

'A revelation to actors and readers of Shakespeare' — John Bell



Rhythm and Meaning in **SHAKESPEARE**

A Guide for Readers and Actors

Peter Groves

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MONASH University
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To the memory of “these gentle three”:

Roy Groves (1922 – 2007)

John Oliver (1942 – 2006)

Nicholas Sabin (1949 – 2007)

“Peter Groves’ book will come as a revelation to actors and readers of Shakespeare. With a shortage of formal training and a desperation to be ‘natural’, many actors today ignore or even resist the literary conventions and devices embedded in Shakespeare’s plays.

“Dr Groves’ intensive and illuminating study demonstrates how an appreciation of Shakespeare’s use of metre, stress and rhythm, along with many attendant subtleties, will inform actors’ understanding of a text and allow them to soar beyond the bounds of mere ‘naturalism’, to delight the ear as well as the intellect of an audience.”

—*John Bell, Bell Shakespeare*

“It is beautifully written, rich with meaning, humorous and deeply knowledgeable, with a full feeling for the life of the stage. Groves analyses the way that Shakespeare uses speech to create and reinforce meaning: and in so doing he engages in an alive and alert way with many of the complexities this entails. He really understands that speaking verse provides the key to ‘living’ a part, and I love the colorful economy of his language – it is full of down-to-earth metaphor, which is really engaging and delightful ... This is one of the most originally conceived and useful books I’ve read for a long while.”

—*Philippa Kelly, California Shakespeare Theatre*

“I pray you, mar no more of my verses
with reading them ill-favouredly.”

(As You Like It 3.2.261-2)

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Introduction

HAMLET: Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounc'd it to you, trippingly on the tongue, but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief¹ the town-crier spoke my lines.

(*Hamlet*, 3.2.1-4)

Shakespeare wrote verse for the ear, not the eye, and so it is not fully present in a silent reading: if you are to appreciate it – or even understand it – in a sophisticated way, you have to hear it. Sometimes you will be listening to the intelligent voice of a skilful actor, but when you're sitting alone with the book, the voice will have to be your own – and if you're sitting in a library or a crowded railway carriage, you may have to be content with the voice in your head. What you cannot usefully do, however, is skim or speed-read his plays as though they were newspaper articles: as Cicely Berry, voice coach with the Royal Shakespeare Company, puts it, “with Shakespeare … you have to speak the text out loud and feel the movement of the language before you can begin to realise its meaning” (1993, 52). Listen, for example, to the Fairy Queen, enchanted by a love-charm, on being awakened by the raucous braying of Bottom, the ass: “I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again: / Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note” (*MND* 3.1.132-3). The prose sense of this is, of course, absurd in the context, but it is only a part of the meaning of what she says: at least as important is the resonant musicality that lifts her speech – and thus her presence – above the merely ludicrous. This musicality is produced not only by a subtly interwoven pattern of sounds (alternating nasals, other voiced continuants, and long vowels) but also by its dignified, stately rhythm (the second of her lines is in metrical terms a ‘golden’ line, a term explained in §2.4.3). But as John Bell has remarked, “when you perform Shakespeare, you are his collaborator”

¹ As willingly.

(2011, xvii): whereas the phonetic texture of the line is present to any speaker of English who hears or speaks it, the rhythm is something the speaker or reader must partly produce in co-operation with the verse, and is therefore something that has to be learned.

This book, then, is about the way Shakespeare organises the rhythms of speech in verse, and uses them to create and reinforce meanings in the theatre (and in the mind of the reader); it doesn't deal with either prose or song, which are different (and complex) topics. The first chapter explores the material of performance – the music of English speech – and the second deals with the normal ways in which that material is patterned in verse; the third discusses breaks and pauses; the fourth and fifth look at the ways in which performance-direction is structured into the verse in metrical gaps and absences; the sixth briefly covers other kinds of spoken verse in the plays; and the seventh shows how to explore in technical detail the possibilities of the verse for performance.

There are, of course, those who feel we'd be better off ignoring the metre: that iambic pentameter is a kind of “metronome” (Harrison 1948, 249) that stifles the actor's spontaneity, making soliloquies monotonous and dialogue wooden and artificial.² There's an element of truth in this if we confine ourselves to the very earliest examples of blank verse drama, from *Gorbuduc* (1569) to the late 1580s, but the insistent regularity of this ‘drumming decasyllabon’ was artificially produced: it was a deliberate starching strategy to distinguish the new (and self-consciously artistic) form as far as possible from the rough-and-ready doggerel of the old interludes and morality plays that preceded it (see §6.2.7).³ To reform the crude insistence of early pentameter into something

² See Groves (2007) for instances of this curious modern hostility to metre, in part the result of “a failure of ear: an inability to hear pentameter in all its modulated complexity” (128).

³ As an illustration of what Robert Greene dismissed as “the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse” and “the spacious volubility of a drumming decasyllabon” (Preface to *Menaphon* [1589]), consider the opening of Sackville and Norton's *Gorbuduc* (1569):

The silent night that bringes the quiet pawse,
From painefull travailles of the wearie Daie
Prolonges my carefull thoughts and makes me blame
The slowe Aurore that so for love or shame
Doth longe delaye to shewe her blusshing face,
And nowe the Daie renewes my grieffull plainte.

The heavy-handed rhythmical insistence illustrated here is not due to incompetence: it is artfully produced by poets who wish to ensure that you will not mistake their verse either for prose or for doggerel. Notice, for example, the ‘drumming’ effect of the almost complete coincidence of stresses (bolded) with beats (underlined), and the ‘bombast’ or padding out with vacuous fillers (*silent* and *quiet* in line 1, *painful* and *weary* in 2) to ensure that line endings coincide with grammatical breaks.

more lifelike and flexible, Shakespeare merely had to cut back on the starch: in themselves, pentameters are so unobtrusive as a metrical form that some people can't even hear them, and they occur spontaneously and quite frequently in everyday speech;⁴ at the same time they are capable of a huge range of rhythmical diversity. As Kristin Linklater puts it,

The iambic pentameter is a pulse; it is the heart-beat of Shakespeare's poetry. Like your pulse it does not always keep a steady, dull pace; it races with excitement, dances with joy or terror, slows down in contemplation ... There is nothing mechanical about the rhythms of great poetry. If they seem mechanical, *you* have made them so.

(1992, 140)

And of course it is always possible to do so through simple inexperience, as Jack Lemmon, normally such a sensitive actor, showed in his stilted verse-speaking as Marcellus in Kenneth Branagh's 1996 film of *Hamlet*.

Shakespeare himself has nothing directly to say about speaking the verse, but Hamlet's advice to the players is generally taken to be as close as we are likely to get to an authorial view. Since it favours subtlety and lifelikeness over strutting and bellowing, people sometimes assume that by 'mouthing' Hamlet means a stilted over-emphasis on the metre, the 'beat' of the line. In fact mouthing denotes the over-emphatic and megaphone-distorted bellowing of the town-crier, the effect of which is to obscure those differences in the weight of syllables upon which rhythm and metre depend.⁵ What Hamlet deplores is not the exaggeration of metrical form but the obscuring of it, and what he is

⁴ Australian public radio regularly announces the weather in iambic pentameter: "A warm to hot and mainly sunny day", for example, or "A top today of thirty-four degrees". I once spent a few weeks collecting such lines as they occurred in conversation and the media, and was surprised to find how frequent they were. The following little poem is made of lines that are all, individually, exactly as heard or overheard: "Horses performing dressage in the paddock; / A sculpture made of bits of wood you've found; / That lovely hat you bought in Covent Garden; / I need to know; I want to understand / Science, the arts, religion and ideas. / Who did you say had read *The Golden Bowl*? / I've never farted in a crowded lift: / Ceremony's the crucible of soul."

⁵ See B. L. Joseph (1951, 79–80). Hugh Blair (1783, 2.209) describes what he calls "a theatrical, or mouthing manner" in public speaking, from those who "dwell upon [the syllables], and protract them; they multiply accents on the same word; from a mistaken notion, that it gives gravity and force to their Discourse". In a play from 1626, the 'mouthing' town-crier (p.14) delivers a proclamation in which the disruptive effect of these distortions is represented in the play-text by vertical solidi: "All manner of schollars and students| with their Reteiners| and appurtenances| that hold or pretend to hold| in *Capite*| any learning, art or science| of the grand Lord our soueraigne Apollo| [etc.]" (William Hawkins, *Apollo Shroving* (London: Printed for Robert Mylbourne [1627], pp.16–17).

asking of the actors is a performance in which the lines are permitted to ‘trip’ or dance to the rhythms he has written into them. Hamlet’s anxiety for the vulnerability of his rhythms (which should reassure those who think of the pentameter as a sort of stultifying metronomic juggernaut) is only for *his* lines, the “dozen or sixteen” he has inserted in *The Murder of Gonzago*; Shakespeare, who wrote considerably more, may have felt a similar concern that his labour in shaping the verse be not undone in the theatre.

Actors approaching Shakespeare for the first time are sometimes advised to ignore the metre and go just for the meaning, but this represents a false dichotomy, since metre, as an organiser of speech-rhythm, is itself a guide to meaning. For Clive James, indeed, the “binding energy” of Shakespeare’s blank verse “is not meaning but rhythm. To a large extent the meaning will take care of itself if the rhythm is well attended to, but if the rhythm is broken then no amount of searching emphasis will make up for the loss” (1983, 93). As Janet Suzman has observed, from her long practical experience of acting Shakespeare, “It’s an indulgence to ignore [metrical] structure. Would you ignore the time-signature in music? What it indicates if you do is that you are not *listening* to what’s been written” (1996, 147) – and Shakespeare, not only a poet but an actor and practical man of the theatre, is worth listening to: ignoring the metre will impoverish any performance. Getting the metre right does not mean cultivating the Voice Beautiful, or fluting your way through the play like a young John Gielgud: on the contrary, it means paying close attention to the ways in which the rhythmical organisation of the text reinforces emotion, directs pause and emphasis, even cues gesture. Because metrical form in the pentameter is not passively present in the text but rather something that the performer must co-operatively re-create in speaking it, pentameter is what John Barton calls “stage-direction in shorthand” (1984, 25), a supple instrument through which Shakespeare communicates valuable cues to performance.

This is why experienced actors come to see his metre not as an obstacle to be surmounted, or as a snare to trip them up, but as something “designed to help” (McKellen 1996, 33), “a life raft” that “will support you and take you on a wild ride” (Bell 2011, 92). One very practical way in which metre helps the actor is that it provides a set of mental pegs to fix the speech in memory: pentameter speeches are much easier to memorise than prose. I can remember great swathes of undistinguished verse-parts I played as a student, but little or nothing of the prose. But metre also has subtler, more generalised effects: the pentameter produces (when properly performed) a flexible dance of speech-rhythms that can communicate to the alert listener a kind of energy and excitement, even

with material that might not in itself be particularly stimulating,⁶ and can assist in creating and reinforcing meanings in performance. Unlike cruder kinds of metre, moreover, it has the effect of focussing attention on the texture of speech, which is important because verse is a device of compression and intensity and therefore has a greater density than ordinary speech (which is why one of the most basic pieces of advice one can give about the verse is not to gabble it, in the manner of Lucentio in the BBC *Shrew*).⁷ If a character in a naturalistic play says “Oh look, everybody, it’s morning at last: what a relief that’s all over with”, we get information about the time of day and the character’s relief, but not much more. When Horatio says, after a night of supernatural terrors, “But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad, / Walks o’er the dew of yon high eastward hill”, we get so much more in the same number of syllables, including a vivid sense of what the return of daylight *means* for him (and the others) in emotional terms, and it is in part the metre that slows down and focuses our attention on this richness of meaning.

Sometimes, what theatre people mean by “ignore the metre and it will come out right” is that the metre will take care of itself; there’s some truth in this, in that once you’ve absorbed the system of the verse you needn’t consciously think about it all the time, rather as in riding a bike. The snag is that you still need to know how to do it in the first place, or you’re going to keep ending up in the ditch, with the wheels spinning over your head. I don’t, of course, mean to suggest that there is only one way of speaking Shakespeare – there will be a great many ways of uttering even a single verse appropriately, and every generation of actors does it differently – but there are vastly more ways of getting it wrong, the main cause being the assumption that metre is a simple and straightforward matter. In 1967 Trevor Nunn directed *The Taming of the Shrew* for the Royal

⁶ As Coleridge put it, metre “tends to increase the vivacity and susceptibility both of the general feelings and of the attention. This effect it produces by the continued excitement of surprize, and by the quick reciprocations of curiosity still gratified and still re-excited, which are too slight indeed to be at any one moment objects of distinct consciousness, yet become considerable in their aggregate influence. As a medicated atmosphere, or as wine during animated conversation; they act powerfully, though themselves unnoticed.” From Chapter 18 of *Biographia Literaria* (Shedd 1853, 3.416–7).

⁷ More precisely, a comfortable speed (which will of course vary according to genre, mood and so on) is about three seconds or a little more per line (measured from one line-beginning to the next); the BBC Lucentio in his opening speech takes just under two. See Nagy (2011) for an account of the way in which human experience appears to be ‘chunked’ into roughly three-second units. It’s conceivable, however, that Elizabethan performers were closer to Lucentio in speed, relying on their audience’s church-bred facility in following complex speech: two seconds per line would fit most plays into the “two hours’ traffic of our stage” (*RJ* Prol. 12), if we take that phrase literally (the ‘two’ might just be there to alliterate pleasingly with ‘traffic’).

Shakespeare Company, with the comedian Roy Kinnear as the father, Baptista. Kinnear, a complete novice to Shakespeare, was anxious about getting the blank verse right, and received many reassurances to the effect that it was “all very simple”, and that one just had to go *de-DUM de-DUM de-DUM de-DUM de-DUM*. Consequently, at the initial read-through he delivered his first line with great aplomb: “GenTLE-men, IMporTUNE me NO farTHER!” (*TS* 1.1.48).⁸

To speak of an actor “getting it wrong” might sound rather authoritarian, but metre is really no more than a conventional code that allows the poet to communicate intentions about the rhythmical organisation of the speeches he or she has written, rather as punctuation is a code that communicates intentions about a writer’s meaning. We can ignore these codes if we choose, but we risk two things: the disrespect of those who understand the codes and assume that we don’t (there are whole websites devoted to amusing misuses of the apostrophe) and, much more importantly, a loss of richness and precision (the quotation marks in the market sign I once saw that advertised ‘FRESH’ **STRAWBERRIES** were presumably meant to emphasise the fruit’s freshness, not cast doubt upon it, and the roadside notice **DEAF CHILDREN DRIVE CAREFULLY** was doubtless intended as an instruction, not as an observation).

A quick and easy way to subvert the code of metre is to overlook the occasional differences in word-stress that characterise Shakespeare’s English (listed in Appendices A and B). I have heard a Prospero go through the whole of *The Tempest* referring to his dukedom as contemporary *Milán* rather than Jacobean *Millan*, reducing thus to prose every one of his lines in which the word occurs. The problem is compounded when there are two words with variable stressing in a line: I have heard Laertes’ line “The pérfume and supplíance of a minute” (*Ham.* 1.3.9) both as “The perfúme and supplíance of a minute” and “The pérfume and súppliance of a minute”. To some these might seem trivial lapses, and there will always be people in the audience who won’t notice, but to those who do the effect is a little like that of a soprano hitting a wrong note: at the very least it is distracting, and subtly undermines one’s faith in the actor’s skill. Many would endorse the view of Shakespearean actors like Janet Suzman (“Mis-scansions put my teeth on edge” [1996, 147]) and Sheila Hancock (“it’s like an electric shock. It jars and feels awful” [Barton 1984, 46]).

⁸ Recounted by Trevor Nunn on the Southbank Show, London Weekend Television, broadcast 6 December 1979. Kinnear seems to have got the hang of it, since the drama critic Irving Wardle described the entire cast (which included Janet Suzman and Patrick Stewart) as “all-rounders, as skilled in tumbling, dancing and scene-setting as in delivering the lines” (*The Times*, 06/04/67).

Nevertheless, displacing stress in this way only disrupts the metre: it doesn't usually affect the meaning. The placement of accent is a more serious matter because accent is the system that distributes emphasis in an utterance: one sentence can acquire different contextual implications through the placement of accent (eg “**Bill** reads books” [**Ted** prefers fishing], “Bill **reads** books” [he doesn't just **skim** them], “Bill reads **books**” [not **magazines**]). There is a rough-and-ready rule of thumb here: accent on even-numbered syllables will tend to preserve the metre, and thus Shakespeare's rhythmical intentions, whereas accent on odd-numbered syllables (apart from the first) will tend to derail it if the syllables on either side are weak, as when Viola in the BBC *Twelfth Night* responds to the Captain's “This is Illyria, lady” with the despairing “And what should I **do**, in Illyria?” In itself this is a perfectly legitimate prose accentuation of the line; the metre, however, guides the actor towards a melancholy double contrast that Shakespeare must have intended: “And what should **I** do in **Illy**ria? / My **bro**ther he is in **Ely**sium.” (*TN* 1.2.3–4). Similarly, a Tamora who (as in the BBC *Titus*) tells her new husband, the emperor, “I will **not**, be denied; sweetheart, look back” (*Tit.* 1.1.478) has perhaps not fully considered the way in which the metre points a reading that suggests not mere petulance but a steely will (more appropriate to the vengeful queen of the Goths): “I **will**, not be denied”. Again, Horatio in Tony Richardson's 1969 film of *Hamlet* enquires of the apparition, “What art **thou**, that usurp'st this time of night?” (1.1.46), as though he were constantly bumping into ghosts around the castle (“Not another one!”); if we give the metre a chance, however, we find a reading that suggests the astonishment – and the epistemological horror – of the card-carrying rationalist confronted by evidence of the supernatural (“What **art**, thou, that usurp'st this time of night?”). Of course, all performance is interpretation, and interpretations are not in themselves either right or wrong, but they can vary, as these examples illustrate, in contextual appropriateness, interesting complexity, and so on. My point is simply that if we trust Shakespeare as an artist, it is always worth at least exploring the performance suggested by the metre, because that is most likely to embody his rhythmical intentions. John Bell has remarked of what he calls “subtleties of phrasing, pitch and cadence”:

I watch opera singers working on a score and note the precision they bring to bear. Actors could do with more of that, as long as we regard it as illumination and not as a rigid formula which has to be lifelessly and technically regurgitated. Just like the opera singer we have to fill that form with spontaneous liveliness. (2011, 90).

In order to explore Shakespeare's metrical suggestions we need to be able to hear and utter the verse-form, but as any teacher of English or patron of amateur theatre can attest, not everybody can – not even, odd as it may seem, every editor of Shakespeare.⁹ Yet to judge from the many Companions and Guides currently available, it's just about the one thing modern readers *don't* need help with: a recent one (Armstrong and Atkin, 1998) has a whole chapter on language but doesn't mention metre once. Even where it is dealt with, it is dismissed rather briskly as something simple or even self-evident, like the rhythm of nursery rhymes or protest chants. The reason for this paradox is that those who have acquired the skill have usually done so osmotically, through prolonged exposure to the verse, rather in the way infants acquire their native tongue, and not by learning the rules from a book; for this reason they tend to find iambic pentameter simple and natural. This is normal with linguistic systems like metre, as in the case of the modern Persian poet "who could not scan even the simplest verses correctly, though he could recite them rhythmically enough", but whose lines, on examination, did not commit "even a single transgression against the rules which he did not know, but had assimilated simply by reading and listening" (Thiessen 1988, 6). It is probable that changes in education and in leisure habits over the last fifty years or so have lessened the degree of relevant 'reading and listening' that goes on. Peter Hall points out that "In the past it was hardly necessary to train actors to speak verse. They had – all of them – been marinated in so much Shakespeare during their early years in regional theatres or on classical tours that the rhythm came naturally to them. ... Young actors are now exposed to little Shakespeare" (2003, 11–12).

This book, then, is for those looking for some assistance in exploring and performing the complex rhythms of Shakespeare's dramatic language: it is not only for actors but for all readers of Shakespeare, because all engaged reading is necessarily performance, if only for an audience of one. It aims to complement and extend, not to replace, the various books already available on the subject of speaking Shakespeare, which typically deal with matters such as voice-production and projection. Such books tend to be written by theatre professionals – actors, directors, and voice-coaches – who do not always have the kind of linguistic understanding about how rhythmical form is embodied in language that would enable them to turn their fine insights into usable suggestions. In consequence their advice on such matters, when

⁹ See Groves (2007) for a hair-raising account of the metre-deafness of some recent editors of the plays.

reduced to cold print, tends to turn into vague and unhelpful gestures or cloudy metaphors. If you were studying in person with Patsy Rodenburg I have no doubt she could make you understand clearly what she means by the general injunction to “start the beat *dédum* into the lines. Allow the *dum* to pull you up and out. Don’t pull it into you” (2002, 86); a solitary reader faced with this kind of extravagance, however, is likely to respond only with bafflement.

To take a concrete example: there are three quite different markers of syllabic prominence in English: accent, stress and beat (explained in Chapter 1). In most written discussions of metre, however, these three are unhelpfully lumped together as one feature (usually labelled either ‘stress’ or ‘accent’). Imagine a music teacher who could only speak of the voice going ‘up’ or ‘down’, without being able to specify whether the topic was pitch, loudness or tempo: this is roughly analogous to the position of someone describing pentameter with just one catch-all prosodic category. One director, for example, suggests various ways of performing one of Juliet’s verses (*RJ* 2.2.85), including one he transcribes as ‘*Thou know’st the mask of night is on my face*’, and asks “Does this final version of the stresses make sense? Can that final ‘on’ take a stress?” (Donnellan 2005, 247). The question is left for the reader, but the reader has not been equipped to give a useful answer. If by ‘stress’ here is meant either stress or contextually motivated accent, the answer is clearly ‘no’: ‘on’ is inherently unstressed, and accent on it would imply some bizarre contrast with an unspoken alternative (“*in* my face”, perhaps). If, on the other hand, it’s a question of beats, then the answer is that it not only can take one, but that it must if the line is to be acceptable to the discerning listener as a pentameter. If these distinctions are not made, there is no way of explaining how the actor might attempt to do this – that is, to put a beat on ‘on’ in this line without accenting it. This occasional subtle massaging of speech-patterns towards the forms of the metre, known as ‘supplementation’, is an essential skill for the actor: overdo it and you turn Shakespeare’s verse into nursery rhyme; ignore it and you turn it into prose. All metred verse in English requires supplementation in some degree; one reason iambic pentameter is so often described as ‘naturalistic’ and close to everyday speech is that there the supplementation is at its subtlest and most subliminal.

Finally, a word about Shakespeare’s text. It’s natural to assume that (give or take a few old spellings) his plays appear on the page in front of us more or less as he meant them to, but unfortunately this is not necessarily the case. Shakespeare, unlike his contemporary Jonson, did not oversee the printing

of his plays,¹⁰ many of which were initially published in two or even three competing versions. Whatever he originally wrote may in any case have been modified before it got into print by different agents at various stages: through feedback from performance; through later revision, either by Shakespeare or a colleague; through ‘correction’ – and negligence – in transcription or in type-setting, and so on. Elizabethan play-texts were seen not as revered works of art created by solitary geniuses but as working documents, rather like modern film-scripts, produced through a kind of serial collaboration among playwrights, actors, scribes and type-setters; to complicate the matter they have been subsequently put (many times) through the mill of editing, with different editors holding quite divergent views on how to attempt to undo this mayhem (or even, more recently, whether one should – or can – undo it). For a fuller discussion of this process see Stern (2004).

The practical upshot of all this is that there is no such thing as ‘the’ text of any Shakespeare play, and so, for any given passage, what appears in your edition of the play (including its precise line-numbers) may not exactly correspond with what I have reproduced here. This is particularly likely with short pentameters (pentameters with fewer than ten syllables – see chapters 4 and 5), since many editors from the Second Folio (1632) onwards, taking such verses for mistakes of one sort or another, have attempted to ‘correct’ them by re-arranging the lineation of the verse or even changing or adding words arbitrarily (the Oxford *Complete Works* of 1986 is particularly high-handed in this latter regard). The text I have used here is for the most part that of the widely used Riverside Shakespeare (Blakemore Evans, Tobin, et al., 1997); line-numbers refer where possible to this edition. On the few occasions where the Riverside seems to me to be in error, as in *Macbeth* 2.1.1-3, I indicate a return to the lineation of the First Folio of 1623 with the prefix *F1* before the line-number (this prefix may also mean that I have retained some of F1’s punctuation of a given verse).

Nevertheless, it is not possible to treat F1 as an unquestioned authority, because there are many places in which an editor does genuinely need to correct it: just after the needlessly corrected passage *Macbeth* 2.1.1-3, for example, is one that needs correction: 2.1.5-7. Lineation, in particular, is a feature that its type-setters or ‘compositors’ were notoriously disrespectful of, setting prose as though it were verse or verse as prose or *vers libre* in order to stretch

¹⁰ Though this shouldn’t be taken to mean that he didn’t care what happened to his writing: his more prestigious narrative poems, for example, were carefully published. For an interesting discussion of this question see Erne (2003).

or compress the text they were setting into its allotted space on the page. Macbeth's harangue to the murderers (*Mac.* 3.1.74–90) and the Nurse's reminiscences of weaning Juliet (*RJ* 1.3.16–62), both examples of vigorous blank verse and both usually so printed since the first edited texts, appear in F1 as randomly lineated free verse and as prose respectively.¹¹ One of the most puzzling theatrical fads of recent years has been the use of reprints of F1, such as Neil Freeman's Applause series, in the misguided belief that its erratic punctuation and disrupted lineation derive directly from Shakespeare, providing a form of privileged insight into his dramaturgical intentions. As we shall see, Shakespeare does indeed encode performance cues in his verse, but he does so by using the code of the metre, not by abandoning it.

A Note on Jargon

Unfamiliar concepts, unfortunately, sometimes require unfamiliar language. I have done my best in this book to minimise the amount of jargon used, and I have tried to find transparent non-technical terms in place of technical ones where possible: thus I refer to the process that turns (say) three-syllabled *dange-rous* into two syllabled *dang'rous* as 'contraction' rather than as 'syncope' (the technical term). Words that have been bolded (but which are not part of an example) are terms that are defined in the Glossary (at the end). Terms I use that have no counterpart in traditional metrics are marked with an asterisk in the Glossary. Occasionally I mention technical terms that I don't intend to use much, so that readers can recognise them where they need to in other texts, or just satisfy their curiosity, but when I do so I enclose them in braces {} and preface them with the phrase 'technical term'.

¹¹ As if to illustrate my contention that even some scholars have lost the ability to perceive iambic pentameter, the RSC edition by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (London: Macmillan, 2007) prints both as prose.

1. Prosody – The Music of Speech

PROLOGUE: ... *We do not come, as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand ...*

THESEUS: This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER: He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop.
A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

(*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1.113–21)

When you listen to speech – preferably in a language you don't know, so that your attention isn't distracted by meaning – you can hear that the voice is a kind of musical instrument, going high and low, loud and soft, fast and slow, as required. These musical modulations convey meaning: when Joan of Arc, for example, tells her suitor ►¹ “I must not yield to *any* rites of love” (*1H6* 1.2.113),¹ a descent in pitch at the end of the line expresses a categorical rejection of him, but a rise expresses a conditional acceptance (ie “You're not wooing me in the right way”). Similarly, when Lady Macbeth asks her husband when King Duncan is to leave their castle, he responds “Tomorrow, as he purposes.” A fall in pitch at the end indicates an innocent informative reply, but a rise at the end flirts with a guilty desire (“that's what he intends, but I may have other plans”). More subtly, the voice can convey boredom, suspicion, indignation and so on just through tempo and pitch-change.

This music of speech is called ‘prosody’, and since metre is a systematic organisation of prosodic form we need to begin our exploration with a

¹ The symbol ► means that the associated example is illustrated by a sound-file, available via the book's webpage: www.publishing.monash.edu/books/rms-9781921867811.html

discussion of it. Because our culture sees written language as primary and permanent, and speech as derived and secondary, we tend to think (if at all) of prosody – largely invisible in the written language, as in the case of the examples quoted above – as something unimportant, evanescent, adventitious. But consider the case of Derek Bentley, a London teenager who was hanged in 1953 for having supposedly incited his armed accomplice in burglary – a boy too young to be executed – to shoot dead a policeman while resisting arrest. The words on which Bentley was hanged were “Let him have it, Chris”, and the prosecution successfully argued that his meaning was “Shoot him”. But there is room for reasonable doubt (his conviction was finally set aside in 1998) that what Bentley (already detained by a policeman) meant by “Let him have it” was “Let him have the gun”, and a native speaker of English who had heard him would have been in little doubt about which of the two was meant. All the jury had to go on, however, was the bare written record, bleached and denuded of rhythm and pitch-patterns (and re-uttered in the courtroom, presumably in that bland de-natured style in which oral evidence is normally cited). It is this (not unimportant) signifying music of speech that we call prosody, and it is one of the most important tools available to an actor (Dame Edith Evans is partly remembered for the prosody of her magisterially incredulous “A handbag?” from the 1952 film of *The Importance of Being Earnest*).

What distinguishes a verse play from a prose play like *Earnest* is that the prosody of the verse play is governed not just by the rules of natural language but by a kind of partial prosodic score: if the actor’s voice is the instrument through which he or she interprets that score, pentameter is the musical notation that enables that interpretation. In order to relate the one to the other – the complex potential of performance to the prescriptions and constraints of Shakespeare’s metre – we are going to have to understand something of the music of English speech. The good news is that we don’t need to know everything about it, because only a small part of it is relevant to the metre. In essence, metre in English is about the placement of beats, and in order to understand this we need to look at two other kinds of prosodic prominence: stress and contextually motivated accent. Before we do this, however, we need to take a look at the concept of the syllable, the thing that carries stress and accent.

§1.1: Syllables

§1.1.1: Schwa and Half-syllables

Everyone knows that a syllable is a peak of energy in a word, usually associated with a vowel: there is one in *mad*, for example, two in *ma+dde+nning*, three in *ma+dde+ning*, four in *Ma+da+gas+car*, five in *ma+de+ri+sa+tion*, and so on. Knowing the number of syllables in a word is important because syllable-counting is normative in a sophisticated metre like pentameter: the great majority of Shakespeare's pentameters have ten syllables. But counting syllables is not always as simple as it might seem: is it really *ma+dde+nning*, for example, or just *madd+ning*? Does the second word of Juliet's verse mentioned in the Introduction ("Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face") have one syllable, or two? Some texts print 'know'st' and others 'knowest', and the very earliest texts are not in agreement. And yet, whereas in arithmetic the difference between one and two may be absolute, and while the written distinction between 'know'st' and 'knowest' may seem unequivocal, in prosody it may be a little less clear-cut, because our sense of how many syllables there are in a word does not depend purely upon its sounds. Take, for example, the pairs *lightening* and *lightning*, or *coddling* and *cooling*: in normal rapid colloquial speech they would be pronounced identically, and yet we would still probably perceive an extra syllable in the first of each pair simply because we understand the underlying structure of the word (eg *lighten* or *coddle* plus *-ing*).

At the heart of most syllables is a vowel (or occasionally a voiced continuant² such as /l/, /n/ or /m/, as in the second syllable of *kettle* or *button*), and there are twenty or so different vowels and diphthongs (collectively, 'vocoids') in English, which our alphabet (an ill-fitting hand-me-down) tries to represent with the half-dozen letters appropriate for its source, Latin. In my dialect ('Educated Southern British') the short vocoids are those of ►, *bit*, *bet*, *bat*, *but*, *put*, *pot*, and *butter*, and the long vocoids are those of *beat*, *bait*, *Bart*, *bout*, *bite*, *boot*, *boat*, *Bert*, *bought*, *beer*, *bear*, *boor*, *byre* and *bower*). It is very likely that the actual sounds that you make in uttering these words will differ noticeably from mine, and it is certain that Shakespeare's did, but these qualitative differences in pronunciation do not (on the whole) disturb the system of distinctions among the vocoids, or their relative prominence, and are not therefore relevant to the metre.³ Oddly enough,

² A 'continuant' is a speech-sound that can be prolonged indefinitely (unlike 'p' or 't'); it is voiced if accompanied by vocal cord vibration, like 'z' or 'v' (but not 's' or 'f').

³ There are of course minor systemic differences to be found among the dialects of English: many Americans do not distinguish the vowels of *cot* and *caught*, for example, or *merry* and

the most frequent vocoid in English speech, found in most polysyllables and many of the commonest monosyllables, has no specific representation at all: this is the indistinct grunt-like unstressed central vowel called *schwa* (phonetically [ə]). ►³ This vowel is the commonest in normal conversation even' convəsatiənəl úsəge, and ərísəs frəm the phənétic rədúctiən əv vowels in many unstressed syllables (cəmpáre phótəgráph with phatógráphy). This reduction of vocoids to *schwa* is a standard feature of normal colloquial English, from the highly educated Cambridge or “Hahvahd” variety to the working-class speech of Liverpool, Detroit or Parramatta.⁴

Incidentally, because our mental image of English is based upon the written language, in which *schwa* is not even registered, people are often surprised and even dismayed to discover how prevalent it is in ordinary speech. Sometimes actors (even good actors) who are new to Shakespeare’s verse take it to be a kind of ceremonial language requiring an overly precise enunciation, and so make a point of replacing *schwas* in little words like prepositions and conjunctions with a full vowel: ►⁴ “Too bee orr nott too bee”. The problem with this is not just that it sounds stilted and unnatural in itself: since full vowels are a cue to stress it blurs to some extent our perception of the metre (it is a form of ‘mouthing’, as denounced by Hamlet [*Ham.* 3.2.1-4]), and since full vowels take longer to utter than *schwa*, another effect is subtly but systematically to disrupt the timing of the utterance, producing a distractingly disjointed and unnatural performance of the verse.

§1.1.2: Schwa and Elasticity

As a syllable, *schwa* is both light and unstable; if for convenience we represent the vocoid (properly, a diphthong) of *know* by <ə>, the difference between ‘know’st’ and ‘knowest’ is in phonetic terms an analogue one, not a digital one: it is not the unequivocal distinction <nəst> vs.<nō-est>, but rather both pronunciations are versions of <nōəst>, a one-and-a-half syllabled word that can slide either way on the scale, depending on the lightness with which we enunciate the *schwa*. It follows that any word with a vocoid followed immediately by a *schwa* (like *power*, *here*, *fire*, and so on) automatically has a kind of syllabic instability or double potential: a contracted form (*pow’r*) natural to rapid colloquial speech and an expanded form (*pow-er*) that may

marry, and someone from Yorkshire would conflate the vowels of *but* and *put*, but might have two distinct *bate*-vowels, distinguishing *rain* from *reign*.

⁴ *Schwa* is also a very common vocoid in French (“Jé ná tə lə fais pas dire!”) and German (“Heutə habən die jungə Helden sehr schwer gəarbeitət.”), and again is not represented in either orthography.

occur in more deliberate or formal speech. We may think of the half-syllable here as a value that can be either rounded up to a full syllable in scansion (thus expanding the ‘underlying’ word by half a syllable) or rounded down to a non-syllable (thus contracting the word by half a syllable). The vowel that is absent (or not fully present) in the contracted form is a ‘half-vowel’, and the process that truncates expanded forms into contracted forms by deleting half-vowels may be called ‘contraction’ {technical term: ‘syncopation’}. The obverse of this, pronouncing the half-vowel and thus producing the expanded form of a word, may be called ‘expansion’. Where a word includes a half-vowel, and thus both an expanded and a contracted form, we may describe it as ‘elastic’. Note that every elastic word has an expanded and a contracted form, even where the expansion or contraction is fairly rare: we may think of elastic words as having in theory $N+\frac{1}{2}$ syllables, which in performance must be either contracted to N or expanded to $N+1$.⁵

§1.1.3: Counting Syllables

Juliet’s line, however, is not prose but verse, and this makes all the difference to the process of counting: this is because in metred verse the writer conforms to a particular code which he or she expects the reader to understand. Since we can assume Juliet’s line is meant to be a pentameter (because it occurs in a work written in pentameters and conforms to all the requirements of pentameter), and since the last of its possible eleven syllables (*face*) is stronger than the one that precedes it and cannot therefore be a tail or ‘feminine ending’, the half-vowel in ‘knowest’ – the only one available – must be dropped in order to squeeze the line into the requisite ten syllable-positions. We can be certain, that is, that ‘knowest’ is meant to count metrically as a monosyllable in Juliet’s line, whereas by the same logic ‘lowest’ in the second of these lines is meant to count as two syllables:

(1)

Thou₁ know^est₂ the₃ mask₄ of₅ night₆ is₇ on₈ my₉ face₁₀ (RJ 2.2.85)

In₁ to₂ the₃ cha₄nnel₅, till₆ the₇ low₈est₉ stream₁₀ (JC 1.1.64)

Note that I have put the <e> of ‘knowest’ in superscript rather than replacing it with an apostrophe in the normal fashion (‘know’st’). This is to signify that the *schwa* it represents need not be completely eliminated (‘know’st’ doesn’t

⁵ Of course, there may be more than one half-vowel, as in contemporary *péremptory*, which can be said as any of: ►₅ tetrasyllabic *pərémpþɔrɪ*, trisyllabic *p'rémptɔrɪ* or *pərémp'tɔrɪ*, or disyllabic *p'rémpt'ɔrɪ*. Shakespeare, however, said *péremptory*.

have to rhyme exactly with ‘toast’), though it should be touched very lightly: it is enough that the expanded forms get a more pronounced *schwa* than the contracted ones. The apostrophe should be used where the vowel is completely absent, as in ‘dated and stamp’d’. Similarly:

(2) ►₅

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| And keep not back your pow^ers in da-lli-ance. | (1H6 5.2.5) |
| And knit our pow-ers to the arm of peace. | (2H4 4.1.175) |
| I fear my bro-ther Mor-ti-mer doth stir | (1H4 2.3.81) |
| You speak it out of fe-är and cold heart. | (1H4 4.3.7) |
| As fi-re drives out fire , so pi-ty pi-ty – | (JC 3.1.171) |
| Hear , Na-ture, he-är ; de-är go-ddess, hear ! | (KL 1.4.275) |

The ripple in the rhythm of a line produced by a contracted form such as *pow^ers* or *dang^rous* is one of the factors that gives pentameter its liveliness and lifelikeness.

The important point to remember about contracted and expanded forms is that the poet can choose between them, and while the choice is indicated by the metre it may be motivated by other considerations than metrical convenience: in the last line of example (2), for example, the expanded forms *heär* and *deär* (two syllables each) are used for emphasis, and to impart a kind of liturgical solemnity to the imprecation.

§1.1.4: Kinds of Contraction

Contraction comes in three basic varieties: the first {technical term: ‘syncope’ (**síng-kə-pee**)} drops a *schwa* or a weak /ɪ/ before a voiced continuant such as /r/, /l/ /n/ and /m/: *diff'rent*, *per'lous*, *coun't'nce*, *pusillan'mous*, *moment'ry* (the superscript, we recall, reflects the vowel’s ghostly persistence in the rhythm of the utterance). To illustrate syncope:

(3)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| But either īt was di-ffe-rent in blood – | (MND 1.1.135) |
| The di-ff'rent plague of each calamity. | (KJ 3.4.60) |
| My grisly coun-te-nance made others fly, | (1H6 1.4.47) |
| In gait and count-e-nance surely like a father. | (TS 4.2.65) |
| O mo-men-ta-ry grace of mortal men, | (R3 3.4.96) |
| The fit is mo-men-t'ry , upon a thought | (Mac. 3.4.54) |

In verse-texts from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, syncope is often (but not reliably) indicated in printed texts by an apostrophe: *diff'rent*, *ev'ning*, *par'lous* (from *perilous*). Occasionally (and more frequently in the later plays) Shakespeare will use ‘extended’ syncope – that is, he will treat a *schwa* in a polysyllable as though it were a half-vowel even when it cannot in fact be eliminated in pronunciation (here the extra vowel has rather more than a ghostly presence, and in reading we should make no attempt to eliminate it, though we should utter the word in which it occurs quite rapidly). I will indicate extended syncope with a larger vowel-symbol:

(4)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| His maj^esty seldom fears. I ^a m Cressid's uncle, | (<i>AW</i> 2.1.97) |
| 'Tis done already, ^a nd the mess^enge r gone. | (<i>AC</i> 3.6.31) |
| Like to a vag^abond flag upon the stream | (<i>AC</i> 1.4.45) |
| All broken impl^ements of a ruin'd house. | (<i>Tim.</i> 4.2.16) |

The /ɪ/ between a stressed syllable and a following *schwa*, as in *envious*, *deviant*, *Romeo* is usually contracted in rapid speech into the /y/ sound of *yes*: *envⁱous* (*en-vyəs*), *devⁱant* (*dev-yənt*). *Rom^eo* (*Rom-yo*) {technical term: ‘syneresis’, rhyming with *thesis*}, and unlike syncope it is not traditionally registered in the orthography:

(5)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Be not her maid, since she is en-vi-ous . | (<i>RJ</i> 2.2.7) |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|

JULIET: Can heaven be so **en-vⁱous**?

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| NURSE: Ro-m^eo can,
Though heaven cannot. O Ro-m^eo, Ro-me-o! | (<i>RJ</i> 3.2.40-1) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|

Finally, as we have seen, a *schwa* or a /ɪ/ is always a half-vowel when adjacent to a full vowel: *know^est*, *th^e entire*, *you ^and me* {technical term: ‘synalépha’, rhyming with ‘reefer’}. Synalepha may take place between successive stressed and unstressed vowels, or between a word-final vowel and a following word-initial one provided no major syntactic boundary intervenes:

(6) ►₆

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Beⁱng red, she loves him best; and be-ing white, | (<i>VA</i> 77) |
| Is all too heavy to admit much talk | (<i>2H4</i> 5.2.24) |
| T^admit no traffic tō our adverse towns: | (<i>CE</i> 1.1.15) |

- And how **the English** have the suburbs won. (1H6 1.4.2)
 How **th^eEnglish**, in the suburbs close intrench'd, (1H6 1.4.9)
No excuse current but to hang thyself, (R3 1.2.84)
 There was a yielding – this admits **no^exuse**. (Cor. 5.6.69)

Historically a /v/ between a stressed vowel and a *schwa* is always likely to disappear, exposing the *schwa* to synaloepha, as in *o'er*, *ne'er* and *e'en*. In the case of these conventionally indicated contractions the /v/ should disappear completely in performance; pronouncing *heaven* and *given* as *hen* and *gin*, however, would sound odd and threaten comprehension (“the cannons to the hens”), and so the best strategy is to pronounce the /və/ quickly and lightly:

- (7)
- New lighted on a **hea-ven**-kissing hill, (Ham. 3.4.59)
 The cannons to the **hea^vns**, the **hea^vns** to earth, (Ham. 5.2.277)
 Would she had **ne-ver** gi^ven you leave to come! (AC 1.3.21)
Ne'er brake into extremity of rage. (CE 5.1.48)
 And **ha-ving** that do choke their service up (AYL 2.3.61)
 Not **ha^vng** the pow'r to do the good it would, (Cor. 3.1.160)

One final kind of contraction is the optional loss of initial (or sometimes final) *schwa* in a small number of words, such as '*gainst*' from *against* or *squire* from *esquire* {technical term: ‘aphesis’, rhyming with *thesis*}. The most common kind of aphesis affects grammar words, such as auxiliary verbs (eg *I am*, *we are*, *he is*, *you will be* ⇒ *I'm*, *we're*, *he's*, *you'll be*). This will frequently be registered by an apostrophe, even in modern editions, but not always: as David Crystal has pointed out, “In some cases, it is only the written form that is distinctive: in modern English we do not usually write *y're* for ‘you are’ or *o'dores* for ‘of doors’, but the colloquial pronunciation of *you are going* or *out of doors* would hardly differ between then and now” (2002, 146). For this reason, we may assume such contractions where they are metrically necessary, as in the case of *I am* ⇒ *I'm* in the first line of #4 below.

Aphesis in Shakespeare's English (grammatical words):

- it ⇒ 't (eg *it is well, pox on it* ⇒ *'tis well, pox on't*)
- the ⇒ th' (eg *i'th'night* [two syllables])
- us ⇒ 's (eg *take upon's the mystery of things*)
- You, ye ⇒ y' (eg *y'are i'th'right*)

In some varieties of British English, *the* is pronounced *thee* before a vowel, making it difficult to drop (though available for syneresis before a vowel), but in Elizabethan (as in many forms of contemporary) English, *the* seems to have been given a *schwa* in all positions, making contractions such as *th'entrance* or *th'abuse* perfectly natural.⁶

§1.1.5: Restorables (expanded forms peculiar to Shakespeare's English)

Shakespeare's English has a number of expanded forms that have since disappeared because the contracted forms have become permanent: syncope has become obligatory for us in words like *Hen^ry*, *Humph^rey*, *en^france*, *hand^fling* and *wrest^fler*, for example, and syneresis in words like *notⁱon*, *occasiⁱon*, *opinⁱon*, *o^can* and *Christⁱan*, so that for Shakespeare each of these words has an optionally expanded form that sounds unnatural – or at any rate archaic – in modern English:

- (8) ►₇
- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Remember, lords, your oaths to Hen-ry sworn: | (1H6 1.1.162) |
| Is Cade the son of He-nə-ry the Fifth | (2H6 4.8.36) |
| I never saw but Hum-phry Duke of Gloster | (2H6 1.1.183) |
| Excepting none but good Duke Hum-phə-rey ; | (2H6 1.1.193) |
| The stony en-trance of this sépulchre? | (RJ 5.3.141) |
| That croaks the fatal en-tə-rance of Duncan | (Mac. 1.5.39) |
| As nimble jugg-lers that deceive the eye | (CE 1.2.98) |
| O me! you ju-ggə-ler , you cankerblossom, | (MND 3.2.282) |
| Will all great Neptune's o-cean wash this blood | (Mac. 2.2.57) |
| The beachy girdle of the o-cë-an | (2H4 3.1.50) |
| If only to go warm were gor-gë-ous [<i>sumptuously dressed</i>], | |
| Why, nature needs not what thou, gor-geous , wear'st | (KL 2.2.442-3) |

The expanded forms may (where necessary) be written *Hen^ry*, *ent^erance*, *hand^eling*, *notⁱon*, *occasiⁱon*: “After the prompter, for our ent^erance” (RJ 1.4.8), “The parts and graces of the wrest^eler” (AYL 2.2.13).

⁶ Evidence for this comes from Elizabethan attempts at phonetic transcription, which give forms such as *ð'abius* for *th'abuse*, and *tu ð'spesiaul* for *to th'special* (see Cercignani 1981, 19). I recently heard an Australian radio announcer naively complaining of references to *the 'Lympic Games*.

