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Toward a Practical Poetics of Rhythm:
Kinds of End-Stop and Enjambment

Paul Hawkins

A Thesis
in
The Department
of English

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Toward a Practical Poetics of Rhythm:
Kinds of End-Stop and Enjambment

Paul Hawkins

This case study of line-endings in some of Shakespeare's Sonnets argues that a comprehensive view of metre and of metrical variation requires a description of the total sound of a poem, and that a comprehensive criticism requires attention to the sensuousness of literary language.

The first chapter defends the place of rhythmic analysis within criticism and outlines my principles of prosody, with examples from Shakespeare and other English poets.

The second chapter describes Sonnets #1-6 and elaborates the analytic method; subtle distinctions between kinds of end-stopping and enjambment are made.

The third chapter examines theoretical problems of rhythmic analysis and moves progressively toward elaborating an expressivist theory of rhythm, with examples from Edgar Allan Poe and Oscar Wilde.

The fourth chapter consolidates the findings of Chapter Three on the significance of rhythm and of Chapter Two on kinds of line-ending. The expressive lineation of Sonnets #18 and #29 is described in the light of these earlier chapters.

The fifth chapter analyses line-endings in a sample of other English poems, principally sonnets, making comparative judgments between the lineation of Shakespeare and other

poets.

The conclusion briefly suggests some possible applications of the method of analysis in future study.

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NOTE ON THE TEXTS USED

The text of Shakespeare's Sonnets used here is Stephen Booth's edition, with the 1609 Quarto (Q) and Edited Text (B) on facing pages. My largest section of close analysis involves Sonnets #1-6. Sonnets #3, #4, and #6 are quoted here as edited by Booth. Sonnets #1, #2 and #5 are quoted here as edited by Booth with the following changes in punctuation (in all but one case, specified below, the punctuation preferred is the Quarto's):

1.3 decease,] B no comma; 1.7 lies,] B dash; 1.9 ornament,] B no comma; 1.10 spring,] B no comma; 1.13 be,] B dash; 2.1 brow,] B no comma; 2.4 held:] B period; 2.5 lies,] B dash; 2.6 days:] B dash; 2.7 eyes,] B no comma; 2.10-11 this . . . excuse] B "This . . .excuse"; 2.11 excuse,] B dash Q no punctuation; 5.3 same,] B no comma; 5.5 on,] B no comma; 5.13 distilled] B distilled, Thus, while using Booth's spelling, including hyphenated words not always hyphenated in the Quarto (for example, 1.6 self-substantial), my punctuation of Sonnets #1-6 differs from the Quarto's only in the following instances:

1.5 thou,] Q no punctuation; 1.8 cruel.] Q colon; 1.12 niggarding.] Q colon; 2.3 livery,] Q no punctuation; 2.5 asked] Q askt, ; 2.10 answer,] Q no punctuation; 2.11 count] Q count, excuse,] Q no punctuation; 2.14 cold.] Q could, ; 3.9 glass,] Q no punctuation; 3.10 prime:] Q comma; 4.1 loveliness,] Q no punctuation; 4.5 abuse] Q abuse, ; 4.7 usurer,] Q no punctuation; 5.1 frame] Q frame, ; 5.7 gone,] Q period; 5.8 everywhere.] Q comma;

6.1 deface] Q deface, ; 6.3 place] Q place, ; 6.4 self-killed.] Q colon; 6.5 usury] Q usury, ; 6.8 one.] Q comma; 6.10 thee:] Q thee, ; 6.13 self-willed,] Q no comma.

Specifically, my text of Sonnets #1-6 has brought punctuation at the line-ending closer to the Quarto's.

All other sonnets of Shakespeare are quoted here as edited by Booth, unless otherwise noted.