In contemporary English, the *schwa* in the verb ending <-ed> is always dropped where possible (that is, unless it is preceded by <t> or <d>: *banned* is one syllable, but *batted* must be two). This vowel may be restored in Shakespeare's English; but with a *schwa*, not a full vowel (*banishèd* should not rhyme perfectly with *dead*, for example, even where the rhyme-scheme seems to require it). Verbs with the endings <-est> and <-eth> may also be expanded or contracted as required by the metre:

(9)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Hence ‘ ba-ni-shèd ’ is ba-nish’d from the world, | (RJ 3.3.19) |
| By their o-ppress’l and fear-sur-pri-sèd eyes | (Ham. 1.2.203) |
| Curse, miscr’ant, when thou co-mest to the stake | (1H6 5.3.44) |
| Thou com’st in such a questionable shape | (Ham. 1.4.43) |

The two traditional editorial ways of signalling the metrical status of elastic verb-forms are as follows: “Hence **banished** is **banish’d** from the world” and “Hence **banishèd** is **banished** from the world” (the Arden 3 editions for some reason fail to indicate this distinction in the text, making them less useful for readers and actors).

These ‘dead’ half-vowels have a different effect on our experience of the verse from those that still obtain in modern English, since the latter always have a phantasmal presence for us (due to our knowledge of the language) even when not fully pronounced. For this reason, those of Shakespeare's half-vowels that are never pronounced in modern English may be distinguished as ‘**restorables**’. Restorables, unlike half-vowels, are entirely absent to modern ears (and minds) when dropped and thus need only be indicated when they function in the metre: “I hate him for he is a Christian” (MV 1.3.42). This is, of course, a distinction for us rather than for Shakespeare, to whom they were simply half-vowels, but it is a meaningful distinction nonetheless.

§1.1.6: Transitions between Syllables

Obstruents are consonants that obstruct airflow (/ p t k b d g f th [as in *thin*] s sh v dh [as in *the*] z zh [as in *rouge*] ch j [as in *judge*] /). An obstruent cluster is a sequence of obstruents occurring within or between words. We cannot, of course, rely on spelling here: <x> is a cluster in *six* but not in *xylophone*. Avoidance of obstruent clusters will tend to make the verse flow smoothly and lyrically; such clusters will tend, in bulk, to slow it down, make it seem more strenuous and effortful, and the more consonants in the cluster, the more difficult it will be to enunciate. The kind of consonant matters, too: successive

plosives or stops (p, b, t, d, k, g) are particularly obstructive, as in “sweetbrood” or “world draw”. The first of the following examples is clotted and sclerotic (that is, it has twelve obstruent clusters in four lines), reflecting its strenuous injunctions; the second is relatively free-flowing with just two in three lines, representing the Fairy Queen’s lyrical address to her beloved:

(10)

Devouring Time bluntthou the lion’s paws,
 And make the earth devour her own sweetbrood,
 Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger’s sjaws,
 And burn the long-lived phoenix, in her blood.

(Son. 19.1-4)

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again.

Mine ear is much enamour’d ofthy note;
 So is mine eye entrallëd to thy shape;

(MND 3.1.132-4)

In ordinary speech we often simplify consonant clusters to ease the grinding gears of language: we would tend to say “An’ burn”, for example, in the fourth line. This natural tendency should be resisted in speaking verse, however, not just in the interests of clarity but also because it may eliminate expressive effects of this kind.

§1.2: Lexical Stress: Major, Minor and Weak

§1.2.1: Word Classes

Most of the words (by far) in a dictionary belong to the ‘lexical’ category (nouns, adjectives, derived adverbs, main verbs); these are words that have referential meanings you can look up and define, like *descend*, *discreetly*, *foolish*, *wombat*, *jam* (other terms you may come across for these are ‘full’, ‘dictionary’ or ‘content’ words). This is a huge category of words that is constantly changing through borrowing, coinage, obsolescence and so on. On the other hand, most occurrences of words in a given text (tokens, that is, rather than types) will be particles or ‘grammar’ words like *of*, *the*, *you*, *and*, *should*, *is* (ie prepositions, determiners, pronouns, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, copulas, and so on), also called ‘function’ or ‘empty’ words; this is a small class of words that rarely or never changes. Grammar-words don’t mean or refer directly but rather connect and relate dictionary-words into phrases and sentences; if we think of dictionary words as numbers, grammar words are like the signs for addition, multiplication

and so on that convert strings of numbers into meaningful expressions: just as ‘ $3 + 5$ ’ differs from ‘ 3×5 ’, so “the letter from Ted” is different from “a letter for Ted”.

§1.2.2: Major or ‘A’ Stress

Let’s go back once more to Juliet’s verse quoted in the introduction: “Thou know’st the mask of night is on my face” (*RJ* 2.2.85). Four of the words seem to have a kind of built-in prominence even in the most neutral and context-independent reading imaginable: “Thou **know’st** the **mask** of **night** is on my **face**”. These four words are the dictionary or lexical words in the verse: every dictionary word has one syllable, called the **tonic** syllable, which in isolation carries **major stress** (or **A-stress**): *descénd*, *fóolish*, *wómbat*, *jám*, *discréetly*.

The position of the tonic syllable in the word may distinguish grammatical categories: thus the end-stressed verbs *abstráct*, *présént*, *impórt* differ from the penultimately stressed nouns *ábstract*, *présént*, *ímpórt*.⁷ It’s important to note that in connected speech (as opposed to citation of isolated words) there may be little or no actual physical prominence marking any particular stress: in part we perceive stress just because we expect it to be there. In a lecture I once played two brief digitally synthesised sentences, one using *insult* (a word in which the placement of stress does not affect the shape of the vowels) as a noun and one as a verb; though the word was generated in both cases by the same string of code, the large audience was willing to swear that they’d heard *insult* the first time and *insúlt* the second.

As everyone knows, in a few words the place of the tonic stress has changed since Shakespeare’s time. Ulysses, for example, must speak not of ►₈ “Péaceful cómmerce from divídable shóres” but rather of “Péaceful **commércé** from **dívidable** shóres” (*TC* 1.3.105), and Cerimon must say not “Apóllo, perféct me in the cháracters!” but “Apóllo, **pérfect** me in the **cháracters!**” (*Per.* 3.2.67). These differences, however, are relatively few (affecting about 100 words), and are listed in full in Appendix A (Appendix B indicates the stressing of Shakespearean names where these are likely to puzzle a modern reader, especially one not from the British Isles).

§1.2.3: Minor or ‘B’ Stress

Some dictionary words have in addition a weaker kind of stress, by default preceding the tonic, called **minor** or **B-stress**: *kàngaroo*, *rèfugée*, *fifteenth*, *ùnknówn*. In connected speech a pre-main minor stress may swap positions

⁷ In technical terms *présént* is an **óxytone**, *présént* is a **paróxytone** and *préséntly* is a **próparóxytone**.

with the major (under what is called the **Alternating Stress Rule**) to avoid adjacent major stresses: *a néw réfugée* but *Réfugèe Council*; *kángaróo* cónrt but *the fát kängaróo*; *únknòwn lánds* but *lánds unknówn*; *the Míssissíppi délta* but *the bráod Mississíppi*.

Some Elizabethan words, like *complete*, have a pre-tonic stress that has been lost in modern English, which makes them subject to the Alternating Stress Rule, so that as well as the expected “She is a gallant creature, and **cómplète**” (*H8* 3.2.49) we also find “A maid of grace and **cómplète májesty**” (*LLL* 1.1.136). Such words are identified in Appendix A.

Minor stress may also occur after the tonic, as in *súbjugàte* or *vílífì*; such words are not subject to the Alternating Stress Rule. The loss of post-tonic stress in words like *mómentáry*, *sécretáry*, *libràry* which characterises Modern British English had already begun in Elizabethan English, but has not gone so far in General American, which remains in this (as in other features, such as sounding /r/ after vowels) closer to Shakespeare’s language: of the 40 uses of words ending in *-tary* (such as *momentary*) in Shakespeare’s pentameter, for example, only seven reflect the loss of secondary stress. Note that compounds are words in their own right, so that the second stress in a word like *bláckbird*, *hóusewife*, *shéaring-shèd* or *grándfather* is a minor stress. For convenience of reference we may group A- and B- syllables together as ‘strong’ syllables.

Polysyllabic grammar-words will have minor stress on one syllable: *áfter* (B-o), *bécausé* (o-B). This remains even where such words are reduced to monosyllables (*gáinst*, *'twixt*). Monosyllabic grammar-words fall into two groups: for largely historical reasons some have minor stress (usually when they retain some adverbial function, like *off* or *since*), and some have zero or weak stress; although both kinds of word sound fully stressed when uttered on their own, in normal speech the second group will be uttered with vowels reduced to *schwa* or /ɪ/. Thus while *of* and *off* seem to have the same stressed vowel when the words are uttered in isolation, compare “He tóok the wéapon òff the assáilant” (four stresses) with “He tóok the wéapon of [əv] the assáilant” (three stresses). See Appendix C for a list of the two kinds.

§1.2.4: Weak or ‘O’ Stress

Monosyllabic grammar-words (with some exceptions listed in Appendix C) have weak or O-stress, as do the syllables of polysyllabic words that don’t carry major or minor stress: *árchítéctürál*, *pòlyünsátürátěd*, *épístémölgíčäl*. Syllables with weak stress tend to be reduced to *schwa*.

§1.3: Accent: High and Low Syllables

The stress-pattern of a word or phrase is a fixture or given, something you can look up in a dictionary; to put it another way, it is a kind of factory default that you cannot customise. When we use language in particular situations, however, we often need to establish contrasts and emphases among the words we use, and to direct the listener's attention to what is new or important in what we are saying. Obviously the invariant patterns of stress cannot do this, and so we must draw upon a second system of syllabic prominence, called 'accent', a rapid deflection of pitch that makes a syllable maximally prominent in performance.

§1.3.1: Normal or 'Default' Accent

Every complete utterance of English must contain at least one accent, or it will sound incomplete. Juliet's line could stand as a complete utterance, and so must have an accent: the most obvious reading will put contextually motivated accent on the semantically most important word, 'night'. In this case (a simple statement) the pitch movement is downwards, and it takes the rest of the line with it:

(11) ▶₉

Thou knów'st the másk of night is
on
my fáce.

We call this a low fall (↓); it characterises simple assertions. If *night* starts higher and falls more dramatically it becomes a high fall (↗), marking emphasis or indicating surprise. In yes/no questions, on the other hand, the tail of the accent sweeps up in a high rise (↑): listen to the two accents in the following exchange, a high rise followed by a high fall:

(12) ▶₁₀

i t↑?
Have you found \ I've found i t↗!

Where falling tones suggest completion, rising tones suggest incompleteness, open-endedness, contingency: the low rise is used to indicate that the speaker has more to say:

(13) ▶₁₁

it↗ I've found \ but I'm afraid it's bro ken↖

Accent differs from stress in an important way. Stress is a given or built-in feature of words whereas contextually motivated accent is something we *do* to words in contexts of use: the word *uncertain* will always be stressed on the second syllable, for example, but it might or might not be accented on either the first or the second syllable (though not the last) in any particular utterance of it.

§1.3.2: The Tone-unit: Breaks, Cuts, Cracks and Flaws

It will be noticed that the two parts of the last example are separated by a back-slash (\): this marks an intonational **break**, which is the boundary between successive intonational phrases or '**tone-units**', each of which constitutes a 'chunk' of meaning and contains at least (and usually just) one accent. Every completed utterance of English will consist of at least one tone-unit, and every tone unit must contain an accent, which gives it its overall 'tune'. This explains, incidentally, why the difference between, say, the grammar-word 'in' and the dictionary-word 'inn' may not be very obvious if you utter the words in isolation: a word spoken in isolation constitutes an utterance, which must contain a tone-unit, which must contain an accent; effectively, therefore, any word uttered in isolation will always sound maximally prominent.⁸ You can get a better idea of the contrast by uttering the words in some sort of context: "It's the best room in the inn".

Because a tone-unit is a chunk of meaning, intonational breaks can only occur at the boundaries of phrases or constituents, which are called **cracks** (#). For example, in "The course # of true love # never # did run # smooth" (*MND* 1.1.134) there are four cracks. Words with a crack between them are said to be **adjacent**. Cracks divide a sentence into its smallest intelligible constituent phrases; phrasal boundaries within those constituent phrases are called **flaws** (+): the prepositional phrase "#of true love#", for example, consists of a noun phrase 'true love' and the preposition 'of', but since only one of these is an intelligible constituent phrase, they are **contiguous** (ie linked by a flaw: "The course # of + true love # never # did + run # smooth"). Note that there is a flaw between a verb and a **clitic** pronoun subject or object, as in "I + love + her" (cp "Fred # loves # Tess"). Flaws do not represent potential intonational breaks: 'of', for example, could never constitute a tone-unit. Finally, consecutive words within a phrase are **joined**: "The - course", "true - love".

⁸ In the building where I work they recently installed a recorded PA system in the lifts that announces the floor that has been reached. Because the word *level* was recorded just once, however, in isolation from the numbers, what the voice actually says is not (for example) "level seven" in one tone-unit but "level\ seven" in two. Users of the London Underground will be familiar with its peculiar injunction to "Mind\ the gap".

Relations Between Consecutive Words

Divided by:	Symbol	Term
a word-boundary	<i>the - man</i>	joined
a flaw (a phrase boundary)	<i>in + the pool</i>	contiguous
a crack (a potential break)	<i>the old man # sat down</i>	adjacent
a cut (an obligatory break)	<i>Run, † Fred!</i>	separate

Even cracks, of course, are only *potential* breaks. There are two factors that govern whether a crack becomes a break: the size of the tone-unit in question (the average length of a tone-unit in English is about five words; only 20% are longer than seven – see Crystal 1969, 256), and the importance of the crack. The crack between subject and predicate ranks higher, for example, than that between verb and object, because it produces more meaningful chunks: the sentence “Hamlet(*Subj.*) # ordered(*Verb*) # the soup(*Obj.*)” makes more sense as ►₁₂ “Hamlet \ ordered the soup” than as “Hamlet ordered \ the soup”. In the verse from *MND* the most important crack, that between subject and predicate, divides the verse into a five-word sequence and a four-word one, so it is the only logical place for a break in utterance: ►₁₃ “The course of true love \ never did run smooth \”.

A fairly elaborate subject may constitute a tone-unit in its own right: “The much-respected former chairman of the municipal Council \ yesterday announced a change of career \”; this is a recognisable feature of newsreaders’ speech. For this reason, cracks after long subjects are sometimes given what we would consider an inappropriate comma by writers and printers of Shakespeare’s time (and by modern students). One would be surprised to see a comma after the subject in “The man lives round here”, for example, but “The tall bearded man who came to fix the roof last Thursday, lives somewhere round here” would represent a common punctuation error.

However, because a tone-unit is, essentially, a more-or-less discrete chunk of information, there are certain grammatical junctures at which a break is obligatory, whatever the size of the resultant tone-unit: such junctures are called **cuts** (words on either side of a cut are **separated**), symbolised as “†”. In utterance, every cut will become a break, but it is important not to conflate the two levels of text and utterance (see §2.1). There is, obviously, a cut at the end of each sentence or independent clause, and also at the boundaries of interpolated or parenthetical material (text between brackets, dashes or pairs of commas that can be removed without affecting the grammar or the

propositional content of the sentence), vocatives (*Luisa*, † *I'd like a word with you*) and commenting or linking adverbials (*Luckily*, † *he escaped*; *In my opinion*, † *the dog's too fat*; *Nevertheless*, † *it rained*). Cuts usually (but not invariably) correspond to important pieces of punctuation: stops, em-dashes, brackets, colons, semi-colons, and frequently (though not always) commas:

(14)

- I came, † I saw, † I conquered. †
 Frankly, † my dear, † I don't give a damn †
 My friend – † you don't know him † – speaks Greek, † fortunately. †

These sentences will produce the following utterances (with some options on the placing and direction of accents):

(15) ►₁₄

- I came, ^ I saw, ^ I conquered. ^
Frankly, ^ my dear, ^ I don't give a damn ^ (or give a damn if you're *Clark Gable*)
 My friend ^ – you don't know him ^ – speaks Greek, ^ fortunately. ^

Note that there is no need to pause at a break, though of course we may; it is sufficient that the intonational ‘tune’ of the utterance be interrupted (the boundary will also be marked by deceleration, so that “friend” in the last example will be longer than in (say) “My friend speaks Greek”). Cuts also occur at ellipses, as with ellipted *had* in the following:

(16)

- Mary had a little lamb, † and Bill † the boeuf bourgignon †

In the same way, they are introduced at the site of a constituent that has been moved. There are no cuts in the default word-order (17), for example, but displacing *now* and *are* produces energising cuts in (18) at the site from which they were excised:

(17) ►₁₅

- Our brows + are + bound # with + victorious wreaths # now

(18)

- Now † are + our brows † bound # with + victorious wreaths

(R3 1.1.5)

One final complication (there's always something): because tone-units tend to be about five words long (except in the 'listing' cases illustrated in (20)), a crack that is only one word⁹ away from a cut ceases to be even a potential break and is downgraded to a flaw (examples bolded and underlined):

(19)

MUTIUS: † **A**nd ± with # my - sword # I'll + keep # this **d**oor ± safe. †

(*Tit.* 1.1.288)

OPHELIA: *He falls to such perusal of my face*

As + he + would + draw + it. † **L**ong ± stay'd + **h**e ± so. † (*Ham.* 2.1.88)

CHORUS: *Now we bear the King*

T^oward + Callice; grant + **h**im ± there; × **t**here ± seen, × (H5 5.0.7)

§1.3.3: Plonking

By default – that is, in the absence of any contextual information – the accent will fall on the last dominant (major stressed syllable) in the tone-unit. Because beginning readers of dramatic blank verse sometimes regard it as a kind of weird ceremonial language utterly detached from naturalistic habits of speech or normal contexts of meaning, they are tempted to place a low fall (or sentence-final tone) mechanically on the last stress of every line, often treating the whole line as a single tone-unit and keeping everything before the accent on a flat monotone. This habit of 'plonking' will reduce the most vibrant verse to monotonous artificiality: all lines sound more-or-less the same and no line acknowledges its neighbours. Since the low fall is the normal or default ending of a sentence, the auditory effect of plonking is that of ending every line with a full stop, effectively retarding any forward impetus or momentum. I have heard an amateur Goneril say:

(20) ►₁₆

Sir.

×

I love you more than words can wield the matter.\

Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty.\

Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare.\

⁹ 'Word' here includes any 'clitics' or closely attached monosyllables: thus *the word* or *in Spain* would count as one 'word' each.

No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour.\
 As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found.\\
 A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable.\\
 Beyond all manner of so much I love you.\\

(KL 1.1.55-61)

There's no "glib and oily art" here: at the end of the first full line she appears to have finished the speech, and each line thereafter is a jerky new beginning. The effect is one of getting each line over with, as though it were a kind of chore; by aiming always at the end of the line it also underscores the fact that the actor is reciting, and dispels any illusion of spontaneous utterance. An actor who knows her business will begin with something like ►₁₇ "I love you\\ more than words can wield the matter,^", hitting the semantically important words (notice how here the alliteration guides one towards 'wield') and indicating by the low rise that there's more to come.

It's plonking, of course, that gives blank verse a bad name, by making it sound crude, artificial and amateurish. Nonetheless, it is based on a sound instinct: it preserves what Peter Hall calls the "sanctity of the line" and recognises, at least, the phenomenon of endweight: "Most of Shakespeare's verse, early and late ... has the crux – or the important meaning – in the last words of the line". Nevertheless, there are better ways of doing this, such as ending on a low rise: "To drop the end of the line (or to allow it to droop in the depressed inflections of modern Estuary English) usually produces a line with little meaning and no impact" (Hall 2003, 28). In the words of Hamlet, "Pray you avoid it".

The amateur Goneril gave just one tone-unit to each line of (20), but the seasoned actor will recognise a greater complexity. To some extent the way an utterance is divided into tone-units reflects grammatical structure: an adverbial that modifies the verb, telling us, for instance, how the action was performed, will tend to be part of the same tone-unit as its verb ("Joyfully they heard the news"), whereas an adverbial 'disjunct', commenting on the whole clause, will have its own tone-unit: "Hopefully\\ they heard the news\\". Again, while independent clauses are separated by cuts, dependent clause boundaries may not even be cracks, depending on the meaning: "She + spoke # to + the - waiter + who + brought ± the - soup †" suggests that the waiter has already brought the soup (because the 'restrictive' relative clause "+ who + brought ± the - soup †" tells us which waiter she spoke to), whereas "She + spoke # to + the - waiter † who + brought ± the - soup †" suggests that he brings it after she has spoken to him (we already know which waiter, so "† who + brought ± the - soup †" merely adds information).

Each item in a list will be a separate tone-unit:

(21)

Five, ↗ \ten, ↗ \fifteen, ↗ \twenty, ↗ \twenty-five ↗ \...

We need pears, ↗ \plums, ↗ \oranges, ↗ \figs ↗ \ and grapes. ↗ \

§1.3.4: Contrastive and Focal Accent

If accent falls elsewhere than on the last stress, or takes on a more emphatic shape, its effect is to direct the listener's attention (the 'focus') towards what is important or new in the utterance and away from what is familiar, or given by the context. Suppose, for example, you were to enter a room and announce: "I've just been to the library ↗ \ and I've found something ↗ \ that might interest you. ↗ \". Here accent falls in its default positions. But now suppose that you entered the same room and someone greeted you with "If you're going to the library ↗ \ could you look something up for me??" To reply "I've just been to the library" would sound distinctly odd, as though you hadn't heard the person. Because they have introduced the topic 'library' it has become 'old' information, and should consequently be de-emphasised in your response, with accent moving back to the previous stress: "I've just been to the library ↗ \". Note, by the way, that the word 'library' doesn't need to have been spoken: it is the presence of the concept that matters. Your answer would be similar if the other person had said "You couldn't take these books back for me, ↗ \ could you↑?", where the idea 'library' is only implicit. If you have grasped the notion of focal accent and background information you will be in a position to explain the prosody of the following gag: "The Queen said she was delighted to be in Australia ↗ \ and then Prince Philip ↗ \ made a joke" (cp the expected "and then Prince Philip made a joke ↗ \").

Another use of contextually motivated accent is to imply a contrast of some kind. If we say "Bill collects old books", with a low fall on 'books', the accent is neutral and implies nothing. If, however, 'books' has a high fall ("Bill collects old books ↗ \") it implies a contrast (eg "not old records"): Similarly:

(22) ►₁₈

Bill ↗ \ collects old books (implies something like: "not Harry")

Bill collects ↗ \ old books (implies eg "but he doesn't read them")

Bill collects old ↗ \ books (implies eg "not new ones")

Bill ↗ \ collects old ↗ \ books (implies eg "it's Ted that prefers new ones")

Note that contextually motivated accent is not confined to stresses; a function word that is being used contrastively may be accented, as in the remark about

Saddam Hussein's surreptitiously videoed hanging: "Executions should be in camera, \ not on camera!" Affixes, too, may carry accent when used contrastively, as in Cleopatra's rueful remark "In praising Antony I have disprais'd Caesar" (*AC* 2.5.107).

Finally, marked accent is used for emphasis: "Shut the door", an exasperated parent might bellow, not in order to contrast the door with some alternative aperture but simply to make the point more forcefully.

It is clear, then, that the appropriate placement of accent within the line is highly dependent on context, juggling the three systems of focus, contrast and emphasis. It is a characteristic mistake of beginning readers of verse to treat each line as a discrete unit, unrelated to its surroundings. In the following line, for example, it may be tempting to turn the crack after *mercy* into a break and make two tone-units, to bring out the two foci of meaning:

(23) ►₁₉

The quality of mercy, \ is not strain'd,\

✗ (MV 4.1.184)

But one should never consider a line of Shakespeare apart from its context: in context, Portia's assertion is a response to Shylock's defiant "On what compulsion must I [be merciful]?" The idea of mercy is thus background information, and all the emphatic weight of her contradiction must fall upon the crucial word *strained* ('forced, constrained'):

(24) ►₂₀

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,\

✓

Note the low rise, which signals to the audience that an amplification of her remark is about to follow; using (where grammatically appropriate) low rises rather than low falls towards the end of the line keeps the forward momentum of the speech.

In trying to get a given line right it is easy to forget that it must be plugged into its context: encountering the line in isolation, for example, it is natural to say, as a kind of detached observation or *sententia*, "Roses have thorns,\ and silver fountains mud\"; as line 2 of Sonnet 35, however, it has to acknowledge its role in the argument and its relation to its context: "*No more be griev'd at that which thou hast done: / Roses have thorns,\ and silver fountains mud,\ / Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,*". The contextually motivated accent on 'roses' establishes the contextual meaning 'even roses [have flaws, so why not you?]. One reason that some commercially available readings of the sonnets sound

rather lifeless and artificial (not to mention obscure) is that they don't take into account this need for individual lines to acknowledge their surroundings through intonation.

Where the context is not explicit, it may need to be imagined. Take the very first verse of *MV*: one's first impulse is to say:

(25) ►₂₁
In sooth,\ I know not why I am so sad;\ \ x (MV 1.1.1)

This hits what seems to be the semantically important word with the accent. But though it's the first line of the play, it still has a presumed context, a discussion into which we have broken (most of Shakespeare's middle to late plays begin 'naturalistically' in the middle of a conversation), in which Salerio and Solanio have been (at least implicitly) complaining that Antonio isn't much fun nowadays ('sad' here means 'grave', 'serious', as much as 'mournful'). Antonio will sound more like a person speaking to others, and less like someone reciting a poem, if he treats *sad* as de-accented background information and says, with genuine protestation and an air of bafflement:

(26) ►₂₂
In sooth /\ I know not why I am so sad; /\ ✓

For the same reason, the first line of *Twelfth Night* should not sound like the beginning of an academic lecture:

(27) ►₂₃
If music be the food of love, /\ play on\ x

Rather, it should sound like a *response* to the idea of music as the food of love that has already presented itself (or been presented) to Orsino, making that phrase (and the idea of music) background information and shifting the first accent onto the only terms left ('if' or 'be'):

(28) ►₂₄
If music be the food of love, /\ play on\ ✓

The Sonnets are particularly prone to this kind of misreading, because their dramatic, argumentative and dialogic nature is concealed by their presentation as discrete poems; readers are only too likely to assert, plonkingly:

(29) ►₂₅

My mistress' eyes ↗ are nothing like the sun; ↗ x (Son. 130.1)

This a strange, decontextualised, seemingly pointless remark makes as much sense as walking into a room and announcing “My Welsh Corgi does not in any way resemble a budgerigar”. The line only really makes sense as part of a dialogue, a response to an imaginary interlocutor, some conventional Petrarchan poet who has just said something like “My mistress’ eyes are brighter than the sun”. *Sun*, *mistress* and *eyes* are all now background information, and *my* becomes contrastive (opposed to implied *your*):

(30) ►₂₆

My mistress' eyes ↗ are nothing like the sun ↗ ✓

(or, in a more contemporary voice, *nothing like*). Incidentally, because the sonnets often represent miniature self-contained dramas, they are excellent texts to practise dramatic speech on, as directors like Trevor Nunn and Peter Hall have pointed out.

Once crucial function of contrastive accent in Shakespeare is the pointing of antithesis, the rhetorical device that places two related terms in contrast and comparison within the line or pair of lines (eg “A bliss in proof, and prov’d, a very woe” [Son. 129.11]). Shakespeare is particularly fond of antithesis as way of organising meaning, and highlighting such antitheses not only clarifies the meaning for the listener but produces the effect of an intellect at work – and perhaps at play – rather than that of an actor reciting verse. The following passage, for example, I have heard performed as follows by an amateur actor who had not fully explored the relationships of meaning within it:

(31) ►₂₇

He after honour hunts, ↗ / I after love; ↗ /
 He leaves his friends, ↗ / to dignify them more; ↗ /
 I leave myself, ↗ / my friends, ↗ / and all for love. ↗ / x
 (TGV 1.1.63–65)

Here Proteus is comparing the choices he and his more adventurous friend Valentine have made. The meaning of this passage revolves around a number of antitheses to do with self and other, appearance and reality: *I* :: *he*; *honour* :: *love*; *leaves* [apparently neglects] :: *dignifies* [actually honours]; *leaves* [apparently

neglects] :: *leave* [actually neglect]. To bring these antitheses out in performance (as far as one can) makes the speech come alive:

(32) ►₂₈

He after honour hunts, / I after love; /
 He leaves his friends / to dignify them more: /
 I leave myself, / my friends, / and all / for love. / ✓

And, of course, antithesis may exist between lines as well as within them. In the following line the BBC's Isabella accents by default the last major stress, 'giant', but to do this is to overlook the previous line which makes 'giant' background information and contrasts *having* strength with *using* it:

(33) ►₂₉

ISABELLA: *O, it is excellent / To have a giant's strength! But it is tyrannous
 To use it like a giant.* /

LUCIO: That's well said. / (MM 2.2.108)

But of course, as with everything, it can be overdone: Clive James writes of the BBC *Hamlet*:

Many a time and oft I was reminded of Robert Stephens's classically over-explanatory first line as Oberon. "Ill-met (as opposed to well-met) by moonlight (as opposed to daylight), proud (not humble, like other Titania) Oberon had had the good fortune to meet in his time) Titania (not some other well-met fairy of equivalent high rank walking proudly in the moonlight in that particular forest)." (1983, 93)

Accenting every lexical word is not only absurd, but also futile, like tooting your car-horn in the cacophony of a Calcutta traffic-jam: where everything is highlighted, nothing is highlighted.

As an exercise, the reader might care to try marking up the tone-units for a possible reading of the following well-known passage:

(34)

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
 Whether 'Tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
 And by opposing end them. To die – to sleep –
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end
 The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd. To die – to sleep.
 To sleep – perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub!

(Ham. 3.1.55-64)

§1.4: Syntactic Stress

§1.4.1: Subordinate or 'a' Stress

To recap: one word is contiguous with another when no actual or possible syntactic break intervenes between them; words are adjacent when divided by a crack and separate when divided by a cut (see 1.3.2). When two major (A) syllables are contiguous, one will be **subordinated** to (ie weaker than) the other. If they are joined into a new word (a compound), the second is subordinated: *a blackbird*, *the Whitehòuse*, *Chúrch Strèet* (pattern A-b); if they are contiguous in a phrase, as in the case of an adjective and its noun, the first is subordinated: *a bläck bïrd*, *the white hóuse*, *Chùrch Róad* (a-A). A major will not be subordinated to a following subordinate stress, however, so that *Fréd's òld dóg*, *thrée lärge hóuses* will have the pattern A a-A. We need to remember, of course, that a crack that is one word removed from a cut becomes a flaw:

(35)

- We shall be *call'd* \pm *púrgers*, † not mürderers. (JC 2.1.180)
 And let the *sòul* \pm *fórth* † that adoreth thee, (R3 1.2.177)
 For had I *cùrs'd* \pm *nów*, † I had curs'd myself. (R3 1.3.319)

Where two majors are separated by a cut, of course, no subordination takes place:

(36)

- The wisest *áunt*, † *télling* the saddest tale, (MND 2.1.51)
 Gently to *héar*, † *kindly* to judge, our play. (H5 1.0.34)
 Now are our *bróws* † *bóund* with victori^{ous} wreaths, (R3 1.1.5)
 Love is a *smóke* † *máde* with the fume of sighs;
 Being purg'd, a *fire* † *spárkling* in lovers' eyes;
 Being vex'd, a *séa* † *nóurish'd* with lovers' tears. (RJ 1.1.190-92)

§1.4.2: Inhibited or ‘ō’ Stress

Weak syllables contiguous with subordinated or a-syllables, like ‘in’ in the phrase ‘in great haste’ (ō-a-A), are not completely dominated but **inhibited** (ō) instead: inhibition is a weaker form of domination which strongly discourages but does not absolutely exclude a beat falling on that syllable. Weak syllables separated from a preceding dominant by a potential intonational break (a crack), like ‘in’ in ‘Jump # in + the pool’, are also inhibited. See §7.2.1.

§1.5: Beats: The Timing of Syllables

When we count, or list items, our speech has a very pronounced rhythm, with the accented syllables occurring at regular intervals: “¹Pears, / ²plums, / ³oranges, / ⁴figs / and ⁵grapes /”.

These periodic recurrences of intensity are called ‘beats’: they are not directly features of sound but rather of the muscular organisation of speech, sympathetically perceived by the listener (very roughly, they represent squeezes of the air-sac in the lungs). Those who accompany their speech with gestures will tend to time those gestures on the beats.

Repeated muscular activity tends to fall into a regular periodic rhythm: it takes more effort to walk (for example) without equal timing than with it. Notice here the way in which ‘oranges’ is compressed and ‘pears’ extended so that they occupy roughly the same time-interval. This tendency towards the regular timing of beats {technical term: ‘isochrony’}, though prominent in listing and counting, is in ordinary speech easily disrupted by pauses, hesitations, and so on, and present more in perception than in reality. Nonetheless it does exist, and is an important part of the organising system of metre.

Regular timing is less evident (though still present) when the beats fall mainly upon stresses that are not carrying accent:

(37)

The ¹tráin on ²pláform ³fíve / is the ⁴séven-⁵twénty to ⁶Lóndón /

If stresses and beats could be completely identified in this way, it would make English metre very simple; it would also, however, make it very monotonous and mechanical, and Shakespeare would probably have rejected it in favour of prose. It is partly in the interesting slippage between these two categories that Shakespeare’s metre finds its life and energy. It is often said, for example, that iambic pentameter is a five-stress line, but a pentameter can have anything from two to ten stressed syllables:

(38)

To the inheritance of Fórtinbras,

(Ham. 1.1.96)

Fare ill, lie hárð, lakk clóthes, lakk fíre, lakk fóod

(Browning, *The Ring and The Book* 4.645)

What all pentameters must have, however, is the capacity to be uttered with five beats, and while beats most often fall on stressed syllables they may fall on unstressed ones, and even on silence.

§1.5.1: Stress, Accent and Beats

To begin with, beats tend to fall on independent (A and B) stresses, not on subordinated (a) stresses: ►₃₀ “I ¹mét an ^{old} ²friénd, \ in Nèw ³Yórk, \”, where *old friend* and *New York* are both a-A. The exception would be ‘public announcement’ style, in which virtually every stress gets a beat: “The ¹tráin on ²plátform ³five, \ is the ⁴séven-⁵twénty to ⁶Kings ⁷Cróss, \”. Accent will, however, make a subordinate stress independent and attract the beat onto it and away from the independent stress: “I ¹mét your ²nèw friénd\ in the ³párk to⁴dáy, \”

English has a tendency to alternate beats and off-beats where possible, even in the case of strings of adjacent stresses: “¹Nèw Sòuth ²Wales”, “an ¹old bláck ²dóg” (you *could* say “an ¹old, ²bláck, ³dóg” but it would sound odd and distinctly ‘marked’). This only applies, however, when the stresses belong in the same tone-unit; where they are separated by cuts the rule does not apply (“¹Pears, \ ²plums, \ ³oranges, \”; “My ¹lawyers are ²Smith, \ ³Smith, \ ⁴Smith, \ ⁵Smith, \ ⁶Smith, \ and ⁷Blenkinsop, \”).

It is also the case that the number of beats in an utterance will depend in part upon tempo and formality: the slower and the more formal, the more beats there will be. If the station announcer were in a hurry, however, he or she might say (with a little gabbling) in one tone-unit: “The ¹tráin on plátform ²five is the ³séven-twénty to ⁴Lóndon, \”.

§1.5.2: Unstressed Beats

Take the utterance ►₃₁ “She’s the ¹ónly ²Látinist in the ³Fáculty”: it has three beats, with four syllables between beats number two and three. If you revise it to ►₃₂ “She’s the ¹ónly A²méricanist in the de³pártment, \”, there are now six syllables between beats two and three, which regular timing turns into a terrible gabble (four or five is about the maximum tolerable). The normal solution in everyday English is what is called Beat Addition, the addition of a beat on a weak syllable:

(39) ►₃₂She's the ¹only A ²méricanist³ in the de⁴pártment⁵

Note that this is very different from the occurrence of contextually motivated accent on ‘in’, which would occur if this sentence were uttered as a response to (say) “She could get help for her Whitman thesis from someone in the department” (where ‘the department’ is de-emphasised as background information and the accent falls earlier by default):

(40) ►₃₂She's the ¹only A ²méricanist³ in the de⁴pártment⁵

Beat addition, unlike accent, is perceptually a very subtle thing; here it requires no more than a mere slowing of the tempo over the stretch *ricanist in the de* and a slightly more precise enunciation of the vowel in ‘in’.

One secret of the flexibility of iambic pentameter is that it co-opts the process of beat addition to place beats on weak syllables that would never be candidates for it in ordinary non-metred speech, as in the case of ‘and’ and ‘of’ in the first line of (38) above. The only place where beat addition is impossible is on a weak syllable contiguous with a dominant (ie with no crack intervening): an unstressed syllable in this position is said to be ‘dominated’. Any unstressed syllable that is not dominated is said to be ‘independent’, capable of carrying a beat. In the following verse, dominants are bolded, and unstressed ones are in roman type; dominated syllables are bracketed with their dominants, and independent syllables are underlined: “[**Absént** thee] from [**felíci**]ty [**a while**]” (*Ham.* 5.2.346). It will be noticed that independent syllables occur in this verse regularly in even-numbered positions.

§1.5.3 Silent Beats

Since beats are not a form of sound, but of muscular activity, a means of organising utterances in time, they may (unlike stress and accent) fall upon silence (indicated throughout by an exclamation mark between angle brackets [⟨!⟩]). If we take the two sentences about the waiter and the soup mentioned above, we see that the second version, in which the waiter brings the soup after being spoken to, has an extra beat falling in the pause between the tone-units:

(41) ►₃₃She ¹speak to the ²waiter who ³brought the ⁴soup⁵She ¹speak to the ²waiter³ ⟨!⟩ who ⁴brought the ⁵soup⁶

As Derek Attridge has shown, silent beats are a structural feature of what is called simple or ‘demotic’ verse – children’s rhymes, weather saws, advertising jingles, protest chants and the like – where the lines most usually have four beats, the last beat sometimes silent (you can test this by tapping a pencil to the beat as you recite them):

(42) ►₃₄

¹Hickory, ²dickory, ³dock: ⁴<!>

The ¹mouse ran ²up the ³clock. ⁴<!>

The ¹clock struck ²one, the ³mouse ran ⁴down:

¹Hickory, ²dickory, ³dock: ⁴<!>

A ¹macho young ²cowboy called ³Tex ⁴<!>

Was ar¹aigned for ex²posing his ³sex; ⁴<!>

But the ¹judge, with a ²snort, threw the ³case out of ⁴court,

For non ¹curat de ²minimis ³lex. ⁴<!>¹⁰

¹What do we ²want? ³Ten per ⁴cent!

¹When do we ²want it? ³Now! ⁴<!>

Sometimes silent beats may be situated more creatively, as in the case of the old English football chant about George Best or the Australian industrial protest chant:

(43)

¹Georgie ²Best! ³Georgie ⁴Best!

¹Georgie! ²<!> ³Georgie ⁴Best!

The ¹workers ²<!> u³nited ⁴<!>

Will ¹never ²be de³feated! ⁴<!>

Because such verse is heavily isochronous, approaching the regular timing of song or chant, the silent beats are sufficiently indicated by timing.

¹⁰ Latin legal tag: “the law does not concern itself with very small matters”.

2. Pentameter and its Common Variations

HOTSPUR: I had rather be a kitten and cry mew
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers.
Tis like the forc'd gait of a shuffling nag

(*Henry IV, Part 1*, 3.1.127-33)

A strange and rather literal-minded (but widespread) misconception about iambic pentameter is that the term can only be properly applied to lines with alternating unstressed and stressed syllables, like “Öf hnd, öf foot, öf lp, öf éye, öf brw” (*Son.* 106.6), and that any line deviating from this pattern represents an ‘exception’, an ‘irregularity’ or a ‘metrical licence’. As Roman Jakobson (1960) has observed, one of the fundamental structuring devices of art is repetition with variation: there must be enough repetition to suggest a pattern, and thus stimulate interest, with enough variation to maintain that interest. Regulated variation is the life of pentameter: it is what makes it simultaneously ordered and lively, where other kinds of metre in English (some of which are discussed in Chapter 6) tend to be either ordered or lively.

§2.1: The Prototype: Verse and Line

Metre is a way of representing or embodying simple patterns in the relatively complex prosodic material of speech: this is normally done by regulating just one aspect of the prosody into basic structures of alternation and recurrence, and letting the other aspects fend for themselves. The result is not in itself simple, but is a representation of simplicity in and through complexity which is aesthetically pleasing.

The main prosodic feature regulated in English metre is the beat (§1.5): because the placement of beats in English is constrained but not completely determined by the given prosody – stress, syntax, contextually determined

accent – metre is not passively or automatically present in the verse but actively re-created by the reader or performer in the act of speaking the lines (aloud or in the head). It is not only a question of what a verse intrinsically is, that is, in terms of stress, obligatory accent and syntactic divisions; it is also a question of what you can make of it (within the constraints of English). Take, for example, the following verses; we could, if we chose, read them as rough four-beat lines with a break (||) in the middle, in the manner of Middle English alliterative verse (I have seen a *Romeo and Juliet* where the prologue was performed quite effectively as rap):

(44) ►₃₅
 To ¹be, or ²not to be || ³that is the ⁴question:
¹Whether 'tis ²nobler || in the ³mind to ⁴suffer
 The ¹slings and ²arrows || of out³rageous ⁴fortune,
 Or to ¹take ²arms || against a ³sea of ⁴troubles, (Ham. 3.1.55-8)

If experienced readers give it a five-beat reading it is not because the linguistic structure of the verse compels such a reading, but rather because that reading is more rewarding, particularly in the context of drama: at the same time it is more engagingly complex and closer to the rhythms of natural speech (the four-beat reading becomes more strained and artificial in the lines that follow: “The ¹heartache and the ²thousand || ³natural ⁴shocks”). It is also because a vast weight of cumulative evidence suggests that this is what the poet intended, and doing what the poet seems to have intended must at least be worth a try.

Because many pentameter verses can be read as four-beat lines, some critics have asserted that that is what they ‘really’ are, but this is a confusion of ideas: they are what we can make them, within the constraints of their prosodic form. The important question is whether they can be read with five beats: an Elizabethan manual of versifying pointed out that the following verse doesn’t work as a pentameter, for example, and the reason is simple: there are only four independents (bolded) – and so four possible beats – in the whole verse: “Your **1**meaning I **2**under**3**stand by your **4**eye”.¹ Each of the non-bolded syllables is dominated by the stressed syllable next to it. In theory it might be possible (with a lot of crude forcing and artificiality) to perform a whole play as four-

¹ George Gascoigne, *Certayne Notes of Instruction Concerning the Making of Verse or Ryme in English* (1575). Gascoigne does not, of course, have the conceptual equipment to point out what has gone wrong: he can only dismiss the line intuitively, as “neither true nor pleasant”.

beat lines, but it would be as clear a violation of artistic intention as we could hope to find, and the reason we might choose not to do it is not bardolatrous reverence but the perception that Shakespeare was a subtle dramatic artist and that his rhythmical choices are worth attending to because they produce interesting and valuable effects in the theatre.

For this reason we need to distinguish the performed pattern of syllables carrying beats and off-beats (the **line**) from its raw material or input, the prosodic base (with its given pattern of stress, accent and syntactic juncture) that underlies it (the **verse**). As performers we co-operatively turn verses into lines; often one verse may give rise to more than one line (which is why we always need to bear in mind that our first analysis of a line may not be the only – or the best – one possible).

The abstract pattern that underlies pentameter consists of a ‘grid’ of ten syllable-positions, each either O[dd] or E[ven]:

(45)

O₁ E₂ O₃ E₄ O₅ E₆ O₇ E₈ O₉ E₁₀

This is traditionally, economically and conveniently thought of as a sequence of five **feet**, each consisting of an Odd position and an Even position. Each position is occupied by a **slot**, prototypically **w** in O-position and **S** in E-position, producing the prototypical pattern, or ‘matrix’:

(46)

The Matrix: w-S w-S w-S w-S w-S

Normally each of these ten slots will be occupied by just one syllable, but under certain circumstances a slot may be occupied by two (§1.1), or by none (see chapters 4 and 5). A verse is a string of syllables that can be related to or mapped onto this underlying pattern or matrix (or one of its derivative templates), point for point. The prototypical verse is a sequence of ten syllables, alternately unstressed and fully stressed (“And bárren ráge of Déath’s etérrnal cólđ” [*Son.* 13.12]).

A prototypical verse is naturally performed as a prototypical line, which is an utterance, bounded by intonational breaks, consisting of ten syllables, where the even-numbered syllables carry a beat and the odd-numbered ones do not: *And¹barren²rage of³Death’s⁴ternal⁵cold.²* This is the simplest possible

² Such feet are termed ‘iambic’ – hence the term ‘iambic pentameter’, where *penta-* derives from the Greek for ‘five’, and *-meter* from *metron*, a measure.

representation of (46) in speech, but it is not in any sense a ‘typical’ form: since there are several ways of producing a beat or an offbeat, prototypical verses are considerably rarer than prototypical lines. There are just six prototypical verses, for example, in the first scene of *Hamlet* F1 (ie three per cent of the scene):

(47)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------|
| And lét ū ónce ágáiñ ássáil yður éars, | (1.1.31) |
| And lét ū héar Běrnárdō spéak ȏf thís. | (34) |
| Ás stárs wíth tráins ȏf fíre, ánd déws ȏf blóod, | (117) |
| Ánd thén, théy sáy, nō spír't cän wálk ábróad | (161) |
| Thě níghts áre whólesõme, thén nō plánëts stríke, | (162) |
| Büt lóok, thě mórn, ín rússët mántlë clád, | (166) |

It is significant that three of the six occur close together at the end of the scene, to express the sense of restored order and calmness after the ghost’s exit. All other kinds of pentameter represent variations of one kind or another on this prototype: either variations in the sequence of beats and offbeats (metrical variation: each such variation is a **switch**) or variations in the ways that those beats and offbeats are embodied in the line (prosodic variation: each such variation is a **shift**).

Scansions like those of (47) are rather fussy, in that they mark every syllable, and at the same time not very revealing because they are too busy with redundant information. A better way to indicate the structure of the verse is to indicate the foot divisions with (say) a vertical solidus (|); if we assume in the first instance that the first syllable in the foot will be unstressed and the second stressed, we need only mark deviations from this pattern, simplifying and clarifying the notation without loss of information:

(48)

- | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| And let us once again assail your ears , |
| As stars with trains of fire , and dews of blood , |
| But look , the morn , in ru ssët man tle clad , ³ |

³ Why *ru|ssët man|tle* (rather than, say, **russ|et ma|ntle*)? Briefly, internal syllables begin with a consonant where possible, which rules out **russ|et*, but cannot begin with a cluster that does not begin words (no **ma|ntle* because we cannot have **ntle*). The asterisk is a linguistic convention indicating a badly formed example.