All other poetry has been quoted from the edition listed under each author in Works Cited or Consulted.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis began in enthusiasm. Enthusiastic response to poetry is its origin and its end. It attentively inspects the line-endings of some of Shakespeare's Sonnets--#1-6, #18, and #29--as its primary case study in the critical importance of rhythm. Line-endings, as all other rhythmic elements, and their contribution to the rhythms of poetry can only be recognized and appreciated if the poems are spoken and heard, spoken and heard either by a silent "inner" voice and imagining "inner" ear, or aloud. So the close-analytical sections herein involve detailed description of the sounds of the poems. Wherever possible, I have tried to cut down on quotation; nonetheless, quotations are abundant when necessary to the discussion.

To my knowledge, no such focused study of line-endings in poetry has been attempted. The standard distinctions between end-stopping, enjambment, masculine endings, and feminine endings provide me with my point of departure. However, I develop distinctions in Chapters Two, Four, and Five between kinds of end-stopping and enjambment to account more fully than hitherto in prosodic analysis for the rhythms of poetry. These distinctions are original to this thesis.

While technical, my method is neither theoretical nor linguistic, but practical: practical in its conception of prosodic analysis and definition of key prosodic terms, practical in guiding the reader through its analysis of the

sounds and rhythms of Shakespeare's Sonnets. This perhaps demands some discussion. Stephen Booth comments in An Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets that "a mild persecution complex is almost indispensable to a stylistic critic attempting more than an anthology of impressionistic adjectives" (193). An article by David Masson in Neophilologus inspires the comment. "Masson has probably caught himself up so far in technical jargon as to bar himself from those of his potential audience to whom he has most to say, the part of his audience concerned with the sonnets rather than the sciences of speech and hearing" (Booth 195). Booth finds Masson's "error" "grandly but purely tactical"; nevertheless, his comments are an apt warning to anyone attempting something similar.

In his introduction to The Structure of Verse, a collection of twentieth-century essays on prosody, Harvey Gross addresses the division of the field of prosodic studies into theorists with "spatialist" and those with "'performative' or temporalist" approaches ("Toward" 8). Striking a note similar to Booth's, he comments on the work of the spatialists as follows: "The generative metrists . . . continue to make their contributions toward refining the concept of metricality; however, nothing in their approach has been able to demonstrate that the metricality or non-metricality of a line of verse has much to do with either its aesthetic effect or its aesthetic value. The format of their work seems calculated to repel a literary sensibility" (9). Equally telling is John Hollander's declaration: "most

linguistic models of the production or the reading of English verse seem to have propounded a maker or a reader with no memory and no range of reading, a world of poetic language sacred to motherless Muses" (79).

These separate accounts roughly identify two poles of prosodic discussion: the spatialist and the temporalist, the scientific and the aesthetic, the technical and the impressionistic, perhaps even the objective and the subjective. I aim to be both: on the one hand, empirical and objective in describing the rhythms of the poems as I read them; on the other, impressionistic in describing their significance. After all, rhythms affect us, emotionally and viscerally; they enter our body and move us.

Not all can be codified, particularly as we all have different voices, and presumably, slightly different responses. The readings that follow are mine. These reader-response underpinnings of my method are explored briefly in the beginning of Chapter One. I do not pretend to propound rigorously scientific distinctions merely for the sake of the distinctions themselves. My aim is to read the poems by describing their rhythms.

Moreover, my study of line-endings in the Sonnets is a preliminary one, which I hope need not stand or fall on the basis of my distinctions and my readings. Thus, even if we disagree on the particularities of the readings, we may nonetheless agree on the larger range that the particularity works within. Even if we disagree that a certain line-ending

is a stately rather than a conversational end-stop (to use two of my terms), we may nonetheless agree that distinctions like these shape the rhythm of verse, and that reckoning deeply with line-endings is a fruitful area for continued study.

Enthusiastic response is the end of the thesis. My largest hopes for it are personal and pedagogical: that in sharpening my sensitivity to rhythmic matters and their explication, I will be a better teacher of prosody, able to encourage students to find their own joy in the sensuousness of speaking poetry; and that readers may likewise find their sensitivities sharpened, engaged, or affronted.