It is crucial to emphasise that these purely notional foot-divisions are a kind of scaffolding, irrelevant to the performance of the verse. They do not necessarily correspond to pauses or boundaries of any kind (there could hardly be one inside *ru|sset*), nor need they coincide at all with punctuation or syntactic cuts, any more than the lines on an architect's blueprint need correspond to cracks or fissures in the fabric of the building.

Before we consider metrical and prosodic variation we must remember that avoidance of variations is in itself a meaningful choice, as the examples in (47) show: the effect may be (as here) to suggest peace and calm. If we look at Marcellus' serene evocation of Christmas Eve, for example, we find that its eight lines have no switches at all and only seven shifts, and that two lines are prototypical and four only one shift away from prototypicality. Moreover, the first and last lines are examples of a peculiarly serene (but relatively rare) form known as the Golden Line (§2.4.3):

(49) ►³⁶

It fa|ded ōn| the cro|wing ōf| the cock|.

Sòme say| that e|ver, 'gainst| that sea|son comes|

Wherein| our Sa|viour's birth| is ce|lebra|(ted,

The bird| of daw|ning sing|eth all| **nìght** long|,

And then|, they say|, no spir|t| can walk| abroad|,

The nights| are whole|some, then| no pla|nets strike|,

No fai|rty takes|, nor witch| **hàth** pow|r| to charm|,

So ha|llow'd, ānd| so gra|cious, īs| the time|.

(Ham. F1 1.1.157-164)⁴

§2.2: Changing the Pattern (Metrical Variation)

The simplest kind of variation consists in transforming the prototypical metrical pattern (w-S w-S w-S w-S w-S), also called the **matrix**, by **switching** adjacent slots so as to produce another pattern, or **template**, which is then perceived as related to or derived from the matrix.

⁴ This text is based on F1, which many take to be a revision, possibly authorial, of Q2 (see Wells and Taylor 1988, 653). It is significant, therefore, that the three substantive revisions of this passage in F1 all promote prototypicality by removing stresses from odd positions (*This to The* (160), *dare sturre to can walke* (161), and *that to the* (164)). The opening bracket (lunette) in *ce|lebra|(ted* (line 159) indicates a 'feminine ending' (see §2.2.5).

§2.2.1: The Reversal

If we take the matrix as a series of five feet, any foot or Odd-Even pair in the matrix may be reversed (from **w-S** to **S-w**) to form a new template, provided that each reversed foot is followed by a non-switched or default syllable-slot – that is, a **w** in Odd –, presumably as a way of restoring the disrupted pattern and allowing us to relate the derived template to the matrix. This will, of course, rule out successive and final reversals. In the case of a reversal (signified by angle brackets) the default prosodic configuration is **A-o**, where lowercase **o** indicates that the unstressed syllable is dominated by the neighbouring stressed or A-syllable. The most commonly reversed foot is the first, occurring obligatorily in about 15% of lines and optionally in another 20% or so (the percentages vary over Shakespeare's career):

(50)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| < Pointing > to each his thun der, rain and wind , | (<i>Son.</i> 14.6) |
| < Music > to hear , why hear'st thou mu sic sad (ly)? | (<i>Son.</i> 8.1) |
| < Romë >o! Hu mours! Mad man! Pa ssion! Lo (ver! | (<i>RJ</i> 2.1.7) |
| < Borne on > the bier with white and brist ly beard : | (<i>Son.</i> 12.8) |

Least commonly reversed is the second foot, but reversals of the third and fourth are not rare:

(51)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| All tongues < speak of > him, ānd the blea rēd sights | (<i>Cor.</i> 2.1.205) |
| The wi sest aunt , < telling > the sa ddest tale , | (<i>MND</i> 2.1.51) |
| When lof ty trees I see < barren > of leaves , | (<i>Son.</i> 12.5) |
| My love shall īn my verse < ever > live young . | (<i>Son.</i> 19.14) |
| Then Ham let does it nōt , < Hamlet > denies (it. | (<i>Ham.</i> 5.2.236) |

In the last line the reversal serves to make the second “Hamlet” more emphatic. Double reversals are possible provided they are not consecutive:

(52)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| < Gently > to hear , < kindly > to judge , our play . | (<i>H5</i> 1.0.34) |
| < Hate of > my sin , < grounded > on sin ful lov (ing: | (<i>Son.</i> 142.2) |
| < Met we > on hill , in dale , < forest >, or mead , | (<i>MND</i> 2.1.83) |
| < Wanton > as youth ful goats , < wild as > yōung bulls , | (<i>1H4</i> 4.1.103) |

The reversals we have so far dealt with have been obligatory: forced, that is, by the stress-patterns of the verse (about one in five verses will have at least one obligatory reversal). Where a foot consists of two fully independent syllables we have two possible lines we can perform, one with a reversal and one without. We indicate an optional reversal in scanning the verse by putting it between an angle bracket and a solidus:

(53)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| < But as the ri per shōuld by time decease , | <i>(Son. 1.3)</i> |
| < Sap check'd with frost and lus ty leaves quite gone , | <i>(Son. 5.7)</i> |

Surprisingly, almost 30% of Shakespeare's pentameters contain an optional reversal, though which of the options you choose will be essentially an interpretive matter: because we get into a kind of iambic gear when reading Shakespeare most such options are unlikely to be taken up in performance, but it's always worth exploring the possibility of a reversal, since they make the lines more lively. If we take a pair of unstressed syllables like "thou art", we find that most of the time the beat is determined by the metre, even where one of the syllables is accented (to perform the sixth line metrically requires putting a little spin on "art"). Where the metre does not specify a reading, as in the case of the last two examples of (54), it's always worth trying a reversal:

(54) ►₃₇

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <Guilty> thou ārt of mur der and of theft , | <i>(RL 918)</i> |
| Ó Ju līus Cae sar, thōu art migh ty yet ! | <i>(JC 5.3.94)</i> |
| For thou art co vetous , and he is kind , | <i>(Son. 134.67)</i> |
| <How can> I then be el der than thou ārt ? | <i>(Son. 22.8)</i> |
| Farewell! < thou ārt too dear for my posse (ssing, | <i>(Son. 87.1)</i> |
| < Thou art a scho lar, speak to īt , Hora (tio. | <i>(Ham. 1.1.42)</i> |

Reversals carry an element of surprise – a beat where we expect an offbeat – and in consequence can have a button-holing, attention-grabbing effect. From early in his career Shakespeare used initial reversals as an arresting way of beginning important speeches and even plays themselves (Globe audiences were probably not as respectful and attentive as their modern descendants waiting reverently in a darkened theatre):

(55)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| < Noble > patri cians, pa trons ḍf my right , | (<i>Tit.</i> 1.1.1) |
| < Hung be > the hea ^v ens with black , yield day to night ! | (<i>1H6</i> 1.1.1) |
| < Cease to > persuade , my lo ving Pro tēs : | (<i>TGV</i> 1.1.1) |
| < Now is > the win ter ḍf our dis content | (<i>R3</i> 1.1.1) |
| < Open > your ears ; for which of yōu will stop | (<i>2H4</i> 1.1.1) |
| < O for > a Muse of fire , that wōuld ascend | (<i>H5</i> 1.0.1) |
| < Nay, but > this do tage ḍf our ge neral's | (<i>AC</i> 1.1.1) |
| < Never > tell <u>me</u> ! I take it much unkind (ly | (<i>Oth.</i> F1 1.1.1) |

The surprise of a reversal may highlight in performance the peremptory or urgent nature of a command. Compare, in *R3* 1.2, the dignified calm of Lady Anne's initial instruction to the pallbearers ("Sēt down|, sēt down| your ho|noura|ble load|", 1.2.1) with the more importunate commands that ensue:

(56)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| < Stay, you > that bear the corse , and set it down . | (<i>R3</i> 1.2.33) |
| Unma nner'd dog ! < stand thou >, when I command : | (<i>R3</i> 1.2.39) |
| < Curse not > thyself , fair crea ture – thōu art both . | (<i>R3</i> 1.2.132) |
| < Out of > my sight, <thou dost infect mine eyes ! | (<i>R3</i> 1.2.148) |
| < Teach not > thy lips such scorn , <for they were made | (<i>R3</i> 1.2.171) |
| < Nay, do > not pause : for I did kill King Hen (ry- | (<i>R3</i> 1.2.179) |
| < Take up > the sword again , or take up me . | (<i>R3</i> 1.2.183) |
| < Speak it > again , and e ven wīth the word , | (<i>R3</i> 1.2.188) |
| < Bid me > farewell . / 'Tis more than yōu deserve ; | (<i>R3</i> 1.2.222) |

Reversals often have a vocative function: that is, the slight surprise is used to seize the attention of the addressee, particularly when issuing *commands*:

(57)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| < Cromwell >, I charge thee, fling away ambi (tion ! | (<i>H8</i> 3.2.440) |
| < Gentle men, rise , his High ness iſ not well . | (<i>Mac.</i> 3.4.51) |
| < Huntsman >, I charge thee, ten der well my hounds ; | (<i>TS Ind.</i> 1.16) |
| < Lady >, vouchsafe to lis ten what I say . | (<i>1H6</i> 5.3.103) |
| < Madam >, bethink you like a care ful mo (ther | (<i>R3</i> 2.2.96) |

- <**Madam**>, and pre|tty mis|tressēs|, *give ear*|: (LLL 5.2.286)
 <**Merchant**> of Sy|racu|sa, *plead*| no more|. (CE 1.1.3)
 <**Romans**>, *forget*| your fe|alty| to mě|. (Tit. 1.1.257)
 <**Sirrah**>, *cōme hi|ther. Make*| no more| ado| (Tit. 4.3.102)
 <**Traitor**>, *restore*| Lavi|n'a tō| the Em|(p̄ror (Tit. 1.1.296)
 <**Brother**>, a word|! *Descend*|. <**Brother**>, I say|! (KL 2.1.32)

Reversals in general impart energy to the verse: Lear's ferocious denunciation of Cordelia gains part of its mad vigour from the high proportion of obligatory and potential reversals it contains (the large number of obligatory ones encourages the reader to perform the optional ones also as reversals):

- (58) ►₃₈
 <**Let it**> be so|: thy truth| then bě| thy dow'r|;
 <**For by**| the sa|cred ra|d'ance ūf| the sun|, ...
 <**Here I**> disclaim| <**all my**> pater|nal care|, ...
 <**And as**| a stranger to my heart and me
 <**Hold thee**> from this| for e|(ver. \ The bar|b^arrous Scy|(thⁱan,
 <**Or he**| that makes| his ge|nera|tion me|(sses
 To gorge| his a|ppetite|, <**shall to**| my bo|(som
 <**Be [as well]**] neigh|bour'd, pi|ty'd, and| reliev'd|,
As thou, my sometime daughter. (KL 1.1.108-20)

In the following example, Shakespeare might easily have written "The Earl| of Salis|burý| doth crave| supply|" or "requires| supply|"; the reversal on "craveth", even more marked by following a weak beat (a weak syllable that carries a beat – see §2.3.1), draws attention to the urgency of the earl's situation:

- (59)
The English army is grown weak and faint;
 The Earl| of Salis|burý| <**craveth**> supply|
And hardly keeps his men from mutiny, (1H6 1.1.160)

§2.2.2: Performing Medial Reversals

The engaging rhythmic complexity of the pentameter derives from the phenomenon described by Gerard Manly Hopkins as 'counterpoint': subliminally, we perceive the variations of each line in terms of the 'expected' prototype,

which produces what has been described as “a kind of mental tugging, a sense of two things happening at once”.⁵ In simple verse like the nursery rhyme, and compound verse like anapests, the timing of beats is governed by an intensified regularity, which means in effect that they recur at roughly equal intervals of time.⁶ In the pentameter, however, the beat of a reversed foot is not just a beat but a beat-in-place-of-the-expected-offbeat, and for this reason ought to be slightly displaced: it should occur a little earlier, that is, than it would in demotic verse or fully naturalistic speech. In the BBC *1H4*, the second-last line of (60) is uttered so that the beats on *smooth*, *oil*, *soft* and *down* occur at roughly equal intervals, and the effect is to disrupt the counterpoint of the line:

(60)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| A king dom fōr a stage , † < princes > to act , | (H5 1.0.3) |
| <Carryz them here and there , † < jumping > o'er times , | (H5 1.0.29) |
| <Bold in> the qua rrel's right , † < rous'd to> the encoun (ter, | (KL 2.1.54) |
| <Which hath been smooth as oil , † < soft as> yōung down , | (1H4 1.3.7) |
| A love ly boy † < stolēn from> an In dian king ; | (MND 2.1.22) |

As the last line of (60) shows, cuts are not always indicated in the punctuation.

The reversals in (60) are ‘natural’ reversals: two dominants (in Even-Odd position) separated by a cut will both naturally be realised as beats in performance. However, where Even-Odd major syllables are adjacent (ie with only a crack between them) and flanked by weak ones, we have what is called a harsh mapping (§2.3.4), a subordinate (a-)stress in an S-slot: since in speech we don’t put beats on a-syllables, we need to be careful in performance to make both beats perceptible, and the way to do this is to make the crack into an intonational break. The first line of (61), for example, could be performed unmetricaly as “Téll them \ that Gòd bíd̄s us \ do góod \ for évil.”, or metrically, as “Téll them that Gòd \ bíd̄s us do góod \ for évil.”: if you don’t slow down at *God* but run it straight into *bids* the line will sound unmetrical:

⁵ Dr Rowena Fowler, private communication (1977).

⁶ English metres fall into three classes: **simple** metres (as in the case of nursery rhymes or protest chants), where only the number of beats in the line is regulated (“One|, two|, bu|ckle my shoe|”); **compound** metres, which regulate the number of beats in the line and also the number of offbeats between each pair of beats within the line (“The Assyr|ian came down| like a wolf| on the fold|”), and **complex** metres like iambic pentameter, which regulate the number of beats in the line and the number of syllable positions, but allow some interesting dislocation between the two levels, so that a beat expected in a given even-numbered position may occur in the preceding or following odd position.

(61)

- <Tell them> that God| # <bids us> do good| for e|(vil). (R3 1.3.335)
 Who lets| so fair| a house| # <fall to> decay|, (Son. 13.9)
 The blood| # <weeps from> my heart| <when I| do shape|, (2H4 4.3.58)
Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,
 Wherein| he puts| # <alms for> obli|viōn|, (TC 3.3.146)
 <So shall> you share| # <all that> he doth| posses, (RJ 1.3.93)

Note that this doesn't apply when the Even major has a preceding contiguous (and thus subordinate) major, because that forces the Even major to be a dominant:

(62)

- And yet| dàrk níght| # <strángles> the tra|v^eling lamp|. (Mac. 2.4.7)
 <And in| mine ówn| lòve's stréngth| # <séem to> decay|, (Son. 27.3)
 <And [the firme] sóil| # <wín of> the wa|t^ery main|, (Son. 64.7)

Sonnets 107.8 (“And peace proclaims # olives of endless age.”) is a ‘garden path’ verse that can initially mislead the performer: as we read it we initially predict there will be a cut after the object “olives” and thus a subordinate stress on “proclaims” (“And peace procláims ± ólives \”), but then discover that the object of “proclaims” is not “olives” but “olives of endless age”: “And peace procláims # ólives of endless age.” The same thing is true of “Wherein| he puts| # <alms for> obli|viōn|,” (61).

Where the Even syllable is unstressed, as in (63), a natural reading will produce four-beat lines even when the reversal is preceded by a cut (*'Be as thy ²presence is ³gracious and ⁴kind'*), and to read the line metrically it will be necessary both to decelerate on the preceding S-syllable and to pause distinctly after it:

(63)

- <Be as| thy pre|sence ̄s| \ <gracious> and kind|, (Son. 10.11)
I h^ave seen| thee stern|, <and thou| hast oft| beheld|
 <Heart-hard>^ening spec|tacl̄s|; \ <tell these> sàd wo|(men (Cor. 4.1.26)
 Grèat ty|ranny|, \ <lay thou> thy ba|sis sure|, (Mac. 4.3.32)

Even more intervention is necessary when only a crack divides a weak beat from a reversal: to prevent verses like (64) from becoming four-beat lines we

must protect the preceding weak S-syllable from domination by decelerating on it and by (again) turning the crack into an actual break in performance (Olivier, in his film of *Henry V*, fails to do this in the first line of the following):

(64)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <Call in the me ssengěrs # < sent from> the Dáu (phin. | (H5 1.2.222) |
| His tears pùre me ssengěrs # < sent from> his heart | (TGV 2.7.77) |
| The Earl of Salis burý # < craveth supply | (1H6 1.1.160) |
| And yōu an o fficěr # < fit for> the place . | (TGV 1.2.45) |
| Did Je ssică # < steal from> the weal thy Jew , | (MV 5.1.15) |

But this remedy is not available when there is not even a crack between the two; in the case of such ‘harsh’ mappings (**a/S**), the best thing to do is to prolong the subordinated S-syllable (*fair*, *wild*, *strong*, etc) – the effect of this is to throw a degree of emphasis on it:

(65)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| I like not fi air + < térms and a vi llain’s mind . | (MV 1.3.179) |
| <Taming my wi ld + < héart to thy lo ving hand | (MAN 3.1.112) |
| Resem bling stròng +< yóouth in his mi ddle age , | (Son. 7.6) |
| And trou ble dèaf + < héa vn with my boot less cries , | (Son. 29.3) |
| <Flying between the cold + < móon and the earth | (MND 2.1.156) |
| <Quench’d in the chàste + < béams of the wa t’ry moon , | (MND 2.1.162) |
| <i>Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,</i> | |
| That mak’st my blòod ± < còld , \ and> my hair to stare ? | (JC 4.3.280) |
| <We shall be càll’d ± < púrgers , † not mur derers | (JC 2.1.180) |

With such lines you can try hesitating slightly at the flaw, and seeing whether the result sounds okay. It’s probably worth investigating this possibility for any given instance, because it may reveal an embedded stage direction; in the last line of (65), for instance, a slight hesitation can suggest Brutus’ groping for an appropriate euphemism.

It is also worth investigating in these cases whether the preceding S-syllable might receive contextually motivated accent; it doesn’t work in (65) but it does in (66):

(66)

- | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WARWICK: I pluck this white - rose # wth Planta genět . |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|

SUFFOLK: <I pluck> this red - rose # [with young] So|mersět|, (1H6 2.4.36-7)

RICHMOND: <We will| unite| the White| - Rose † ănd| the Red|. (R3 5.5.19)

KENT: *Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;*

He'll shape| his old - course # īn| a coun|try new|. (KL 1.1.187)

<Sparring> would show| a worse - sin # [than ill] doc|(trine. (H8 1.3.60)

But hear| these ill - news # with| the ears| of Clau|(d³)o. (MAN 2.1.173)

In such cases you can reverse the foot following the accent but need not, because a beat on an accented syllable discourages (but does not prevent) a beat from falling on a neighbour syllable.

Occasionally, what looks like a reversal straddles a split between speakers, but it is usually best not to try to realise it as one: in (67), for example, to read “<That is| a man’s| - <són. / Have> I call’d| thee friend|?” or “I have| this charge|, † <tóo. / To> discharge| my life|?” is possible, but requires some tricky co-operation in timing to make it work. Since there is no chance of the Odd syllable influencing the Even one across the gap between speakers, it is perfectly acceptable to perform the relevant foot as an iamb:

(67)

ARCITE: *I am as worthy and as free a lover...*

As any Palamon, or any living

<That is| a man’s| - son.

PALAMON: Häve| I call’d| thee friend|? (TNK 2.2.181)

KEEPER: ... *My lord, for you*

I have| this charge|, † too.

PALAMON: To| discharge| my life|? (TNK 2.2.260)

§2.2.3: The Swap

Reversals apply to Odd-Even pairs of syllable-positions; a swap is a similar switching of properties between Even-Odd pairs of syllable-positions, so that the sequence **w-S w-S** becomes **w-[w S]-S** (which we write as **w-[W s]-S**, to reflect the fact that only certain kinds of syllable may form part of a swap – see below). Just as a reversal must be followed by an unswitched position (that is, a **w** in Odd), so must a swap (that is, an **S** in Even), thus preventing consecutive swaps. Swaps are referred to as belonging to the foot that initiates them, so there can be no fifth-foot swaps.

At *Hamlet* 1.2.32, for example, Shakespeare might have written straightforwardly “The lists|, and full| propor|tions all| are made|”; instead he used a template that swaps the expected prosodic values of positions eight and nine: “The lists|, and full| propor|tions [ăre àll] made|”. Similarly:

- (68) ►₃₉
- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| A mote it īs to troub le [thě mǐnd's] éye | (<i>Ham.</i> 1.1.112) |
| The per fect ce remo ny [ſof lòve's] ríte | (<i>Son.</i> 23.6) |
| I'll woo you like a sol dier, [ăt àrms'] énd , | (<i>TGV</i> 5.4.57) |
| <And he that got it, sen tenc'd – [ă yòung] mán | (<i>MM</i> 2.3.13) |
| <Till by> some el der mas ters [ſof knòwn] hó (nour | (<i>Ham.</i> 5.2.248) |
| For I am fal ser [thăñ vòws] máde in wine. | (<i>AYL</i> 3.5.72) |
| <It is more wor thy [tō lèap] ín ourselves. ⁷ | (<i>JC</i> 5.5.24) |

In what follows I shall follow the convention already established of only marking stress where it deviates from the default expectation (i.e. “[the mind's]” rather than “[thě mind's]”).

The swap is somewhat rarer than the reversal (about 9% of lines in Shakespeare will include a swap).⁸ It is also more constrained in its occurrence: the metrical sequence [W s] can only be occupied by the prosodic sequences Ō-a (see §1.4.2) or O Q: we could not have, for example, o-A (*“The lists|, and full| propor|tions [are máde], Téd|”), or o-a (*“The lists|, and full| propor|tions [**Elàine**] máde|”). Moreover, the two syllables of the swap must be separated by nothing more nor anything less than a word-break: a crack, for example, will split it into two normal feet (and encourage us to perform the crack as a break):

- (69) ►₄₀
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| < ¹ When I be ² hold the ³ vi o ⁴ lět # pàst ⁵ prime , | (<i>Son.</i> 12.3) |
| < ¹ After> a ² thou sand ³ vic to ⁴ rěs # ònce ⁷ foil'd , | (<i>Son.</i> 25.10) |
| And ¹ beau ty ² ma king ³ beau ti ⁴ fūl # old ⁵ rhyme | (<i>Son.</i> 106.3) |

⁷ Note that in association with verbs, words that look like prepositions may in fact be fully stressed verbal particles or adverbs: compare “She looked up the road” (preposition), “She looked the road úp” ([in a directory]; [stressed] verbal particle), “She looked úp” ([stressed] adverb).

⁸ About 7% of lines in the *Sonnets* will contain a swap, for example, as opposed to 30% for a possible reversal. Comparable figures for Milton (*Paradise Lost*) are 5% and 25%, and for Pope (*Rape of the Lock*), 2.5% and 20%.

Note that without the crack between complement and object the rhythm of the last line would be subtly different: “And ¹Shake|speare ²wro|te some ³beau|ti[**fül** - ⁴**old**] ⁵rhymes”.

If the first of the two feet involved in a swap is reversible, we have an optional swap: we can, for example, say either “<**If** my> dear ²love| <were but| the child| of state|” (*Son.* 124.1) or “If [my ¹**dear**] ²love| <were but| the child| of state|”, with obvious distinctions in emphasis. To represent both these potential lines in scanning such verses we include the signs for both:

(70)

- <**If** [my **dear**] **love**| <were but| the child| of state|, *(Son. 124.1)*
 The source| of this| our watch|, † <**and** [**the chief**] **head**| *(Ham. 1.1.106)*
 To bear| our hearts| in grief|, † <**and** [**our whole**] **king**| (dom *(Ham. 1.2.3)*
 <Thus much> the bus|iness ̄s|: † <**we** [**have here**] **writ**| *(Ham. 1.2.27)*
 <It was| about| to speak| # <**when** [**the cock**] **crew**|. *(Ham. 1.1.147)*

A swap that begins in the first foot will necessarily always be optional, but in terms of naturalism and liveliness it will usually work better as a swap than as a reversal, with a beat on the subordinated stress (*vain, deep, first*):

(71)

- For it is as the air, invulnerable,*
 <**And** [**our vain**] **blows**| mali|cious mo|ckery *(Ham. 1.1.146)*

And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
 <**In** [**the deep**] **bo|som** of| the o|cean bu|(ried *(R3 1.1.4)*

 ... the King's son, Ferdinand, /...
 <**Was** [**the first**] **man**| that leapt|; cried 'Hell| is emp|ty,
 And all the devils are here.' *(Tp. 1.2.214)*

There is, finally, a small class of swaps that is produced by a pair of unstressed syllables in Even-Odd positions where the second is accented:

(72) ►₄₁

- <Say if> thou'dst ra|ther hear| it [**from** **ጀur**] mouths|,
 Or from our masters? *(Mac. 4.1.62)*
 <How can| I then| be el|der [**than** **thጀou**] art|? *(Son. 22.8)*

- <As I| not for| myself|, but [for thèe] will|, (Son. 22.10)
 <And [for mÿ] sake| e'ven so| doth she| abuse|(me, (Son. 42.7)

§2.2.4: Performing Swaps

The most natural and effective performance of a swap will result in consecutive beats (“The ¹perfect ²cere³mony of ⁴**love’s** ⁵**rite**”; “A ¹mote it ²s to ³trouble the ⁴**mind’s** ⁵**eye**”), but because the first of these falls on a syllable that is subordinated to the second, the effect is subtly different from that where the two beats are consecutive because of a reversal or a jolt (eg “<¹Mumbling> of ²wicked ³**charms**|, ⁴<**conj**“ring> the ⁵moon|” [KL 2.1.39]). Whereas in a reversal the beat occurs a little earlier than expected, in a swap the first (subordinated) beat is momentarily delayed, because it is closely bound to the following word: the effect is a that of a slightly deferred beat, a little like a syncopation in music. At the same time, the subordinated stress in the swap – the s-syllable or subordinated beat – will be slightly prolonged.

There is an alternative way of performing swaps: some traditional metrists feel that what I call swaps are simply successive iambic feet,⁹ so that instead of:

- (73) ►₄₂
- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| A ¹ mote it ² is to ³ trouble the ⁴ mind’s ⁵ éye | (Ham. 1.1.112) |
| Fare ¹ well the ² plumëd ³ troop and the ⁴ big ⁵ wárs | (Oth. 3.3.349) |
| And ¹ he that ² got it, ³ sentenc’d – a ⁴ yòung ⁵ mán | (MM 2.3.13) |
| For ¹ princes to ² còme ³ view fair ⁴ Por ti ⁵ ă. | (MV 2.7.43) |
| The ¹ perfect ² cere ³ mony of ⁴ love’s ⁵ ritic | (Son. 23.6) |
| To ¹ morrow are ² let ³ blóod at ⁴ Pomfret ⁵ Castle, | (R3 3.1.183) |

we should (according to them) say:

- (74) ►₄₃
- | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A ¹ mote it ² is to ³ trouble ⁴ thè mind’s ⁵ eye |
| Fare ¹ well the ² plumëd ³ troop and ⁴ thè big ⁵ wars |
| And ¹ he that ² got it, ³ sentenc’d – ⁴ ă young ⁵ man |

⁹ According to Woods (1984, 5–8), for example, the foot boundary (a purely notional concept in any case) has some mysterious occult potency that prevents us from comparing syllabic prominence on either side of it: in “Whén tō | thě sés | siðns óf | swěet sí | lěnt thóught|,” (Son. 30.1, her scansion), *of* is (it seems) metrically prominent and *sweet* isn’t, because we only compare within the foot: *of* with *-sions*, and *sweet* with *si-* (see also McAuley 1966, 23). This is magical thinking.

For ¹princes ²to come ³view fāir ⁴Porti⁵a
 The ¹perfect ²cere³mony ⁴of lōve's ⁵rite.
 To¹morrow ²are let ³blood at ⁴Pomfret ⁵Castle

Such mechanical and unnatural readings are just possible, given that the weak syllables that are now to carry the beat are inhibited rather than fully dominated, but to allow them to do so they require an arbitrary and unmotivated accent. The greater regularity of (74) over (73) – and regularity is not, in any case, a virtue in itself – comes at a cost to both naturalness and prosodic liveliness. As with other performative choices, however, it is a matter of interpretive decision, and there is no practical reason why you should stick rigidly to one or the other method of reading swaps.

Because of the prominence that the swap lends to what would normally be a subordinate syllable, it is always worth checking to see whether that syllable might take a liberating accent. Horatio's seemingly odd reference to "young Hamlet" (presumably they are roughly contemporary) makes more sense, for example, as a contrastive allusion to the *old* Hamlet whose ghost has just appeared to them:

(75)

HORATIO: *Let us impart what we have seen to-night*

<Un|to young] Ham|let; for|, upon| my life|,

This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

(Ham. 1.2.170)

The metrical variation is thus functioning as a kind of authorial direction to the actor, to at least consider the possibility of contextually motivated accent on the s-syllable. Further examples:

(76) ►₄₄

KING EDWARD: *Is Clarence dead? The order was revers'd.*

GLOUCESTER: But he|, pōor man|, by [your first] or|der died|,

... Some tardy cripple bore the counterman,

(R3 2.1.88)

ANTONIO: My ven|tures re| not [in one] bo|ttom trus|(ted,

(MV 1.1.42)

JESSICA: *And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see*

Loren|zo, whō| is [thy new] mas|ter's guest|.

(MV 2.3.6)

PERDITA: ... *With wisdom I might fear, my Doricles,*

You woo'd| me [the false] way|.

FLORIZEL: I think| you have|
As little skill to fear as I have purpose (WT 4.4.151)

LORENZO: I know| the hand|; in faith|, <tis [a **fair**] hand|, (MV 2.4.12)

<In [the **old**] age| <black was> not coun|ted fair| (Son. 127.1)

CLAUDIUS: ... *That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound*
 In fil|i|al ob|liga|tion [for **some**] term|
To do obsequious sorrow. (Ham. 1.2.91)

WORCESTER: <For [mine **own**] part|, <I could| be well| content| (1H4 5.1.24)

The fugitive Prince Florizel, in danger of being compromised (by his poor retinue) in his pretence of being on a diplomatic mission, assures Leontes he has come

(77)

To execute the charge my father gave me
 For vi|siting| your High|ness. [My **best**] train|
I have from your Sicilian shores dismiss'd; (WT 5.1.163)

The frequency of swaps in Claudius' first speech represents an invitation to the actor to underscore his smarmy over-emphatic manner with excessive accentuation (L. C. Knights speaks of the "unctuous verse rhythms" [1960, 41] in this passage):

(78) ►₄₅

Though yet| of Ham|let [our **dear**] bro|ther's death|
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
 To bear| our hearts| in grief|, and [our **whole**] king|(dom
 To bē| contrac|ted [in **one**] brow| of woe| ...
 With one| auspi|cious [and **one**] dro|pping eye| (Ham. 1.2.1-4, 11[F1])

Even in the absence of actual contrastive accent, a swap should encourage a performative exploration of semantically appropriate emphasis on the subordinated syllable, frequently an adjective:

(79) ►₄₆

- If frosts| and fasts|, hard lod|ging [and **thin**] weeds|, (LLL 5.2.811)
 <I do| arrest| thee, trai|tor, [of **high**] trea|(son; (2H4 4.2.107)
 <Now, trust| me, 'tis| an o|ffice [of **great**] worth| (TGV 1.2.44)
 And ne|ver from| this pa|lace [of **dim**] night| (RJ 5.3.107)
 The no|ble Pa|ris [and **true**] Ro|m^o dead|. (RJ 5.3.259)

§2.2.5: The 28 Templates and the Tail, or ‘Feminine’ Ending

Simple arithmetic will show that given the rules of combination – every switch must be followed by an unswitched position – there are 28 possible templates, including the matrix (with no switches), 11 templates with one switch, 12 with two switches, and four with three:

The 28 Templates:

1. wS wS wS wS wS The matrix
2. **S**w wS wS wS wS First reversal
3. wS **S**w wS wS wS Second reversal
4. wS wS **S**w wS wS Third reversal
5. wS wS wS **S**w wS Fourth reversal
6. **S**w wS **S**w wS wS First and third reversal
7. **S**w wS wS **S**w wS First and fourth reversal
8. wS **S**w wS **S**w wS Second and fourth reversal
9. **wW** sS wS wS wS First swap
10. wS **wW** sS wS wS Second swap
11. wS wS **wW** sS wS Third swap
12. wS wS wS **wW** sS Fourth swap
13. **wW** sS wW sS wS First and third swap
14. **wW** sS wS wW sS First and fourth swap
15. wS wW sS wW sS Second and fourth swap
16. **S**w wW sS wS wS First reversal and second swap
17. **S**w wS wW sS wS First reversal and third swap
18. **S**w wS wS wW sS First reversal and fourth swap
19. wS **S**w wW sS wS Second reversal and third swap
20. wS **S**w wS wW sS Second reversal and fourth swap
21. wS wS **S**w wW sS Third reversal and fourth swap
22. **wW** sS **S**w wS wS First swap and third reversal
23. **wW** sS wS **S**w wS First swap and fourth reversal

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 24. wS wW sS Sw wS | Second swap and fourth reversal |
| 25. Sw wS Sw wW sS | First and third reversals with fourth swap |
| 26. Sw wW sS Sw wS | First and fourth reversals with second swap |
| 27. wW sS wS wW sS | First and fourth swaps with third reversal |
| 28. Sw wW sS wW sS | Second and fourth swaps with first reversal. |

Verses with three switches are fairly rare, probably because they can be metrically hard to decode: the play's New Arden editor comments on the "very awkward rhythm" of one example of Template 25 ("<Till we> perceiv'd| <both how| you [were wrong] led|," *AC* 3.6.80), a verse that earlier editors frequently emended for metre.

Each of these 28 templates has a kind of shadow version with an extra weak position on the end, indicated here by a ‘(’ or opening lunette after the final foot-marker:

(80)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Resem bling sire , and child , and ha ppy mo (ther, | (<i>Son.</i> 8.11) |
| By what? By a ny o ther house , or per (son? | (<i>Tp.</i> 1.2.42) |

This may be called a **tail** (or a 'double ending'; formerly, a 'feminine ending').¹⁰ Tails make a line a little less formal, and in broad terms their frequency tends to increase as Shakespeare's career progresses, from fewer than 1% in *LLL* to over 20% in the last plays. Occasionally we will find a 'long tail', one with two weak syllables (also called a 'triple ending'); it is usually possible to make this a sixth iambic foot, though Occam's Razor suggests that we should perform a verse in pentameter *as* a pentameter where we can:

(81)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| My Lord of West moreländ , and un cle Ex (eter, | (<i>H5</i> 2.2.70) |
| For what is hē they fo llow? Tru ly, gent (lemen, | (<i>R3</i> 5.3.245) |

An unambiguous alexandrine (see §6.1.2), by contrast, will end in a dominant, and have a syntactic cut after the third foot, producing a symmetrical pattern not possible in the pentameter:

¹⁰ The term has been abandoned because to modern ears it sounds sexist, although its origins are more innocent: it arose because in the classical scansion of French verse, feminine adjectives ending in <e> acquire an extra syllable – a final *schwa* – before a following consonant, so that the following line has ten syllables: *Ni un grand homme, ni une grande femme.*

(82)

- That troop| with ma|jestŷ|. † Ourselv| by month|ly **course**|, (KL 1.1.132)
 <Make with> you [by due] turn|. † <Only> we shăll| **retain**| (KL 1.1.135)

In Shakespeare's late style, perhaps under the influence of John Fletcher (with whom he collaborated), a stressed syllable may find its way into the tail if the syllable that precedes it is stronger (ie accented):

(83)

- <Rather> to show| a no|ble grace| to both|(**parts**) (Cor. 5.3.121)
 This night| he makes| a su|pper, ānd| a great|(**one**), (H8 1.3.52)
 <Follow> us tō| the court|. Thou, churl|, for this|(**time**), (WT 4.4.432)

In dramatic verse, a cut in the middle of the line can also take an extra weak syllable, a **caesural tail** {technical term: 'feminine epic caesura'}:

(84)

- <Then, if> he lose|, he makes| a swan|-like end|,
 <Fading> in mu|(sic. † <That the| compa|rison|
 May stand| more pro|(per, † my eye| shall bē| the stream| (MV 3.2.45-6)

The general effect of the tail is to impede the onward rush from line to line (or from part-line to part-line), and so tails are particularly appropriate to a meditative mood:

(85)

- To be|, or nōt| to be|, <that is> the ques|(**tion**:
 <Whether> 'tis no|bler īn| the mind| to su|(ffer
 The slings| and a|rrows öf| outra|geous for|(tune,
 <Or [to take] arms| against| a seal| of trou|(bles,
 <And by| oppo|sing, end|(**them**). † To die|, to sleep| – (Ham. 3.1.55-62)

§2.3: Changing the Representation of the Pattern (Prosodic Variation)

The amount of metrical variation offered by the pentameter is restricted in obvious ways: simple arithmetic will show that (tails aside) in addition to the matrix we can derive eight templates with a single switch (a swap or a reversal), sixteen with two switches, and a further three with three switches.

Verses in this last category are rare and offer the reader and performer a bumpy ride (the New Arden editor notes the “very awkward rhythm” of the following):

(86)

<Till we> perceiv'd| <both how> you [were wrong] led| (AC 3.6.80)

If we add a tail to each of these 28 templates, the total number of metrically distinct verse-shapes is only 56. Far greater, however, is the number of ways in which these templates can be realised in the prosodic material of the line.

The simplest way to realise a template is through ‘natural’ mappings, in which each beat or S-position is realised by a dominant, and each off-beat or w-position by a weak syllable:

(87)

<Hunting> he lov'd|, but love| he laugh'd| to scorn| (RL 4)

<Roses> have thorns|, and sil|ver foun|tains mud|, ...

And loath|some can|ker lives| in swee|test bud|. (Son. 35.2-4)

Such fully natural verses are, however, less common than might be supposed, because the structure of English tends to discourage them.

§2.3.1: Weak Beats (beats realised by weak syllables)

One of the most common kinds of artificial mapping is the **light mapping**, or alignment of an independent unstressed (ie ‘O’) syllable with an S-position; in performance this produces a weak beat (a beat realised by a weak syllable):

(88)

<This was> the no|blest Ro|man ɔf| them all|: (JC 5.5.68)

His ten|der heir| might bear| his me|mory: (Son. 1.4)

<**Shall I**> compare| thee tō| a su|mmer's day? (Son. 18.1)

Absent| thee frōm| feli|city| a while|, (Ham. 5.2.346)

<**Of the**> defen|dant; ănd| thou hăst| incurr'd| (MV 4.1.361)

For reasons to do with the structure of English – in particular its fondness for prepositional phrases (*of them all, by succession, from felicity*) – weak beats are surprisingly common: on average 65% of lines will include one. In the following passage, every line has at least one:

(89)

I ām| not par|tial tō| infringe| our laws|;
The en|mity| and di|scord whīch| of late|
<Sprung from> the ran|cōrous out|rage ūf| your Duke
To mer|chants, ūr| wēll-deal|ing coun|trymen|,
<Who, wan|ting guil|ders tō| redeem| their lives|,
Have seal'd| his ri|gōrous sta|tutes wīth| their bloods|,
Excludes| àll pi|ty frōm| our threat|ening looks|.
<For sīnce| the mor|tal ānd| intes|tine jars|
<"Twixt thȳ| sedi|tious coun|trymen| and ūs|,
<It hāth| in so|lemn sy|nods bēen| decreed|,
<Both by> the Sȳ|racū|sians ānd| ourselves|,
Tō admit| no tra|ffic tō| our ad|verse towns|.

5

10

(CE 1.1.4-15)

§2.3.2: Performing Weak Beats

In a prose scene in *As You Like It* (4.1), Orlando (who has been hanging love-poems on the trees, much to Jaques' disgust) enters with "Good day, and happiness, dear Rosalind!", and Jaques responds grumpily with "Nay, then, God buy [*goodbye to*] you, an [*if*] you talk in blank verse". But how does Jaques recognise Orlando's utterance as pentameter? Its most likely performance in isolation would be with only three beats: ►₄₇ "Good ¹day, and ²happiness, dear ³Rosalind!" In order to speak it as "Gòod ¹day|, and ²ha|ppi³něss|, dèar ⁴Ro|sa⁵līnd|!" Orlando must signal the beat-bearing status of *-ness* and *-līnd*, and the usual way to do this is to co-opt the process of Beat Addition discussed above (§1.5.2). What this means in practice is that he decelerates slightly before the unstressed beat-carrying syllable so that it occurs later than it would have in reading the line as prose, at the same time enunciating the vowel of the weak beat *-ness* with a little more clarity: somewhere between the *schwa* we would expect in prose (§1.1.1) and the full vowel we would expect if the syllable were fully stressed: the subliminal delay is no more than a signal. The speaker should not try to exaggerate the slowing down: no-one expects or wants sing-song regular timing from iambic pentameter. It is enough merely to suggest a deceleration: my own research on recorded performances suggests that actors will tend to utter feet with weak beats between five and 15 per cent more slowly than they do phonologically equivalent segments in prose.

§2.3.3: Strong Offbeats (offbeats realised by stressed syllables)

A **heavy mapping** – a subordinated stress or a-syllable in w-position – will produce a **strong offbeat** in the performed line. Heavy mappings are about half as common as light ones, averaging (very roughly) 0.3 per line. The following ponderous, rhetorically patterned line is atypically rich in them: “**Thòughts** black|, **hànds** apt|, **drùgs** fit|, and time| agree|(ing” (*Ham.* 3.2.255). Ordinary strong offbeats cause no problem in performance, because it is normal in speech to avoid placing beats on subordinated a-stresses.

Rarer, but more disruptive, is the super-strong offbeat, produced by a **super-heavy mapping** (dominant A-stress in w-position), as in the first two feet of this line: “**Wòrds**, vows|, **gìft**s, tears|, and love’s| full sa|crifice|,” (*TC* 1.2.282). Super-strong offbeats are unnatural: since they constitute a list (see §1.5.1), each of the first four syllables of this line ‘wants’ to be a beat, and to perform it as a pentameter we have to artificially subordinate syllables one and three – effectively by timing the line *as though* the first four syllables belonged to two noun phrases (eg *Hèard vòws, wèpt téars*). Superstrong offbeats can give a line a degree of weight and *gravitas*, as in “**Sín**, death|, and hell| have set| their marks| on him|” (*R3* 1.3.293), or “<Clarence> is come|, **fálse**, flee|ting, per|jur’d Cla|(rence,” (*R3* 1.4.55), or “[I …] Do love|, **príze**, ho|nour yóu]. / < I am| a fool” (*Tp.* 3.1.73)

Strong offbeats are one way in which Shakespeare can govern tempo: they slow the line down because a stressed syllable demands more time than an unstressed one. Weak beats, however, do not speed the line up (indeed, they slow it down when they are the result of expansion: see §2.3.6), but they do make it more light-footed and agile, less ponderous. The opening lines of *MND*, for example, express Theseus’ ennui, his sense that time is dragging its feet as it moves towards the wedding, and this mood is reflected in the prevalence of (bolded) **strong offbeats** (1.66 per line, as against a typical 0.3) over (italicised) *weak beats* (0.83). Note that (as in line 5) a foot may contain both a strong offbeat and a weak beat if they are separated by a cut:

(90) ►₄₈

<Now, **fair**| Hippo|lyză|, our nup|tial hour|
 <**Dràws** on| apace|. **Fòur** ha|ppy days| **brìng** in|¹¹
 Ano|ther moon|; but, O|, methinks|, **hòw** slow|
This old| **mòon** wanes|! She lin|gers my| desires|,

¹¹ Note that *on* and *in* in this line are (fully stressed) verbal particles, not stressless prepositions.

<Like to| a step|-**dàme**, *ör*| a do|wagēr|,
Lòng wi|th^cring out| a young| **màn's** re|venüe|.

(MND 1.1.1-6)

In addition to their actual effect on the line, this density of strong offbeats can be seen as constituting a sort of embedded instruction to the actor to slow down the tempo here. Hippolyta manages to cheer him up with her first speech, however, and his next is much lighter and quicker in movement, with a much lower 0.25 **strong offbeats** per line but an above-average 1.37 *weak beats*:

(91) ►₄₉

<**Stir** up| th^c Athē|nⁱan youth| to me|rrimēnts|,
 Awake| the pert| and nim|ble spir't| of mirth|,
Turn Me|lancho|ly forth| to fu|nerāls|;
 The pale| compa|nion īs| not fōr| our pomp|.
 Hippo|lytă|, I woo'd| thee wīth| my sword|,
 And won| thy love| <doing> thee in|jurēs|;
 <But *I*| will wed| thee īn| ano|ther key|,

With pomp|, with tri|umph, ānd| with re|velīng|.

(MND 1.1.12-19)

§2.3.4: Harsh Mapping (beat realised by subordinate stress)

A harsh mapping is the alignment of a subordinate or a-syllable with an S-position in the verse (see §1.4.1 for the conditions that govern subordination); because subordinate stresses don't carry beats in ordinary speech the resultant line will be unmetrical unless it is recuperated in performance (by hesitation, prolongation, or motivated accent), which generally sounds strained and awkward, and while it is favoured by rough-textured poets like Donne and Browning, is avoided altogether in strict neo-classical verse. It can hardly be a coincidence that in the line in which he protests about the 'forced' and artificial nature of 'mincing poesy', Hotspur should employ a harsh mapping: "<'Tis like| the **forc'd**| + <gait of> a shuff|ling nag|" (1H4 3.1.133).

A harsh mapping is thus a feature of the verse which must be recuperated in performing the line if it is not to sound unmetrical. I have discussed the performance of harsh mappings above in the section on medial reversals (§2.2.2), because they are most often caused by such reversals. As I point out there, in Brutus' self-exculpatory "<We shall| be **call'd**| ± <purgers>, † not mur|derers|" (JC 2.1.180) hesitating at the flaw can suggest his searching for

a convincing euphemism, but if we don't hesitate, and prolong *call'd* instead, the line sounds awkward and evasive, as though Brutus himself doesn't believe what he's saying. As an actor, you pays your money and you takes your choice. Camillo's attempt to broach the question of Leontes' homicidal paranoia with Polixines is equally awkward:

(92)

There is a sickness

Which pùts| # <some of> us ĩn| distem|per; bút|

I cannot name the disease; and it is caught

Of you that yet are well.

(WT 1.2.385)

Prolonging the subordinated syllable gives it a degree of performative emphasis which (not being accent) is not necessarily contrastive or focal; incantatory speeches in *MND* favour this device:

(93) ►₅₀

<Fall in> the frèsh| - <lap of> the crim|son rose|, (MND 2.1.108)

<Flying> between| the cold| - <moon and> the earth|, (MND 2.1.156)

<Quench'd in> the chàste| - <beams of> the wa|t'ry moon|, (MND 2.1.162)

Note that for the purposes of the metre it is only the stress adjacent to the dominant that is subordinated: in a phrase like *old* # [black ram] only *black* is subordinate, so that such a phrase scans naturally in Even-Odd-Even position, as predicted by the Alternating Stress Rule (§1.2.3), with no harsh mapping:

(94)

E^{ve}n now|, nòw, ve|ry now|, an old| blàck ram| (Oth. 1.1.89)

My ve|ry no|ble ānd| approuv'd| góod mas|(ters, (Oth. 1.3.77)

In performing iambic pentameter, however, there is a tendency to generalise the Alternating Stress Rule to just about any sequence of three majors in Even-Odd-Even, though this can be uncomfortable with 'left-branching' sequences like *góod* | *friends*, † *hark* | and may generate odd implications in some cases: if, for example, we say "It would control my dam's god, \ Setebos," we seem to be implying the existence of some other god as background information, which makes no sense in the context:

(95)

- What **foul**| **pláy # had**| we, thät| we came| from thence|? (Tp. 1.2.60)
 <Seem to| besiege|, and make| his **bold**| **wáves # trem**|(ble, (Tp. 1.2.205)
 ... *His art is of such power,*
 <It would| control| my **dám's**| **gód, † Se**|tebos|, (Tp. 1.2.373)
 What har|moný| is this|? My **gòod**| **fríends, † hark**|! (Tp. 3.3.18)

The alternative strategy is to treat such sequences as harsh mappings to be recuperated.

§2.3.5: Awkward Mapping (beat realised by influenced syllable)

By far the rarest prosodic variation in Shakespeare (and even rarer outside his work) is the awkward mapping, in which a beat is realised on an ‘influenced’ syllable – that is, a weak syllable that is protected from a preceding dominant only by a crack. The most usual occurrence is on a preposition in position 4, following a monosyllabic verb:

(96) ►₅₁

- <Let me> put # **ín**| your minds|, <if you| forget|, (R3 1.3.130)
 <Shall we> hear # **frōm**| you, Cates|by, ere| we sleep|? (R3 3.1.188)
 <Caesar> said # **tō**| me, “Dar'st| thou, Ca|ssius, now| (JC 1.2.102)
 <Do not> smile # **ăt**| me thät| I boast| her off|, (Tp. 4.1.9)
 The stairs| <as he> treads # **ōn**| them kiss| his feet|. (LLL 5.2.330)

As its name suggests, it feels awkward and forced both in performance and in perception, since the beat is most naturally attracted to the syllable exerting the influence (in the BBC *LLL* the King puts a beat on *treads* in the last line of (96), turning it into a four-beat anapestic romp), and it sometimes reflects a felt awkwardness in the speaker, as in the case of Macbeth’s embarrassed apology for his alarming behaviour at the feast, or Posthumus’ reluctant inquiry about Iachimo’s trophy-bracelet:

(97) ►₅₂

- MACBETH: <Do not> muse # **ăt**| me, [my most] wor|thy friends|, (Mac. 3.4.84)

POSTHUMUS: *Once more let me behold it. Is it that*

- <Which I> left # **wíth**| her?
 IACHIMO: Sir| (I thank| her) that|. (Cym. 2.4.100)

Some verses that look as though they contain awkward mappings may be redeemed by contextually appropriate accent (this is always worth exploring):

(98) ►₅₃

<They may> vex us with shot| or wɪth| assault| (1H6 1.4.13)

IMOGEN: <How should> I bɛ| reveng'd|?

IACHIMO: Should he> make me|

Live, like Diana's priest, betwixt cold sheets,

Whiles he is vaulting variable ramps ... ?

(Cym. 1.6.132)

CORDELIA: *That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry*

<Half my> love with him, half| my care| and du|(ty.

(KL 1.1.102)

OTHELLO: *Put out the light, and then put out the light:*

<If I> quench thee!, thou fla|ming mi|nistr|,

I can again thy former light restore,

<Should I| repent| me; [but once] put| out thy| (light, ... [to Desd.]

(Oth. 5.2.8)

In the following example, an initial consideration would suggest “<She may> help you to ma|ny fair| prefer|(ments”, in itself a perfectly adequate reading of the line, but a consideration of the context reveals a sarcastic playing with the word *may*. Gloucester’s original *may*^a is the usual unstressed form of the auxiliary, meaning “I don’t know” (the ‘epistemic’ use, as in “She may go to the ball – who knows?”) but Rivers’s *máy*^b is accented (by default, being the stressed form used when the main verb is ellipted), and counters with the ‘deontic’ use (meaning “She is entitled to deny it (since it is untrue)” as in “She may go to the ball: I permit it”). Gloucester echoes this mockingly with a deliberately accented *may*^c that asserts (deontically) that she has the power to tell lies because she is the queen of England:

(99) ►₅₄

GLoucester: You [Queen Elizabeth] *may*^a deny that you were not the mean
Of my Lord Hastings’ late imprisonment.

RIVERS: She *máy*,^b my lord; for –

GLoucester: She *máy*,^b Lord Rivers? Why, who knows not so?

She may^c do more, sir, than denying that:

She may^c <help you> to ma|ny fair| prefer|(ments
And then deny her aiding hand therein, (R3 1.3.90-96)

§2.3.6: Contraction and Expansion of Words in Performance

When the curate Nathaniel recites a sonnet in alexandrines (six-foot iambic lines) found in a letter, the schoolmaster Holofernes reprimands him: “You find not the apostrophus, and so miss the accent; let me supervise the canzonet [*look over the poem*.]” (*LLL* 4.2.119). The lines that provoke this comment are the final couplet:

(100)

Celes|tⁱal as| thou art|, † O, par|don love| this wrong|,
 That sings| hea^ven’s praise| with such| an earth|ly tongue|. (LLL 4.2.117-8)

The problem here is that while the first thirteen lines are alexandrines, the last comes out in Nathaniel’s reading as a pentameter. ‘Apostrophus’ was a contemporary word for contraction,¹² and ‘accent’ effectively meant both ‘major stress’ and ‘beat’: presumably Nathaniel has misread the alexandrine “That sing|eth hea|ven’s praise|† with such| an earth|ly tongue|” by contracting *singeth* to *sings* and *heaven’s* to *hea^ven’s*, thus missing the beat on monosyllabic *hea^ven’s*, now subordinated in stress to *praise*; Holofernes, having heard the mis-scansion, wishes to ‘supervise’ or look over the poem to see where Nathaniel’s contractions went wrong.

Where a word is contracted the half-vowel remains psychologically present to the reader or audience as a kind of ripple in the prosody, even if it is completely eliminated in phonetic terms; this is because they know the underlying shape of the word. The effect of this is a slight local acceleration of tempo, as dictated by regular timing (§1.5): put simply, the more syllables there are between beats, the faster the tempo.

The essential performance point about half-vowels (and restorables) is that where they count in the metre they should be pronounced lightly, and usually with a *schwa* or /ɪ/; the idea is to make mapped half-vowels and restorables as unobtrusive in performance as possible. There are one or two exceptions to this

¹² “Apostrophus is the ejecting of a letter or a syllab out of one word or out betwene tuae, and is always marked above the lyne, as it wer a comma, thus.” from CAP. 10 of Alexander Hume’s c1620 MS *Of the Orthographie and Congruitie of the Britian Tongue; A Treatise, noe shorter then necessarie, for the Schooles*, ed. Henry B. Wheatley for the Early English Text Society (London: Trübner & Co., 1865).

rule, however; because the expanded forms are usually more formal and elevated, their choice is sometimes motivated by stylistic considerations, and their presence may indicate the need for a more stately or exaggerated performance, as in the case of the Prince of Morocco's grandiloquent opening "Mislike| me nōt| for my| comple|xiōn" (*MV* 2.1.1), where the actor should not just give the word *complexion* the four-syllabled enunciation demanded by the metre, but extend this formal and exotically over-precise performance to the whole passage (compare Portia's dismissive echo of the word, colloquially contracted: "Lèt all| of his| comple|xion choose| me so|." (*MV* 2.7.79). Similarly, a prissy trisyllabic expansion of *patience* is well suited to Iago's mock-sententious "How poor| are they| that have| not pa|tiēnce|!" (*Oth.* 2.3.370). The expansion of words in *-tion*, *-sion* and so on [technically called 'depalatalisation'] was normal in Chaucer's speech but already a purely literary convention for Milton,¹³ and so must have had for Shakespeare (as for us) an archaic and formal ring; it is significant, therefore, that it occurs so frequently in the scene in which Buckingham and Catesby are sanctimoniously trying to represent Gloucester to the citizens of London as 'holy and devout':

(101)

CATESBY: *He is within, with two right rev'rend fathers,*

Divine|ly bent| to me|dita|tiōn|; (R3 3.7.62)

BUCKINGHAM: *He is not lolling on a lewd day-bed,*

<But on| his knees| at me|dita|tiōn|; (R3 3.7.73)

BUCKINGHAM: *So sweet| is zea|lous con|templa|tiōn|.* (R3 3.7.94)

BUCKINGHAM: *And par|don ūs| the in|terrup|tiōn|*

Of thy devotion and right Christian zeal. (R3 3.7.102)

Contracted forms speed up the line. The contraction of *dangerous* by Claudius in the following is appropriate to the urgency of what he is saying:

(102)

CLAUDIUS: *Grating so harshly all his days of quiet*

With tur|bulēnt| and dan|grous lu|nacŷ|? (Ham. 3.1.4)

¹³ Milton uses depalatalisation frequently in the self-consciously 'Elizabethan' *Comus* but hardly at all in the deliberately modern verse of *Paradise Lost*.

CLAUDIUS: How **dang|rōus** īs| it thăt| this man| gōes loose! (Ham. 4.3.2)

By contrast, the slower and more deliberate movement of expansion suits both Hamlet's quiet menace and Caesar's pomposity:

(103)

HAMLET: *I prithee take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,
<Yet have| I īn| me some|thing dan|gerōus|,* (Ham. 5.1.262)

CAESAR: *Danger knows full well*

That Cae|sar īs| more dan|gerōus| than hē|. (JC 2.2.45)

Contraction is the default expectation: of the 34 pentameter occurrences of *difference* in Shakespeare, for example, 25 (73%) are contracted, and of the 88 occurrences of *dangerous* 52 (59%) are contracted, so that expansion, with its slower tempo, is the marked option. Expansion suits the gravity of a judge addressing counsel in a capital case; the solemnity of an ambassador delivering a grim warning; and the lascivious dwelling of an adulteress on the 'difference' between her husband and her lover:

(104)

DUKE: <Are you| acquain|ted wīth| the **di|fferēnce|**
That holds this present question in the court? (MV 4.1.171)

EXETER: <And, be| assur'd|, you'll find| a **di|fferēnce|**,
As we his subjects have in wonder found, (H5 2.4.134)

GONERIL: ^ O,| the **di|fferēnce|** of man| and man|!
To thee a woman's services are due; / A fool usurps my bed. (KL 4.2.26)¹⁴

§2.4: Other Variations in Rhythm

Not all variations in rhythm are produced by metrical or prosodic variation.

¹⁴ The caret (^) indicates a silent offbeat (see §1.5.3 and Ch. 4) which here encourages a lascivious dwelling on the exclamatory 'O'.

§2.4.1: Phrasing

An important influence on the rhythm (though not on the metre) of the line is word- and phrase-structure. Where a weak syllable follows a dominant in the word or phrase pattern (**A-o**), we call it a ‘falling’ measure, which I shall indicate here by bolding: **sínging**, **búsy**, **éat it**; the converse pattern **o-A** is a ‘rising’ measure (here italicised): *alért, depénd, a lífe*. The following verses are metrically identical (ten syllables, every other syllable dominant) but rhythmically the pairs are quite distinct, because (105) has predominantly *rising* measures and (106) predominantly **falling** ones.

(105)

They know| your grace| bath cause| and means| and might| (H5 1.2.127)
And so| espous'd| to death|, with blood| he seal'd| (H5 4.6.26)

(106)

The si|nging ma|sons buil|ding roofs| of gold|, (H5 1.2.198)
With bu|sy ha|mmer clo|sing ri|vets up|, (H5 4.0.13)

For technical reasons falling rhythms have a slightly faster tempo than rising ones,¹⁵ and it is no coincidence that both lines of (106) describe scenes of busy activity. Such modulation of phrasing is an important source of rhythmic variety in the pentameter.

§2.4.2: Syllabification

Syllabification is another important component of line structure. A monosyllabic line moves more slowly than a polysyllabic one, which is why Othello’s solemn invocation before the murder of Desdemona is largely monosyllabic (polysyllables in bold):

(107)

<It is| the cause|, <it is| the cause|, my soul|.
 <Let me> not name| it t| you, [you chaste] stars|:
 <It is| the cause|. <Yet I'll> not shed| her blood|,
 Nor scar| that whi|ter skin| of hers| than snow|
 And smooth| as mo|numen|tal a|labas|(ter. (Oth. 5.2.1-5)

¹⁵ For an explanation of this timing phenomenon see Couper-Kuhlen (1986, 59).

The predominance of monosyllables in the first four lines gives that last polysyllabic phrase a kind of monumental solidity (ironically emphasising by contrast Desdemona's soft vulnerability). A famous use of contrastive syllabicity is the following, where the word 'seas' is overwhelmed by the polysyllables that surround it, hyperbolically suggesting the enormity of Macbeth's crime:

(108)

*Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The mul|titud|iuous seas| incar|nadine|,
Making the green one red.*

(Mac. 2.2.73)

§2.4.3: Prosodic Figures: The Golden Line: o A o O o A o O o A

A prosodic figure is a prosodic sequence that not only enables a metrical line but is identifiable as a patterned artefact in its own right. For example, the alternation of strong and weak beats throughout a line in the pattern **o A o O o A o O o A** seems to produce a peculiarly even, ordered and tranquil rhythm, perhaps because the resultant lines have a kind of double order: the three equidistant peaks of major stress superimposed upon the five beats of the pentameter. The rhythmical doubleness can be seen very clearly in a famous golden line with double tail by an Elizabethan poet, which can be read as both iambic pentameter and paeonic trimeter: “[Ó wea|rísome|] [condi|tion óf|] [huma|(nity)].”¹⁶ In the following examples the golden line is used to suggest simplicity and serenity:¹⁷

(109) ►₅₅

The qua|lity| of mer|cy is| not strain'd|,

(MV 4.1.184)

It fa|ded ón| the cro|wing óf| the cock|.

(Ham. 1.1.157)

¹⁶ Fulke Greville, Baron Brooke (1554-1628), first verse of 'Chorus Sacerdotum' from *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (London: [J. Windet] for N. Butler, 1609). A 'paeon' has three offbeats between each pair of beats, as in the patter songs of W. S. Gilbert ("I ¹am the very ²model of a ³modern major ⁴general") or the poems of Banjo Patterson ("There was ¹movement at the ²station, for the ³word had passed a ⁴round").

¹⁷ If the balanced line (§2.4.4) is a favourite of Pope's, the golden line is typical of Wordsworth in his more serene moods: in 'Tintern Abbey' alone we find: "The landscape with the quiet of the sky.", "An appetite; a feeling and a love.", "A presence that disturbs me with the joy", "A motion and a spirit, that impels", "A lover of the meadows and the woods, / And mountains; and of all that we behold", "In nature and the language of the sense,." It is perhaps worth noting that the Wordsworthian last line of Wilfred Owen's fine poem 'Insensibility' is a golden line: "The eternal reciprocity of tears."

My boun|ty īs| as bound|less ās| the sea|, (RJ 2.2.133)
 And simp|ler thān| the in|fancyō| of truth|. (TC 3.2.170)

In (110) the golden line that refers to heaven is immediately followed by a reference to “this harsh world” in a clotted, retarded line with a swap, a harsh mapping and a super-strong offbeat:

(110)
 Absent| thee frōm| feli|cit| a while|,
 <And [in this] hārsh| wórlđ draw| thy breath| in pain|,
To tell my story. (Ham. 5.2.346-8)

§2.4.4: Prosodic Figures: The Balanced Line: o A o A o O o A o A

If the mapping of beats in the golden line can be represented as **AOAOA**, in the balanced line it is **AAOAA**, with two pairs of strong beats flanking a weak centre. It is a form that lends itself to the expression of antithesis and was very popular with Augustan poets such as Pope (“A li|ttle lear|ning īs| a dang|erous thing|” [Ess. Crit. 215], “The feast| of rea|son ānd| the flow| of soul|” [Imit. Hor. 1.1.128]). Balanced lines are frequent in Sonnet 129, a poem full of balancing rhetorical figures such as chiasmus and antithesis, whose cumulative effect is to suggest the dehumanising mechanical nature of lust:

(111)
 Th^e expense| of spi|rit īn| a waste| of shame|
 Is lust| in ac|tion, ānd| till ac|tion, lust| ...
 Enjoy'd| no soo|ner büt| despi|sēd straight|,
 Past rea|son hun|ted, ānd| no soo|ner had|,
 Past rea|son ha|ted īs| a swa|llow'd bait|, (Son. 129)

Balanced lines (with retarding tails) are also suited to the solemn antiphonal lament of the queens in *Richard III*:

(112)
 I had| an Ed|ward, tīll| a Ri|chard kill'd|(him;
 I had| a Ha|rry, tīll| a Ri|chard kill'd|(him:
 Thou hadst| an Ed|ward, tīll| a Ri|chard kill'd|(him;
 Thou hadst| a Ri|chard, tīll| a Ri|chard kill'd|(him. (R3 4.4.40-3)

3. Pauses, Breaks and Transitions

GLoucester: Come, cousin, canst thou quake and change thy colour,
Murder thy breath in middle of a word,
And then again begin, and stop again,
As if thou were distraught and mad with terror?

(*Richard III*, 3.5.1-4)

§3.1: Pauses and Short Lines

Pace Gloucester, it is a mistake to try to deliver Shakespeare's verse with a lot of Pinteresque pausing: it "kill[s] the pace" (Gielgud 1989, 100). "To put in pauses and breaks – *In sooth* (big pause) *I know not WHY* (hesitation) *I am so* (pause) *SAD* – ruins the form, even if it makes the actor feel modern and colloquial" (Hall 2003, 35); it "turns [the verse] into a jolting ride and makes it harder to follow, besides robbing it of its dynamic and emotive power" (Bell 2011, 92). Moreover, as Ian McKellen remarks, "the speeches are made up of a series of logical links. It disturbs this forward movement if the actor does too many 'naturalistic' pauses in the middle of the lines. ... the natural place to pause (but then only when really necessary for effect) is usually at the end of the blank verse line, even if the end of the sentence occurs in the middle of the line" (McKellen 1996, 35). Moreover, if pauses are rare and thus not expected within the line, when they are made they can have a powerful effect: "When my love swears that she is made of truth, / I do believe her – [*pause*] though I know she lies" (*Son.* 138 1-2).

A 'short line' is any non-pentameter in the blank verse with fewer than ten available syllables (all syllables, half or full, up to and including the last independent, are 'available'); a short line with fewer than six is a 'fragment'. As many writers have observed, a short line is Shakespeare's way of cueing a

pause (though it would be foolish to try to measure that pause by the number of supposedly ‘missing’ feet in the manner of Sicherman (1984)). Thus Marullus timorously hesitates before defying Caesar:

(113)

FLAVIUS: ... *Disrobe the images / If you do find them deck'd with ceremonies.*

MARULLUS: May we do so?

You know it is the feast of Lupercal.

(JC 1.1.66)

An uncomfortable pause follows the messenger’s trimeter estimate of Octavia’s age:

(114) ►₅₆

MESSENGER: *She was a widow –*

CLEOPATRA: *Widow? Charmian, hark.*

MESSENGER: <And I| do think| she’s thir|(ty.

CLEOPATRA: *Bear’st thou her face in mind? Is’t long or round?* (AC 3.3.30)

Medial short lines (those within speeches), because of their intrusiveness and relative rarity, can have a powerfully disruptive effect. The Sergeant in *Macbeth* 1.2 has two fragments; the first is a deliberate rhetorical device on his part to introduce a slightly teasing suspense into the report of the combat between Macbeth and Macdonwald, while the second interrupts his faintly absurd rhetorical excesses with a typically Shakespearean intrusion of reality, giving the actor the opportunity to suggest that the Sergeant has been overpowered by his wounds:

(115)

For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name), ...

(Like Valour’s minion) carv’d out his passage

Till he fac’d the slave;

Which ne’er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,

Till he unseam’d him from the nave to th^e chops, (Mac. 1.2.20)

Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,

Or memorise another Golgotha,

I cannot tell –

But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

(Mac. 1.2.41)

The Sergeant uses an initial fragment for the same teasing introduction of suspense:

(116)

DUNCAN: *Dismay'd not this our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?*

SERGEANT: Yes,

As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.

(*Mac. 1.2.35*)

A famous medial fragment in *Hamlet* enacts the pause of the revenger Pyrrhus, a tableau in which Hamlet finds a peculiar resonance:

(117)

*So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.
But as we often see, against some storm, ...*

(*Ham. 2.2.483*)

Earlier in the play, medial fragments represent the ghost's stubborn silence in the face of Horatio's questioning:

(118)

*If thou hast any sound or use of voice,
Speak to me.
If there be any good thing to be done
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,
Speak to me.
If thou art privy to thy country's fate
Which happily foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!*

(*Ham. 1.1.128-35*)

Iago gives us a classic 'thinking' pause:

(119)

*How, how? —Let's see:
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear ...
The Moor is of a free and open nature, ...
And will as tenderly be led by the nose
As asses are.*

*I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.* (Oth. 1.3.402)

In the last scene of *The Tempest* a medial fragment establishes a pause for contemplation as Prospero surveys the victims of his magic:

(120) *Now useless, boil'd within thy skull! There stand,
For you are spell-stopp'd.
Holy Gonzalo, honourable man,* (Tp. 5.1.62)

Sometimes a short line indicates an interruption (see also (99) and (138)):

(121) BERNARDO: *Last night of all, / ... Marcellus and myself,
The bell| then bea|ting one| – [Enter Ghost].*
MARCELLUS: *Peace! break thee off! Look where it comes again!* (Ham. 1.1.39)

A fragment may also herald and provide space for a significant piece of stage business, as in the case of Octavius's drawing his sword or Othello's ceremonial renunciation of love:

(122) OCTAVIUS: *The proof of it will turn to redder drops.
Look,
I draw a sword against conspirators;* (JC 5.1.50)

OTHELLO: *All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.
'Tis gone.
Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell!* (Oth. 3.3.446)

Initial fragments can sometimes have a vocative function, where the speaker (having something important to say) establishes the addressee, attracts his or her attention and pauses to secure it:

(123) HELENA: Gentlemen,
Heav'n hath through me restor'd the King to health. (AW 2.3.63)

PISANIO: Lady,

The gods throw stones of sulphur on me, if...

(*Cym.* 5.6.240)

POET: Sir,

I have upon a high and pleasant hill ...

(*Tim.* 1.1.62)

YORK: Sirrah,

Get thee to Plashy, to my sister Gloucester;

(*R2* 2.2.89)

KING RICHARD: Ratcliff,

About the mid of night come to my tent

(*R3* 5.3.76)

ABBOT: My Lord,

Before I freely speak my mind herein,

(*R2* 4.1.326)

PERICLES: Great king,

Few love to hear the sins they love to act;

(*Per.* 1.1.91)

Most trimeters, on the other hand, as Fredson Bowers (1980) has shown, are speech-final, and they tell the next speaker not to pick up the cue, not to respond quickly. In the following example, we can see Shylock's declining to complete Antonio's proffered part-line as a refusal to engage with him, to "hear [him] speak":

(124)

ANTONIO: I pray thee, hear me speak.

SHYLOCK: I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:

(*MV* 3.3.11-12)

A scene-final trimeter can also serve as a kind of concluding punctuation mark (with or without a rhyming couplet):

(125)

HAMLET: *The time is out of joint – O cursed spite,*

That ever I was born to set it right!

Nay, come|, let's go| toge|(ther.

(*Ham.* 1.5.188-90)

FORTINBRAS: *Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this*

Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

<Go bid| the sol|diers shoot|.

(*Ham.* 5.2.401-3)

PROSPERO: ... *Thou shalt be as free / As mountains winds; but then exactly do
All points of my command.*

ARIEL: *To th^e syllable.*

PROSPERO: Come, fo|llow: speak| not for|(him. [exeunt] (Tp. 1.2.499-502)

§3.1.1: Mid-line Break ('Caesura')

A medial break – one within a line – is traditionally known as a **caesura** (Latin: ‘cutting’); it rarely represents an actual pause. Cicely Berry refers to the normal caesura as “a poise on a word – ie the word holds and lifts for a fraction of a second before it plunges into the second half of the line” (1993, 58). The caesura is not a feature of the metre: there may be none, or one, or many in any given line, and they may, but need not, be marked by punctuation:

(126) ►₅₇

TITANIA: <Out of> this wood| † <do not| desire| to go|:
<Thou shalt| remain|(h^ere, † <whether> thou wilt| or no|. (MND 3.1.152-3)

The caesura in the first line of Titania’s splendidly imperious command is a cut produced by the moving (or ‘fronting’) of the adverbial phrase “out of this wood” from its default position at the end of the clause (phrases that are moved in this way carry their terminal boundaries with them): compare the flatter but more natural version “Do not desire to go out of this wood”, in which the caesura has disappeared (the earliest texts place a helpful but ungrammatical comma at the caesura: “Out of this wood, do not desire to goe”).

We should distinguish two kinds of caesura in English: the ordinary connective caesura or **joint** (||), and the interruptive caesura or **fracture** (\ \) that temporarily suspends the forward pressure of sense and grammar, generally coinciding with the ends of questions and exclamations and the edges of parentheticals (roughly, bits that could go in brackets or between dashes). Note that when such fractured junctures occur at line-ends they have the opposite effect, reinforcing metre rather than disrupting it. The following two passages, separated by only sixty lines, show two very different Angelos – the first, with just one fracture, calmly and confidently expounding the law; the second, with a dozen of them, agitatedly examining his dissolving sense of selfhood:

(127) ►₅₈

ANGELO: The law hath not been dead, || though it hath slept.
Those many had not dar'd to do that evil

^ If the first that did th^e edict infringe
 Had answer'd for his deed. || Now 'tis awake,
 Takes note of what is done, || and like a prophet,
 Looks in a glass that shows what future evils,
 Either now || or by remissness new conceiv'd,
 And so in progress to be hatch'd and born,
 Are now to have no successive degrees,
 But ere they live to end.

ISABELLA: Yet show some pity.

ANGELO: I show it most of all when I show justice;
 For then I pity those I do not know,
 Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall,
 And do him right that, \\\ answ'ring one foul wrong,
 Lives not to act ano|(ther. || Be satisfied;
 Your brother dies to-morrow; || be content.

(MM 2.2.90-105)

(128) ►₅₉

ANGELO: What's this, \\\ what's this? \\\ Is this her fault, or mine?

The tempter or the tempted, who sins most? \\\ Ha?
 Not she; || nor doth she tempt; || but it is I
 That, \\\ lying by the violet in the sun,
 Do as the carrion does, || not as the flow'r,
 Corrupt with virtuous season. || Can it be
 That modesty may more betray our sense
 Than woman's lightness? \\\ Ha^{vi}ng waste ground enough,
 Shall we desire to raze the sanctu^ary,
 And pitch our evils there? \\\ O fie, \\\ fie, \\\ fie!
 What dost thou - \\\ or what art thou - \\\ Angelo?
 Dost thou desire her foully for those things
 That make her good? \\\ O, let her brother live!
 Thieves for their robb^ery have authority
 When judges steal themselves. || What, \\\ do I love her,
 That I desire to hear her speak again?
 And feast upon her eyes? \\\ What is't I dream on?

(MM 2.2.162-78)

It will be noticed that where fractures disrupt the metrical flow of the line and render the verse more colloquial and naturalistic, joints tend to confirm and emphasise its metrical organisation.

Since the occurrence and positioning of caesurae are to some extent optional, the question of whether any given syntactic cut should be treated as a caesura is (outside the obvious cases) partly a matter of interpretation and judgment in the performance of the verse. The placement of caesurae is of course limited by syntax and sense (we couldn't, for example, read "To be or not || to be, that is the question"), but it is not wholly determined by it, any more than is our choice of where to pause in ordinary speech.

As an exercise, the reader is invited to mark up the joints and fractures in an equivalent pair: calm Prospero (*Tp.* 4.1.146–63) vs. agitated Prospero (*Tp.* 1.2.66–87).

§3.1.2: Final Pause: Endstopping and Running On

Somewhere between the extremes of plonking (§1.3.3) and reading verse as rhythmic prose is the performance that recognises that each line is both a discrete entity and at the same time linked in different ways to what precedes and follows it: that one line flows into the next with different degrees of pressure, speed and urgency. Traditionally verses are termed '**endstopped**' if the line-ending coincides with a cut, and 'run-on' or '**enjambed**' if it doesn't. An endstopped verse is 'single-moulded' if that clause or phrase is co-extensive with the line itself: verse 3 of (130) is single-moulded, for example, because it forms a complete predicate, whereas verse 6 doesn't because it lacks the direct object (which itself constitutes the single-moulded verse 7).

But the situation is more complex than this binary distinction would suggest. The flow from one line into the next depends on a number of variables, the first of them being the degree of **terminal closure**. There are five kinds of terminal closure for verses; only the first three occur in Shakespeare. If the verse ends in a cut (§1.3.2), it has maximal or Type 1 closure; if it ends in a crack, it has Type 2 closure; if it ends in a flaw, it has Type 3 closure.¹ Other possibilities, not found in Shakespeare, include ending in a join (a mere word-juncture, Type 4) and ending inside a word (Type 5). An example of Type 4 closure would be Hopkins's "Because| the Holly Ghost| <over> the bent / World broods| with warm| <breast and> with ah! bright wings|." ("God's Grandeur"); a Type 5 would be Marilyn Hacker's "<heard from>, unru|ffled, coup|led with|

¹ In an early play like *CE*, the distribution is 84% Type 1, 15.8% Type 2, 0.2% Type 3. At the end of Shakespeare's career, in the much more fluid versification of *Tp.*, the figures are very different: 45% Type 1, 46% Type 2, 9% Type 3.

astound|- / **ing** speed| with some|body| whose name| (not gen|(der)" (Hacker 1995, 148). These two types do not produce enjambment, because enjambment is a tension between closure and the pressure to complete the syntax, and so it requires the end of the line to coincide with a syntactic break of some sort. Examples of the three types of closure:

(129) ►₆₀

If by your art, my dearest father, you have +	Type 3
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them. †	Type 1
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch, †	Type 1
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek, †	Type 1
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered #	Type 2
With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel, †	Type 1
Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her, †	Type 1
Dash'd all to pieces. O, the cry did knock #	Type 2
Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perish'd. †	Type 1

(Tp. 1.2.1-9)

It is sometimes assumed that endstopped lines have no onward momentum, but in fact where they include an ‘**impetus marker**’, bolded in the scansion – a subordinating conjunction, a nominative pronoun with no verb attached, or a transitive verb with no object – the line will have a degree of onward semantic pressure, indicated by a small arrow:

(130) ►₆₁

[<i>A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd</i>], †	
Before [<i>the always-wind-obeying deep</i>] # ⇒	2
[<i>Gave any tragic instance of our harm</i>]: †	
But [<i>longer did we not retain much hope</i>]; †	4
For [<i>what obscured light the hea^{we}ns did grant</i>] # ⇒	
Did but convey [<i>unto our fearful minds</i>] # ⇒	6
[<i>A doubtful warrant of immediate death</i>], †	
[<i>Which though myself would gladly have embrac'd</i>],	8
Yet [<i>the incessant weepings of my wife</i>], † ⇒	
[<i>Weeping before for what she saw must come</i>], †	10
And [<i>pit^eous plainings of the pretty babes</i>], †	

That mourn'd for fashion, [*ignorant what to fear*], †
[Forc'd me to seek delays for them and me]. †

12

(CE 1.1.62-74)

As Peter Hall says, “It is unfortunate that … it should be known as endstopping, because [in performance] there should, wherever possible, be no stop. It is rather a going-on point, an energetic hesitation that summons up the strength to proceed and define the next line. It does not stop: it energises” (2003, 28). One problem with plonking (§1.3.3) is its heavy-handed insistence on the end of every line, which does *not* energise: each line crawls along like a wounded animal towards its inevitable collapse in the fifth foot.

Persistent endstopping in the verse throws particular weight and importance upon the last word in each line, and makes the verse more stately and formal, just as avoidance of it makes it more rapid, energetic and colloquial; as Shakespeare's skills developed he tended to introduce more and more run-on lines into his dramatic verse. Here is part of a second and more lively account of a storm at sea from the other end of Shakespeare's career, in which Prospero, in a state of great agitation, explains that his enemies "durst not" kill him:

(131) ►₆₂

So dear the love my people bore me; [nor set #⇒

A mark so bloody on the business; [but + ⇒

[With colours fairer painted their foul ends]. †

In few, [*they hurried us aboard a bark*], †

Bore us some leagues to sea; [where they prepar'd # =>

A rotten carcass of a boat, [*not rigg'd*], †

Nor tackle, sail, nor mast; [**the very rats** #⇒

Instinctively have quit it. ...

(Tp. 1.2.140-48)

In run-on lines the grammar is incomplete at the line-end and we experience a pressure to complete the sense which is momentarily thwarted by the line-ending; that tension is released by the completion of the syntax in the next line, and the part that completes it is called the *rejet*:

(132)

To have no screen between this part he play'd

And him he play'd it for, [he needs will be + ⇒

Absolute Mílan] – me (pòor man) my library #

Was dukedom large enough

(Tp. 1.2.107-10)

Obviously a run-on line cannot work in performance without the simultaneous presence of the metrical boundary and its syntactic over-riding; it is as wrong to ignore the former (which produces prose: “he needs will be absolute Milan”) as the latter (which produces plonking [§1.3.3]: “he needs will be\ Absolute Milan”), though both are common errors of the beginner. What experienced readers do is to co-opt the phonological rules of the language: syllables that mark a syntactic boundary are prolonged slightly,² and so the easiest way to mark a run-on line-ending is to dwell upon and thus prolong slightly the final syllable, without letting the pitch of your voice rise or fall. This is a sort of vocal sleight of hand, which marks the metrical boundary without distorting grammar or sense. Take, for example, Shylock’s complaint at *MV* 1.3.108: “Signior Antonio, many a time and oft / In the Rialto you have rated me”. What he means is that Antonio has berated him many times – and often, indeed, in the Rialto, one of the most public places in Venice; if we plonk on “oft” and pause after it we mark the line-ending, but we lose the sense “oft in the Rialto” in return for a banal pleonasm (“many a time and oft”); if we say “many a time\ and oft in the Rialto\ you have rated me\”, we get the desired sense, but it’s expressed in prose. If, however, we prolong “oft” slightly, so that it resembles in duration the “soft” in “This bed’s too soft.” rather than that in “Soft and sweet”, we get both rhythm and sense together: ►₆₃ “Signior Antonio\ many a time\ and **oft** / In the Rialto\ you have rated me\”.

Of course, run-on lines in Shakespeare are not simple mechanical consequences of the interaction of syntax and metre: they represent authorial choices, and in consequence it is always worth exploring whether they might encode instructions for performance – specifically, a hesitation. One can imagine Prospero hesitating slightly (though not plonking) as he formulates the precise nature of Antonio’s ambition: “he needs will be – Absolute Milan”). A clearer example occurs in one of Leontes’ rants about his imagined cuckoldry:

(133) ►₆₄

Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er head and ears a fork'd one!

Go, play, boy, play. Thy mother plays, [**and I + ⇒**

Play too], but so disgrac'd a part, whose issue

Will hiss me to my grave.

(*WT* 1.2.186-9)

² Compare length of ‘two in “his [two-thousand-year-old] pots” (2,000-year old pots) with that in “his two [thousand-year-old] pots” (two 1,000-year old pots).

Repeating a word while shifting the meaning is a rhetorical figure {technical term: ‘àntanáclasis’}, but the performance of dramatic verse is more effective and more engaging when it suggests not recitation but a mind in action; here the actor can perform the antanaclasis not as a prefabricated rhetorical figure but as emerging from a train of associative thought in the character’s mind. Leontes dismisses his little son with “Go, play, boy, play” and the word immediately strikes him as ironically applicable to his wife (*OED* 11.b “engage in amorous play”, and perhaps also 12.a. “mock, ridicule”). He goes on to consider his own position, hesitates as he gropes for an appropriate verb, and suddenly realises that the word applies to him, too, in a third (or fourth) sense: “and I – play too” (26.b “act a... part in a drama”), which goes on to suggest further theatrical metaphors in “part” and “hiss”.

Energetic enjambment is sometimes (as here) an index of violent emotion. The violence of a run-on line-ending depends, as I remarked above, on three factors: the pressure to completion (stronger, for example, from adjective to noun than from subject to predicate), the size of the *rejet* (the shorter and more compressed the *rejet*, the more powerful the release of tension), and the degree of connectedness between the words that straddle the line-break, which is a slightly more complicated idea than terminal closure. In the following example, the fact that the line ends in a preposition is much less disruptive than it might have been because the preposition governs a whole clause rather than a single noun:

(134) ►₆₅

KING: *Read o'er this, / And after, this, and then to breakfast [with + ⇒ # What + appetite # you + have.]* (H8 3.2.202)

Compare the disruptiveness of (135), exacerbated by its shorter *rejet*:

(135) ►₆₆

And after, this; and then to breakfast [with + ⇒ Relish], my noble lord.

The following passage moderates what would otherwise be highly disruptive run-on lines by inserting parentheticals (italicised) between the line-terminal word and what it connects grammatically to:

(136) ►₆₇

This child was pris^oner to the womb, and [is † ⇒ By law and process of great Nature] [thence] †

**Freed and enfranchis'd]; not [a party to + ⇒
The anger of the King], nor [guilty of † ⇒
(If any be) the trespass of the Queen. †** (WT 2.2.57-61)

Compare the genuinely (and ineptly) disruptive run-on lines in this flabby passage from *The Atheist's Tragedy*, in which the Type 3 line-terminal words are connected rather directly to the following word or phrase:

(137)

§3.2: Transitions Between Speakers

§3.2.1: Shared or Divided Lines (Part-lines)

Many lines in a Shakespeare play are divided between speakers, both – or each – supplying a part-line to make up the whole (we can think of this as a special case of the caesura). In the following example, Antony speaks the first two feet but is interrupted by Cleopatra, who provides the last three:

(138)

ANTONY: The gods| bëst know|—

So mightily betray'd!

(AC 1.3.24)

Arranging part-lines horizontally on the page to illustrate their relatedness, as in (138), is a helpful editorial convention that arose at the end of the eighteenth century. Because that relatedness is important, editions that fail to represent it, such as Jonathan Bates's *RSC Shakespeare* (Macmillan 2007), should be avoided. Nonetheless, because of the collaborative nature of textual production in the period we cannot always be absolutely sure, in those cases where there is room for ambiguity, that the given arrangement on the page reflects authorial intentions about lineation, and different editors may arrange them in different ways. The following points, therefore, are not cast-iron rules as much as suggestions to be explored: if the suggested manoeuvre makes no sense in the context, it can be safely abandoned.

If a speech ends in a fragment there may be a slight discontinuity before the next speech begins; if it ends in a part-line, on the other hand, the next speaker is instructed to pick up the cue fairly promptly (Barton 1984, 32). Take the following exchange:

(139) ►₆₈

GRATIANO: <I have| a suit| to yōu|.

BASSANIO: <You have| obtaind|(it.

GRATIANO: ^ You| must not| deny| me: I| must go|

With you to Belmont.³

BASSANIO: <Why then| you must|. But hear| thee, Gra|tia|(no: (MV 2.2.176-9)

Bassanio's instinctive generosity is suggested by the way he grants the yet-unknown suit without hesitation, by completing Gratiano's part-line “<I have| a suit| to yōu|.”; his subsequent natural caution about taking his boisterous companion to Belmont, however, is suggested by the fact that the fragment “With you to Belmont.” is left dangling – Shakespeare could have written something like:

(140)

GRATIANO: ^ You| must not| deny| me: I| must go|

<With you| to Bel|mont.

BASSANIO: What|? <Shall I| deny|(you?

One source of ambiguity in lineation is the so-called ‘amphibious section’, a fragment which as a part line both completes the preceding part-line and is itself completed by the following part-line, like “Alack, why thus?” in (141). Some editions print such sequences as three fragments, without indentation. Others will choose one of the two possible arrangements, not always well advisedly: the Riverside, for example, disconnects Kent's response from Albany's question in (141) and turns Edmund's self-involved musing into a prompt response to Kent:

(141) ►₆₉

ALBANY: Speak, Edmund, where's the King? and where's Cordelia?

See'st thou this object, Kent?

KENT: Alack|, why thus|?

³ All the earliest texts print “You must not... to Belmont” as one impossibly long line.

EDMUND: Yé^t Ed|m^{und} w^äs| belov'd|!

The one the other poison'd for my sake, ...

(KL 5.3.240)

Common sense suggests that the arrangement should be:

(142) ►₇₀

ALBANY: <See^est thou> thⁱs ob|ject, Kent|?

KENT: Alack|, why thus|?

EDMUND: *Yet Edmund was belov'd.*

Verses with multiple-shared part-lines may look fragmented on the page, but in performance they should usually be tightly bound together. The rapid pick-ups in the following divided alexandrine indicate the eagerness of the fairies to obey their queen:

(143) ►₇₁

TITANIA: *Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!*

PEASEBLOSSOM: <Ready>:

COBWEB: And I|.

MOTH: And I|.

MUSTARDSEED: And I|.

ALL: <Where shall| we go|?

(MND 3.1.163)

In the next example it underscores the uncanny univocality of the Weird Sisters, as each answers in the number of syllables corresponding to her position in the trinity:

(144) ►₇₂

MACBETH: ... answer me

To what| I ask| you.

FIRST WITCH: Speak|.

SECOND WITCH: Demand|.

THIRD WITCH We'll an|(swer. (Mac. 4.1.61)

A well-known example of a much-divided line is the passage in which King John is hinting to Hubert the gaoler that he'd like to be rid of his prisoner, the child Prince Arthur:

(145) ►₇₃

KING JOHN: *He is a very serpent in my way, ...*
Thou art his keeper.

HUBERT: *And I'll keep him so*
That he shall not offend your Majesty.

KING JOHN: *Death.*

HUBERT: *My lord|?*

KING JOHN: *A grave|.*

HUBERT: *<He shall| not live|.*

KING JOHN: *Enough|!*

I could be merry now. Hubert, I love thee.

(KJ 3.2.66)

Because Hubert initially appears unable or unwilling to catch on to the king's infanticidal intentions, the latter abandons circumlocution (though still maintaining what the CIA calls 'plausible deniability' by avoiding explicit assertion or command) in line 65, which consists of the single monosyllabic word "Death", the smallest fragment possible (though its weight fills the whole line). It's followed by an indefinite pause in which Hubert absorbs and digests it. His eventual "My lord?" is a groping for confirmation, which the king instantly supplies, and Hubert immediately agrees to do it: because they're talking about murdering a child they want to spend as little time as possible doing so ("Enough!"), which accounts for the rapid pick-up of cues throughout the line.

There is a different reason for the rapid pick-up in the following passage (three lines with seven changes of speaker): it is the jumpy wound-up energy (underscored by the jolts in lines 17 and 18) of two novice criminals whose nerves are frayed to the limit. One critic, alluding to Lady Macbeth's violin-tuning metaphor ("Screw your courage to the sticking-place"), remarked "we can almost hear 'the snapping of the strings'":⁴

(146) ►₇₄

LADY MACBETH: <Did not| you speak|?

MACBETH: Whén?

LADY MACBETH: Now|.

MACBETH: <As I| descen|(ded?

⁴ Middleton Murry, quoted in Kenneth Muir (ed.) *Macbeth*. (New Arden Shakespeare; London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1951), p. 32n.

LADY MACBETH: ^ Ay|.

MACBETH: ^ Hark|! – Who lies| I th'se|cond cham|(ber?

LADY MACBETH: ^ Do|nalbain|.

MACBETH: <This is> a so|rry sight|. (Mac. 2.2.16-18)

§3.2.2: Stichomythia

Stichomythia (rhymes with *pithier*) may be thought of as a special case of endstopping; in stichomythia, characters exchange single complete lines, so that what might have been conversation turns into something like ritual or liturgy. Hence stichomythia can be used as a kind of distancing formality; in the following passage, for example, it serves (with the help of elaborately artificial rhetorical patterning) to keep the absurd predicament of the lovers at emotional arm's length, so we can enjoy the mishaps in the woods:

(147) ►₇₅

LYSANDER: The course of true love never did run smooth;
But either it was different in blood –

HERMIA: O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

LYSANDER: Or else misgraff'd in respect of years –

HERMIA: O spite! too old to be engag'd to young.

LYSANDER: Or else it stood upon the choice of friends –

HERMIA: O hell! to choose love by another's eyes. (MND 1.1.134-40)

It works in a similarly distancing way in *Twelfth Night*:

(148) ►₇₆

OLIVIA: I prithee tell me what thou think'st of me.

VIOLA: That you do think you are not what you are.

OLIVIA: If I think so, I think the same of you.

VIOLA: Then think you right: I am not what I am.

OLIVIA: I would you were as I would have you be!

VIOLA: Would it be better, madam, than I am?

I wish it might, for now I am your fool. (TN 3.2.146-152)

Stichomythia is particularly effective in combative situations (the *OED* describes its Greek original as “employed in sharp disputation, and characterised by antithesis and rhetorical repetition or taking up of the opponent's words”),

because the avoidance of shared lines suggests a complete failure to engage with each other's point of view, as in the following exchange between Shylock and Bassanio:

(149)

SHYLOCK: I am not bound to please thee with my answers.
 BASSANIO: Do all men kill the things they do not love?
 SHYLOCK: Hates any man the thing he would not kill?
 BASSANIO: Every offence is not a hate at first.
 SHYLOCK: What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice? (*MV* 4.1.65-9)

Stichomythia lends itself to agonistic displays that have something of the feel of a tennis-match, a metaphor explicitly invoked by the Princess in the following example:

(150)

ROSALINE: Look what you do, you do it still i' th' dark.
 KATHARINE: So do not you; for you are a light wench.
 ROSALINE: Indeed, I weigh not you; and therefore light.
 KATHARINE: You weigh me not? O, that's you care not for me.
 ROSALINE: Great reason; for past cure is still past care.
 PRINCESS: Well bandied both; a set of wit well play'd. (*LLL* 5.2.17-29)

In the early plays such 'tennis-matches' of stichomythia can become quite artificially protracted; Richard III exchanges 24 lines of stichomythia with Queen Elizabeth (*R3* 4.4.343-67) in a vain attempt to secure her daughter's hand, and the relentless ping-pong parrying of his approaches underscores King Richard's ironic inability to reproduce Gloucester's triumphant wooing of Lady Anne.