At the same time, I have been conscious while writing that my matter and method are now not fashionable in criticism, if they ever were. In fact, Harvey Gross discusses the neglect of prosodic study by prominent critical schools of the past and present: "John Crowe Ransom felt it was 'a public scandal' that his colleagues among the New Critics, so renowned for their sensitivity and ingenuity, were singularly deaf 'to hearing the music of poetry, or at least, to avoid misunderstanding, to hearing its meters'" (quoted from Gross, "Toward" 5). Later Gross writes, "The recent hermeneutic and semiotic movements . . . have shown an extreme intellectualistic fastidiousness in dealing with the concrete realities of poetic structures. Like the now old New Critics they have locked their interests into the meaning rather than the texture of the literary work" ("Toward" 9-10). Indeed, sound analysis may be thought too subjective to be

theoretically formulated, and therefore outside of genuine criticism. Or at best, analysing the sounds of poems may be thought a dead end: yes, it's all lovely, but what is the point?

Both problems present sound criticism or any explication of readerly joy two alternatives: either that it become a theoretical and theoreticized discourse, distancing itself intellectually from the messy matter of actual sound; or that it remain marginal as merely one component of a critic's discourse, and be given respectability once subsumed by a larger concern for signified meaning. The first is the spatialist route whose limitations Booth, Gross, and Hollander have identified.

The second is for me equally unacceptable: any reading of a poem presupposes and is limited by a hearing of the poem or a deafness to its sounds; the meaning of a poem--as of any utterance--is a temporal and physical rhythmic experience. These are matters that future criticism will, I hope, engage, as this thesis attempts to engage them.

The thesis, then, has three branches: at its centre is the description of line-endings in some of Shakespeare's Sonnets, with a final chapter studying line-endings in other English poems, principally sonnets; introducing and interspersed with this discussion are first, an argument with thematic criticism, and particularly the tendency in such criticism away from discussions of rhythmic experience, and second, an engagement with unresolved questions in rhythmic

theory.

The prior research and criticism that constitute my bibliography reflect these divisions; my limited citation of that material reflects the primary nature of my central analysis. The following identifies my major indebtedness to prior scholarship.

First, I have consulted representative criticisms of the Sonnets (especially Booth 1969 and 1977, Felperin 1985, Pequigney 1985, Smith 1992, Everett 1994) to situate my arguments, and in the case of Felperin and Everett, to problematize some of their methodological assumptions where they touch my endeavour. Second, I have consulted representative accounts of contemporary critical theory (especially Belsey 1980, Eagleton 1983, Easthope 1983) for similar reasons: to situate and justify my project, and to identify and take issue with certain (for me, problematical) tendencies.

Third, I have consulted the work of various prosodic theorists (especially Pound 1934, Hollander 1975, Gross 1979, Fussell 1979, Cureton 1994) and prosodic discussions of Shakespeare's art (especially Sipe 1969, Wright 1988) to identify issues and problems and respond to them, and to define my terms and approach.

All three "external" arguments are largely developed in Chapters One and Three. Chapters Two, Four, and Five are primary analysis of line-endings in Shakespeare's Sonnets (Two and Four) and in other English poems, principally sonnets

(Five). In other words, the secondary source material from the three areas has been used to identify the contribution that this thesis makes to their various critical discourses.

CHAPTER ONE: Criticism and Prosody

One afternoon while I was an undergraduate at Concordia University, a group of students from a course on Paradise Lost assembled in a seminar room with their instructor to read the first two books of Milton's poem. We sat in a circle and read aloud, taking turns reading one verse paragraph each. That afternoon, hearing the degrees of foregrounding, middle-grounding, backgrounding, and non-grounding of the metre of the poem in the different voices of the group, I was made powerfully aware that we were all reading different texts. As a possible prosodic elitist, I recognized that I was reading a text more or less like the text conceived by the professor and a few of the others (that is, a metrical verse poem), but that many if not most in the room were reading a bizarre prose. As an elitist, I of course phrased my awareness in the question, "what can the others possibly be understanding of the poem?" Even then, however, I meant by this the more neutral, "what are they understanding it as?" That is, not a negative but a positive "what": what meaning does reading it have for them, what is their meaning, what is their text? That day, there was undeniably not a text in that class.