Stichomythia is not confined, however, to early plays, as in the case of this more naturalistic exchange from *Hamlet*:

(151)

QUEEN: Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
 HAMLET: Mother, you have my father much offended.
 QUEEN: Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.
 HAMLET: Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue. (*Ham.* 3.4.9ff.)

4. The Short Pentameter 1: Silent Offbeats

“this gap of breath” (*King John*, 3.4.32)

It is a commonplace that pentameter is distinguished from, for example, nursery rhyme in that it regulates the number of syllables in the line. In fact the matter is, as we have seen, slightly more complicated than this, because what is regulated is the number of syllable-slots in the template; although normally one slot corresponds to one syllable, in certain circumstances (contraction, for example) a slot may contain two. Even more oddly, under certain circumstances a slot need not be occupied by a syllable at all; such an ‘empty’ slot may be termed a **‘lacuna’**. In Shakespeare’s dramatic verse the lacuna is not a lapse or a metrical license but a rhythmic device, operating for the most part in one of two ways; ‘deictically’ (acting as a pointer, marker or signal) or ‘mimetically’ (representing or imitating speech patterns). Before the joust in *R2* 1.3, for example, the Marshal cries suddenly to the combatants “Stay, the king hath thrown his warder down”, announcing King Richard’s theatrically timed interruption. The surprise of the silent initial offbeat – a little like treading in the dark on a step that isn’t there – deictically draws attention to Richard’s *coup de théâtre* and mimetically conveys the abruptness of the herald’s injunction. We may represent such silent offbeats, depending on their nature, by means of a caret (^) or a tilde (~,≈):

(152)

^ Stay|, the King| hath thrown| his war|der down|.

(*R2* 1.3.118)

It is a mistake to refer to lacunae as ‘missing syllables’, as some writers do, because they represent not absences but differently realised presences. Such language also tends to imply that the basis of the pentameter is syllabic (rather than positional) and that short pentameters are therefore defective: because

of this widespread perception, short pentameters do not occur at all in the ‘literary’ tradition from Spenser to Tennyson, even in Shakespeare’s own non-dramatic verse, though they are found in Wyatt, at the beginning of the modern pentameter tradition, and re-appear in the twentieth century.¹ Shakespeare’s editors, starting with the redactors of the Second Folio (1632), have shared this misconception and, anxious to defend their poet against the traditional charges of artlessness and lawlessness, have attempted to eliminate lacunae through emendation and relineation (see Groves 2007). With line (152), for example, early editors would ‘repair’ the ‘problem’ by arbitrarily inserting a “But” before “Stay”; later ones have been more cautious, though the New Arden 2 edition suggests the Broad Australian pronunciation “throw-en” to supposedly ‘regularise’ the line – by creating *three* successive reversals [“<Stay, the><king hath><throwēn> ...”]). Perhaps the most surprising thing about this editorial *horror lacunae* is its persistence in the teeth of the evidence, given that the lacuna was identified as an option in Shakespeare’s verse as early as E. A. Abbott’s *Shakespearean Grammar* (1879), a grammatical source much relied upon by modern editors.

This mind-set explains, incidentally, why it is that such an important system of signification in Shakespeare’s verse has been so widely overlooked for so long: if lines with ‘missing syllables’ are something that shouldn’t even exist, shameful lapses in arithmetic to be corrected or tidied away where possible, they are unlikely be explored as part of a system of meaning. The fact that for the most part we don’t notice them is testimony to the fact that we interpret them unconsciously as part of the metre, not as lapses from it. I should add that I do not see lacunae as deliberate attempts to communicate instructions to the actor, even though they usually have some such effect, because if they were so we might expect their use to be more systematic. Rather they represent, I suspect, Shakespeare’s auditory imagination occasionally incorporating pause and gesture into the metrical and prosodic structure of the line. Speaking of vocative phrases such as “My lord”, Steve Urkowitz recently enjoined us to:

pay more attention to such “indicative” or deictic markers in
Shakespearean dialog.

Pointing to or calling out to people and things seems an almost
obsessive verbal function in the dialogue. “Ye powers,” and “O Nature”

¹ Beginning with Yeats (eg “<Speech af>ter long| ~ si|lence: īt| is right|”, line 1 of “After Long Silence”, or “A gaze| ~ blank| and pi|tiless ās| the sun|”, line 15 of “The Second Coming”). For further discussion of this see Groves (2005, 2001).

and that run-of-the-mill “my Lord” encourage vigorous verbal and physical actions of pointing and looking. If I may suggest further, I think it is just this dense web of actions that makes Shakespeare so appealing to actors and audiences. Doing Shakespeare means that you’re always doing, acting, involving your own fictional persona with the fictions of those others on stage. It’s called *playing*. If you find yourself snoozing at a performance, just check to see if the actors are using those ‘addresses’ as vocal springboards or instead are sliding past them.²

It is significant that so many of the pauses and gestures cued by *lacunae* occur, as we shall see, at moments of “pointing to or calling out to people and things”.

§4.1: The ‘Jolt’

The silent offbeat {technical term: ‘catalexis’} comes in two distinct flavours: (a) the **jolt** (^), which occurs between tone-units, in a syntactic cut, and which has the effect of emphasising the discontinuity; and (b) the much rarer **drag** (~, ≈), which occurs within a phrase or at a flaw and has the effect of locally slowing down the tempo and forcing accent on the syllable that precedes it. Very occasionally a jolt will be required at a crack, as in (164): the effect here is of a performative, extra-grammatical pause as Prospero hesitates over a choice.

§4.1.1: The Initial Jolt (‘Headless Line’)

To begin a line with an unrealised offbeat produces a slight surprise, as in the case of the initial reversal; the surprise is continued, however, in that the ‘missing’ offbeat receives no compensation: instead of the familiar pattern *DUM de-de DUM* it lurches along: *DUM de DUM*. Shakespeare uses initial jolts deictically as a way of grabbing attention for a command (“Go!”, “Stay!”), a vocative (or ‘hailing’) use of a name or phrase (“Titus!”, “Gentlemen!”) and other abrupt openings:

(153) ►₇₇

^ **Go**], tāke hence| that trai|tor frōm| our sight|,

(2H6 2.3.100)

^ **Come**], my lord|, I'll lead| you tō| your tent|.

(1H4 5.4.9)

² “Re: SHAKSPER Digest – 3 Apr 2006 to 4 Apr 2006 ((2)006-34)”, online posting, 5 April 2006, SHAKSPER: The Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference. (SHK 17.0281, <http://www.shaksper.net/archives/2006/0285.html>), accessed 1 December 2007.

- ^ **Come**, good fe|llow, put| mine i|ron on|. (AC 4.4.4)
- ^ **Prove**| it, Hen|ry, ānd| thou shālt| be King|. (3H6 1.1.131)
- ^ **Speak**|, Lavi|n̄ia, what| accur|sēd hand| (Tit. 3.1.66)
- ^ **Give**| me leave|, beseech| you. ī| did send|, (TN 3.1.111)
- ^ **Read**| the will|, we'll hear| it, An|tony|. (JC 3.2.147)
- ^ **Let**| me tell| you, Ca|ssius, yōu| yourself| (JC 4.3.9)
- ^ **Die**|, <perish>! Might būt| my ben|ding down| (MM 3.1.144)
- ^ **Worces|ter**, get| thee gone|; <for ī| do see| (1H4 1.3.15)
- ^ **Jai|ler**, take| him tō| thy cus|todý|. (CE 1.1.155)
- ^ **Ti|tus**, ī| am come| to talk| with thēe|. (Tit. 5.2.16)
- ^ **Soft**|! it smells| mōst sweet|ly īn| my sense|. (Per. 3.2.60)
- ^ **Out**|, you rogue|! you pluck| my foot| awry|; (TS 4.1.150)

Such verses are commonly called ‘headless’, but a headless verse can have ten syllables if it acquires a tail (§2.2.5). The obvious example is Lear’s famous “ ^ Ne|ver, ne|ver, ne|ver, ne|ver, ne|ver, ne|(ver!)” (5.3.308),³ but there are many others:

(154)

- ^ **Gen|tlemēn**|, impo|r|tune me| no far|(ther (TS. 1.1.48)
- ^ **Come**|, sir, wē| will be|tter īt| in Pi|sa. (TS. 4.4.71)
- ^ **Go**| with mē|. Once more|, nēw ser|vant, wel|(come. (TGV 2.4.118)
- ^ **Then**| the whi|ning school|boy, wīth| his sa|(tchel (AYL 2.7.145)
- ^ **Set**| it down|. Is ink| and pa|per rea|(dy? (R3 5.3.75)
- ^ **Say**| to mē|, whose for|tunes [shall rise] high|(er (AC 2.3.16)
- ^ **Look**|, I draw| a sword| against| conspi|(rators. (JC 5.1.51)
- ^ **Say**| again|, <where didst| thou leave| thèse var|(lets? (Tp. 4.1.170)
- ^ **How**? <Traitor>? / Náy, tem|p̄e|rately|: your pro|(mise. (Cor. 3.3.67)

In (155) Brutus, understandably rattled by Caesar’s ghost, calls nervously for a servant but gets no response; his second – more forceful – *Claudio!*, made more prominent by expansion, is all the more emphatic in being preceded by a jolt,

³ Many writers regard such lines as having five successive reversals, but the matter can be settled by Occam’s Razor: given that both tailed and headless lines occur throughout Shakespeare, but that successive reversals of even two feet are avoided, there is no need to postulate a special exemption rule that permits five successive reversals. Lines like those in (154) do not occur in traditions that do not permit headlessness (initial jolts).

so that it is extended from two syllable-positions into four (something similar happens with Cassius' incredulous repetition of *flatterers*):

(155) ►₇₈

BRUTUS: Bóy! Lu|c̄us! Va|rro! Clau|dīo! Sirs|, awake|!

^ Clau|dīo|!

LUCIUS: The strings|, my lord|, are false|. (JC 4.3.289-90)

ANTONY: *You show'd your teeth like apes,...**Whilst damnēd Casca, like a cur, behind*

Strück Cae|sar ön| the neck|. ^ O| you fla|(tterers|!

CASSIUS: ^ Fla|tterers|? <Now, Bru|tus, thank| yourself>; (JC 5.1.44-5)

Headless verses are more difficult to spot when the first beat falls on a weak syllable, and a reader will most probably get them wrong at a first attempt, not initially seeing the need for a beat on the first syllable (some of them may, indeed, represent textual corruption):

(156)

^ Th̄ey| were trai|tors; ho|nourā|ble men|! (JC 3.2.153)

^ Wě| are blest| that Rome| is rid| of h̄im|. (JC 3.2.70)

^ Tō| be spoke| to büt| by th̄e| Recor|(der). (R3 3.7.30)

^ Āt| a poor| mān's house|; he us'd| me kind|(ly). (Cor. 1.9.83)

Such lines encourage the performer to test for the possibility of contextually motivated accent on the initial syllable:

(157) ►₇₉

LEAR: ... No, I say.

KENT: ^ I| sày yea|.

LEAR: By Ju|p̄ter, I| swèar no|! (KL F1 2.3.18)

HERMIONE: *You look / As if you held a brow of much distraction.*

^ Are| you mov'd|, my lord|? [ie Am I correct in my guess?]

LEONTES: <No, in> góod ear|(nest. (WT 1.2.150)

ANTONY: [stubbornly] *I'll fight at sea.*

CLEOPATRA: ^ I| have six|ty sails|, <Caesar> none be|(tter. (AC 3.7.49)

§4.1.2: The Medial Jolt

A medial jolt is a catalexis that falls in a cut within the line, and its simplest function is similar to that of the initial jolt: to throw emphasis – that is, to cue the presence of accent – on the word that follows it:

(158) ►₈₀

MENENIUS: <You and> your crafts|! ^ You| have craf|ted fair|! (Cor. 4.6.117)

MARTIUS: *Yonder comes news: a wager they have met.*

LARTIUS: My horse| to yours|, ^ no|.

MARTIUS: "Tis done|.

LARTIUS: Agreed|. (Cor. 1.4.2)

PROTEUS: *Bear witness, heaven, I have my wish for ever.*

JULIA: And I| ^ mine|.

OUTLAWS: A prize|, a prize|, a prize|! (TGV 5.4.121)

ANTONY: *Thy master dies thy scholar. To do thus [Falling on his sword]*

I learn'd| of thee|, ^ How|? not dead|? not dead|? (AC 4.14.103)

TIMON: [Gold will] ... place thieves / And give them title, knee, and approbation,
 With se|n^a tors ḍn| the bench|, ^ This| is īt|

That makes the wappend widow wed again (Tim. 4.3.38)

ALCIBIADES: *Is this the balsam that the us"ring Senate*

<Pour in>to cap|tains' wounds|? ^ Ba|nishměnt|? (Tim. 3.5.110)

Jolts commonly highlight the emphatic nature of the interjection 'O':

(159) ►₈₁

HAMLET: ... a plot / Which is not tomb enough and continent

To hide| the slain|? ^ O|, from this| time forth|,

My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! (Ham. 4.4.65)

HELENA: *Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,...*

When we have chid the hasty-footed time

For par|ting ūs| - ^ O|, is all| forgot|? (MND 3.2.201)

PORIA: *One half of me is yours, the other half yours –
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
And so| all yours|. ^ O|, these naugh|ty times|* (MV 3.2.18)

GONERIL: ^ O|, the di|fferēnce| of man| and man|! (KL 4.2.26)

As in the case of the initial jolt, the medial jolt may foreground an imperative (a command):

(160) ►₈₂

LADY MACBETH: ... *The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal enterance of Duncan
<Under> my batt|lements, ^ Come|, you spi|(rits* (Mac. 1.5.40)

HERO: Good Mar|garēt|, ^ run| thee tō| the par|(lour, (MAN 3.1.1)

GONERIL: *Inform her full of my partic"lar fear,
And thereto add such reasons of your own
<As may| compact| it more|. ^ Get| you gone|,* (KL 1.4.339)

YORK: <Yea, look'st| thou pale|? ^ Let| me see| the wri|(ting (R2 5.2.57)

ISABELLA: <I will| proclaim| thee, An|gelō|, ^ look|(for't! (MM 2.4.52)

CAESAR: ... *Within our files there are
Of those that serv'd Mark Antony but late
Enough| to fetch| him in|. ^ See| it done|,* (AC 4.1.14)

KING RICHARD: ^ Set| it down|. Is ink| and pa|per rea|(dy?

RATCLIFF: It is|, my lord|.

KING RICHARD: <Bid my> guārd watch|; ^ leave|(me. (R3 5.3.75-6)

GHOST: *Harry, that prophesy'd thou shouldst be King,
Doth com|fort thēe 'n| thy sleep|. ^ Live| and flou|(rish!* (R3 5.3.130)

SERVANT: *I never saw so huge a billow, sir,
As toss'd| it ü|pon shore|.*

CERIMON: ^ Wrench| it o|(pen; (Per. 3.2.59)

COUNTESS: *Unless her prayers... reprove him from the wrath*

Of grea|test jus|tice. Write|, ^ write|, Rinal|(do,
To this unworthy husband of his wife;

(*AW* 3.4.29)

Or a vocative:

(161) ►₈₃

PUCK: But room|, ^ fai|r! Here| còmes O|berõn|.

(*MND* 2.1.58)

TROILUS: <You have| bereft| me [of all] words|, ^ la|(dy.

(*TC* 3.2.54)

ULYSSES: *Those scraps are good deeds past, ... forgot as soon*

As done|. Persé|verãnce|, ^ dear| my lord|,
Keeps honour bright; ...

(*TC* 3.3.150)

CYMBELINE: ... *It strikes me past*

The hope| of com|fort. [*To PISANIO*] Bút| for thee|, ^ fe|(llow,

(*Cym.* 4.3.9)

CORDELIA: That wants| the means| to lead| it. [*Enter MESSENGER*]

MESSENGER: News|, ^ ma|(dam. (*KL* 4.4.20)

IMOGEN: *And like the tyrannous breathing of the north*

<Shakes all| our buds| from growi^{ng}|.

LADY: The Queen|, ^ ma|(dam,

Desires your Highness' company. (Cym. 1.3.37)

NORTHUMBERLAND: *He that but fears the thing he would not know*

<Hath by| instinct| <knowledge> from o|thers' eyes|

That what| he fear'd| is chanc'd|. Yet speak|, ^ Mor|(ton, (2H4 1.1.87)

EDMUND: *I have seen drunkards*

Do more| than this| in sport|. – ^ Fa|ther, fa|(ther!

(*KL* 2.1.35)

CAPULET: ^ Nurse|! ^ Wife|! Whát, ho|! Whát, nurse|, I say|! (RJ 4.4.24)

The medial jolt can also signal a change of addressee, perhaps with a turn of the head:

(162) ►₈₄CORNWALL: [To GLOUCESTER] *Make your own purpose,*<How in> my strength| you please|. For you|, ^ **Ed**|(mund,

(KL 2.2.112)

CYMBELINE: Not seen of late? Grant, heav^ens, that which I fear

Pròve false|! [Exit]

QUEEN: ^ **Son**!, I say|, <follow> the King|.

(Cym. 3.5.53)

MALCOLM: ... *This is the sergeant**Who like a good and hardy soldier fought*<'Gainst my> capti|vit^y|. ^ **Hail**!, bràve friend|!

(Mac. 1.2.5)

PROSPERO: *They are both in either's pow'rs; but this swift business**I must uneasy make, lest too light winning*<Make the> prize light|.- ^ **One**! wòrd more|; I charge|(thee:

(Tp. 1.2.453)

PARIS: *It is great morning; and the hour prefix'd**For her deliv^rry to this val^ant Greek*Còmes fast| upon|. ^ **Good**| my bro|ther Troi|(lus,

Tell you the lady what she is to do,

(TC 4.3.3)

ANTONY: *Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,*<Take thou> what course| thou wilt|! ^ **How**| nòw, fe|(llow?

(JC 3.2.261)

LUCIUS: <Varro> and Clau|dius|! [Enter VARRO and CLAUDIUS]

VARRO: ^ **Calls**! my Lord|?

(JC 4.3.246)

BRUTUS: <Lucius>! My gown|. ^ **Fare|wèll**, good| Messa|(la;

(JC 4.3.231)

Or a shift of topic:

(163) ►₈₅PETRUCHIO: But soft|! ^ **Com|paný**! is co|mning here|.

(TS 3.5.26)

PISTOL: *Old I do wax; and from my weary limbs*<Honour> is cu|dgell'd. Well|, ^ **bawd**| I'll turn|,

(H5 5.1.85)

LEONTES: *the tenth of mankind*

Would hang| themselves|. ^ Phy|sic fōr't| there's none|; (WT 1.2.200)

DOLABELLA: <And he| hath sent| for thēe|. ^ Fōr| the Queen|,

I'll take her to my guard. (AC 5.2.66)

KING: Cōme hi|ther, Count|. ^ Dō| you know| these wo|(men? (AW 5.3.165)

The jolt can also work mimetically, to represent interrupted speech: it can, for example, indicate a pause or hesitation. In the following examples it represents the ‘thinking on the fly’ or ‘er-um’ pause: Prospero, arbitrarily instructing Ariel to make a diegetically pointless costume-change that will be “invisible / To every eyeball else”, seems to hesitate whimsically before the final selection (a modern playwright might write “Go make yourself – [thinks] – like a nymph of the sea”):

(164) ►₈₆

Gò make| thyself| ^ like| a nymph| o'th'sea|; (Tp. F1 1.2.301)

Gonzalo, inventing a Utopia on the spur of the moment, hesitates a couple of times in deciding on its elements:

(165) ►₈₇

<Letters> should nōt| be known|; ^ ri|ches, po|(verty,

And use| of ser|vice, none|; <contract>, succe|(ssion

Bóurn, bound| of land|, ^ tilth|, ^ vine|yard, none|; (Tp. 2.1.151-3)

Northumberland, rebuked by York for referring to the doomed king prematurely as mere ‘Richard’, hesitates before arriving at an insultingly weak excuse:

(166)

Your Grace| mistakes|; ^ on|ly tō| be brief|, / *Left I his title out.* (R2 3.3.10)

Hamlet, groping for a plan of action that will be an alternative to mere words, needs two thinking-hesitations and a “Hm” in the one line:

(167) ►₈₈

HAMLET: About|, my brains|! ^ Hm| – ^ I| have heard|

That guilty creatures sitting at a play, ... (Ham. 2.2.588)

Sometimes the medial jolt represents a catch in the voice at a moment of high emotion (as also in (159)):

(168) ►₈₉

DUNCAN: ... *My plenteous joys, / Wanton in fullness, seek to hide themselves*
 In drop|s of so|rrow. Sons|, ^ **kins|men**, thanes|, (Mac. 1.4.36)

CLEOPATRA: <Anto>ny's dead|! ^ **if** thou say| so, vi|(llain,
Thou kill'st thy mistëress; (AC 2.5.26)

ANTONY: *You did know / My sword, made weak by my affection, would*
 Obey| it [on all] cause|.

CLEOPATRA: ^ **Par|don**, par|(don! (AC 3.11.68)

PRINCE HENRY: *How fares your Majesty?*

KING JOHN: <Poison'd> -ill-fare|! ^ **Dead|**, forsook|, cäst off|, (KJ 5.7.35)

Alternatively (it depends, of course, on the context of meaning), the jolt can evoke a sudden start: incredulity, anger, or the feigned exasperation of Petruchio:

(169) ►₉₀

MENENIUS: The con|sul C^ori|ola|nus.

BRUTUS: ^ **He|?** ^ **Con|(sul|?** (Cor. 3.1.278)

ULYSSES: *'Tis known, Achilles, that you are in love*
 With one| of Pri|am's daugh|ters.

ACHILLES: Ha|? ^ **known|?** (TC 3.3.194)

NURSE: <May not| one speak|?

CAPULET: ^ **Peace|**, you mum|bling fool|! (RJ 3.5.173)

LEONTES: *Skulking in corners? Wishing clocks more swift?*
 Hours, mi|nutes? noon|, ^ **mid|night?** [And all] eyes
Blind with the pin and web but theirs, theirs only, (WT 1.2.290)

PETRUCHIO: What's this|? ^ **Mu|tton?**

FIRST SERVANT: Ay|.

PETRUCHIO: Who brought| it?

PETER: I|. (TS 4.1.160)

Jolts in successive feet are always mimetic: they can represent Lady Macbeth's jumpiness as she waits for her husband to return from the murder, or Hamlet's bafflement at Horatio's reference to having seen 'him' the previous night when the only possible antecedent of 'him' is the dead King Hamlet:

(170) ►₉₁

LADY MACBETH: ^ **Hark!** ^ **Peace!** <It was| the owl| that shriek'd|,

(*Mac.* F1 2.2.3)⁴

HORATIO: *My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.*

HAMLET: ^ **Saw?** ^ **Who?**

HORATIO: My lord|, the King| your fa|(ther. (*Ham.* 1.2.190)

Note that when successive jolts begin the line it is important to establish their timing: if in (170) we utter "Hark! Peace!" or "Saw? Who?" too quickly, the listener will take them in each case for a single foot with superstrong offbeat (§2.3.3) and so lose the violent effect of the jolts. The explosive quality of successive jolts is well suited to the expression of anger:

(171) ►₉₂

LEAR: Blów, winds|, and crack| your cheeks|! ^ **Rage|**, ^ **blow**, (*KL* 3.2.1)

TIMON: ^ **Gold|?** ^ **Ye|llow**, gli|tt^ering, pre|cious gold|? (*Tim.* 4.3.26)

CAPULET: *Gòd's bread| it makes| me mad|! ^ Day|, ^ night|,*
^ Hour|, ^ tide|, ^ time|, ^ work|, ^ lay|,
Alone, in company, still my care hath been
To have her match'd ...⁵ (*RJ* F1 3.5.176)

It is also appropriate to indignation or defensiveness:

(172)

SOLANIO: <Why then| you ţare| in love|.

ANTONIO: ^ **Fie|**, ^ **fie|!** (*MV* 1.1.46)

⁴ Lines *Mac.* 2.1.5-7 as they appear in F1 need relineation; since Rowe, however, editors have routinely (and mistakenly) relineated the entire sequence 2.1.2-7.

⁵ F1 requires a slight shift in the line-boundary, since it reads "Gods bread, it makes me mad: / Day, night, hour, tide, time, worke, play, / Alone in companie, still my care hath bin".

... Or in some other way to the pressure of strong emotion:

(173)

LEONTES: *The purity and whiteness of my sheets*

(Which to preserve is sleep, which being spotted

Is goads|, ^ thorns|, ^ ne|ttes, tails| of wasps|),

(WT 1.2.329)

PAULINA: *What studied torments, tyrant, hast for me?*

What wheels|? ^ Racks|? ^ Fires|? what flay|ing, boi|(ling

In leads or oils?

(WT 3.2.176)

Shakespeare uses multiple or successive jolts to suggest alarm and consequent urgency, as in the case of Horatio (the paid-up rationalist) confronted by a ghost, Albany desperately trying to save Lear and Cordelia, or Banquo Fleance:

(174) ►₉₃

HORATIO: ^ Stay|! ^ Speak|, ^ speak|, I charge| thee speak|! (Ham. 1.1.51)

EDMUND: *my writ / Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia.*

Nay, send| in time|.

ALBANY: ^ Run|, ^ run|, Ó, run|!

(KL 5.3.249)

BANQUO: ^ Fly|, good Fle|ance, fly|, ^ fly|, ^ fly|,

(Mac. F1 3.3.17)

§4.1.3: The Transitional Jolt

A medial jolt that occurs between two speakers most commonly has the mimetic effect of suggesting hesitation in the response, often because the second speaker is dissenting from the first speaker's position. This may be through flat contradiction:

(175) ►₉₄

HERMIONE: *You scarce can right me throughly, then, to say*

<You did| mistake|.

LEONTES: ^ No|; <if I| mistake|

... *The centre is not big enough to bear / A school-boy's top.*

(WT 2.1.100)

CLEOPATRA: *Caesar's will?*

THIDIAS: <Hear it| apart|.

CLEOPATRA: ^ None| but friends|: say bold|(ly. (AC 3.13.47)

Or admonition:

(176)

FERDINAND: *So rare a wond'red father and a wise*

<Makes this| place Pa|radise|.

PROSPERO:

^ Sweet| now, si|(lence; (Tp. 4.1.124)

Or a firm reservation:

(177)

BRUTUS: *For he [Mark Antony] can do no more than Caesar's arm*

When Cae|sar's head| is off|.

CASSIUS:

^ Yet| I fear|(him, (JC 2.1.183)

At times the transitional jolt may represent a kind of double-take, as when Hamlet (in F1) responds with astonishment to Gertrude's attempt to dismiss his criticisms as 'ecstasy' (temporary madness), Bolingbroke is surprised to find King Richard in Flint Castle, Caesar's centurion is amazed to come across Enobarbus soliloquising in a ditch, or Coriolanus reacts with a incredulous rage to Aufidius' disrespectful mode of address:

(178) ▶₉₅

GERTRUDE: *This bodiless creation ecstasy* [temporary madness]

Is ve|ry cu|nning īn|.

HAMLET:

^ Ec|stasý|?

My pulse as yours doth temperately keep time,

(Ham. 3.4.139)

PERCY: *The castle royally is mann'd, my lord,*

Against| thy en|tērānce|.

BOLINGBROKE:

^ Roy|allý|?

Why, it contains no king.

PERCY:

Yes, my good lord,

(R2 3.3.23)

ENOBARBUS: *Bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did*

Before| thy face| repent|!

CENTURION:

^ E|nobar|(bus?

(AC F1 4.9.10)

AUFIDIUS: Ay, trai|tor, Mar|tiūs|!

CORIOLANUS:

^ 'Mar|tiūs|'?

(Cor. 5.8.87)

When Polixenes clumsily casts his wife and Hermione in the role of the ‘temptations’ that led him and Leontes into sin, she mimics a startle of horrified dissent (“Grace to boot!” = “God help us!”):

(179)

POLIXENES: *Your precious self had then not cross'd the eyes
<Of [my young] play|fellōw|.*

HERMIONE: [^]**G**race| to boot|!

*Of this make no conclusion, lest you say
Your queen and I are devils.*

(WT 1.2.80)

More frequently, however, the transitional jolt suggests a more polite or tentative demurral, as with the puzzled Gloucester responding to his unknown guide, Antigonus diplomatically questioning the judgment of his king, Perdita attempting to qualify the rashness of Prince Florizel, or the tribune Brutus declining to respond to what he sees as the deranged insults of Volumnia:

(180) ►₉₆

GLoucester: *Methinks the ground is e^ven.*

EDGAR: *Horrible steep.*

<Hark, do> you hear| the sea|?

GLoucester: [^]**N**o|, [^]**tr**u|(ly).

(KL 4.6.4)

LEONTES: *We need no more of your advice. The matter,*

The loss, the gain, the ord'ring on't, is all

<Proper>ly ours|.

ANTIGONUS: [^]**A**nd| I wish|, my liege|,

You b^ad only in your silent judgment tried it,

(WT 2.1.170)

FLORIZEL: *my desires / Run not before mine honour, nor my lusts*

Būrn ho|tter thān| my faith|.

PERDITA: [^]**O**| but, sir|,

Your resolution cannot hold ...

(WT 4.4.35)

VOLUMNIA: *Cats, that can judge as fitly of his worth*

As I can of those mysteries which heaven

<Will not| hāve earth| to know|.

BRUTUS: [^]**P**ray| let's go|.

(Cor. 4.2.38)

Emilia gently dissents from her sister-in-law's view that true love is possible between the sexes:

(181)

HIPPOLITA: *I will now in, and kneel, with great assurance
That we, more than his Pirothous, possess
The high| <throne in> his heart|.*

EMILIA: ^{^ I|} am nōt
Against your faith, yet I continue mine. (TNK 1.3.96)

In *Julius Caesar* the third citizen is skeptical of the idea that Caesar has “had great wrong”, but thinks nonetheless that killing him was a bad idea, since “there will a worse come in his place”:

(182)

SECOND CITIZEN: <Caesar> has had| grēat wrong|.
THIRD CITIZEN: ^{^ Has|} he, mas|(ters?
I fear| there will| a worse| <come in> his place|. (JC 3.2.110)

Prospero's response to his prospective son-in-law's promise of premarital chastity carries in its transitional jolt a hint of skeptical reserve (borne out by the fact that he renews his admonitions on the subject within twenty lines) – indeed, an actor might be tempted to put contrastive accent on *spoke* (since ‘words are no deeds’):

(183)

FERDINAND: *When I shall think or Phoebus' steeds are founder'd
Or Night| kēpt chain'd| below|.*
PROSPERO: ^{^ Fair|}ly spoke|. (Tp. 4.1.31)

Of course, hesitation doesn't necessarily signal disagreement. In the following example, the transitional jolt represents Messala's sympathetic reluctance to confirm what seems to be unwelcome news:

(184) ►₉₇

BRUTUS: *seventy senators that died / By their proscriptions, Cicero being one.*⁶

⁶ This verse raises an interesting question, in that it requires one contraction but contains more than one eligible. <*By their| proscrip|tions, Ci|cerō| bēing one|*> is the least marked line because it contracts the least important word (as opposed to <*By their| proscrip|tions,*

CASSIUS: <Cice>ro one|?

MESSALA: ^ Ci|cerō| is dead|, (JC 4.3.179)

The murderer of Banquo is similarly unwilling to announce the escape of Fleance, knowing how much Macbeth wanted him dead:

(185) ►₉₈

MURDERER: Most ro|yal sir|, ^ Fle|ance īs| escap'd|. (Mac. 3.4.19)⁷

Juliet's nurse hesitates twice before giving what she knows must be unwelcome advice:

(186) ►₉₉

JULIET: *What say'st thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?*

Some com|fort, nurse|.

NURSE: ^ Faith|, ^ here| it īs|. ... *I think it best you married with the County.* (RJ 3.5.214)

Nestor's response to Ulysses' cunning plan, on the other hand, involves a slight deliberative pause, as befits his senatorial dignity:

(187)

ULYSSES: *The seeded pride ... / In rank Achilles must or now be cropp'd*

Or, shedding, breed a nurs'ry of like evil

To o|verbulk| us all|.

NESTOR: ^ Well|, and how|? (TC 1.3.320)

What George Wright calls Claudio's "laconic" hesitation in expressing gratitude for "an offer that, under the circumstances, he finds rather empty" (177) is registered by a jolt between speakers:

(188) ►₁₀₀

ISABELLA: *O, were it but my life!*

Ci|cerō bē|ing one|); a third, more artificial option would contract both words and expand "proscriptions", as two lines later: <By their| proscript|ions|, <Cicerō bē|ng one|.

⁷ Most editions, following F1, print 'scap'd, making this a random tetrameter in a pentameter dialogue, but given that Shakespeare uses *escape(d)* and aphetic *'scape(d)* as what Sipe (1968) calls metrical variants (cp "Some i|nnocents| 'scape not> the thun|derbolt|." (AC 2.5.77) and "<That has| to-day| escap'd|. I thank| you all|;" (AC 4.8.4) my pentameter reading of the line is plausible and effective.

*I'd throw it down for your deliverance
As frank|ly äs| a pin|.*

Claudio: ^Thanks|, dèar I|(sabel. (MM 3.1.105)

Occasionally, a jolt between speakers may occur at the beginning of the line, as in the Captain's contradiction of Hamlet:

(189)

Hamlet: *Why, then the Polack never will defend it.*

Captain: ^Yes|, <it is| alrea|dy ga|rriſoñ'd|. (Ham. 4.4.24)

§4.2: The 'Drag'

A drag is a less common kind of silent offbeat that occurs where there is no cut, and not even a crack. It produces an entirely different effect from a jolt: where jolts create a jerky staccato rhythm that disconnects, drags make a phrase smooth and connected (or *legato*). Drags occur either within a phrase (ie an internal drag, represented by ‘~, as between an adjective and the noun it modifies), or between phrases at a flaw (an external drag, represented by ‘≈; **for 'flaw', see §1.3.2**). In practical terms it is not important to distinguish the two types of drag, but you need to know how to do so if you wish to identify drags.

In a drag, the first syllable will typically be either dominated by or subordinated to the second, and will need to be liberated by accent before it can function as a beat. Take, for example, Enobarbus' nine-syllabled verse “Lord of his reason. What though you fled”, from the post-mortem over the battle of Actium: editors since the eighteenth century have tried to ‘repair’ it by (for example) changing “though” to “although”, and it is true that out of context it appears to have only four beats with no opportunity for a jolt (which requires two fully independent syllables separated by a cut). In context, however, is clear that the pronoun ‘you’ should be accented to contrast it with ‘he’ two lines later: what Enobarbus is saying is “So what if *you* – a woman, unused to warfare – fled? Why should *he* – a hardened soldier – follow?” The accent in both cases allows the pronoun to function as the fourth of five beats, and produces a drag that forces a slowing down on the accented syllable:

(190) ►₁₀₁

Cleopatra: *Is Antony or we in fault for this?*

Enobarbus: *Antony only, that would make his will*

*<Lord of> his rea|son. What| though **you| fled***

From that great face of war, whose several ranges

<Frightened> each other? Why should **he** follow? (AC 3.13.2-6)

Using accent in this way to disrupt the prototypical alternating metrical order introduces a kind of naturalism into the voice, but it remains a heightened naturalism, not a banal one. If you were to say “¹**What** though ²**you** fled?/ ³**Why** should ⁴**he** follow? √” naturalistically, it would most likely have four beats, with the second and fourth beats attracted from the stressed syllables 4 and 8 onto the accented syllables that precede them. But this, of course, would not serve the metre, which requires beats on all four syllables. We deal with this in performance not by bunging an almost certainly inappropriate accent on the syllable after the drag but by timing: by prolonging (indeed, dragging out) the dragged syllable into a full measure: “**Lord** of his ²**reason**. ³**What** though ⁴**yoo** ⁵**fled**...? / ³**Why** should ⁴**hee** ⁵**follow**? ” More examples:

(191) ►₁₀₂

SICINIUS: Pray you| <go to> him.

MENENIUS:

What| should I| ≈do| †?

(Cor. 5.1.39)

QUEEN: ^ Say | his **long** | ~ trou|ble now| is pa|(ssing

(H8 4.2.162)

WATCHMAN: *why commands the King*

That his chief followers lodge in towns about him.

While he[himself] <keeps in> the cold[~ field]

(3H6 4.3.14)

ARIEL: the fire and cracks / Of sulphurous roaring [the most] mighty *Neptune*

Seem to besiege, and make his bold waves tremble.

<Yea, his> drèad tri|dent shake].

PROSPERO:

My brave | ~ spirit | !

(Tb. 1.2.206)

OPHELIA: *He falls to such perusal of my face*

<As he| would draw| it. † Long| ≈ stay'd| he so|.

(Ham. 2,1.88)⁸

DUNCAN: *He was a gentleman on whom I built*

An ab|solute| ~ trust|. [Enter Macbeth] Ó wor|thiest cou|(sin)

(Mac 1414)

⁸ “Long” and “stayed” would, of course, normally be separated by a crack, but recall that where it is within one word of a cut, a crack becomes a mere flaw (§1.3.2).

VALENTINE: <Who should| be trus|ted, when| òne's **right**| ~ **hand**|

Is perjured to the bosom?

(*TGV* 5.4.68)

MUTIUS: <And with| my sword| I'll keep| this **door**| ~ **safe**. † (*Tit.* 1.1.288)

SICINIUS: Your C^ori|ola|nus ſ̄s| not **much**| ~ **miss'd**| (*Cor.* F1 4.6.13)

CHORUS: *Now we bear the King*

T^oward Ca|llice; grant| him there|; **there**| ~ **seen**, †

Heave him away upon your wingèd thoughts

(*H5* 5.0.7)

This doesn't mean, of course, that we shouldn't accent the post-drag syllable if it needs it:

(192) ►₁₀₃

LORENZO: *Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode! ...*

When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,

<I'll: watch| as long| for **you**| ~ **then**|. † Approach|; (*MV* 2.6.24)

LADY MACBETH: *That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold.*

<What hath> quènch'd **them**| hath giv|en **me**| ~ **fire**|. † (*Mac.* F1 2.1.3)

In the example from *Macbeth*, *me* contrasts with *them* and *fire* with *quench'd*; the consequent deceleration is appropriate to the sinister gloating quality of Lady Macbeth's speech here.

Forcing a drag is thus a useful 'pointing' technique for Shakespeare, since it alerts the actor to the need for contextually motivated accent at a particular point. Thus Aegeon, if he is to continue speaking pentameter, must contrast the low-born nature of the Dromios' mother with his own wife's status; Macbeth must put a degree of sarcastic spin on the word "worst" in his brow-beating of the murderers; and Isabella, desperately trying to explain a crucial moral distinction between 'lawful mercy' and 'foul redemption', must put an insistent accent on "two" (meaning 'two quite distinct') to make the line a pentameter. It should be noted, however, that in every case the syllable following the drag must be uttered with more emphasis than it would in prose-speech, to allow it also to carry a beat:

(193) ►₁₀₄

AEGEON: *There had she not been long but she became*

A joyful mo|ther [of two] good|ly sons|;

That very hour, and in the self-same inn,
 A mean| ~ wo|man wăs| deli|verěd| (CE F1 1.1.54)

MACBETH: *Now, if you have a station in the file,*
 <Not i'> the worst| ~ rank| of man|hood, say|(it, (Mac. 3.1.102)

ANTONY: There's hope| in't yet|. CLEOPATRA: ^ That's| my brave| ~ lord! (AC 3.13.177)

ISABELLA: ^ Ig|nomý| in ran|som [and free] par|(don
 ^ Āre| of two| ~ hou|ses: law|ful mer|(cy
 Is no|thing kin| to foul| redem|ptiōn|. (MM 2.4.112)

Certain modifiers, like *all*, are natural attractors for accent through dragging (it will be seen that drags commonly occur in the last foot, where the need for one is most easily predicted):

(194) ►₁₀₅
 IMOGEN: *There is no more such masters. I may wander*
From east to occident, cry out for service,
Trȳ ma|ny, all| ~ good|; sèrve tru|ly, ne|(ver
Find such another master. (Cym. 4.2.373)

MALCOLM: *And here from gracious England have I offer*
Of good|ly thou|sands. Büt|, for all| ~ this|, (Mac. 4.3.45)

POSTHUMUS: *Is there no way for men to be, but women*
 <Must be> hālf-wor|kers? Wě| are all| ~ bas|(tards, (Cym. 2.5.2)

ANTONY: *you ... have fought / Not as you serv'd the cause, but as't had been*
 <Each man's| like mine|; <you [have shōwn] all| ~ Hec|(tors. (AC 4.9.7)

Peter Hall interprets a superficially awkward verse from *MND* as containing a sequence of two drags (though he doesn't, of course, put it that way) and an initial reversal, which by suggesting secret knowledge ("I know") and slowing down the ending, with equal weight on the three last syllables, gives the line in performance an air of mysterious portentousness "to herald a magical invocation" (Hall 30): ►₁₀₆ "<I know> a bank| where th^e wild| ~ thyme| ≈ blows|" (*MND* 2.2.249). The line is performed in this way in the RSC's 1996 production directed by Adrian Noble for the UK's Channel 5.

5. The Short Pentameter 2: Silent Beats

TAMORA: ^ Ti|tus, I| am come| to talk| with thee|.

TRITUS: <No, not> a word|. <How can> I grace| my talk|,
<Wanting> a hand| to give| it ac|tion|?

(*Titus Andronicus*, F1 5.2.16-18)

As we have seen, the silent beat or ‘rest’ (§1.5.3) is a structural feature of some kinds of demotic verse, where its predictability both in structure (occurring, for example, at every eighth beat in the ballad stanza) and in performance (due to the rather regularly timed ‘sing-song’ performance) permit it to be adequately signalled by a silence. Neither of these regularities obtains in sophisticated forms like pentameter, however, and so the natural assumption – one I long shared – is that Shakespeare makes no use of the silent beat. Yet Fredson Bowers has drawn attention to a couple of instances in the operatic love-duet at the beginning of Act 5 of *The Merchant of Venice*: there are six mid-line baton-changes in the passage, and in each case the second speaker begins with the two-foot refrain “In such a night”. The first two exchanges are straightforward, but as a realistic emblem of married love, the duet involves both co-operation and competition, harmony and discord. At the third, Lorenzo (in boldface) attempts to put Jessica (in italics) off her game with a caesural tail (or ‘feminine epic caesura’) on *Car|(thage*; she remains unfazed, however, and lobs it right back to him (*Ae|son*). A colleague has suggested to me that a split line with a caesural tail might be an instruction to the second actor to ignore the tail and speak over it, which would work well here:¹

¹ John Bigelow (personal communication, December 2012). Lear in his first scene has the imperious habit of interrupting others (overlap bolded): “*Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sounds Reverb| no ho|(lowness. / <Kent, on> thy life|, no more|.*” (1.1.152); “*Thy safe|ty be|ing mo|(tive. / <Out of> my sight|!*” (1.1.155); “*<Duchess> of Bur|(gundy.*

(195) ►₁₀₇

LORENZO: ... Where Cre|ssid lay| that night|.

JESSICA: In such| a night| ...
And ran| dismayed| away|.LORENZO: In such| a night| ...
To come| again| to Car|(thage).\JESSICA: In such| a night| ...
That dīd| renew| old Ae|(son.)\

LORENZO: In such| a night| (MV 5.1.6-14)

Lorenzo's response is to raise the stakes by giving her only two-and-a half feet for the expected three, but she supplies the missing beat and returns an equivalent five-syllabled half-line to Lorenzo:

(196)

LORENZO: Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far| as Bel|mont.JESSICA: <!>| In such| a night|
Did young Lorenzo swear he lov'd her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er| a true| òne.LORENZO: <!>| In such| a night|
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her. (MV 5.1.14-21)

As Bowers says, “the symmetry ... can only be designed” (Bowers 99) – two normal transitions, two ‘excessive’ ones, and then two ‘defective’ ones – showing that Shakespeare clearly intended silent beats in this passage.

§5.1: Rests that Cue Stage Business

But how do Jessica and Lorenzo signal these silent beats? As we have seen, a pause – silence itself – will not do the job in pentameter verse, where such

/ <Nothing>; I have sworn|; I am firm|.” (1.1.245). Goneril later treats Albany with the same courtesy: “I cannot be so partial, Goneril, <To [the great] love| I bear|(you,— / <Pray you>, content|. What, Oswald, ho!” (1.4.312).

lines are in any case rather rare. Just occasionally, a rest may be represented by a noise ‘off’:

(197) ►₁₀₈

He's ta'len. [Shout] <!>| And hark|, they shout| for joy|. (JC 5.3.32)

But since beats represent muscular activity, peaks of effort in articulation, unexpected silent beats are more likely to be perceived through some form of surrogate gesture than through the precisely timed pauses that earlier writers seemed to imagine. An appropriately timed piece of business will supply the beat in both these cases – perhaps a playful admonitory tap from Jessica and a patronising kiss from Lorenzo.

Occasionally the beating of the verse is played out more violently on the human body, as in the case of the messenger both unlucky enough to bring the news of Antony’s marriage and reckless enough to recommend “pa-ti-ence” to Cleopatra:

(198) ►₁₀₉

MESSENGER: Gòod ma|dam, pa|tiënce|!

CLEOPATRA: What say| you? <!>| [Strikes him]²

Hénce, horr|ible vi|llain! ör| I'll spurn| thine eyes| ... (AC F1 2.5.63)

OTHELLO: ^ Devil! <!>| [Strikes her.]

DESDEMONA: ^ I| have nōt| deserv'd|(this. (Oth. 4.1.240)

The line from *Othello* is unusually complex in that it also includes an initial vocative jolt and a transitional demurral jolt.

Such ‘percussive’ rests may be more common than we suspect, given that the earliest editions are not very scrupulous about stage-directions: in the scene of Gloucester’s interrogation, for example, neither Regan’s plucking at his beard or Cornwall’s plucking out his eyes is given a stage-direction in F1 or QQ. But the scene, in its escalation from insult to torture, seems to require some episode of violence intermediate between beard-tweaking and eye-gouging, and between these two occurs a short pentameter that might plausibly cue a blow from Regan, to punish Gloucester for his disobedience (“Wast thou not charg'd at peril – ?”):

² This stage direction is from the First Folio.

(199) ►₁₁₀

CORNWALL: <Where hast> thou sent| the King|?

GLOUCESTER: To Do|ver.

REGAN: [?Strikes him]

<!>|

Wherfore to Dover? Wast thou not charg'd at peril –

(KL 3.7.50)

It would not be out of character, given her sadistic insistence on stocking Kent “till night, and all night too”, and her eagerness to extend the eye-gouging (“One side will mock another. Th’ other too!”). It is perhaps worth noting that if F1 *Lear* is indeed a revision of Q1, the reviser actually created the silent beat by removing “sir” from the end of the line. Similarly, Timon’s driving his false friends from the false banquet, perhaps by pelting them with stones (see 3.6.120), is registered not in the stage-directions but in the reference to their “taking [their] physic”, and perhaps in the silent beat of the preceding line:

(200)

TIMON: *Of man and beast the infinite malady*

<Crust you> quite o|ver! <!>| <What, dost> thou go|?

Soft, take thy physic first – thou too – and thou;

(Tim. 3.6.99)

A lighter blow is given by the officer who claps his hand on Antonio’s shoulder to arrest him, and a more welcome one in Cassius’ and Brutus’ hand-clasping and in King John’s dubbing of the Bastard:

(201)

ANTONIO: ... *You stand amaz’d;*

<But be| of com|fort.

SECOND OFFICER: <!>| Cómé, sir|, away|. (TN 3.4.339)

CASSIUS: Good night|, my lord|.

BRUTUS: Good night|, good bro|ther <!>|. (JC 4.3.237)

KING JOHN: <Kneel thou> down Phi|lip, <!>| but rise| more great|:

(KJ 1.1.161)

It is possible that the silent beat in the following was supplied by the gardener’s demonstrative lopping off of a ‘superfluous branch’ (though how that might be done on the Globe stage is another question):

(202)

GARDENER: *Had he done so to great and growing men,
They might have liv'd to bear and he to taste
Their fruits| of du|ty. <!>| Super|fluous bran|(ches
We lop away, that bearing boughs may live;* (R2 3.4.63)

The silent beat may cue some business with props, as when the *aedile* brandishes the requested list of stooges, the Jeweller points to the ‘water’ (lustre) of his jewel, Diomedes flourishes Troilus’ favour, or Edmund thrusts the hilt of his sword towards Edgar:

(203) ►₁₁₁

SICINIUS: *Have you a catalogue / Of all the voices that we have procur'd,
<Set down| by th' poll|?*
AEDILE: I have|; 'tis rea|dy. <!>| (Cor. 3.3.10)

MERCHANT: [Looking at the jewel] *'Tis a good form.*
JEWELLER: And rich|. <Here is> a wa|ter, look| ye <!>|. (Tim. 1.1.18)

CRESSIDA: *'Twas one's that lov'd me better than you will.
But, now| you have| it, take| it.*

DIOMEDES: <!>| Whose was|(< i>it? (TC 5.2.90)

EDMUND: *Nay, send in time.*
ALBANY: ^ Run, ^ run, O, run!
EDGAR: *To who, my lord? Who has the office? Send
Thy token of reprieve.*

EDMUND: Well thought| on! Take| my sword|. The cap|tain – <!>|
Give it the captain.

ALBANY: Haste thee for thy life. (KL 5.3.251)

Bassanio’s fateful opening of the leaden casket is marked by a rest:

(204) ►₁₁₂

PORTIA: *O love, be moderate, allay thy ecstasy, ...
I feel too much thy blessing; make it less,
For fear| I sur|feit.*
BASSANIO: <!>| What find| I here|? (MV 3.2.115)

In the following passage King Richard makes some conciliatory gesture towards the messenger he mistakenly struck – a hand on the shoulder, perhaps (it would seem a little odd to offer the purse quite so quickly):

(205)

MESSENGER: ... Buckingham's army is dispers'd and scatter'd;

And he himself wand'red away alone,

<No man| knows whi|ther.

KING RICHARD:

<!>| I cry thee mercy.

There is my purse to cure that blow of thine.

(R3 4.4.513)

Finally, the rest may cue a pointing to or indication of some object or person:

(206) ►₁₁₃

HENRY: And there|upon| <give me> your daugh|ter <!>|.

(H5 5.2.347)

LEAR: *Death on my state! Wherfore*

<Should he| sit he|(ere <!>|? This act| persuades|(me

That this remotion of the Duke and her /Is practice only.

(KL 2.3.113)

CLEOPATRA: *But there's no goodness in thy face, if Antony*

Be free| and health|ful – <!>| so tart| a fa|(vour

To trumpet such good tidings!

(AC 2.5.38)

BANQUO: *the heaven's breath*

*Smells woo'ng|ly he|ere <!>|; No ju|tty, frieze|,*³

Buttress, nor coign of vantage ...

(Mac. 1.6.6)

In (207), Horatio's alarm ("O, where, my lord?") makes more sense if the rest in Hamlet's line cues a gesturing, pointing or turning towards the imaginary father:

(207) ►₁₁₄

HAMLET: My fa|ther – <!>| methinks| I see| my fa|(ther.

HORATIO: *O, where, my lord?*

HAMLET:

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

(Ham. 1.2.184)

³ There is an alternative line with initial jolt (" ^ Smells| <wooing>ly here|; No ju|tty, frieze|,"), but a jolt between subject and predicate is inappropriate and seems unmotivated.

§5.2: Rests that Cue Expressive Gestures

A second function of the silent beat is to cue an expressive bodily gesture. Take Polonius' ‘you're-a-man-of-the-world, work-it-out-for-yourself’ shrug as he ekes out his list of suggested “slips” to Reynaldo:

(208) ►₁₁₅

POLONIUS: *But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.*

REYNALDO: *As gaming, my lord?*

POLONIUS: ^ Ay|, or drink|ing, fenc|ing, swear|ing, <!>|
<*Quarrel*>ling, dra|bbing – yōu| may go| so far|. (Ham. 2.1.25)

A mock shrug will do as well as a real one: Henry IV shrugs in an ironic simulation of bafflement; Iago, questioned about Cassio's honesty, just hints a fault, and hesitates dislike (Bob Hoskins, in the BBC *Othello*, shrugs on the rest); Gloucester shrugs provokingly in response to Lady Anne's accusations; and Flavius mimics the embarrassed prevarications of Timon's ungrateful parasites:⁴

(209) ►₁₁₆

WORCESTER: *I have not sought the day of this dislike.*

KING: <You have| not sought| it? <!>| How comes| it, then? (1H4 5.1.27)

OTHELLO: <Is he| not ho|nest?

IAGO: <!>| <*Honest*>, my lord|? (Oth. 3.3.103)

LADY ANNE: ... <*Didst thou*> not kill| this king|?

GLOUCESTER: I grant| ye. <!>|

LADY ANNE: *Dost grant me, hedgehog? then, God grant me too*

Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed! (R3 1.2.101)

FLAVIUS: *They answer, in a joint and corp^orate voice,
That now they are at fall, want treasure, cannot
Do what they would, are sorry; you are hon^{ou}rable,*

⁴ The first two examples were originally pointed out by George Wright (1988).

But yet| they could| have wish'd| – they know| not – <!>|
Something hath been amiss – a noble nature
May catch a wrench – would all were well! – 'tis pity – (Tim. 2.2.207)

The phrase “I know not” seems to be a natural attractor for the shrug: Timon’s parasites later have cause to shrug in genuine bafflement, and the post-homicidal Hamlet gives a mad shrug of apparent indifference:

(210) ►₁₁₇
<What does| his lord|ship mean|? / I know| not <!>|. (Tim. 2.2.207)

HAMLET: *How now? a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead!*
POLONIUS: *O, I am slain!*
QUEEN: *O me, what hast thou done?*
HAMLET: ^ Nay|, I know| not. <!>| <Is it| the King|? (Ham. 3.4.25)

In *Coriolanus*, Menenius, recounting his somewhat perfunctory fable of the belly to the mutinous citizens, pauses with a teasing shrug before the punch-line, eliciting the First Citizen’s impatient query (for the rest after the First Citizen’s line, see below, §5.3)

(211) ►₁₁₈
MENENIUS: *Unto the appetite and affection common*
<Of [the whole] bo|(dy. \ The be|lly an|swer'd – <!>|
FIRST CITIZEN: *Well, sir|, what an|swer made| the be|lly <!>|?* (Cor. 1.1.105)

Other possible gestures include the shudder or grimace:

(212) ►₁₁₉
OPHELIA: *As if he had been loosed out of hell*
To speak| of ho|rrors – <!>| he comes| before|(me. (Ham. 2.1.81)

CLAUDIUS: *O, my offence is rank! It smells to heaven.*
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A bro|ther's mur|der. <!>| <Pray can> I nōt|, (Ham. 3.3.38)

The sigh:

(213) ►₁₂₀
PORTIA: *I must go in. Ay me! How weak a thing*

The heart| of wo|man ūs! Ó Bru|tus, <!>|
The heavens speed thee in thine enterprise! (JC 2.4.40)

AEGEON: *In Syracusa was I born, and wed
Unto a woman, happy but for me,
And by| me,— <!>| <had not| our hap| been bad|:* (CE 1.1.38)

SECOND LORD: *this her son / Cannot take two from twenty, for his heart,
And leave| èighteen|. Alas|, pòor Prin|cess, <!>|* (Cym. 2.1.56)⁵

PERCY: *No, Percy, thou art dust, and food for — <!> [Dies.]*

PRINCE: *For worms|, bràve Perc|y. <!>| Farewell|, grèat heart|!* (IH4 F1 5.4.87)

CYMBELINE: ... *Heard you all this, her women?*
LADIES: *We did|, so please| your High|ness.*
CYMBELINE: <!>| *Mine eyes|*
Were not in fault, for she was beautiful (Cym. 5.5.62)

The sob (genuine or otherwise); here Antony attempts to “make his followers weep”, and seems to succeed later in the play with Octavian:

(214) ►₁₂₁
ANTONY: *Haply you shall not see me more, or if,
A mang|led sha|dow. <!>| Perchance| to-mo|(rrow
You'll serve another master.* (AC 4.2.27)

OCTAVIAN: ... *Look you sad, friends?*
The gods| rebuke| me, <!>| <but it| is ti|(dings
To wash the eyes of kings. (AC 5.1.27)

The gestural mimicry of a violent action:

(215) ►₁₂₂
LADY MACBETH: *I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums*

⁵ Alternatively we may jolt foot four and drag foot five for double emphasis (“And leave| èighteen|. Alas|, ^ poor| ~ Prin|(cess,”, but since it involves two catalexes rather than one, Occam’s Razor suggests that it is the less satisfactory solution.

And dash'd| the brains| out <!>| <had I| so sworn|

As you have done to this.

(*Mac.* F1 1.7.58)

The open-armed gesture of appeal:

(216) ►₁₂₃

CORIOLANUS: *Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,
I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius,
Were you| in my| stead, <!>| would you| have heard|
A mother less? or granted less, Aufidius?*

(*Cor.* 5.3.192)

LEONTES: *Now, from the oracle*

*They will bring all, whose spiritual counsel had,
Shall stop| or spur| me. <!>| <Have [I done] well|?*

(*WT.* 2.1.219)

The open-armed gesture of bafflement:

(217) ►₁₂₄

FRANCISCO: They va|nish'd strange|ly <!>|
SEBASTIAN: No ma|tter, since|
They ha've left their vi'nds behind; for we have stomachs.

(*Tp.* 3.3.40)

And the gesture of denial:

(218) ►₁₂₅

CAESAR: <Where is| he now|?
OCTAVIA: My lord|, in A|thens.
CAESAR: <!>|. *No, my most wrongéd sister: Cleopatra
Hath nodded him to her.*

(*AC* 3.6.64)

We also find the gesture of admonition (or perhaps a clip round the ear), used here to quiet an unruly servant:

(219) ►₁₂₆

CELIA: *I faint almost to death.*
TOUCHSTONE: *Holla, you clown!*
ROSALIND: <Peace, fool|; he's not| thy kins|man. <!>|
CORIN: Who calls|? (*AYL* 2.4.67)

The Duke invites Othello to tell his story with an expansive gesture:

(220) ►₁₂₇

OTHELLO: *I'll present / How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
And she| in mine|.*

DUKE: <Say it>, Othe|llo. <!>. (Oth. 1.3.126)

A silent beat can cue a start of surprise:

(221) ►₁₂₈

VOLUMNIA: *I kneel before thee, and unproperly
Show duty, as mistaken all this while
Between| the child| and pa|rent. [Kneels]*

CORIOLANUS: <!>| What's this|?
Your knees to me? to your corrected son?

(Cor. 5.3.56)

DESDEMONA: *He hath commanded me to go to bed,
And bid| me to| dismiss| you.*

EMILIA: <!>| Dismiss|(| me? (Oth. 4.3.14)

or a gesture of recognition (like the clapping of hand to forehead):

(222) ►₁₂₉

ULYSSES: *They clap the lubber Ajax on the shoulder,
As if his foot were on brave Hector's breast,
And great| Tròy shrin|king.*

ACHILLES: <!>| <I do| believe|(| it;
For they pass'd by me "s misers do by beggars - (TC F1 3.3.141)

LUCENTIO: <Pardon>, swèet fa|ther.

VINCENTIO: <!>| <Lives my> swèet son|? (TS 5.1.112)⁶

or of dismissal (a finger-snap or its equivalent):

(223) ►₁₃₀

CAESAR: ... *Let the old ruffian know / I have many other ways to die; mean time,
<Laugh at> his cha|llenge. <!>|*

⁶ Alternatively, “<Pardon>, swèet fa|ther. / Lives| my sweet| ~ son|?”.

MAECENAS:

<Caesar> must think|

(AC 4.1.6)

or exasperation (striking a surface or stamping):

(224) ►₁₃₁

OTHELLO: ... Now, by heaven, / My blood begins my safer guides to rule ...

And he that is approv'd in this offence, ...

Shall lose| me. <!>| <What! in> a town| of war|, ...

To manage private and domestic quarrel?

(Oth. 2.3.213)

OTHELLO: *The handkerchief!*

DESDEMONA: A man that all his time

Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,

Shà'r'd dan|gers wiþ1 you –

OTHELLO: <!>| The hand|kerchief! (Oth. 3.4.95)

LEAR: Deny to speak with me? They "re sick? they "re weary?

They ha|ve tra|vell'd all| the night|? Mère fe|tches – <!>| (KL 2.4.89)

or of emphasis:

(225) ►₁₃₂

HOTSPUR: Send danger from the east unto the west,

So honour cross it from the north to south,

And let| them grapp|le: <!>| the blood| more stirs|

To rouse a lion than to start a hare!

(1H4 F1 1.3.197)

ISABELLA: Merciful heaven! / Thou rather with thy sharp and sulph"rous bolt

Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarlèd oak

<Than [the soft] myr|tle; <!>| but man|, pròud man|, ... (MM 2.2.117)

A silent beat may cue a theatrical registration of dismay or alarm at being suddenly at a loss for an answer. For example, Desdemona is disconcerted by Othello's odd remarks; Viola, embarrassed by Olivia's declaration of love, breaks off in confusion; the conscience-tormented Second Murderer finds it hard to name his errand to the victim:

(226) ►₁₃₃

OTHELLO: For there's a young and sweating devil here

*That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
A frank| òne.*

DESDEMONA: <!>| You măy|, indeed|, sày so|;
For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart. (Oth. 3.4.44)

OLIVIA: *But would you undertake another suit,*
I had rather hear you to solicit that
Than mu|sic frõm| the spheres|.

VIOLA: Dèar la|dy – <!>| (TN 3.1.110)

CLARENCE: *Who sent you hither? Wherefore do you come?*

SECOND MURDERER: To, tō|, to – <!>|

CLARENCE: To mur|der mě|?

BOTH MURDERERS: Ay, ay|.

CLARENCE: *You scarcely have the hearts to tell me so,* (R3 1.4.172)

More benignly, Gonzalo muses on his hypothetical Arcadia (eked out, as we have seen, with hesitation jolts):

(227) ►₁₃₄

GONZALO: *Had I plantation of this isle, my lord –*

... <And were| the king| on't, <!>| <what would> I do|? (Tp. 2.1.1.46)

Cleopatra's messenger, now wary of the queen's right hook, finds himself ambushed by a demand ("Guess at her years") to which it would be hard to give a safe answer (to escape another smacking he needs to make Octavia young enough to be a plausible match for the "ne'er lust-wearied" Antony, but not younger than Cleopatra herself, "wrinkled deep in time"). The silent beat here perhaps registers his alarmed facial response to the situation, alarm followed almost immediately by an inspired answer, simultaneously true, pleasing and non-committal:

(228) ►₁₃₅

CLEOPATRA: *The fellow has good judgment.*

CHARMIAN: *Excellent.*

CLEOPATRA: <Guess at> her years|, I pri|thee.

MESSENGER: Ma|dam, <!>|

She was a widow –

CLEOPATRA:

Widow? Charmian, hark.

(AC 3.3.30)

Northumberland begins, awkwardly, a difficult attempt to pour oil on troubled (and dangerous) waters, though almost immediately cut off by the King with a peremptory vocative jolt:

(229) ►₁₃₆

WORCESTER: *Our house, my sov'reign liege, little deserves
The scourge of greatness to be us'd on it,
And that same greatness too which our own hands
Have holp| to make| so port|ly.*

NORTHUMBERLAND: <!>| My lord| –

KING: ^ Worces|ter, get| thee gone|; <for I| do see|
Danger and disobed'ence in thine eye. (1H4 1.3.14-5)

In the following example, Claudius and Hamlet are fencing with each other, each prefacing his response with a knowing gesture (eyebrow-raising, nodding) in order to ‘psych out’ the other, to imply that the speaker knows more than the other has suspected:⁷

(230) ►₁₃₇

CLAUDIUS: *The barque is ready, and the wind at help,
Th' associates tend, and everything is bent
For En|gland.*

HAMLET: <!>| For En|gland?

CLAUDIUS: <!>| Áy, Ham|(let. (Ham. 4.3.46)

§5.3: The Deictic Rest

In addition to these mimetic and expressive applications of the silent beat, we also find a couple of interesting deictic uses, marking and drawing attention to features of the interaction between characters. One of these, for example, is to mark the end of a question, perhaps with a conventional head-tilt or some similar item of body language:

⁷ The other interpretive possibility is to expand *England* to three syllables in both cases. Trisyllabic *Engeland*, however, occurs nowhere else in Shakespeare , and while we could easily imagine Hamlet mimicking Claudius’ unusual pronunciation, it’s hard to see why Claudius would be given this exotic pronunciation in the first place.

(231) ►₁₃₈NORTHUMBERLAND: *My liege, old Gaunt commends him to your Majesty.*

KING RICHARD: What says| he <!>|?

NORTHUMBERLAND: Nay, no|thing; all| is said|. (R2 2.1.148)

KING RICHARD: Shall I obtain it <!>|?

BOLINGBROKE: <Name it>, fair cou|(sin. (R2 4.1.304)

BISHOP OF ELY: <Where is> my lord| the Duke| of Gloucester <!>|?

(R3 3.4.46)

GLOUCESTER: ... *O strange and fasten'd villain!*

<Would he| deny| his le|tter, said| he <!>|? (KL 2.1.78)

SILVIA: *Servant, you are welcome to a worthless mistress.*PROTEUS: *I'll die on him that says so but yourself.*

SILVIA: <That you| are wel|come <!>|?

PROTEUS: That you| are worth|(less. (TGV 2.4.115)MARTIUS: *Where is the en'my? Are you lords o' th' field?*If not|, why cease| you till| you are| so <!>|? (Cor. 1.6.47)

MESSENGER: <Fulv'a> thy wife| is dead|.

ANTONY: Where died| she <!>|? (AC 1.2.118)

CLEOPATRA: <Where is| he <!>|?

CHARMIAN: <I did| not see| him since|. (AC 1.3.1)

LEPIDUS: *Of us must Pompey presently be sought,*Or else| <he seeks| out us|.

ANTONY: Where lies| he <!>|? (AC 2.2.159)

TRITUS: <Publ'i'sus>, hòw now|? Hòw now|, my mas|ters <!>|? (Tit. 4.3.36)

RICHMOND: <Tell me>, hòw fares| our lo|ving mo|ther <!>|? (R3 5.3.82)

Sometimes the silent beat comes after a supplementary or tag question:

(232)

REGAN: *What, did my father's godson seek your life?*
 <He whom| my fa|ther nam'd|, your Ed|gar <!>? (KL 2.1.92)

DESDEMONA: Who's there|? Othe|llo <!>?
 OTHELLO: <Ay, Des|demo|(na (Oth. 5.2.23)

Like the jolt, the rest can mark an imperative, but with a supporting gesture. In King Richard's case, the first injunction "leave me", marked by a jolt, doesn't seem to work, so the repetition is accompanied by an intensifying silent beat (perhaps an impatient wave of the hand):

(233) ►₁₃₉

KING RICHARD: ^ Set it down. Is ink and paper ready?
 RATCLIFF: It is, my lord.
 KING RICHARD: Bid my guard watch; ^ leave me.
Ratcliff,
About the mid of night come to my tent
 And help| to arm| me. <!>| <Leave me>, I say|. (R3 5.1.78)

YORK: I pray| you, un|cle, <!>| <give me> this da|(gger. (R3 3.1.110)

GHOST: <Think on> Lòrd Has|tings. <!>| Despair| and die|! (R3 5.3.156)

GUIDERIUS: *I do note / That grief and patience, rooted in him both,*
 <Mingle> their spurs| toge|ther.
 ARVIRAGUS: <!>| Gròw pa|(tience!
And let the stinking elder, grief, untwine (Cym. 4.2.58)

The rest can also mark a vocative, specifically one involving a shift of addressee, possibly cuing a deictic turning of the head or body towards the new interlocutor:

(234) ►₁₄₀

BOLINGBROKE: Thánks, gen|tle un|cle. <!>| <Come, lords|, away|, (R2 3.1.42)

STANLEY: My lord|, gòod mo|rrow; <!>| gòod mo|rrow, Cates|(by. (R3 3.2.73)

BRABANTIO: [To OTHELLO] I here do give thee that with all my heart
 Which but thou hast already, with all my heart
 <I would| keep from| thee. [Turns to DESDEMONA]
 <!>| For your| sâke, je|(wel
 I am glad at soul I have no other child, (Oth. 1.3.195)

OTHELLO: What! in a town of war, ... / To manage private and domestic quarrel, ...
 'Tis mon|strous. <!>| Ia|go, whõ| began't?⁸ (Oth. 2.3.217)

OTHELLO: I cry you mercy then; / I took you for that cunning whore of Venice
 That ma|rried with| Othe|llo. [to EMILIA] <!>| You, mis|(tress,
 That have the office opposite to Saint Peter ... (Oth. 4.2.90)

ANTONY: A good rebuke, / Which might have well becom'd the best of men
 To taunt| at slack|ness. <!>| Cani|d'us, wě|
 Will fight with him by sea. (AC 3.7.27)

PROSPERO: their rising senses / Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
 Their clea|rer rea|son. <!>| Ó good| Gonza|(lo, (Tp. 5.1.68)

SICINIUS: if you bring not Martius, we'll proceed
 <In [our first] way|. MENENIUS: I'll bring| him tõ| you.
 [To the Senators.] <!>| Let me desire your company. (Cor. 3.1.336)

Or a topic change:

(235)

RICHMOND: But tell| me, <!>| is young| Gèorge Stan|ley li|(ving?
 (R3 5.3.376)

INNOCEN: ^ I| am sick| still; heart|-sick. <!>| Pisa|(n̄o,
 I'll now taste of thy drug. (Cym. 4.2.37)

Sometimes exits are punctuated by a silent beat:

⁸ Alternatively (and less interestingly) we could read the expanded form *monstèrous*, as in "Who ca|nnot want| the thought|, how mon|sterous|" (Mac. 3.6.8).

(236)

MARTIUS: Your valour puts| well forth|. Pray follow. <!>| [Exeunt]
 (Cor. 1.1.251)

INNOCENT: I am bound| to you|.

BELARIUS: And shalt| be ever. <!>| [Exit INNOCENT]
 (Cym. 4.2.46)

BRUTUS: Let's ... carry with us ears and eyes for th' time,
 But hearts| for the| event|.

SICINIUS: <Have with> you. <!>| [Exeunt]
 (Cor. 2.1.270)

More frequently entrances are accompanied by a deictic rest, perhaps a pointing gesture or a turning of the body towards the new arrival:

(237) ►₁₄₁
 BOLINGBROKE: Of much less value is my company
 <Than [your good] words|. But who| comes he|(ere <!>)?
 [Enter HARRY PERCY] (R2 2.3.20)

BOLINGBROKE: I know| it, un|(cle;| <and o>pouse not| myself|
 Against| their will|. But who| comes he|(ere <!>)?
 [Enter HARRY PERCY] (R2 3.3.19)

BOLINGBROKE: Evermore thanks, the exchequer of the poor;
 Which, till my infant fortune comes to years,
 <Stands for> my bount|y. <!>| But who| comes here|?
 [Enter BERKELEY] (R2 2.3.67)

LADY: How, my good name? or to report of you
 <What I> shall think| is good|? – The Prince|cess <!>!
 [Enter INNOCENT] (Cym. 2.4.85)

CLEOPATRA: Seek him, and bring him hither. Where's Alexas?
 ALEXAS: <Here, at> your service. <!>| My lord| approach|(ches.
 [Enter ANTONY with a Messenger] (AC 1.2.86)

AUFIDIUS: ^ Hě| approa|ches. Yōu| shall hear| him. <!>|

[Enter CORIOLANUS, marching with drum and colours;]

(Cor. 5.6.69)

CORIOLANUS: *Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow*

<In [the same] time| 'tis made|? I will| not. <!>|

[Enter, in mourning habits, VIRGILIA, etc.]

(Cor. 5.3.21)

CASSIO: *I humbly thank you for't. I never knew*

A Flo|rentine| more kind| and ho|nest. <!>|

[Enter EMILLA]

(Oth. F1 3.1.40)

OTHELLO: *Even then this forked plague is fated to us*

<When we| do qui|cken. <!>| <Look where> she comes|:

[Re-enter DESDEMONA and EMILLA.]

(Oth. 3.3.277)

Sometimes the entrance-jolt and the start of surprise appear to be fused, as with Cleopatra's first sight of the dying Antony:

(238) ►₁₄₂

DIOMEDES: *Look out o' th' other side your monument;*

His guard| have brought| him thi|ther.

[Enter [below], ANTONY, and the GUARD [bearing him]]

CLEOPATRA:

<!>| Ó sun|,

Burn the great sphere thou mov'st in! ...

(AC 4.15.9)

Another kind of rest is the interruption, where the silent beat involves the speaker breaking off in mid-sentence, as when the Jeweller breaks into the Osric-like verbosity of the Merchant's praise of Timon with an intrusive gesture such as showing the jewel, or Gertrude interrupts her son's intolerable tirade about Claudius by (perhaps) throwing up her hands:

(239) ►₁₄₃

MERCHANT: *A most incomparable man; breath'd, as it were,*

To an untirable and continuatue goodness.

He passes –

JEWELLER: <!> I have a jewel here.⁹ (Tim. 1.1.12)

HAMLET: *A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole
And put| it in| his po|cket –*

QUEEN: <!>| No more||! (Ham. 3.4.101)

In the following example Gloucester interrupts Margaret's curse to make it fall on her own head, though the structure of the following line, in which *Margaret* occupies the first three positions, suggests that the interruption is not vocal but gestural – perhaps a clap of the hands:

(240) ►₁₄₄

MARGARET: *Thou loathēd issue of thy father's loins,
Thou rag| of ho|nour, thou| detes|ted –*

GLoucester: <!>
<Marga>ret!

MARGARET: Ri|chard!

GLoucester: Ha|?

MARGARET: I call| thee not|. (R3 1.3.232-3)

And then there's the absolutely final interruption:

(241) ►₁₄₅

HOTSPUR: Nō, Per|cy, thōu| art dust|, and food| for – <!>| [Dies.]¹⁰

(1H4 5.4.86)

Interruption can be self-interruption, under the pressure of emotion (in this case exasperation, perhaps manifested as a contemptuous flicking of the letter):

(242) ►₁₄₆

HOTSPUR: *Sick now? droop now? This sickness doth infect*

⁹ Most editions print a full stop after *passes*, as in F1, but while the verb could be used intransitively to mean 'excels', 'He passes.' seems far too laconic for this Osric-like speaker when he could say something like 'He passes the extolment of all virtues, / And ...').

¹⁰ Editors usually follow the earliest texts in placing 'No, Percy, thou art dust' after 'Lies on my tongue', and stranding 'and food for' as a fragment. My arrangement makes better sense to me, with an expressive pause after 'Lies on my tongue' and the grunt or death-rattle expressed as the final rest of Hotspur's final line.

The very life-blood of our enterprise ...

He writes me here that inward sickness – <!>|

And that his friends by deputation could not

So soon be drawn ...

(1H4 4.1.31)

Sometimes where the interruption is caused by an entrance it leaves a word unspoken: Macbeth, for example, unwilling to be caught in hesitant soliloquy by his wife, breaks off in mid-sentence, leaving the word *side* unsaid:

(243) ►₁₄₇

MACBETH: *I have no spur / ... but only / Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself*

And falls| on th^e o|ther – <!>| [Enter LADY MACBETH.]

How now|? What news|? (Mac. 1.7.28)

Similarly Iago, not wanting Othello to hear him gossiping about him, breaks off before uttering the name *Desdemona*:

(244)

IAGO: *He's married.* / CASSIO: *To who?*

IAGO: <Marry>, to – <!>| [Enter OTHELLO]

Còme, cap|tain, will| you go|?

(Oth. 1.2.53)

§5.4: Multiple Lacunae

We can see the short pentameter at work in the following passage, in which Emilia registers for the first time the appalling truth about her husband's slander of Desdemona. It contains four occurrences of the phrase "my husband", all of which are placed by their prosodic and informational contexts in different relations to the metre. The first (l.138) is simply a puzzled query ("Why mention him? What has he got to do with all this?"); the second (l.142) repeats that query after a silent beat that signifies a kind of stunned double-take (the penny is beginning to drop). The third utterance (l.145) has an incredulous, horrified accent on both words in the phrase; by the fourth (l.148) accentuation has returned to normal as she desperately seeks a contradiction from Othello (whose exasperation provides the jolts in this line):

(245) ►₁₄₈

OTHELLO: <*Cassⁱo*> did top| her; ask| thy hus|band else|.

<*O, I*> were damn'd| beneath all depth| in hell|,

<But that| I did| proceed| upon| just grounds|
 To this| extre| mitý|. \ Thy hus| band knew| it all|.

EMILIA: My hus|(band)? \

OTHELLO: Thy hus|(band). \

EMILIA: <That she| was false| to wed|(lock?

OTHELLO: ^ Ay|, with Ca|ssio|. <Had she| been true|,
 If heav'n| would make| me such| ano|ther world|
 Of one| entire| and per|fect chry|solite|,
 I'ld nōt| have sold| her fōr| it.

EMILIA: <!>| My hus|(band)?

OTHELLO: ^ Ay|, 'twas he| that told| me օn| her first|.

An ho|nest man| he ȳs|, and hates| the slime|
 That sticks| on fil|thy deeds|.

EMILIA: ^ My| ~ hus|(band)?

OTHELLO: What needs| this it|e rance, wo|(man?)\ I say| thy hus|(band).

EMILIA: Ó mis|tress, vi|ll'i ny [bath made] mocks| with love|!

My hus|band say| sh^e was false|!!

OTHELLO: ^ He!, ^ wo{man;

I say| thy hus|(band. \ Dost un|derstand| the word|?

My friend|, thy hus|band, ho|nest, ho|nest ^{l'a}|go.

(Oth. 5.2.136-54)

I have provided lots of examples of lacunae in action because I wish to show that they represent not sports or flukes or compositorial botching but rather a systematic pattern of compositional choice on Shakespeare's part. Nevertheless, they remain rare in his verse because they are parasitic upon the normative syllabic regulation of the verse; too many of them would undermine our sense of the decasyllabic norm against which they must be perceived.

Some writers for whom all lacunae are merely pauses have imagined whole strings of them padding out short verses into pentameters, as though one could have a line like: "Ó Ca|ssus, if| you could| ^ <!>| ^ <!>|" (JC 1.3.140).¹¹ But while the short line doubtless indicates a hesitation on Cinna's part here, such a precise sequence of lacunae could not be communicated by an actor; at most it would be possible in theory to have a single silent foot composed of a jolt and a gestural silent beat, but this is not an option that Shakespeare seems to avail himself of, with one possible exception, the rest here expressed by a gesture of bafflement:

¹¹ See, for example, Sicherman (1984).

(246)

HAMLET: *For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil
Must give| us pause|; ^ <!>| <there's the> respect|
That makes calamity of so long life:*

(Ham. 3.1.67)

Shakespeare avoids this for the same reason, perhaps, that he uses lacunae sparingly: to avoid undermining the code that reveals his metrical intentions by introducing too much play and laxity into the system. By the same token, if we want to read that code accurately we need to follow Occam's Razor, and not introduce lacunae unless there is a genuine gap in the syllabic structure of the verse. The following scansions, in which silent beats substitute for weak beats, are perverse, in that in none of these verses has Shakespeare signalled the need for a rest, and in each case the rest produces extrametrical syllables:

(247)

To be , or <u>not</u> t° be, <!> <that is> the ques t(tion:	x
<Whether> 'tis no bler <!> in th° mind to su (ffer	x
The slings and a rrows <!> °f outra geous for (tune	x

(Ham. 3.1.55-7)

6. Other Kinds of Verse in the Plays

“Lascivious metres, to whose venom sound
The open ear of youth doth always listen”

(*Richard II*, 2.1.19-20)

Although most of the verse in the plays is unrhymed iambic pentameter, there is a surprising variety of other kinds of spoken verse (I do not deal here with the rhythm of the songs, since this is for the most part governed by their musical settings). This falls into two categories: isolated non-pentameter iambic lines scattered through the blank verse (Shakespeare seems to have seen such lines as a kind of metrical variation within blank verse) and more markedly distinctive passages of rhyming verse, ranging from couplets to whole scenes.

§6.1: Short and Long Lines in Blank Verse

§6.1.1: Short Lines

A short verse is a non-pentameter with fewer than ten available¹ syllables occurring in a passage of blank verse. They are quite common in Shakespeare’s mid to late style, in part because, as George Wright says, they make the “dialogue sound more convincing” (1988, 137). Isolated tetrameters are fairly rare, perhaps because they run the risk of sounding like failed pentameters, but also because they disrupt the heuristic process of scansion, which instructs us to look for pentameters where possible:

¹ All syllables in a verse , including half-syllables, up to and including the last independent, are ‘available’.

(248)

GAUNT: *There is no virtue like necessity.*

<Think not> the King| did ba|nish thee|,

But thou the King.

(R2 1.3.279)

Trimeters or three-foot verses, on the other hand, go well with pentameters (as illustrated in the odes of Collins and Keats), and so tend to constitute the bulk of short verses; we also occasionally find the dimeter or two-foot verse, and other fragments. In the first scene of *King Lear*, the point at which Cordelia's inability to co-operate causes Lear's ceremonial catechism of his daughters to erupt into open-ended drama is marked by the progressive dissolution of pentameter into dimeter and then into smaller fragments:

(249)

LEAR: *Now, our joy,*

Although our last and least, to whose young love

The vines of France and milk of Burgundy

Strive to be interess'd, what can you say to draw

A third more op"lent than your sisters? Speak.

CORDELIA: <Nothing>, my lord|.

LEAR: Nothing?

CORDELIA: Nothing.

(KL 1.1.82-9)

For a discussion of the relation between short lines and pausing, see §3.1.

§6.1.2: Long Lines (Alexandrines)

Between 0 (*MND*) and 2.3% (*MM*) of the lines in a play will be alexandrines, or six-foot iambic lines; for technical reasons alexandrines have eight beats, the fourth and eighth being silent (see §1.5.3). Lear uses them in the first scene of the play, for example, to swell out his wounded dignity, like a frill-necked lizard making itself appear bigger (and more threatening) than it is:

(250)

LEAR: *I do invest you jointly with my power,*

Pre-eminence, and all the large effects

That troop| with ma|jestý|. <!> Ourself|, by month|ly course|, <!>

With reservation of an hundred knights,

By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode

<Make with> you [by due] turns|. <!> <Only> we shāll| retain| <!>

The name, and all th' addition to a king:

(KL 1.1.132, 135)

The alexandrine differs fundamentally from the pentameter in that it requires a break (known as an **obligatory caesura**) after the third beat to accommodate the medial rest, so that the line can never be ‘single-moulded’. It is interspersed throughout the blank verse, and is it is rare to find two alexandrines together; one sustained passage of particular interest, however, is the conclusion to the wooing of Lady Anne in *Richard III*. Earlier in the scene their contest of wit is represented through stichomythia (3.2.2), and this scene superficially resembles a reprise of this form in a different metre. What it actually represents, however, is the opposite of the complete separation suggested by stichomythia, in that in each exchange the two combine to construct an alexandrine between them, their co-operative connectedness underscored by hemistich-final semantic and phonetic ties (*heart/tongue, false/true, hereafter/hope, sword/made*). It marks the beginning of Anne’s capitulation, her acceptance of Richard, expressed in this very passage in her shift from the contemptuous *thy* to the more respectful *your*:

(251) ►₁₄₉

ANNE:

I would| I knew| thy heart|. <!>
I fear| me both| are false|. <!>
Wéll, well|, <put up| your sword|. <!>
<That shall> you know| hereaf|(ter.\ <!>
All men|, I hope|, live so|. <!>

RICHARD:

|| 'Tis fi|gur'd īn| my tongue|. <!>
|| Thèn ne|ver man| was true|. <!>
|| <Say, then|, my peace| is made|. <!>
|| But shall| I live| in hope? <!>
|| Vouchsafe| to wear| this ring|. <!>

(R3 1.2.192-201)

§6.2: Rhymed Verse

The sole medium for English drama before the reign of Elizabeth was rhymed verse, and when Shakespeare first began to write for the stage blank verse was still a relatively new vehicle. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that early in his career Shakespeare used quite a lot of rhyme (over 40% of the lines in *Love's Labours Lost* are rhymed, for example), though the proportion decreased markedly as his career developed, down to less than 1% in *Coriolanus*. Differences are not due solely to Shakespeare’s development, however: comedies and romances, for example, will tend to have more rhyme in them than tragedies and histories.

§6.2.1: The Pentameter Couplet

Pentameter couplets (rhymed pairs of lines) are the most common alternative verse-form in the plays, either as isolates or in extended passages. As pentameters they are, of course, subject to all the normal variations discussed in chapters 2 and 3 (but not those of chapters 4 and 5).

The most familiar use of the isolated pentameter couplet is to act as a kind of punctuational device, indicating the end of a scene. Though the frequency of this device declines during Shakespeare's artistic development, it can be found in both the earliest and the latest plays:

(252)

EGEON: Hopeless and helpless doth Egeon **wend**,
But to procrastinate his liveless **end**. [Exeunt] (CE 1.1.157-8)

ARIEL: Prosp^ero my lord shall know what I have **done**.
So, King, go safely on to seek thy **son**. [Exeunt] (Tp. 2.1.327-8)

HAMLET: *My father's spirⁱt – in arms! All is not well.*
I doubt some foul play. Would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul. Foul deeds will **rise**,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's **eyes**. [Exit]
(Ham. 1.2.254-7)

In the last example rhyme serves a double turn, in also pointing a *sententia* – a pithy generalising maxim that relates the particular action of the drama to some supposedly universal truth. Since the habit of inserting *sententiae* seems to derive from Seneca, sententious couplets tend to be commonest in the tragedies:

(253)

LADY MACBETH: Nought's had, all's **spent**,
Where our desire is got without **content**;
"Tis safer to be that which we **destroy**
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful **joy**. (Mac. 3.2.5-8)

Couplet dialogues where the couplets (and even the lines) are shared are sometimes used to suggest the quick cut-and-thrust of witty exchange:

(254)

BEROWNE: <White-han|ded mis|tress, one| sweet word| with **thèë**.

PRINCESS: <Honey>, and milk|, and su|gar: there| is **three**|. ...

BEROWNE: One word| in se|cret.

PRINCESS: Let| it nōt| be **sweet**|.

BEROWNE: Thou griev'st| my gall|.

PRINCESS: Gáll! bi|tter.

BEROWNE: There|fore **meet**.

(*LLL* 5.2.229-38)

Sustained couplet passages, being more obviously artificial than blank verse, function as a distancing mechanism, where Shakespeare wants to preclude a close emotional engagement with the characters. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, wouldn't work in quite the same farcical way if we were disposed to take the lovers' problems seriously, and so the language seeks to obviate our emotional involvement through a combination of highly formal elements: rhyme and stichomythia (together with a degree of grammatical parallelism, or 'isocolon'):

(255) ►₁₅₀

HELENA: Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,

The rest I'd give to be to you translated.

O, teach me how you look, and with what art

You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

HERMIA: I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA: O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

HERMIA: I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

HELENA: O that my pray'rs could such affection move!

HERMIA: The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HELENA: The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA: His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA: None, but your beauty; would that fault were mine!

(*MND* 1.1.190-201)

Something similar obtains in the following passage from *Twelfth Night*, expressing Olivia's farcical attachment to Viola/Cesario:

(256) ►₁₅₁

OLIVIA: A murd^erous guilt shows not itself more soon
 Than love that would seem hid: love's night is noon. –
 Cesarⁱo, by the roses of the spring,
 By maidhood, honour, truth, and every thing,
 I love thee so that, maugre all thy pride,
 Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide. (TN 3.2.153-160)

Rhymed pentameter can also function as a marker of artificiality itself, as in the play-within-the play in *Hamlet*, where it serve to indicate the ‘scriptedness’ of *The Mousetrap* as opposed to the represented spontaneity of the blank verse that surrounds it:

(257) ►₁₅₂

PLAYER KING: Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
 Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbëd ground,
 And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
 About the world have times twelve thirties been
 Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands,
 Unite commutual in most sacred bands. (Ham. 3.2.154-9)

The question of how much weight to give the rhyming word is decided by the degree of endstopping built into the verse by Shakespeare; in these heavily endstopped examples it would be hard to avoid coming down heavily on the rhyme, whereas in the following example from the masque in *The Tempest*, the first line of each couplet is run on, encouraging a more fluid delivery, couplet by couplet, with less emphasis on the rhymes:

(258)

CERES: Hail, many-coloured messenger, that ne'er # →
 Dost disobey the wife of Jupiter; †
 Who, with thy saffron wings, upon my flow'r's # →
 Diffusest honey drops, refreshing show'r's; †
 And with each end of thy blue bow dost crown # →
 My bosky acres and my unshrub'd down, †
 Rich scarf to my proud earth-why hath thy Queen # →
 Summon'd me hither to this short-grass'd green? † (Tp. 4.1.75-82)

§6.2.2: The Pentameter Stanza

A stanza is a group of three or more lines that rhyme in a particular pattern. In *CE* Shakespeare experiments with pentameter quatrains (rhyming *abab*) as a subtler form of distancing mechanism:

(259)

LUCIANA: And may it be that you have quite forgot	a
A husband's office? Shall, Antipholus	b
E'en in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot?	a
Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous?	b
If you did wed my sister for her wealth,	
Then for her wealth's sake use her with more kindness:	
Or, if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth,	
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness:	(CE 3.2.1-8)

RJ famously makes use of the sonnet – the archetypal love-poem – in various ways, most memorably as a way of framing and holding the lovers' first meeting. The sonnet (technically a *sonetto caudato*, or 'sonnet with a tail') here acts as a kind of synecdoche of their relationship, book-ended as it is by antithetical threats: Tybalt's mindless ferocity and the Nurse's banal domesticity. The movement of the sonnet towards its inevitable conclusion prefigures in an accelerated way the development of their own connectedness: at first they merely share the octave, one quatrain each; then they begin to share pairs of lines, and end by sharing a single line:

(260) ►₁₅₃

TYBALT: <I will withdraw ; but this intru sion shāll ,	
<Now see ming sweet , convert to bi tērest gall .	Exit.
ROMEO: <If I profane with my unworn thi'est hand	
This ho ly shrine , the gen tle sin is this :	
My lips , twō blu shing pil grims, rea dy stand	
To smooth that rōugh <touch with> a ten der kiss .	
JULIET: Gōod pil grim, yōu do wrong your hand tōo much ,	
Which ma nnerlȳ devo tion shows in this ;	
For saints have hands that pil grims' hands do touch ,	
And palm to palm is ho ly pa lmers' kiss .	
ROMEO: <Have not> sāints lips , and ho ly pa lmers too ?	

JULIET: Ay, pil|grim, lips| that th y| must use| in pray r|.

ROMEO: < , then|, d ar saint|, l t lips| d  what| h nds do|!

They pray|; <grant thou>, lest faith| <turn to> despair|.

JULIET: <Saints do> not move|, though grant| for pra|yers' sake|.

ROMEO: Then move| not while| my pray r's| effect| I take|.

<Thus from> my lips|, by thine| my sin| is purg'd|. [Kisses her.]

JULIET: <Then have| my lips| the sin| that th y| have took|.

ROMEO: <Sin from> my lips|?   tres|pass sweet|ly urg'd|!

<Give me> my sin| again|. [Kisses her.]

JULIET: You kiss| by th'book|.

NURSE: <*Madam*, your mo|ther craves| a word| with y u|. (RJ 1.5.91-111)²

§6.2.3: Rhymed Alexandrines

The alexandrine (§6.1.2) is a clunky line in English because of the obligatory medial caesura that accommodates the necessary rest, and that clunkiness becomes highly noticeable in an extended passage. For this reason rhyming alexandrines only ever appear in Shakespeare as a satire on wooden versifying, as in the case of the pageant of the Nine Worthies in *Love's Labours Lost*:

(261)

NATHANIEL: <When in> the world| I liv'd|, <!> <I was| the world's|
comman|der; <!>

By east|, w st, north|, and south|, <!> I spread| my con|qu ring might|. <!>

My scut|cheon plain| declares| <!> that I| am A|lisan|(der - <!>

(LLL 5.2.562-4)

§6.2.4: The Septenary or 'Fourteener' ('Iambic Heptameter')

The septenary (a seven-foot iambic verse followed by a rest or a silent foot, printed either as one or as two typographic lines) was much more widely used – it was the staple metre of old-fashioned morality plays like *A lamentable tragedy mixed ful of pleasant mirth, conteyning the life of Cambises king of Percia* (1569) – but by the 1590s was considered old hat and suitable only for parodies (such as *The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby*), or for

² I have scanned this passage to illustrate the difference between a somewhat agitated Romeo, with six obligatory switches and a harsh mapping, and a much more composed Juliet, with just one obligatory switch.

folk poetry. Shakespeare uses it in *Cymbeline* to suggest the archaic voice of Posthumus' dead father, speaking from the tomb:

(262)

<Hath my| pòor boy| done aught| but well|, Whose face| I ne|ver saw|? <!>
I died| whilst ĩn| the womb| he stay'd| Atten|ding na|ture's law|, <!>
Whose father then (as men report Thou orphans' father art)
Thou shouldst have been, and shielded him From this earth-vexing smart.