I relate this story at the outset because there is a danger in metrical criticism of lapsing into elitism and dogmatism, or of being seen as elitist or dogmatic, as holding that metrical structures prescribe any one reading of a line or of a whole poem. Harvey Gross has written that prosodic

discussions can become "bad-temper[ed]" because no one wants to be called insensitive to the rhythms of poetry (17). If one argues that a poem's metre indicates or suggests this or that kind of scansion or delivery, one had better nail down one's analysis, brooking no opposition.

My experience with the reading group persuades me that prosodic analysis should not be about elitism or dogmatism, or about nailing meaning down. After all, there can never be one text about which we can all agree. Now it may be that critics can agree, more or less, about what, for instance, "From fairest creatures we desire increase"--the line or the whole of Shakespeare's Sonnet #1--means. However, no one can make me say, hear, and feel it as I say, feel, and hear it myself. And no one can feel while saying and hearing it--silently or audibly--as I do. Those responses are mine alone. Further, if I hear John Gielgud saying it in a crowded theatre, surely no one else can describe in precisely the same way my experience of his reading and its meaning. That too is mine alone, as it is any reader's.

But a reader's experience of a poem is not merely individual and subjective. Since our own awareness of and responses to the surface of a poem, its metre and its rhythm, create in large part the text we read and the meaning we find, the description of that text is an important critical act. Recently in fact, Helen Vendler has argued that there are, in criticism of poetry, three acts of criticism: "the first act of identifying theme and imagery, the second act of describing

form, and the third act of analysing imaginative transumption" (6). In Vendler's terms then, my concern is with the second act. Since we can all describe what is personal and conditioning our interpretations, discussion can be generated, disputes engaged, resolved, and begun again.

Dialogue rather than dogmatism on metrical matters is thus my aim and theme. To begin, we need to make some preliminary investigations.

Consider the following two commercial proverbial poems taken from a Toronto high school's cookbook (1984). Scorn could be heaped upon both, but I would like to see what conclusions can be drawn if we try to suspend negative judgment, and perhaps even assume a positive one, at least until after a brief analysis. My assumption is that both, while perhaps not exactly poetry, and certainly not "Poetry" (whatever those words mean), partake of poetry and the poetical, and can reveal something of the nature of poetry. For convenience, I shall refer to both as poems:

1) Be careful of the words you say,
To keep them soft and sweet;
You may never know, from day to day,
Which ones you'll have to eat. (Georgian 19)

2) Have you had a kindness shown?
Pass it on!
Let it travel through the years,

Let it wipe another's tears,
Till in heaven the deed appears,
Pass it on! (Georgian 21)

When I say above that each of these poems partakes of poetry and the poetical, I mean particularly that each shares certain features with things uncontroversially known as poems. Poem #1, for example, is written in a common verse form, the ballad stanza, alternating iambic tetrameter and trimeter lines, with an abab rhyme scheme. One might also note that this poem's form seems well-suited to its content, the expression of a gentle moral command followed by a brief comic argument in defense of that moral. The first tetrameter line sets forth with delicately poignant regularity the moral: "Be careful of the words you say." The irony of the poem's close is foreshadowed here by the fall of the second stress on the minor preposition. If a child were being addressed, the line's namby-pamby regularity and the stress on "of" would reveal the speaker's condescension. Considered as a conscious rhetorical ploy, the structure of the first line seems then to indicate that the addressee is an adult whom the poem's speaker is gently treating as a child or with child-like tenderness, perhaps accompanied with a knowing wink. The second line qualifies or further defines the first line's proposition. As it is a trimeter line, the pattern of tetrameter/trimeter alternation is established for the reader. That pattern could instantly be violated in the next line;