(*Cym.* 5.4.35-42)

More commonly, however, the form is used with parodic intention, to mock (for example) the pedantically inept versifying of Holofernes' extempore effusion in *Loves' Labours Lost*, with its heavy-handed alliteration and painfully elaborated puns:

(263)

The prey|ful Prin|cess pierc'd| and prick'd| a pre|tty plea|sing pri|cket; <!>
<Some say| a sore|, but not| a sore|, till now| māde sore| with shoo|ting. <!>
The dogs did yell; put *el* to *sore*, then sorel jumps from thicket,
Or pricket sore, or else sorel; the people fall a-hooting.
If sore be sore, then L to sore makes fifty sores o' sorel.
Of one sore I an hundred make by adding but one more L. (*LLL* 4.2.56-61)

Even-handedly, Shakespeare also uses the form to poke gentle fun at the amateur theatricals of those that “never laboured in their brains till now”; Pompey’s speech in the pageant of the Nine Worthies is largely in septenary, as is Bottom’s death-agony as Pyramus:

(264)

Cóme, tears|, confound|; / Oút, sword|, and wound| / The pap| of Py|ramüs|; <!>
<Ay, that> lèft pap|, / Where heart| doth hop|. / <Thus die| I, thus|, thús,
thus|. <!>
Now am I dead, / Now am I fled; / My soul is in the sky.
Tongue, lose thy light; / Moon, take thy flight. / Now die, die, die, die, die.
(*MND* 5.1.295-306)

Given the parodic nature of such verse it would be difficult to over-emphasise the metre in performance.

§6.2.5: The Iambic Tetrameter Couplet

Occasionally we find in the plays a four-beat rhyming couplet, usually used for what might be called ‘ritual utterance’: spells, incantations, and extradiegetic matter such as prologues and epilogues, where the actor steps out of his or her role to address the audience:

(265)

Upōn| the cor|ner ḍf| the moon|
 There hangs| a vap|rōus drop| profound|;
 I'll catch| it ere| it come| to ground|. (Mac. 3.5.23-9)
 And that|, distill'd| by ma|gic sleights|
 Shall raise| such ar|tifi|cial sprites|
 <As by| the strength| of thēir| illu|(sion
 Shall draw| him on| to hīs| confu|(sion.

This example is atypical, however, because it represents a four-foot (tetrameter) couplet, which scans (less a foot) very much like the pentameter, with the same metrical and prosodic variations:

(266)

<And, which| is worse|, <all you> have done| (Mac. 3.5.10)
 The close| contri|ver [of all] harms|, (Mac. 3.5.7)

This footed four-beat form tends to be found in parts of the canon that are usually ascribed to other writers (the Hecate scenes in *Macbeth*, for example, or the Gower sections of *Pericles*).

§6.2.6: The Four-beat Heptasyllabic Couplet

Shakespeare’s typical ritual verse, a four-beat heptasyllabic couplet, is much more clearly distinguished from pentameter than the tetrameter in that it is not footed, which means that there is no metrical variation within the line; no reversals or swaps (though tails are, of course, possible: “¹Double, ²double, ³toil and ⁴trou(ble”). The great majority of lines, however, have seven syllables, every odd-numbered one being a beat: Shakespeare neatly precludes the possibility of footedness by combining an even number of beats with an odd number of syllables.

This might seem a trivial difference but the effects are profound: it is the capacity of the beat to slide around in the grid of syllable-positions that gives footed metre like the pentameter its lively naturalistic complexity. When the placing of beats is fixed in relation to the grid it produces a heavy insistent sing-song rhythmicality that distorts natural speech-patterns in favour of the rigid metrical scheme:

(267) ►₁₅₄THIRD WITCH: ¹Finger ²of birth-³strangled ⁴babe¹*Ditch-de²liver'd³by a⁴drab*

(Mac. 4.1.30)

FIRST WITCH: ¹*Pour in²sow's blood³that hath⁴eaten*¹**Her** nine ²farrow; ³grease that's ⁴sweaten

(Mac. 4.1.65)

PUCK: ¹*When thou²wak'st, let³love for⁴bid*¹Sleep his ²seat on ³**thy** eye⁴lid.

(MND 2.2.81)

ARIEL: (Be¹fore you ²**can** say ³'come' and ⁴'go',¹**And** breathe ²twice, and ³cry 'so, ⁴so',

(Tp. 4.1.45)

Unfooted verse tends towards chantably regular timing. This allows choral speaking (virtually impossible with pentameter) and makes it peculiarly appropriate to the eldritch other-worldly anonymity of the triune Weird Sisters, who speak in incantation and whose conversations are more like infernal liturgies:

(268) ►₁₅₅FIRST WITCH: ¹When shall ²we three ³meet a⁴gain?In ¹thunder, ²lightning, ³or in ⁴rain?SECOND WITCH: ¹When the ²hurly-³burly's ⁴done,¹When the ²battle's ³lost and ⁴won.THIRD WITCH: ¹That will ²be ere th^e³set of ⁴sun.FIRST WITCH: ¹Where the ²place?SECOND WITCH: U³pon the ⁴heath.THIRD WITCH: ¹There to ²meet with -³<!> Mac⁴beth. (Mac. 1.1.1-6; dash mine)

As the last line shows, the metre employs (though rarely) the silent beat (see §1.5.3): here, violently intruding at a flaw (not possible in iambic pentameter) it produces a portentous pause before the revelation of their victim's name (recall

that in simple metre no gesture is required to mark a silent beat, only timing). It also uses occasional catalexis (usually a drag in position 6):

- (269) ►₁₅₆
- ¹Toad, that ²under ³cold ~ ⁴stone (Mac. 4.1.6)
¹Trip we ²after ³night's ~ ⁴shade. (MND 4.1.96)
¹Swifter ²than the ³moon's ~ ⁴sphere; (MND 2.1.7)

The metrical rigidity is appropriate to a certain kind of heavy didacticism:

- (270) ►₁₅₇
- ¹All that ²glisters ³is not ⁴gold,
¹Often ²have you ³heard that ⁴told;
¹Many a ²man his ³life hath ⁴sold
¹But my ²outside ³to be⁴hold. (MV 2.7.65-8)

It is also useful to distinguish extradiegetic verse such as epilogues:

- (271) ►₁₅₈
- ¹Now the ²hungry ³lion ⁴roars,
¹And the ²wolf be³howls the ⁴moon;
¹Whilst the ²heavy ³ploughman ⁴snores,
¹All with ²weary ³task for ⁴done. (MND 5.1.371-4)
- ¹Now my ²charms are ³all o'er⁴thrown,
¹And what ²strength I ³have's mine ⁴own,
¹Which is ²most faint. ³Now 'tis ⁴true,
I ¹must be ²here con³fin'd by ⁴you, (Tp. Epil. 1-4)

The masque in *The Tempest* uses a variation with an obligatory tail:

- (272) ►₁₅₉
- ¹Honour, ²riches, ³marriage-⁴blessing,
¹Long con²tin^uance, ³and in⁴creasing,
¹Hourly ²joys be ³still u⁴pon you,
¹Juno ²sings her ³blessings ⁴on you. (Tp. 4.1.106-9)

§6.2.7: Doggerel

Before the triumph of the pentameter in the 1580s, most English drama was written in doggerel, by which I mean verse with a fixed number of beats per line (usually four or eight) and a variable number of syllables:

(273)

¹Many a ²mile have I ³walked, ⁴<!> di⁵verse and ⁶sundry ⁷ways, ⁸<!>
 And ¹many a ²good man's ³house ⁴<!> have I ⁵been at ⁶in my ⁷days ⁸<!>
¹Many a ²gossip's ³cup ⁴<!> in ⁵my time ⁶have I ⁷tasted ⁸<!>
 And ¹many a ²broach and ³spit, ⁴<!> have ⁵I both ⁶turned and ⁷basted ⁸<!>

(*Gammer Gurton's Needle* [1575], 1.1.1-4)

Because such verse lacks the foot-structure of pentameter it is often hard to know how to scan it, or even whether it is meant to be eight-beat or four-beat; the eight-beat speech (above) that opens the play, for example, modulates randomly in and out of a four-beat mode:

(274)

¹Sighing and ²sobbing they ³weep and they ⁴wail
 I ¹marvel in my ²mind, what the ³devil they ⁴wail

(*GGN* 1.1.13-14)

Such doggerel can occasionally be found in Shakespeare's earliest comedies, where it can be seen as part of the exuberant linguistic playfulness that characterises *CE* and *LLL* in particular, though he seems to have abandoned it after *LLL*, except for specific uses like the Fool's prophecy in *Lear*. In *CE* 3.1, for example, the urbane blank verse with which the scene opens shifts into six-beat doggerel couplets with the first speech of Dromio of Ephesus and remains in that form throughout the farcical episode of Antipholus' being locked out of his own home, returning to blank verse only after Dromio's exit to fetch a crowbar at line 84 (the scansion here is only my suggestion):

(275) ►₁₆₀

ANTIPHOLUS E.: But, ¹soft, my ²door is ³lock'd; ⁴<!> go ⁵bid them ⁶let us ⁷in.
⁸<!>

DROMIO E.: ¹Maud, ²Bridget, ³Marian, ⁴<!> ⁵Cicely, ⁶Gillian, ⁷Ginn! ⁸<!>

DROMIO S.: [*Within*] ¹Mome, ²malt-horse, ³capon, ⁴<!> ⁵coxcomb, ⁶idiot,
⁷patch! ⁸<!>

Either ¹get thee ²from the ³door, ⁴<!> or ⁵sit ⁶down at the ⁷hatch. ⁸<!>

¹Dost thou ²conjure for ³wenches, ⁴<!> that thou ⁵call'st for ⁶such ⁷store,
⁸<!>

When ¹one is ²one too ³many? ⁴<!> Go ⁵get thee ⁶from the ⁷door. ⁸<!>

(CE 3.1.30-35)

It has been suggested that the way in which doggerel makes everyone sound much the same intensifies that confusion of identity that lies at the heart of the play (see O'Donnell 1997). The plot of *CE* is based on the comedies of Plautus, and it is perhaps no coincidence that the earliest attempts to write Plautine comedy in English (such as Nicholas Udall's *Rafe Royster Doyster* [1553]) were written in doggerel.

Doggerel is not confined, however, to low-life or farcical situations: a four-beat doggerel couplet is occasionally used for wit-contests among the French courtiers in *LLL*:

(276)

BOYET: I was as ¹willing to ²grapple as ³he was to ⁴board.

KATHARINE: ¹Two hot sheeps, ²marry!

BOYET: And ³wherefore not ⁴ships?

No ¹sheep, sweet ²lamb, unless we ³feed on your ⁴lips.

KATHARINE: You ¹sheep and I ²pasture: shall that ³finish the ⁴jest?

BOYET: So you grant ¹pasture for ²me. [*Offering to kiss her*]

KATHARINE: Not ³so, gentle ⁴beast;

My ¹lips are no ²common, though ³several they ⁴be.

BOYET: Be¹longing to ²whom?

KATHARINE: To my ³fortunes and ⁴me. (*LLL* 2.1.218-24)

It may be that in (276) Shakespeare was seeking the effect of witty extempore versifying, but it is a clumsy form in which to represent elegant badinage. As this example shows, there is no point in trying too hard to get doggerel 'right', not only because there is often no right reading, but also because its clumsiness is part of its comic appeal: trying to perfect the speaking of doggerel is like combing a fright wig – not only pointless (and perhaps impossible) but counterproductive.

7. Taking it Further: Metrical Analysis

“That would be scann’d” (*Hamlet*, 3.3.75)

§7.1: What is Scansion (and Why is it Useful)?

Scansion is the explicit metrical analysis of a verse, something that most of the time you should not find necessary if you have worked your way through this book. As with any cognitive ability, once you’ve learned how to do it the processing tends to take place automatically, below the threshold of consciousness. Once you’ve learned how to dance or to drive, for example, you’re not constantly thinking to yourself “which foot do I move next, and where do I put it?” The analytical process described here, therefore, is only for those odd lines that defeat the rapid intuitive process of forward guesswork that usually works very well. The notation we have been using so far in the book is a descriptive system for representing scensions that have already been made, rather than a heuristic tool for discovering them. For proper analytical or investigative scansion we require a more explicit system that describes separately (and relates) the prosodic structure of the verse and the metrical pattern of the line, which means such scensions must be – cumbersomely – three-tiered: text, prosody and metre.

§7.2: Prosodic Politics: Independence, Domination and Liberation

The first task in metrical analysis is to mark up the prosodic structure of the verse, in terms of the categories of syllables described in Chapter 1 (A-, B- and O-), not forgetting to tag half-syllables (with an \ddot{o}). Before we can scan a verse to work out what metrical lines might or might not emerge from it, we need to understand what might be called its prosodic politics – that is, the way syllables

exert power over their neighbours to affect the possible placement of beats; this depends on the strength and connectedness of syllables. A syllable capable of carrying a beat (A, B, O, O) is called an ‘**independent**’. Since a metrical pentameter line requires five beats, a verse must have at least five independents to produce a metrical line. The threat to a weak syllable’s independence is a neighbouring major stress, and the more closely connected they are, the greater the threat. A weak syllable will be **dominated** by a contiguous strong (A- or B-) syllable, but not by an adjacent one (ie where a crack intervenes – see §1.3.2): a dominated weak syllable is represented in the **prosodic base** by a lowercase ‘o’, with a line joining it to the dominating syllable. A weak syllable will also be protected by a following crack: in “the messengers # sent from Rome”, the last syllable of “messengers” remains independent. In the same way, a minor (B) syllable will be dominated by a neighbouring A-syllable *unless* it is protected by an intervening cut. (See Table in §7.2.2 for a full account of these prosodic politics.)

We can indicate domination graphically by putting the ‘O’ of the dominated in lowercase and connecting it to the dominating A-syllable (the ‘dominant’, for short). If we take the word ‘deceptive’ (**o-A-o**) or the phrase ‘the water’ (**o-A-o**) or ‘between us’ (**o-B-o**), in each case the central strong syllable dominates the unprotected weak syllables on either side, and thus prevents each of them from carrying a beat. The same is true of the sentence ‘I **love** you’ (**o-A-o**), because personal pronouns function (effectively) as affixes or ‘clitics’ of the verb. Subordinated stresses dominate joined weak syllables in the same word: “immense heights” (**o-a-A**), “Nicole left” (**o-a-A**). Some examples of the domination of a minor syllable: “between jobs” (**b-A**), “**lamp-post**” (**A-b**).

We then attempt to relate this prosodic base, syllable by syllable, to one of the metrical templates (§2.2); if we find we have to map a dominated *o*-syllable onto an *S*-position, the verse is unmetrical. Much of the time the process is pretty straightforward:

(277)

And let my liver rather heat with wine (MV 1.1.81)

o---A	o--A-o	A--o
w---S	w--S	w---S

prosodic base

metrical template

Brief as the lightning in the collied night, (MND 1.1.143)

A---o	o--A----o	o
S---w	w--S	w---S
		w S w---S

Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play. (H5 1.0.34)

A---o o--A \ A---o o---A \ o----A
S---w w---S S---w w---S w----S

§7.2.1: Inhibition

Where an unstressed or O-syllable is adjacent to a preceding fully stressed major (A) or minor (B) syllable it ceases to be fully independent and is ‘inhibited’: “sing # in the shower” (**A-Ō o-A-ō**); subordinate major or ‘a’-syllables inhibit contiguous weak syllables: “the old dog” (**Ō-a-A**). An inhibited syllable is so called because readers will refrain from placing a beat on it (except where it is unavoidable) in all but the most artificial of performance-styles. Thus Ō-syllables must be matched with either W- or w-slots in the template; note that in the case of trisyllabic ‘descending’ compounds (*AbO*) like *grandmother*, the final syllable is not influenced:

(278)

And faire Queene Isabel, his Grandmother, (H5 1.2.81)

O A a---A-o O o---A---b---O
W S w S w S w S

§7.2.2: Table of Prosodic Politics

**Table of Prosodic Politics:
Influence of stresses on neighbouring syllables not separated by a cut**

Effect of	Within word	Within phrase (joined or contiguous)	Within tone-unit (adjacent)
1. On major (A-) syllables			
A	N/A	A subordinates A: <i>old mán</i> a----A <i>Jóhn's hát</i> a-----A	A subordinates A if they are in immediate construction: <i>Jóhn # léft</i> a-----A <i>lèave # nów</i> a-----A

2. On minor (B-) syllables

A	A dominates B : Housewife A----b	A dominates B : <i>between + jobs</i> b-----A	No effect
a	N/A	a has no effect on B : <i>between + two worlds</i> o---B a--A	N/A

3. On unstressed or weak (O-) syllables

A	A dominates O : <i>defend</i> o-A <i>fighter</i> A--o	A dominates O : <i>visible + light</i> o----A	A inhibits following O : <i>sleep # in the subway</i> A----ō A has no effect on preceding O
B	B dominates O : <i>between</i> o---B <i>after</i> B--o	B dominates O : <i>beautiful + kangaroos</i> o-----B <i>between + us</i> B-----o	B has no effect on O : <i>witnesses # understand</i> o B
a	a dominates O : <i>defend freedom</i> o-a-----A--o	a inhibits O : <i>the - old man,</i> ō---a----A	N/A
b	b has no effect on O : <i>between jobs</i> o b----A <i>Grasshopper</i> A----b o	b has no effect on O : <i>in this way</i> o b----A	N/A

§7.2.3: Liberation

Accent has the revolutionary property of liberating any syllable on which it falls from domination. Consider the following verse in isolation from its context: it appears to have only four independents (bolded), and thus to be ineligible as a pentameter (though okay as a rough four-beat line): “And **that’s** the **reason** I **love** him so **little**” (o-A o-A-o o-A-o o-A-o). But to scan the verse in this way is to ignore the clear contextual requirement for backgrounding (and thus

de-accenting) “love” as old information, and for establishing through accent a contrast between “him” and “his lady”. The effect of accent on “him” is (1) to allow it to function as a beat, and (2) and to subordinate the neighbouring dominant “love”, thus creating a third-foot swap:

(279)

Proteus: O, but I love his lady too-too much,
 And that's| the reason [I love] him| so li|(t^tle. (TGV 2.4.205)
 o-----A o--A---o ō--a----O o--A---o
 w-----S w--S w---W s----S w--S---o

Accent does not itself dominate (a neighbouring independent remains independent), but it subordinates a neighbouring dominant. It is also important to note that while accent may enable a syllable to take a beat, it does not compel it, although it remains, of course, a powerful attractor of the beat. How accent interacts with the metre is decided by a sort of negotiation among three systems: the metrical rules, the obligatory assignment of accent, and the stress-pattern of the lines, and the rule is that metre trumps the other two. In (280) there are three feet affected by accent: 1, 2 and 5. In foot 1 metre and stress are neutral – that is, either a normal or a reversed foot would satisfy their requirements – and so contrastive accent on “thou” determines the issue, making the foot reversed; in the second foot metre dictates (and accent here prefers) a normal foot, despite the stressed syllable in first position; in the fifth foot metre dictates and (and stress prefers) a normal foot, despite the accented syllable in first position and the consequent harsh mapping on “love”, producing a distinctly uneasy rhythm in a line that deals with an uncomfortable situation:

(280)

<Thou dost> love her|, because| thou know'st| I love|(| her
 (Son. 42.6)
 o---o a---_o o--B o---A _ō--a----ō
 S---w w---S w--S w---S w--S-----o

§7.3: Scanning Elastic Words

Verses like (277) are, of course, so uncomplicated as to make explicit scansion on two levels redundant. The process is only useful with puzzling or ambiguous verses, and for the most part the puzzle will tend to be about contraction and

expansion. Many of the problems we find in intuitive scansion come from making too early a decision about dealing with half-syllables, and thus short-circuiting other possibilities; explicit scansion can make visible the possibilities our ears have overlooked. Take, for example, the second verse of (281), which people usually mis-read because they take “our” (which needs to carry a beat) to be monosyllabic (as it usually is), and thus dominated by “graces” (S indicates that the position is illegally occupied by a dominated syllable). As scansion shows, if we expand “our” and contract “towards” (and alter our performance accordingly) the line scans:

(281) ►₁₆₁

DUNCAN: *Conduct me to mine host. We love him highly,*

And shall continue **our** graces **towards** him. (Mac. 1.6.30)

O	O	o--A-o	Oö----A-o	ö-B-----o
[w-----S]	w--S	w-- <u>S</u>	S-w	w-S-----o ×
[w-----S]	w--S	w--Sw----	S w-----S-----o ✓	

This example introduces the question of contingent domination: if the half-vowel in “our” is pronounced it functions like any other syllable in protecting the preceding syllable from domination; if it is dropped, it is effectively non-existent and so “our” is dominated by “gra[ces]”.

In general it is quicker to try scanning backwards: having anchored the final independent to the last S-position, we establish foot 5 (F5) and then successively attempt to find F4, F3, F2 and F1. This may involve back-tracking: our first run with (281) will make “towards him” F5 and “graces” F4, leaving us with no independent in F3. In (282), having established F5, we might consider F4 as reversed *vio-* but then reject that because F3 would have to be another reversal, *-lights have*, and successive reversals are not possible. Instead we expand the first “violent” and contract the second, and find that the line fits unproblematically to a primary template:

(282)

These **violent** delights have **violent** ends

(RJ 2.6.9)

b---- Aö-O	o-A	a---- Aö o---A
w---- Sw-S	w-S	w----S w---S

Shakespeare sometimes shifts between contraction and expansion (usually in that order) of the same proper noun within a line or two:

(283) ►₁₆₂<Rom^eo>! my cou|sin Ro|m^eo! Ro|meo!

(RJ 2.1.3)

Then stir| Deme|trⁱus up| with bi|tter wrong|;

And some|time rail| thou like| Deme|trius|;

(MND 3.2.361-2)

If Al|cibi^a|des kill| my count|rymen|,<Let Al|cibi|ades| know this| of Ti|(mon,

(Tim. 5.1.169-70)

A hate|ful truth|. / <What, and> from Troi|lus too|? /

From Troy| and Tro|i|lus|. / Is't po|ssible|?

(TC 4.4.31-2)

In the first example the long version represents Benvolio's final hallooing of the name.

Of course, in reading verse we intuitively scan forward, from left to right, not from right to left. This is not usually a problem: in the case of (282), for example, the first *violent* is followed by a weak (suggesting -S wS (w-)) and the second by a strong syllable (suggesting -S w (S)). Just occasionally, however, forward scanning on the fly will lead us up the garden path: take, for example, Richard of Gloucester's description of Lady Anne's ex-husband: "Young, valiant, wise, and (no doubt) right royal" (R3 1.2.244), which on a first reading may strike you as unmetrical. We begin "Young, val*iant*, wise|, and ..." (because of a sensible heuristic procedure that encourages us to map dominants where possible to S-positions), and then find that we have painted ourselves into a corner:

(284)

Young, valiant, wise, and (no doubt) right royal

A	A-öO	A	＼ O	＼ o---	A	＼ a----	A-ö
w-----S	w-----S	S-----w	w-----S	w-----S	w-----S	w-----S	w- <u>S</u>

One way to recuperate this might be to scan the line with a jolt in the cut after *wise*, allowing the actor a deliberate ironic hesitation:

(285) ►₁₆₃Young, valiant, wise,[^] and (no doubt) right royal

A	A-öO	A	＼ O	＼ o---	A	＼ a----	A-ö
w-----S	w-----S	w-S	w-----S	w-----S	w-----S	w-----S-o	

Alternatively, we could drag P9, though with no obvious justification:

(286) ►₁₆₄

Young, valiant, wise, and (no doubt) right ~ royal

A	A-ÖO	A	\ O	\ o---A	\ a	A-ö
w-----S	w-----S	S-----w	w-----S	w-----S	w-S-o	

But as a rule, lacunae are rare (and must be, to preserve the integrity of the metre) and should be a last resort in scansion: we shouldn't invoke them unless there is contextual motivation, a genuine lacuna in the verse (ie too few syllables) and no alternative scansion. The back-to-front method quickly reveals an alternative analysis here with an expanded "valiant":

(287) ►₁₆₅

Young, valiant, wise, and (no doubt) right royal

A	A-ÖO	\ A	\ O	\ o---A	\ a-----A-ö
w-----S	wS	S----w	w---S	w-----S	-o

The process of scansion seeks to discover the line – or lines – latent in the verse. In planning a performance one should systematically explore all the possible lines that may be derived from a given verse. Those who do not understand (or fail to keep in mind) the distinction between verse and line (§2.1) are apt to narrow the possibilities of performance, by taking the first line they find in the verse for 'the' verse itself; this is what a recent editor of *AYL* did, for example, when he announced that Celia's pseudonym "Aliena" (which occurs only once in verse) must be stressed *Aliena* as in (288a), failing to notice that expanding "Celia" (as in "Ày, Ce|liä, we stay'd| her för| your sake|," [*AYL* 1.3.67]) allows the expected Latinate stressing *Àliéna*.¹

(288) ►₁₆₆

No longer Celia, but Aliena.

(*AYL* 1.3.127)

(a) a--A--o A-ÖO o o-Ao o x
w--S w---S w---S w-Sw-S

(b) a--A--o A-ÖO o--B-oA-o ✓
w--S w---S wS w--S wS-o

¹ Michael Hattaway (ed.), *As You Like It* (The New Cambridge Shakespeare. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.97n.

In other words, intuition isn't always enough: scanning a problematic verse is a way of revealing other possibilities within it. As this example shows, we cannot assume that an editor has done this sort of analysis, even on problematic verse. Take *H8 3.2.305*, for example, which all modern editions print (following F1) as an unmetrical verse:

(289) ►₁₆₇

Now, if you can blush, and cry 'guilty' cardinal,

A \ O O o---A \ ō a---A---o | A--ö O

[S---w] w---S w---W s---S w---S o

You'll show a little honesty.

(*H8 3.2.305*)

It is ironic that in the same footnote in which the Arden 2 editor complains that the line is "rhythmically not very satisfactory" (p.116n) he remarks that "Pope's addition of a comma after 'can' is needless, for the sense is good". Pope's comma is, of course, a recuperation of the metre: a comma after 'can' introduces a cut and gives the (now grammatically isolated) auxiliary the major stress of a main verb. Even if F1 had been carefully printed, introducing a comma (that doesn't affect the sense) would be a small price to pay for recovering a line: clearly it should be printed (as other eighteenth-century editors agreed) thus:

(290) ►₁₆₈

Now, if you can, blush, and cry 'guilty', Cardinal;

A \ O o---A \ A \ ō-----a---A---o \ A--ö O

[S---w] w---S S---w w---S w---S----o

There is a similar problem at *AYL 2.4.64-5*: Celia is given a pair of verses which Arden 2 prints as prose on the grounds that the first of them "scans badly, even with *question* a trisyllable" (p.40n):

(291) ►₁₆₉

I pray you, one of you question yond man,

o---A---o \ A---o o---A---öO b---A

w---S w---S w---S S---w w---S

If he for gold will give us any food.

(*AYL 2.4.64*)

Scansion shows that the problem is the second “you”, and exposes the possibility that it might be read not as a dominated clitic subject but as part of a (grammatically independent) and somewhat peremptory vocative noun-phrase from the hypoglaecemic princess (ie “one of you [I don’t care who]”).² The phrase now has its own tone-unit, and the consequent intonational break renders the syllable “you” independent, removing the problem:

(292) ►₁₇₀

I pray you, one of you, question yond man,
 o---A---o \ A---o o \ A--öO b----A
 w---S w---S w---S S---W w----S

§7.4: Context and Accent

Sometimes accent in Shakespeare’s verse is pointed within the verse itself: “Lóok, here| is writ| ‘kind Ju|l̄ia’. Un|kind Ju|(l̄ia” (*TGV* 1.2.106) or “In prai|sing An|t̄ny I| have dis|präis’d Cae|(sar” (*AC* 2.5.107), or “On this| side my| hand, and| on that| side yours” (*R2* 4.1.183). But much of the time it isn’t: if you attempt to scan the verses “For Edward our son, that was Prince of Wales” (*R3* 1.3.199) or “And I lov’d her that she did pity them” (*Oth.* 1.3.168) in isolation, you will discover them to be unmetrical as pentameters, with an illegal o/S mapping in position 4:

(293)

For Edward our son, that was Prince of Wales,
 o---A---o o---A \ o o----A o---A
 w---S w----S [S-----w] w----S w---S

And I lov’d her that she did pity them.

o o---A----o \ o o o---A-o o
 S---w w----S [w----S] w---S w---S

Indeed, your ear should tell you that neither of them is a pentameter. But (of course) in English a verse should never be scanned apart from its context, because it is context that provides accentuation:

² The difference can be easily illustrated: subject (“Nobody move! \”), vs vocative (“Nobody! \ Move! \”, a command the Cyclops might have addressed to Odysseus).

(294)

*Edward thy son, that now is Prince of Wales,
 For Edward our son, that was Prince of Wales,*

O--A--o O---a \ O O---a o---A
 w--S w----S w-----S w---S w---S

*She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd,
 And I lov'd her that she did pity them.*

O O---a O O o---A-o O
 w---S w----S [w---S] w---S w---S

As the first example shows, while accent permits a beat to fall on an otherwise dominated syllable, it does not require it: the contextually motivated accent on “was” and the resultant harsh mapping merely provide some interesting rhythmic complication.

Sometimes the process of scansion invites us to consider an accent that might not have occurred to us: nothing much in the context requires an accent on “my” in the following line, for example, but the metre makes it mandatory (since “my” must be mapped to an S-position but is otherwise dominated by “part”), and it puts a particular combative spin on Ursula’s reply:

(295)

HERO: *My talk to thee must be how Benedick / Is sick in
 love with Beatrice. ...*

URSULA: Fear you not my part of the dialogue. (MAN3.1.31)

A----ō o---_o---a O o--Ao B
 S----w w---S w---S w--Sw-S

Viola in the Renaissance Theatre production of *TN* (DVD FHED 1774) reads (296) with accent on “well”: nothing in the context of meaning makes that a poor choice, but it derails the metre, which requires accent on “that”:

(296)

VIOLA: *This fellow ^{is} wise enough to play the fool;*

And to do that well craves a kind of wit. (TN3.1.61)

O ō--a---_A---a A o--A o---A
 S----w w---S w-----S w--S w---S

In discursive contexts personal pronouns and possessive adjectives, though inherently unstressed, are a strong attractor for accent, the possibility of which should always be investigated:

(297)

If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain, (Son. 42.9)

O O a-----O o--A---ō ō--a-----A
 S--w w----S w--S w---W s-----S

All days are nights to see till I see thee, (Son. 43.14)

a----A o----A o--A | B O a----o
 w----S w----S w--S S---w w----S

And then believe me, my love is as fair (Son. 22.10)

o-----A o--A----o O--a O o---A
 w-----S w--S w---S w---S w---S

§7.5: Scanning Compounds

Compounds are words made by joining two dictionary words to make a new word whose meaning is not just a product of the two, as it is in a phrase: whereas a *black bíd* must be black, for example, a *bláckbird* may be brown (eg a female *Turdus merula*). Descending trisyllabic compounds like *hóusekéepíng* and *grándfáthér* are inherently problematic for a metre based upon alternation of prominence, and the simplest solution is to map such compounds onto a reversal (**S-w w-**):

(298) ►₁₇₁

Henry the Fourth, **grandfather** to this king, (1H6 2.5.63)

A--o o---A **A---b** O O b---A
 S--w w---S **S---w** w---S w---S

Schoolmasters will I keep within my house (TS 1.1.94)

A---b O O o--A O O o---A
S---w w----S w--S w--S w---S

Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits. (TGV 1.1.2)

A-----b O A \A-o \ A---o A
S-----w w-----S [w---S]w---S w--S

More commonly, however, we find ‘grandfather’ compounds beginning in the strong position of a normal foot. The rationale for this is that the second syllable of such compounds, as a dominated b-syllable, does not dominate the third:

(299) ►₁₇₂

Thy deeds, thy plainness, and thy **housekeeping** (2H6 1.1.191)

o--A	o---A---o	o	o---A---b o
w--S	w---S	w---S	w---S w--S

My father and my **grandfather** were kings; (3H6 3.1.77)

o--A---o o	o---A---b o	o----A
w--S w--S	w---S w--S	w----S

We sent our **schoolmaster**; is he come back? (ACF1 3.11.71)

o--A	o-----A---b o	\ o	ō--a----A
w--S	w-----S	w--S	S--w w----S

A knot you are of damnëd **blood-suckers**. (R3 3.3.6)

o---A---ō o	o---A---ö	A----b o
w---S w---S	w---S	w----S w--S

And gorgeous as the sun at **midsummer**; (IH4 4.1.102)

o----A---ō o	o--A	o---A---b o
w----S	w---S	w--S w---S w--S

Provided that you do no **outrages**

(TGV 4.1.71)

o-A-o o	o---A	o---A---b o
w-S w----S	w---S	w--S w--S

The pattern, odd as it seems, is normal for such compounds in Shakespeare (nine out of the twelve occurrences of the word *grandfather* pattern this way) and standard throughout the tradition of iambic pentameter, even in the work of that *doyen* of metrical ‘correctness’, Alexander Pope:

(300)

In Summer-Days like **Grasshoppers** rejoice

(Pope, *Iliad* 3.199)

o---A---o A	o-----A---b---o	o-A
w---S w---S	w-----S	w--S w-S

And Beau's in **Snuff-boxes** and Tweezer-Cases. (Pope, *Rape* 5.116)

o-----A o----**A**---b o-----A--o A-o
w-----S w----S **w-S** w-----S w---S-o

Each **Word-catcher** that lives on syllables (Pope, *Ep. Arb.* 166)

a----**A**---b o o---A o---A--o o
w-----S **w---S** w---S w---S w--S

The *grandfather* pattern **A-b O** occurs in reverse (as **O b-A**) when a two-syllabled endstressed function word like *among* is followed immediately by a dominant, and it is found in the same counter-intuitive (and – to our ears – somewhat awkward) mapping (**S w-S**):

(301) ►₁₇₃

Henceforth be never number'd **among men!** (MND 3.2.67)

b----A o--A-ö A--o ö o **b----**A
w-----S w--S w---S w----S w----S

That it is proof and bulwark **against sense.** (Ham. 3.4.38)

o o o----A o----A--o o **b-----A**
[w--S] w----S w----S w---S **w-----S**

And therein wretched, **although free.** But if (TNK 3.1.27)

o----A--b A---o o **b-----A** o o
w-----S w----S w---A o----A w--S

cp And solid pudding **against empty** praise. (Pope, *Dunc.* 1.51f.)

o----A-o A--o o **b-----A---o** A
w----S w---S w---S w----S w---S

Pride, Malice, Folly **against Dryden** rose (Pope, EC 458)

A A-o A--o o--b A-o A
w-----S w-----S w-S w-----S w---S

But there is a third way of accommodating such compounds to the metre, as we shall see in the next section.

§7.6: Scanning and Stress Exchange

As we have seen, in normal speech the Alternating Stress Rule (§1.2.3) serves to exchange the positions of the two stresses in a double-stressed word like *unknówn* to avoid consecutive major stresses, and it naturally works the same way in verse:

(302)

<Nor is| your firm| resolve| unknoWn| to mě|,

(TS 2.1.92)

To make| it wan|der ĩn| an un|knòwn field|?

(CE 3.2.38)

In verse the rule is generalised to accommodate just about any sequence of three stresses to an alternating **S w-S** pattern (but see §2.3.4); in such cases it is always worth investigating the possibility that contextually motivated accent should fall on the first syllable (it would make sense in the first line of (303), for example) but there is no need for it to do so (stress-exchanges are surrounded by brackets):

(303)

And so he plays his part. The **sixth age shifts** (AYL 2.7.157)

o----A	o---A	o---A	o--- A-----a	A
w----S	w---S	w---S	w---S	w----S

Tõngues spit their duties out, and **cold hearts freeze**

(H8 1.2.61)

a-----A	o---A--o	A	o (A-----a)	A
w-----S	w---S	w---S	w---S	w-----S

Seem to besiege, and make his **bold waves tremble**, (Tp. 1.2.205)

A----ō	o--A	o---A	o--- (A-----a)	A--o
S----w	w--S	w----S	w---S	w-----S--o

That I have ta'en away this **old man's daughter**,

(Oth. 1.3.78)

O	O	o	Aö	o-A	b- (A-----a)	A---o
[w--S]	w----S		w-S	w--S	w-----S---o	

In pentameter the Alternating Stress Rule is also extended (optionally) to compounds, even disyllable ones. In general you would expect a compound like

midnight to scan **Sw**, in the same way as a word like *middle*, and in general that is what you find:

(304)

Thou call'dst me up at **midnight** to fetch dew (Tp. 1.2.228)
 o---A-----ō A o---**A**--**b** ō--a----A
 w---S w-S w---S w----W s----S

We'll over-reach the **greybeard**, Gremio, (TS 3.2.145)
 oö---A-o B o---**A**---b A-öO
 w---S w---S w---**S** w-----S wS

And laid the **love-juice** on some true-love's sight. (*MND* 3.2.89)
o----A o--**A**----b O o-----A---b A
w----S w--**S** w---S w-----S w-----S

But thanks to the extended Alternating Stress Rule we also find such words scanning wS:

(305)

Keep word, Lysander; we must starve our sight (MND 1.1.223)
 From lovers' food till morrow deep **midnight.**

○---A-○ A ○---A--○ A (**b--A**)
 w---S w-----S w---S w---S w---S

Have I in conquest stretch'd mine arm so far
 To be afeard to tell **greybeards** the truth? (JC 2.2.67)

O	O	o--Aö	o--A	(b---A)	o---A
[w-S]	w--S	w--S	w---S	w---S	

But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
 With the **love-juice**, as I did bid thee do? (MND 3.2.37)
 O O (**b-----A**) \O O o---A---o O
 [S-----w] w----S [S--w] w---S w---S

Effectively, under the extended ASR a *grandfather* compound can behave metrically as though it were a phrase like *old father*. This is the usual way of

scanning novel or nonce-compounds like *sea-sorrow*, but it is also occasionally used for established compounds:

(306)

Defile the locks of your **shrill-shrieking** daughters; (*H5* 3.3.35)

o-A	o---A----ō	O	(b-----A)-o	A---
w-S	w--S	w---S	w-----S	w----S---o

Sit still, and hear the last of our **sea-sorrow**: (*Tp.* 1.2.170)

a----A	o----A	o--A---ō	O	(b---A)-o
w----S	w----S	w--S	w---S	w---S---o

Ay, some mad message from his mad **grandfather**. (*Tit.* 4.2.3)

A	A	a---A--o	O	o---A	(b---A)-o
w----S		w---S	w----S	w---S	w---S---o

Turning his side to the **dew-dropping** south. (*RJ* 1.4.103)

A--o	o---A----ō	O	(b---A)-o	A
S---w	w---S	w---S	w---S	w----S

Doth with his lofty and **shrill-sounding** throat (*Ham.* 1.1.151)

O	O	o---A--o	O	(b-----A)--o	A
[S----w]		w---S	w-S	w-----S	

It will be noticed that when extended ASR in feet 3 and 4 combines with initial reversal the temptation to read the verse as four-beat dactylic is very strong: “¹Turning his ²face to the ³dew-dropping ⁴South”.

§7.7: Scanning Short Pentameters

Where a verse has fewer than ten available syllables (ie including all half-syllables but discounting any syllable after the last independent) we investigate the possibility of a lacuna, if the context of meaning and the structure of the verse will allow it. If, for example, after successfully working backwards we find just one independent in the first foot, we may assume the most common kind of lacuna, the initial jolt (producing headlessness):

(307)

Go, take hence that traitor from our sight, (2H6 2.3.100)

\ A a----A b----A--o o o---A
 w--S w----S w---S w---S w---S

Set it down. Is ink and paper ready? (R3 5.3.75)

\ A---o A o--A o---A-o A-o
 w-S w--S w--S w---S w---S-o

And he bid us follow to the temple. (MND F1 4.1.197)

\ o o--A--o A--o o o--A--o
 w-S w--S w---S w---S w---S--o

We may find that a jolt will scan to a cut within the verse:

(308)

You and your crafts! You have crafted fair! (Cor. 4.6.117)

O O o----A \ o o----A--o A
 S--w w-----S w-S w---S w---S

In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes, (Mac. 1.4.36)

o---A o---A--o \ A \ A---o \ A
 w---S w---S w---S w-S w---S

Why, so did'st thou. Seem they grave and learned? (H5 2.2.128)

A A--ö o \ A----ö A o---A---o
 [w---S] w-----S w--S w---S w---S---o

Sometimes we may find the context suggesting contrastive accent on a stress that would otherwise be subordinated, providing the conditions for a drag (note that the artificial prolongation of the dragged syllable, indicated here by a colon (see §4.2), prevents the following major from being subordinated):

(309)

MACBETH: Now, if you have a station in the file,

Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say it, (Mac. 3.1.102)

o o o--A : A o---A--b A--ö
 [S-w] w--S w--S w---S w-----S [-o]

AEGEON: *That very hour, and in the self-same inn,*

A mean woman was delivered

(CE 1.1.54)

o--A : A-o O o-A-ö Ö
w--S w-S w---S w-S w-S

If there are only four usable independents in the verse (successive weak independents need to be separated by a cut) and there is a cut, or the verse ends with a dependent, we may suspect a silent beat:

(310)

You have not sought it! How comes it then?

(1H4 5.1.27)

O O o ---A---o \ a---A---o A
S---w w----S w--S w---S w---S

Is he not honest? / Honest, my lord?

(Oth. 3.3.103)

O O o---A-o \ A-o \ o--A
[S---w] w---S w----S S-w w--S

Would he deny his letter, said he?

(KL 2.1.78)

O O o-A o---A--o A---Ö \
[S----w] w-S w---S w----S w--S

Sometimes there may be a choice of lacunae; in (190) in §4.2, for example, an alternative to drags enabled by the contrastive accenting of the pronouns *you* and *he* would be in either case a silent beat at the caesura. It is a possible reading (the first could be marked by a gesture of bafflement, and the second could be a question-final rest), though it seems less motivated to me than the version with accent and drag. As with all performative choices, it is a matter of interpretation; a good case could be made for reading the following not with a third-foot rest (as in (215) in §5.2) but a fifth-foot drag, with contextually motivated accent on *so*:

(311)

LADY MACBETH: *I would, while it was smiling in my face,*

Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums

And dash'd the brains out, had I so ≈ sworn

(Mac. F1 1.7.58)

o----A o--(A-----a) \ O O A----a
w----S w---S w----S w--S w---S (with drag)
o----A o--(A-----a) \ O O a---A

And dash'd the brains out, <!> had I so sworn
 w----S w---S w----**S** w--S w---S (with rest)

It is crucial to remember, however, that lacunae are not just a formal device: they point to a world of meaning outside the phonological structures of the metre. They need, therefore, not just to be structurally possible, but plausibly motivated in some way: they are not simply a device for recuperating unmetrical verses. The following unmetrical verses all occur in F1 *Macbeth* (the only textual source for the play that we have):

(312)

- (a) Norway himselfe, with terrible numbers (TLN 76)³
 A--o o--A o----A--o o---A--o
 S--w w--S w----S w-**S** w--**S**
- (b) He hath beene in vnusuall Pleasure (TLN 587)
 O O O O o-A-öo-----A-o
 [S--w] w---S w-S w**S** w-**S**
- (c) He is about it, the Doores are open (TLN 652)
 O O o--B--o o---A o---A-o
 [S-w] w--S w----**S** S----w w-**S**
- (d) Or did lyne the Rebell with hidden helpe, (TLN 220)
 O o---A o--A-o o----A--o A
 S---w w-----**S** S-w w----S w---S
- (e) Which you thought had been our innocent selfe. (TLN 1073)
 O o----A----ö O o--A--o o---A
 S----w w----S S----w w--**S** w----S

Each of these, as a little experiment will show, can be ‘rescued’ with either a final rest or an initial jolt (I will leave this as an exercise for the reader), but in

³ The passage this line is taken from remains unsatisfactory even after relineation, with a stranded fragment “With terrible numbers”. Pope suggested that Shakespeare might have written “[Norway] himself”, with num|bers te|rrible|” (cp “And prophesying, with accents terrible”, *Mac.* 2.3.57), a richer line in that “terrible” now qualifies both “numbers” and “Norway”.

no case would such a measure be justified in terms of meaning and context. It is pleasing to report, therefore, that in none of these cases is it necessary, since each verse occurs in an unmetrical passage that can be restored to metricality simply by relineation, and which presumably therefore represents a compositorial mislineation (common in F1). Modern editors vary, however, in the extent to which they are willing to acknowledge and repair such mislineations (see Groves, 2007, for a fuller discussion).

Appendix A: Differently Stressed Words

The following is an attempt to list those Shakespearean word-stress and syllabification patterns that might surprise a British or an American reader, or both. Some interesting experiments have been made at the New Globe Theatre in London in performing Shakespeare's plays in some approximation to 'original' accents,¹ but the purpose of reproducing the stress-patterns of Shakespeare's English (where they differ from ours) is not to make some purist attempt at 'authenticity' but rather to preserve where possible the rhythmic structure of his verse. Of course, saying things like *acceptable* and *precinct* can make one's speech sound odd and alienating, and it may at times threaten ready intelligibility. For these reasons such pronunciations should only be used in verse, and only when necessary to rescue the metre. For example, the Elizabethan stressing *authórise* is necessary to the metre in a verse like "His rude|ness so| with hřs| **autho|riz'd** youth|" (*ALC* 104), but in "**Authoriz'd** by her grandam. Shame itself," (*Mac.* 3.4.65) we can get away with the inauthentic but familiar modern pronunciation by introducing a reversal ("<Autho>riz'd bý| ..."). This explains why I have not exhaustively listed every possible variant stressing: I have only supplied an Elizabethan stress-pattern where it is required at least once to rescue the metre. Take, for example, the word *retinue*: Fausto Cercignani argues on philological grounds that Shakespeare uses *retínue*, but the evidence from contemporary scansion is mixed,² and since its only verse occurrence in Shakespeare ("But other of your insolent retinue" [*KL* 1.4.202]) will allow both possibilities (depending on whether *insolent* is contracted to *ins°lent*), the least disruptive choice is to

¹ See Crystal (2005) for more information.

² (Cercignani 1981, 42); Richard Brathwait (1588?–1673) scans the word both ways (*Againe|', mongst all| my ré|tinüe|, no knave|* ("The Ape of Vaine-glory"); *With such| a Pen|sion őur| Retí|nue pay|* ("The Judicall Apé").

pronounce it as in modern English (which is why it does not appear in the following list).

There are three kinds of stress-pattern in Shakespeare's words: **fixed**, **predictably variable**, and *randomly variable*. Words in **bold** are always so stressed in Shakespeare; words in *italics* are so stressed only where indicated, and elsewhere stressed as in modern English (sometimes differently stressed forms are in free variation, as with *gárage* and *garágé* in current English; we find, for example, both *récord* and *recórd* for the noun, used as the metre requires). Words underlined are double-stressed in Shakespeare's English, and follow the Alternating Stress Rule (§1.2.3), which means that they are endstressed (*dístinct*, *éxtreme*, *förlörn*, *óbscúre*, *súpreme*) except where they are directly followed by a dominant in the same phrase: *dístinct bréath*, *éxtreme ráge*, *förlörn children*, *óbscúre bírd*, *súpreme Jóve*. Some of these words, like *còndémn*, *désérve* and *sécure*, are no longer double-stressed, which makes them awkward to pronounce when fore-stressed ("Upon| my sé|cùre hóur| thy un|cle stole|" [Ham. 1.5.61]); the less disruptive choice may be to pronounce them as in modern English. I have added suggested pronunciations, both in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and in a more *ad hoc* form for those who don't read it, where they seem to be necessary (I have put post-vocalic /r/ in brackets because only some dialects of English pronounce it).

I have included below one or two words that are not – or not necessarily – differently stressed in Shakespeare, but about which doubts might reasonably arise, like *tríumph*. I have also included the few words which have consistently a different number of syllables in his English, such as *á-chës*, and one or two that can be expanded in his English but not in ours, such as *bú-si-ness*. This is also the place to note a systematic difference in syllabic length between Shakespeare's English and ours: the possessive of nouns ending in /s/. For Shakespeare, while plural *mistresses* has three syllables ("When **mis|tressës** from co|mmon sense| are hid|" [LLL 1.1.64], possessive *mistress'* has only two, and sounds just like the non-possessive form. All the bolded words in the following lines have just two syllables:

(313)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| My mis tress' eyes are no thing líke the sun ; | (Son. 130.1) |
| I crave your High ness' par don. / Hë is ma (rried? | (AC 2.5.98) |
| Upon old Bru tus' sta tue. All this done , | (JC 1.3.146) |
| Füll thir ty times hath Phoe bus' cart góne round | |
| <Neptune's> sàlt wash and Tellus' or bèd ground | (Ham. 3.2.154-5) |

The exception is when the noun is a monosyllable: then the possessive has two syllables, as shown by the way in which *Mars'* is spelt in the original texts as *Marses* or (by a misunderstanding of the possessive suffix) *Mars his*:

(314)

<*Marses*> hot Mi|nⁱon īs| returnd| againe| (Tp. 4.1.98, F1)

On Mar|ses Ar|mor forg'd| for proofe| eterne|, (Ham. 2.2.490, Q2)

On Mars| his Ar|mours, forg'd| for proofe| Eterne|, (*ibid.*, F1)

Where the part of speech is not specified in the list, it is irrelevant. The abbreviation PNS denotes that a variant pronunciation, though found in the canonical plays, is ‘probably not Shakespearean’: for example, we find *cónfessor* (still the stressing for many English Catholics) throughout the canon, except in those parts of *Henry VIII* now believed to be by Fletcher, where we find modern PNS *conféssor*. This is, of course, of no particular relevance to the question of how the verse is to be read, but may help to explain some anomalies to the curious.

Stress-patterns: Fixed, Predictably Variable, and Randomly Variable

àbsúrdáchës (noun) /'eitʃəz/ áitchës(sg. *aitch*); aches (verb) /eiks/ akesáceptableaccéss (once *áccess*, Ham. 2.1.111)ácessaryàdvérseadvértiseadvértisementally, allíesárchbishopaspéctauthórisebáboon (*Mac.* 4.1; *Per.* 4.6)búsⁱness (usually contracted except at line-end)canónisecément (/simnt/ /símm-ənt/)céremònnycharácter (*Luc.*, *TGV*, 2H6 3.1, *Ham.*1.3, *Per.*; otherwise *cháracter*)charáct^erychástise /'tʃæstɪs/ (*cháss-tiss*); *chastise*, *Tp.*chásitism^ent /'tʃæstɪsmənt/(*cháss-tiss-mənt*)chevalíer (three syllables, like *cavalier*)cómbatcommándément (four syllables in 1H6, PNS; elsewhere three)³cómmandable (*comméndable* only at *MV* 1.1.111)commércé

³ Three syllables, not four, at *MV* 4.1.151 (“Be va|lud| against| your wiues| commande|(ment”).

<u>còmmít</u>	DÈSPÍSE
<i>compáct</i> (<i>cómpact</i> in <i>1H6</i> 4.4.63 PNS)	détestable
<u>còmpel</u>	díréct
<u>còmpléte</u>	discóurse
cómplot (at <i>R3</i> 3.1.192 read <i>yī-ěld</i>)	díspérse
<i>comráde</i> (also <i>cómrade</i> , <i>KL</i> 2.4.210)	dístinct
<u>cònctal</u>	distréss
concúpiscible	dívers (adj.)
<u>còndémn</u>	dívidable (but ùndivídable)
<i>cónfessor</i> (<i>conféssor</i> in <i>H8</i> PNS)	ducdámë
<u>cònfine</u>	
<u>cònfirm</u>	edíct (also <i>édict</i> in <i>R3, AC.</i>)
<i>confíscate</i> (<i>cónfiscate</i> in <i>CE</i> 1.2.2 and <i>MV</i>)	effig'iës /ɛ'fidʒiiz/ eff-ídg-i-eez
conflúx	émpiric
<u>còngéal</u>	ènjóin
<i>conjúr'd</i> (<i>Oth.</i>)	ent'rance
<i>conquést</i> (<i>Tim.</i>)	èntire
<u>cònsign</u>	envý verb (<i>Son.</i> 128, <i>TS</i>)
cónsistory	èxáct (adj.)
<u>cònsort</u>	éxecutor (meaning <i>executioner</i> ; otherwise <i>exécutor</i>)
cónstrue	exile (/ɪg'zail/ <i>ig-zíle</i>), noun: <i>TGV</i> , <i>AYL, R2</i>)
conténts	èxpél
<i>contráct</i> (as noun; usually <i>cóntract</i>)	èxpíre
<i>contrárty</i> (<i>cóntrary</i> in <i>Son.</i> 62.11, <i>2H6</i> 3.1.58)	exploit
cóntrovèrsy	équisite
cónventicle	èxtraórdinàry (six syllables)
córollary	èxtreme
córrosive	
<u>còrrupt</u>	fértile /'fɜ[r]tɪl/ (<i>fē[r]-til</i>)
<u>cúrtail</u>	fòrlórn
deféct	fòrnicátress
délectable	frústrate
démonstrable	hand ^e ling
<i>demónstrate</i> (<i>Oth., Tim.</i>)	hóspitable
déscant	hóstess
<u>dèsérve</u>	

illústrate	<i>pérempt^rry</i> (PNS <i>p^réempt^rry</i> , 2H6, <i>Per.</i>)
ímp^íous	péfect (verb and adj.; properly, / 'p ^z [r]f ^ə t/ <i>pé[r]f^ət</i>)
impórt	perfúme (verb)
impórtune	<i>pérfume</i> (noun; <i>perfúme</i> TS; possibly <i>Tim.</i> , <i>Cym.</i>)
<u>impréss</u>	persévr^rance
incárnadíne	perséver[e]
<u>insáne</u>	pérspective
instínc^t	píonner
int^crrógrat^ry	<i>p^léb^eian</i> (<i>plebéian</i> , <i>Tit.</i> , H5)
júgg^gler	portént
Júly	precínc^t
lámentable	<i>prescience</i> (TC)
<i>mankínd</i> (<i>Mac.</i> 2.4.18; AC 4.8.25; <i>Cor.</i> 4.2.16; <i>Tim.</i> 3.4.83, 4.3 <i>passim</i>)	preténce
médⁱcinable	príncess
médⁱcine	<u>pròfound</u>
médicinal /'mèdɪ,sainəl/ (<i>méddy-sìne-əl</i>)	promúlgate
merváilous	próstrate
miscónstrue	protést
multípotent	<i>púissance</i> (/' <i>pjuisns/ p[y]úo-i-sənss</i>)
mútine	purpórt
needle rhymes with <i>feel</i>	pùrsué
obdúrate	<i>púrsuit</i> (<i>Son.</i> 143.4)
<u>òbscúre</u>	púrvveyor
óbservant (<i>noun</i>)	<i>pyrámidës</i> (AC 5.2.61)
oppórtune	
órdain (<i>Tit.</i>)	
órgulous	
órison	
outráge (1H6 4.1.126 PNS)	
pérdurable	quíntessence
pérdurably	
	réceptacle
	<i>recórd</i> (noun; also <i>récord</i>)
	rélapse (H5)
	réspite
	<i>revénue</i> (also <i>révenue</i>)
	rhéumatic
	<u>sécúre</u>
	sepúlchre (verb)

séquester (but *sequéster'd*, AYL 2.1.43)

serpígo (/sə'paigəu/ *sə(r)-piē-go*)

siníster

sojóurn'd (*MND*)

sold'er

solémnized (*LLL, Tp.*)

spírit

státue (sometimes spelt *statua* in C16

texts) 2H6 3.2.80, R3 3.7.25; JC

2.2.76 and 3.2.192)

subdúe

succesive (*MM*)

súccessor

supplíance (= 'supply'; nb

Shakespeare does not use

suppliance [= 'supplication'].)

súpportable (but **insuppórtable**)

súprême

súrety ('ʃuə(r)ti/) *shú(r)e* [rhymes
with *pure*] -*ti*)

transláte

tríumph

triúmpher

turmóil

unknówn (as other disyllables

beginning with prefix *un-*, such as

úntrúth)

útensil

wárr^ant (nb only fully contractable in

rhotic dialects like Shakespeare's
or General American)

wássail (/wɒsəl/ *wossle*)

Wéndnesday (/wenz,deɪ/, *wénz-day*, as
in Pres. E.)

wrést^fler (/rɛsələ(r)) *réssələ(r)*

Appendix B: Pronouncing Shakespeare's Names

The following list of names in Shakespeare is not exhaustive (no likely reader of this book needs, for example, to be told how to pronounce *Julia* or *Venice*), but I have included names that may not be transparent in their pronunciation to non-British readers, such as *Gloucester* and *Abergavenny*, and others that will cause difficulty only to British readers, such as *Glamis* (two syllables in Shakespeare). I have omitted names that do not occur in verse, such as *Conrade*. Most names in -ia, -io, -eo, -eus and -ius will be contracted or not, according to the metre (compare <*Ill met* by moon|light, proud| *Tita|niā* with <*There sleeps* *Tita|n̄a* some|time of| the night|). To illustrate the marking conventions: in *Alcibīd̄es*, the first syllable *al* carries minor stress, the second *ci* is unstressed, the third *bí* carries major stress, the fourth ^a is half-vowel (that is, it may or may not be fully sounded, depending on the metre) and the fifth *d̄es* is sounded (syllables are only so indicated where there might be doubt – *Alcibiades* might, after all, rhyme with *glades*). Syllables in the last two categories are always unstressed. Parts of words given in square brackets are not pronounced: *Wo(r)[ce]ster*.

Pronunciation, where necessary, is indicated as in Appendix A. For the most part I have not indicated how vowels and doubtful consonants (like <ch>) should be pronounced, because it is not metrically relevant: the choice between *Maria* rhyming (in non-rhotic dialects) with *fire* (the traditional pronunciation) or with *fear* (the modern version) will not affect the rhythm of the line but may well signify other matters (a *Twelfth Night* set in Edwardian England might well prefer the first version, whereas a modern-dress production might find it alienating).

List of Names

Áberg[av]ènny (/ə'bə(r)gənni/ á-bə[r]-gènn-y, <i>g</i> as in <i>gun</i>)	Bárnadìne
Abhórsón	Béaufort (/bəufət/ bō-fōt)
Aenéas	Bénédick
Ájax (/eɪdʒæks/, <i>ey-jacks</i>)	Benvól'o
Álbany (/ɔlbəni/ áwl-bə-ni)	Bérk[e]ley (/bə(r)kli/ báh[r]k-li)
Alénçon	Berówne (/bə'rəun/ bə-róne)
Ángiers (<i>Angiers</i> , KJ 1.1.1.)	Bígot
Agénor	Bíondéllu
Águecheek (/eɪgjutʃɪk/ áy-gyoo-cheek)	Bólingbroke (/bulɪŋbruk/ búll-ing-brook; rhymes with <i>cook</i>)
Àlcibi'dës (/ælsɪ'baiədiz/ al-si-bye-ə-deez)	Borách'o
Àliéna	Bórdeaux
Ám'ens	Boyét (/boi'et/ boy-étt)
Amphímacus	Brákenbury (/bræknbri/ brákk-ən-b̥ri)
Andrómachë	Bückingham (/bʌkɪŋəm/ buikk-ing-əm; first syllable rhymes with <i>duck</i>)
Andrónicus	Búrgundy
Ángelo	Cáius (/kaiəs/ kie-əs)
Anténor	Cálaïs (/kælis/ cáliss; rhymes with <i>Alice</i>)
Antígonus	Cáliban
Antíochus	Calpúrn'a
Antípholus	Campéius
Apemántus	Càrlisle (/kə(r)'lail/ càr-lile)
Árcite (/ɑ(r)sait/ áh(r)-site)	Célia (always three syllables)
Ár'el (/ɛəriəl/, like <i>ariel</i>)	Cérimon
Árragon	Cesár'o
Árvirágus	Chárlémàin (ie Charlemagne)
Ásia (always three syllables)	Chárm'an (/tʃə(r)mīən/ chár-mee-ən)
Aufidius	Chatill'on (not <i>Chatillon</i>)
Aumérle	Chíron (/kairən/ kie-rən)
Autólycus	Cláud'i'o (<i>clore</i> , not <i>clow</i>)
Bácchus (/bækəs/, <i>back-əs</i>)	Cláud'i'us (<i>clore</i> , not <i>clow</i>)
Bálthasar	Cleómenès
Baptista Mínola	
Barklóu[gh]ly (/ba(r)k'ləuli/ bah[r]k-löe-li)	

Clóten	Gálathë
Cólèville (/kəuləvɪl/ <i>kōe-lō-vill</i>)	Gánymède
Cólme	Glámisi (/glæmɪs/ <i>glám-iss</i> [not Pres. E. /glamz/ <i>glahmz</i>])
Cordélia	Gléndow̄r
Cɔ̄riolánus (/kə'raiə'leinəs/ <i>kō-rē-yē-ə-láy-nəs</i>)	Gló[uce]ster (/glōstə/ <i>glōss-tə</i> , except in 1H6, where it is PNS <i>Gloucester</i> , [/'glɒsəstə/ <i>glōss-əss-tə</i>])
Cɔ̄riolì (/kə'raiə'lai/ <i>kō-rē-yē-ə-lē</i>)	Gló[uce]stershire (/glōstəʃə/ <i>glōss-tə-shə</i>)
Créssid(a)	Gón̄ril
Cýmbeline	Gonzálo
Dáuphin (/dəfin/ <i>dāw-fin</i>)	Gratiáno
Déc̄us	Gréenwich (/grɪniʃ/ <i>grīnn-itč</i>)
Déíphobus	Grém̄o
Dèsdemóna	Guidér̄us
Díomedes (but Díomed)	Hécate (/hækət/ <i>héck-ət</i>)
Dionýza	Hécuba
Dòlabélla	Hélena
Dónalbàin	Hélenus
Dóriclès	Hèlicánu
Dúnsinàne	Hén̄ry
Egéus	Héreford[shire] (/ha(r)fəd[ʃə]/ <i>hāh(r)-fəd-[shə]</i>)
Églamour	Hérm̄a
Elýsium	Hermíñë
Ènobárbus	Héro (<i>here-oh</i> , as in <i>superhero</i> , not <i>herro</i>)
Éphesus	Hippólyta
Escalus	Hó[1]m[e]don (/həumdən/ <i>hōhm-dən</i>)
Éuphratës	Hòlofernës
Fáulconbrìdge (/fɔ̄knbrɪdʒ/ <i>fāw-kən-brìdge</i>)	Horát̄o (/hə'reiʃiəu/ <i>hō-ráy-shē-oh</i>)
Féstë (rhymes with <i>chesty</i>)	Horténs̄o
Fidélë	Húmph̄rey
Flamín̄us	Iáchimo (/jækiməu/ <i>yā-kee-moh</i>)
Fláv̄us	Íago (/i'agəu/ <i>ee-yāh-go</i>)
Fléänce	
Flórizel	
Flüéllen	
Fórtinbràs (rhymes with <i>lass</i>)	

Illyrⁱa	Marséillës (/Ma(r)'seliz/ <i>mar-sell-eez</i>)
Ímogen (or Ínnogen)	Melún
Jàcquenéttá	Menécratës
Jáquës (/dʒeikwiz/ <i>jáy-kweez</i> ; always two syllables)	Menén'us
Jóurdain (like <i>Jordan</i>)	Mentéith
Júlⁱet	Messála
Lában (/leibən/, <i>lay-bən</i>)	Milan
Làértës (/lei'z(r)tiz/ <i>lāy-ér-teez</i>)	Montáno
Laféu (/lə'fju/ <i>lə-fyoo</i>)	Montgóm^{er}ry
Lánchester	Montjóy (to the French; <i>Montjoy</i> to the English)
Laváche (rhymes with <i>cash</i>)	Mówbray (/məubri/ <i>mōe-bri</i>)
Lé[ice]ster[shire] (/lɛstə[ʃə]/ <i>lēs-tə-[shə]</i>)	Mýtilène (/mítɪlin/ <i>mí-ti-lēn</i> ; but / <i>mitr'lini/ mì-ti-lée-ni to Marina)</i>
Lèⁿáto, -us	Níobe (/naiəbi/ <i>nyē-ə-bee</i>)
Léóntes	Nórfo[I]k (/ɔ(r)feək/ <i>nó(r)-fək</i>)
Lépidus	Northúmb^{er}land (/nɔ(r)'θʌmbə(r) lənd/ <i>no(r)-thūm-bə(r)-lənd</i>)
Línco[1]n[shire] (/lɪŋkən[ʃə]/ <i>link-ən-(shə)</i>)	Óberòn (rhymes with <i>sober on</i>)
Lòdovíco	Órléans
Lóvell (/lʌvl/ <i>luvv-əl</i> ; first syllable same as <i>love</i>)	Orsíno
Lùc'ána	Othéollo
Lúcrece	
Lucíl'us	Paróllës (/pə'rɒliz/ <i>pə-róll-eez</i>)
Lucúllus	Pàlamédes
Lychórida	Pálamon
Lysánder	Pémbroke (/pəmbrək/ <i>pém-brək</i>)
Lysímachus	Pérdita
Marcadé (/ma(r)kə'dei/ <i>ma(r)-kə-dáy</i>)	Pérⁱclës
Marcéllus	Petrúchⁱo
Márgarélon	Philíppi
María	Phílomèl
Marⁱána	Phíloméla
Marína	Phílostràte (/filəstreit/ <i>fil-ə-stràyt</i>)
	Píndarus
	Pírothous (three syllables, <i>TNK</i>)

1.3.55 and elsewhere in Shakespeare's part); <i>Piróthous</i> (PNS: four syllables, <i>TNK</i> 4.1.12 and elsewhere in Fletcher's part)	Sómerset (/' <i>sʌmə(r)sət/</i> <i>súmmə(r)-sət/</i>)
Plantágenet	Sóuth[w]ark (/' <i>sʌðə(r)k/</i> <i>súth-ə(r)k/</i> ; <i>ú</i> as in <i>love</i> , <i>th</i> as in <i>bathe</i>)
Poitiérs (/' <i>pɔɪtiə(r)z/</i> <i>poy-téers</i>)	Stepháno (<i>MV</i>), Stéphano (<i>Tp.</i>)
Políxenés	Súffolk (/' <i>sʌfək/</i> <i>súff-ək/</i> ; first syllable rhymes with <i>tough</i>)
Polónius	Sýcoràx
Polýdamus	Sýracùse
Pórtia (/' <i>pɔ(r)ʃə/</i> <i>pó[r]-shə</i>)	Tálbot (/' <i>tɔlbət/</i> <i>táwl-bət/</i>)
<i>Posthúmus</i> (<i>Pósthumus</i> at <i>Cym.</i> 4.2.321)	Támora
Pròculéius	Téarsheet (/' <i>teəʃit/</i> <i>táre-sheet</i>)
Próspéro	Thäisa (/' <i>tai'izə/</i> <i>tie-éé-zə</i>)
Pucélla	Thálard
Pýramus	Thames (/' <i>temz/</i> , <i>temmz</i>)
Rágózine	Thersítés
Rambúrës	Théséus (/' <i>øisíəs/</i> <i>théé-səs</i> , <i>th</i> as in <i>thin</i>)
Régan (/' <i>rigən/</i> <i>Rée-gən</i>)	Thísbe (/' <i>øɪzbɪ/</i> ; rhymes with <i>frisbee</i>)
Ròdérigo	Thúró
Rome (/rum/; rhymes with <i>boom</i>)	Titánia
Rósalind	Trebónius
Rousillon	Týbalt (/' <i>tibə'lɪt/</i> <i>tibbəlt/</i>)
<i>Róuen</i> (/' <i>rəun/</i> <i>Rone</i> ; PNS /' <i>rəuən/</i> <i>Ro-ən</i> at <i>1H6</i> 1.1.65)	Ulyssës (/ju' <i>lisiz/</i> <i>yoo-líss-eez</i>)
Saint Álbans (/' <i>snt'ɔlbnz/</i> <i>sənt-áwl-bənz/</i>)	Valéría
Sál[í]sbúry (/' <i>sɔlzbrɪ/</i> <i>sáwls-bʊ-ree</i>)	Váu[gh]än (/' <i>vɔən/</i> <i>vau-ən</i>)
Sàturnínus	Vérges (rhymes with <i>splurges</i>)
Scone (/skun/; rhymes with <i>loon</i>)	Vióla
Sétebòs (rhymes with <i>floss</i>)	Virgil'a
Séyton (/' <i>seitn/</i> <i>sáy-tən</i> , like <i>Satan</i>)	Volúmn'a
Shréwsbury (/' <i>ʃrəuzbəri/</i> <i>shroze-bə-ri</i> ; never contracted in Shakespeare)	Wár[w]ick (/' <i>wɔrɪk/</i> <i>wórrick</i> ; first vowel as in <i>porridge</i> , <i>horror</i>)
Simónidës	Wár[w]ickshire (/' <i>wɔrɪkʃə/</i> <i>wórrick-shə</i>)
Síward	Wéstmoreland (/' <i>wɛsmələnd/</i> <i>wéss-mə-lənd</i>)
Solínus	

Willou[gh]by (/ˈwɪləbi/ *will-ə-bi*)

Winchester (/ˈwɪntʃəstə/ *wín-chəs-tə*)

Wólsey (/ˈwulzi/ *wúll-zee*)

Wó[rce]ster (/ˈwʊstə/ *wúss-tə*; first
syllable rhymes with *puss*)

Yorick (/ˈjɔːrɪk/ *yórrick*; first vowel as
in *porridge, horror*)

Appendix C:

Stress in Monosyllables

On the whole, stress-assignment in English is a relatively straightforward matter, but it becomes a little more complex where monosyllables are concerned. All lexical monosyllables have A-stress, of course, but some categories of grammatical monosyllables also have A-stress, some have B-stress and others have O-stress. To add to the complexity, many grammatical monosyllables (notably demonstratives, personal pronouns and possessive determiners) are natural attractors of accent: “Desi|ring this| man’s art| and that| man’s scope|” (*Son.* 29.7), “<Thou dost> love her|, because| thou know’st| I love|(her, / <And [for my] sake| e^ven so| doth she| abuse|(me,” (*Son.* 42.6-7), or “<Deadly> divorce| <step be>tween me| and you|!” (*AW* 5.3.319). Most of the time your ear will guide you in this but for the sake of completeness I include the following chart:

Stress in Monosyllables

1. Major (A) Stress Monosyllables

- a. NOUNS: **bread, land, peace ...**
- b. ADJECTIVES: **green, good, great ...**
- c. MAIN VERBS (ie lexical verbs): **eat, jump, sing, have** [a good time] ...
- d. NEGATIVE AUXILIARY VERBS: **shan’t, won’t, can’t, don’t.**
- e. DERIVED AUXILIARY VERBS: **dare, ought**
- f. ABSOLUTE UXILARY VERBS (ie with ellipted main verb): [A: Will he do it? B: If he] **can**, [he] **will**. [Yes, I] **did**.
- g. ADVERBS of:
 - i. manner: [he went] **fast**, [just] **so**¹ ...
 - ii. place: **here, there ...**
 - iii. time: **now, then, soon ...**
 - iv. frequency: **once, twice ...**
 - v. direction: [what goes] **up** [must come] **down**; [he went] **home** ...

¹ But *so* as a premodifier is unstressed (“So foul and fair a day”) though often accented (“It was so big!”).

- h. PRONOUNS of the following kinds:
 - i. demonstrative: **this** [is the place], **that's** [mine] ...
 - ii. possessive: [these are] **mine**, [but] **whose** [are those?] ...
 - iii. interrogative: **who** [is Sylvia?]; **what** [is she?], **where**, **why** ...
 - iv. quantifier: **some** [like it hot], **few** [are chosen], **most** [don't wish to be] ...
 - i. VERBAL PARTICLES: [she made it] **up**; [I tore it] **off** ...
 - j. DETERMINERS of the following kinds:
 - i. interrogative: **which** [doctor did you see?] ...
 - ii. quantifier: **all** [the President's men]; [there are] **few** [ripe ones]; **more** [people prefer tennis] ...
 - k. INTERJECTIONS: **ah!** **oh!** **yes!** **no!** ...
2. **Minor (B) Stress Monosyllables**
- a. PREPOSITIONS with associated adverbial functions: *by, down, like, off, out, plus, pro, near, next, past, round, save, since, through, till, up*.
 - b. PREPOSITIONS contracted from longer forms: *'gainst, 'twixt, 'fore* ...
 - c. CONJUNCTIONS with associated adverbial functions: *once, since, till, yet, but*.
 - d. WH-SUBORDINATORS: *when* [you go]; [I remember] *what* [you like]; [I don't care] *how* [you do it] ...
 - e. DETERMINERS of the following kinds:
 - i. demonstrative: *this* [royal throne of kings] ...
 - ii. indefinite: *some* [fool has parked here] ...

3. **Weak (O) Stress Monosyllables**
- a. PREPOSITIONS (other than those listed under 2.a): *as, at, but, for, in, of, on, per, than, times, to, with* (but see the major stress categories 1.g.v and 1.i.).
 - b. CONJUNCTIONS (other than those listed under 2.b): *for, if, nor, or than; both* [Bill] *and* [Jennifer know] *that* [you gargle] *while* [you shave] ...
 - c. POSITIVE AUXILIARY VERBS: *shall, would, may, have* [eaten]; *is* [eating], *does* [he eat?], etc. Such words frequently attract accent, however: "You *shall* go to the Ball!"
 - d. PRONOUNS of the following kinds:
 - i. personal: *I* [love] *you* ...
 - ii. relative: [The man] *who* [lives here]; [the dog] *that* [barked in the night] ...

- e. DETERMINERS of the following kinds:
- i. possessive: *your* [knee is on] *my* [chest] ...
 - ii. relative: [Bill,] *whose* [uncle runs the bank] ...
 - iii. articles: *the, a, an.*
 - iv. partitives: [I'd like] *some* [butter]; [is there] *no*² [jam?]
- ...

Since words are classified by function rather than by written form, what looks like the same word may belong to different categories in different grammatical contexts: for example, *have*, *be* and *do* are major when main verbs but weak as auxiliaries; *that* is major as a demonstrative pronoun, minor as a demonstrative determiner but weak as relative pronoun and subordinating conjunction. Compare the *thats* and *hads* in *He sáid that thàt mán had hàd méasles* (/hi sed ðæt ðæt mæn hæd hæd mizlz/).

It may seem fiddly to discriminate three categories of stress but the difference between major and minor stress is functional in the metre.³ Minor monosyllables like *'gainst* and *'twixt* have a double valency in the verse, rather like elastic words: if we take a verse like *And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence* (Son. 12.11), the phrase *'gainst Time's scythe* (**b-a-A**) can count in the metre either as **B a-A**, producing a strong offbeat (*And no|thing 'gainst| Time's scythe| can make| defence|*) or as **Ā-a-A**, producing a swap (*And no|thing [gainst Time's] scythe|*).

² Bearing in mind that *no* as a determiner is by its nature frequently accented: “*There's no business like show business*”. *The same applies to personal pronouns*.

³ Even in the very strictest versification, such as Pope's, minor iambic words like *against* or *between* can occur where major iambic ones can't: Pope can write *And so|lid pu|dding a|gainst emp|ty praise|* (*Dunciad* 1.54) but not **And solid pudding defeats empty praise|*. See the examples from Shakespeare at (301) (§7.5).

Appendix D: Select Glossary

Bolded items are cross-referenced within the glossary.

An asterisk marks a term or its use as non-traditional.

Accent: The rapid deflection of pitch that characterises the most prominent syllable in any tone-unit; it can be used to highlight a contrast, as in “I said Jan, not Jack,” or “Far from being an incentive, it’s a positive disincentive.” See §1.3.

***Adjacent:** Two words separated only by a **crack** are adjacent. See **joined**, **contiguous**, **separate**. See §1.3.2.

Alexandrine: A six-**foot** (but eight-beat) **iambic** line. See §6.1.2 and §6.2.8.

Amphibious section: A part-line that both completes the previous part-line and initiates a new pentameter (to be completed by the following part-line); see §3.2.1.

Anapest: A **measure** with two **offbeats** preceding the **beat** (the first anapest in the line often has only one offbeat). An example of anapestic **tetrameter**:

Why, all| his beha|v^ours did make| their retire|
To the court| of his eye|, peeping tho|rough desire|. (LLL 2.1.234-5)

It is not strictly a **foot** since it is not subject to metrical variations such as reversal and swapping.

A-Stress: see **Major Stress**.

***Available:** Syllables (including **half-syllables**) are available (to scansion) if they do not follow the last independent in the verse.

***Awkward mapping:** Mapping of **inhibited** or Œ-syllables onto S-slots. See §2.3.5.

***Balanced line:** A form of **prosodic figure**. See §2.4.4.

Beat: Extra muscular effort in enunciating certain syllables in the utterance, normally recurring at (very) roughly equal intervals of time (isochrony). See §1.5.

Beat addition: The placing of a beat on an unstressed unaccented syllable in the performance of an utterance in order to avoid a long run of non-beats. See §1.5.2.

Break (symbol: \): A break between **tone-units** in an utterance. See §1.3.2.

B-Stress: see **Minor Stress**.

Caesura (symbol: ||): A syntactic break in the line. See §3.1.1.

Catalexis: A w-slot with no syllable associated with it. See **jolt**, **drag** and Chapter 4.

Clitic: An unstressed particle, such as a pronoun or preposition, closely attached to and in construction with a neighbouring **lexical** word: *to* in *to London* and *it* in *Eat it* are proclitic and enclitic respectively.

***Contiguous:** Two words separated only by a **flaw** or a word-boundary are contiguous. See **adjacent**, **separate**.

Contraction: The dropping or eliding of **half-vowels** in a word; the opposite of **expansion**. See §1.1.

***Complex metre:** In English, a metre that regulates both the number of beats in a performance of the line, and the number of syllable-positions in the verse, but lets the beats slide about in the grid of syllable-positions, like iambic pentameter.

***Compound metre:** In English, a metre that regulates both the number of beats in a performance of the line, and the number of syllables occurring between each pair of beats within the line, as in Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, or anapestic tetrameter: "O ¹young Lo₁chin₂var is₁ come₂ ³out of₁ the₂ ⁴West".

***Crack** (symbol: #): A potential intonation-**break**. See §1.3.2.

***Cut** (symbol: \): An obligatory intonation-**break**. See §1.3.2.

Demotic verse: Also called simple verse: the insistent, unfooted, chantable four-beat verse of nursery rhymes, protest chants, weather-saws and so on.

***Dominant:** A fully stressed (A) syllable.

***Dominate:** When a fully stressed (A) syllable dominates an adjoining weak syllable, it prevents it from carrying a beat (and thus from being mapped onto an S-slot). See §1.5.2.

***Drag** (symbol: ~): A form of **catalexis** or missing offbeat where there is no syntactic break (ie at a **flaw** or **join**). See §4.2.

Endstopping: Coincidence of a **cut** with a line-ending. See §3.1.2.

Enjambment (pr. *injámmənt*): A line whose ending does not coincide with a **cut** is enjambed. See §3.1.2.

Expansion: Expansion is the full pronunciation of **half-vowels** in a word; the opposite of **contraction**.

Extrametrical: A syllable occurring outside the metrical scheme. Some consider **tails** to be extrametrical.

Feminine epic caesura: An **extrametrical** weak syllable occurring before a **cut** in the line. See §2.2.5.

***Flaw** (symbol: +): A phrasal boundary that is not a **crack** because it does not divide a larger unit into possible **tone-units**; there is a flaw, for example, between a preposition and the noun-phrase it governs: “in + the - garden”. See §1.3.2.

Focus: “Roughly speaking, what is focused in a[n utterance] is understood to be ‘new’ information … what is not focused is understood to be ‘given’ [or background information]” (Selkirk 1986, 200). Focused words or affixes are accented; de-focused ones are not. See §1.3.4.

***Foot:** An odd-even pair of syllable-positions in a **template**. See §2.1.

Complex verse in English permits only disyllabic feet.

***Fracture** (symbol: \\\): A disruptive **caesura**. See §3.1.1.

***Fragment:** A non-pentameter line with fewer than six syllables. See §6.1.1.

***Golden line:** A form of **prosodic figure**. See §2.4.3.

***Half-vowel:** A half-vowel is a weak vowel (/ə/ [*schwa*] or /ɪ/) which may – but need not – be mapped onto a slot in the template, like the middle vowel of *dangerous*, which may scan as three syllables or as two (*dang'rōus*). See §1.1.1.

***Harsh mapping:** Mapping of a-syllables onto S-slots. See §2.3.4.

Headless line: A line with a **jolt** in the first **foot** (ie a monosyllabic initial foot), like “^ Boot|less home|, and wea|ther-bea|ten back|” (IH4 3.1.66). See §4.1.1.

***Heavy mapping:** Mapping of a-syllables onto w-slots. See §2.3.3.

Hesitation: A pause not required or not permitted by the grammar: “Thy mother plays, and I – play too.”

***Impetus marker:** A subordinating conjunction, a nominative pronoun with no verb attached, or a transitive verb with no object; these indicate forward momentum for **endstopped** lines. See §3.1.2.

Iambic: Describes a metrical **matrix** in which **feet** consist of an **offbeat** followed by a **beat**.

***Independent:** A syllable that is neither **dominated** nor **subordinated** is called independent, and is represented in the prosodic base by a capital letter (A, B or O). Independent syllables are capable of carrying **beats**.

***Inhibition** (symbol: Ō): Under certain circumstances a **weak** syllable may be discouraged, though not prevented, from carrying a **beat**. See §7.2.1.

Intonational phrase: See **tone-unit**.

Isochrony: Tendency for beats to occur in speech at roughly equal intervals of time. See 1.5.1.

***Join** (symbol: -): Two consecutive words linked only by a word-break, not even a **flaw**, like determiner or adjective and noun, are said to be joined. See §1.3.2.

***Joint** (symbol: ||): A smooth **caesura**. See §3.1.1.

***Jolt** (symbol: ^): A form of **catalexis** that occurs within a syntactic **break** (ie at a **cut** or – rarely – a **crack**). See §4.1.

Lacunae: Collective term for ‘unoccupied’ syllable-positions (**catalexes** and **rests**).

Lexical stress: All lexical words – nouns, adjectives, main verbs and derived adverbs – have a syllable that receives **accent** when the word is uttered in isolation. This syllable is said to carry lexical stress. See 1.2.1.

***Liberation**: The effect of **accent** on an otherwise **dominated** or **subordinate** syllable in rendering it **independent**. See §7.2.2.

***Light mapping**: Mapping of O-syllables onto S-slots.

***Line**: An utterance of a **verse**. See §2.1.

***Major [Stress]**: The main stressed syllable of a **lexical** or dictionary word. See §1.2.2.

***Matrix**: The underlying abstract pattern of a verse-form, consisting of a sequence of identical units such as **feet**. See §2.1.

***Minor [Stress]**: The stressed syllable of a polysyllabic grammar word or the secondary stressed syllable of a **lexical** word. See §1.2.3.

***Natural mapping**: Mapping of A-syllables onto S-slots and o-syllables onto w-slots is called ‘natural’.

Offbeat: A syllable not carrying a **beat** in performance.

Phonology: The psychological, rule-governed aspect of the perception of sounds in language. What is perceived phonologically (eg **lexical stress**) need have no actual phonetic representation in any given performance.

***Plonking**: Consistently placing a falling accent on the last major stress in each line. See 1.3.3.

***Prosodic figure**: A sequence of stressed and unstressed syllables that creates a recognisable pattern. See §§2.4.3-4.

Prosody: The music of speech: rhythm, intonation and so on. See Chapter 1.

Rest (symbol: <!>): A **silent beat**. See §1.5.4 and Chapter 5.

***Restorable**: A restorable is a syllable not normally sounded (in contemporary English) that may nonetheless count in the metre where necessary, like the -*ed* endings of verbs not ending in /t/ or /d/, or the /i/ of words ending in -*ion*. See §1.1.5.

***Reversal**: A metrical variation that exchanges w- and S-positions within a foot, so that the **beat** precedes the **offbeat**. See §§2.2.1-2.

Rhotic: All dialects of English pronounce /r/ before vowel-sounds, but only rhotic ones pronounce it after vowels: thus *rice* and *warrant* have /r/ (in some form) in all dialects, but *form* and *war* only in rhotic varieties such as Shakespeare’s English, modern Scottish, Devon English or General

American. Non-rhotic varieties include the dialect of Boston and other parts of New England, Australian English, and Educated Southern British English.

Schwa (symbol: ə): The neutral unstressed vowel heard in the first syllable of *about* or the second of *bishop*; by far the commonest vowel-sound in English, it is variously spelt with all five vowel-letters. See §1.1.1.

***Separate**: Two words divided by a **cut** are separate. See **adjacent**, **contiguous**.

***Shift**: A prosodic variation. See §2.3.

Silent beat (symbol: <!>): A beat without vocal accompaniment; in iambic pentameter it needs to be indicated by a gesture of some sort in performance. See §1.5.4 and Chapter 5.

***Simple metre**: In English, a metre that regulates only the number of beats in a performance of the line, like that of nursery rhymes or protest chants: “¹**What** do we ²**want**? ³**Ten** per ⁴**cent**! / ¹**When** do we ²**want** it? ³**Now**! ⁴<!>”. The rhythms of simple metre are not themselves simple.

Single-moulded: A line is single-moulded if it consists of an entire clause or major constituent: “The quality of mercy is not strained”.

Slot: A syllable-position in a template, usually either **w**[eak] or **S**[trong].

Stichomythia (rhymes with *pithier*): Exchange of single lines in a dialogue. See §3.2.2.

Stress: Inherent phonological prominence in one or more syllables in a word, or relative phonological prominence assigned by the syntactic rules of English. See §1.2.

***Strong offbeat**: A **heavy mapping** produces a strong (ie a-stressed) **offbeat** in performance.

Strong syllables: Stressed (ie **independent major** and **minor** (A- and B-) syllables and accented syllables of any kind. See §1.2.

Subordination: The weakening of a **major** stress when immediately preceding another major in the same syntactic constituent. See §1.4.1.

***Super-heavy mapping**: Mapping of A-syllables onto w-slots. See §2.3.3.

***Super-strong offbeat**: A **super- heavy mapping** produces a super-strong (ie A-stressed) **offbeat** in performance. See §2.3.3.

***Swap**: A metrical variation or **switch** that exchanges **w** and **S** positions between neighbouring feet. See §§2.2.3-4.

***Switch**: A metrical variation (a **swap** or a **reversal**) that creates a new **template** by altering the sequence of syllable-slots. See §2.2.

Synalépha: Also called **contraction**: the process whereby two adjacent vowels become one, as in *th'entry, fir'y*. See §1.1.4.

Sýncope: Also called **contraction**: the process whereby a weak vowel is dropped after the major and before another weak syllable beginning with a frictionless continuant, as in *dang'rous*, *marv'ling*, *en'my*. See §1.1.4.

Synerésis: Also called **contraction**: the process whereby a weak vowel (either /i/ or /u/) is dropped immediately before another vowel, becoming a semi-vowel (/y/ or /w/), as in *tedious* or *consensual*. See §1.1.4.

***Tail:** An extra **offbeat** on the end of a line, often called a ‘feminine ending’. See §2.2.5.

***Template:** An abstract metrical pattern derived from a **matrix**. See §2.2.

***Terminal closure:** the degree of syntactic closure at the end of a line (in Shakespeare's verse, lines end in either a **cut**, a **crack**, or a **flaw**). See §3.1.2.

Tetrámeter: A line of four **feet**.

Tone-unit: A tone-unit is a phrase that carries a single intonational ‘tune’; any complete utterance must consist of one or more tone-units. To illustrate: if I say *They left hopefully* with one tone-unit, *hopefully* is an adverbial adjunct and means ‘with hope’; if I say *They left, \ hopefully* with two tone-units, *hopefully* becomes dissociated from the verb and functions instead as a disjunct or ‘commenting’ adverbial (“I hope that they left”). See §1.3.2.

Tonic syllable: the syllable in dictionary words which, in isolation, carries major stress

Trimeter: A **line** consisting of three **feet**. See §6.1.1.

***Verse:** A sequence of syllables corresponding to the largest domain in which metrical rules can operate (that is, from line-ending to line-ending); a verse is the raw material for the utterance of a **line**. See §2.1.

Vocative: A noun phrase demarcated by **cuts**, used in hailing or identifying the person spoken to, as in “**Bill**, come here!” Vocatives in Shakespeare can be highlighted by a number of metrical and prosodic devices, including **reversals**, **jolts**, **rests** and speech-initial **fragments**.

Weak beat: A **light mapping** produces a weak (ie unstressed) **beat** in performance.

Weak syllable: An unstressed and unaccented syllable. See §1.2.5.

Appendix E:

A List of Symbols used in Scansion

- | vertical solidus: marks the end of a normal **foot**
- || double vertical solidus: denotes a break or **caesura**
- \\" double reverse solidus: denotes a disruptive caesura, or **fracture**
- < > angle brackets: enclose a reversed **foot**
- < | combination: encloses a reversible foot
- [] square brackets: enclose the syllables involved in a **swap**
- | (vertical solidus followed by left lunette (bracket): marks a tail or ‘feminine ending’
- / solidus (or virgule, or forward slash): indicates where a line is broken between two speakers
- \ back-slash (or reverse solidus): marks a **cut** (a major break in intonation)
- † dagger: obligatory intonational break
- # hash-sign: marks a **crack** (a potential break in intonation)
- + plus-sign: marks a **flaw** (a syntactic juncture where no intonational break is possible)
- ⇒ small arrow: onward semantic pressure for endstopped lines that include an **impetus marker**.
- ± underlined plus-sign: marks a **flaw** due to a demoted **crack**
- ^ caret: marks a **jolt**
- :: two colons: means ‘versus’
- ~ tilde: marks a **drag** at a **join**
- ≈ double tilde: marks a **drag** at a **flaw**
- <!> marks a **rest**
- ... ellipsis: at the beginning of a verse indicates that the first part of the pentameter has been ellipted
- S a slot in the template that must be filled by an independent (beatable) syllable
- S an S-slot (illegally) occupied by a dominated syllable

- s a slot in the template that must be filled by a subordinated stress
- w a slot in the template that may be filled by any kind of syllable
- W a slot in the template that must be filled by an inhibited syllable
- A a fully stressed major syllable (a ‘dominant’)
- a a major syllable with subordinated stress
- B a fully stressed minor syllable
- b a minor syllable with subordinated stress
- O an independent unstressed syllable
- o a dominated unstressed syllable
- ð an elidible: a weak syllable that need not be mapped onto a slot
- Ō an inhibited syllable
- Q an accented unstressed syllable

Appendix F: A List of Abbreviations

- AC* — *Antony and Cleopatra*
ALC — *A Lover's Complaint*
AW — *All's Well That Ends Well*
AYL — *As You Like It*
CE — *The Comedy of Errors*
Cor. — *Coriolanus*
Cym. — *Cymbeline*
Ham. — *Hamlet*
1H4 — *Henry IV, Part 1*
2H4 — *Henry IV, Part 2*
H5 — *Henry V*
1H6 — *Henry VI, Part 1*
2H6 — *Henry VI, Part 2*
3H6 — *Henry VI, Part 3*
H8 — *Henry VIII*
JC — *Julius Caesar*
KJ — *King John*
KL — *King Lear*
LLL — *Love's Labour's Lost*
Mac. — *Macbeth*
MAN — *Much Ado About Nothing*
MM — *Measure for Measure*
MV — *The Merchant of Venice*
MND — *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
MWW — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*
Oth. — *Othello*
Per. — *Pericles Prince of Tyre*
R2 — *Richard II*

R3 — *Richard III*

RL — *The Rape of Lucrece*

RJ — *Romeo and Juliet*

Son. — *Sonnets*

Tp. — *The Tempest*

Tim. — *Timon of Athens*

Tit. — *Titus Andronicus*

TC — *Troilus and Cressida*

TN — *Twelfth Night*

TGV — *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

TNK — *The Two Noble Kinsmen*

TS — *The Taming of the Shrew*

VA — *Venus and Adonis*

WT — *The Winter's Tale*

F1 — ‘The First Folio’; ie *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies* (London, 1623)

OED — the Oxford English Dictionary

Q1 — The first quarto edition of the play in question; *Q2*, the second (etc.).

TLN — Through-Line Numbering (a system that numbers every printed line in F1, starting anew for each work)

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Dr Peter Groves was educated at the universities of Exeter and Cambridge in the United Kingdom and teaches poetry, Shakespeare and Renaissance English literature in the School of English, Communications and Performance Studies at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. He is the author of a series of articles on poets from Chaucer to Philip Larkin and the theoretical monograph *Strange Music: The Metre of the English Heroic Line*.



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