such a violation (say, a third line that is iambic pentameter) would have some meaning, as a deviation from an established unit of discourse, or as a building of some larger more complex pattern (whereby, for instance, tetrameter, trimeter, and pentameter lines are to alternate in this poem). That the next line begins to repeat the pattern confirms the reader's expectations. The second line, as a one-foot shorter unit than the first, also makes somewhat more concrete the first line's command: "soft", "sweet." This seems to communicate that an abstract injunction, "Be careful of the words you say" is a weightier, longer thing, than its further and more concrete definition. The concrete and the particular ("soft", "sweet") are not only more fully comprehensible than the abstraction, but also more compact. So this metrical pattern, coupled with this particular content, makes a particular generalized statement, applicable, presumably, beyond the world of the poem.

While the concluding two lines repeat the tetrameter/trimeter pattern, they contain one interesting variation. The first foot is an anapest: "You may ne" (- - /). The acceleration that this gives to the first part of the line rhythmically signals that the conclusion is near, that this line is penultimate. It's a sophisticated rhythmic addition, again reinforcing the maturity of the poem's intended auditor established by the ironically emphasized "of" in line 1. The whole poem, banal and clichéd though its central concepts ("soft" and "sweet") be, is redeemed by the

wit of its last line.

Poem #2, which I will not subject to as lengthy an analysis, is perhaps more interesting. I have selected it because of its more eccentric metre: trochaic tetrameter, trochaic dimeter, three lines trochaic tetrameter, last line trochaic dimeter (all lines catalectic). How rhythmically fascinating it is! The upward inflection that the question creates in line 1 adds air and lightness to the end-stopped line. The short second line surprises the reader, compelling a pause. The parallel structure of the next two lines accelerates the poem, while the alliterative patterns ("Let it travel . . . Let it wipe"; "through the . . . another's") and the rhyme exert some frictional drag. The fifth line brings the poem to a crescendo on the aspirated "Heaven", and the last line provides a dazzling brief finish.

These poems could well be used with others in an I.A. Richards-type experiment--setting them unidentified alongside similar proverbial verses traditionally recognized as of higher literary quality, asking an audience which are better and why. My interest here is in identifying something of what poetry is, through what I have found in them. In the light of my reading of the poems, Cleanth Brooks's famous definition of poetry, that a poem, unlike other uses of language, doesn't declare its meaning, but buries its meaning in paradox, or expresses it paradoxically, is appropriate but in need of rephrasing. As I shall use the word in this thesis, a poem, as these poems just examined, deflects attention away from

meaning and onto sound. What is poetical is rhythmic indulgence. A poem captivates, as these do to some extent, by the energy of its saying more than by the thing said. In reading poetry, we involve ourselves, as I just have, in the process of the generation of meaning rather than in any final determination of it.

What follows from this is that poetry and the poetical describe a method of reading as much as an object in the world. Anything, especially a poem, is turned into prose when its rhythmic structure is ignored, left unconceived by the reader. And anything is read poetically when read rhythmically.

Another experiment could be conducted to make this second point, that prose is poeticized when read for its rhythm, and when in the throes of its rhythms the reader suspends any impulse to repose in the final determination of meaning, instead experiencing meaning as a rhythm or a sequence of rhythms. In many ways, this is a reading strategy exemplified by Terry Eagleton in his discussion of the Russian Formalists in Literary Theory: An Introduction. He constructs the following analysis of a sign seen in the London Underground, "Dogs must be carried on the escalator":

One could let oneself be arrested by the abrupt, minatory, staccato of the first ponderous monosyllables; find one's mind drifting, by the time it reached the allusiveness of 'carried,' to suggestive resonances of helping lame dogs through life; and perhaps even detect

in the very lilt and inflection of the word 'escalator' a miming of the rolling, up-and-down motion of the thing itself. (7)

While he comments, "This may well be a fruitless sort of pursuit," he nonetheless concludes, as I have above, "'literature' may be at least as much a question of what people do to writing as of what writing does to them."

It is a commonplace of contemporary criticism that language is neither natural nor a mirror to reality. The materiality of language and the priority of its materiality are often invoked in principle, as they are by Eagleton, to justify particular critical operations that function to disrupt naive and "commonsense" assumptions of the transparency of language, the unmediated access that language gives to thought and reality.¹ But the invocation of the materiality of language other than in principle does not command much critical respect, there being a hierarchy within most criticism of meaning over matter, substance over surface, spirit over body, the written over the spoken, the thought over the enunciation, the said over the saying. Eagleton's indulgence in a rhythmic, poetic reading only to minimize its significance within his Marxist critical project manifests this tendency. His position is finally as arbitrary as he finds the Formalists', and by no means indicates an inevitable

¹ A standard discussion of this point is Catherine Belsey, "Criticism and Common Sense," Critical Practice (1-36).

course for criticism. I shall return to this in a moment.

More to the point here is the minimizing of the sonic experience of poetry in criticism of Shakespeare's Sonnets. In a recent essay on the Sonnets, Barbara Everett makes the following point, in an effort to distinguish between Shakespeare's plays and poems:

And yet plays and poems are of course distinguishable in simple ways. The real difference is embodiment. Ezra Pound made the point that the medium of drama is not words or ideas but bodies moving on a stage. A stage-play can be read, and Shakespeare's later plays in particular demand to be read. But the soul of dramatic writing is this fact of embodied presence, both of actors and of audience. The linguistic element depends on this given occasion. Reflective poetry like the Sonnets has no occasion but the page. Its voice is the voice in the head of the individual reader. (11)

Certainly, in my readings of the Sonnets, I stage the poems, insofar as that means describing their oral and aural experience and the meaning that follows from that experience. Everett's position thus demands some response; several can be made, some perhaps more trivial than others. Were Shakespeare's "sugred sonnets among his private friends" never enjoyed by two or more when read aloud? It seems highly unlikely. Perhaps more relevant, however, is Everett's only partial memory of Pound's statement in ABC of Reading:

[W]hereas the medium of poetry is WORDS, the medium of

drama is people moving about on a stage and using words.

(46; my italics)

As Pound recognizes, the theatre is not merely Everett's "bodies . . . on a stage," as it is the embodied word, the word matched to the action, the action to the word. Elsewhere in the same text, in speaking of understanding poetry, Pound clearly admonishes, "LISTEN to the sound it makes" (201).

Related to this are Pound's earlier aphorisms:

There are three kinds of melopoeia, that is verse made to sing; to chant or intone; and to speak.

The older one gets the more one believes in the first.

(61)

While Pound's distinction between the drama and poetry is sensible, the distinction between the two as concerns the speaking of the verse dissolves, as Everett conceives the distinction. Both poetry and the drama are made of words to be embodied; the drama merely adds the bodies. This is all no more than commonsensical.

Another example occurs in Howard Felperin's Beyond Deconstruction. There Felperin articulates "the movement of the Sonnets from enactment to counter-enactment, from performance to pun, from mimesis to metamimesis" (196), and finds in them "a mimetic or supermimetic project that Shakespeare certainly states, in accordance with the poetic and rhetorical theory of his time, but also undermines and disowns as a function of his own writerly practice" (193). Along the way he describes many of the Sonnets' enactive

effects. Within the essay he makes a curious point. Constructing a hypothetical Jakobsonian analysis of Sonnet #55 ("Not marble, nor the gilded monument"), in which the "high incidence of alliteration of 'm', 'p', and 's'" within the sonnet's first strophe would be noted, Felperin comments as follows:

In the terms of his [Jakobson's] analysis, the most the empirical fact of alliteration can be is an earnest of poetic power, alerting us that some extra-communicative intention may be at work; in itself, it cannot be a source or explanation of that power. Occurring as it does within a semantic field that the alliteration does not itself generate, the function of alliteration cannot be causal or integral to signified meaning. . . . As ornament or decoration, alliteration bears the same superficially attractive but functionally inessential relation to the poem as 'gilt' does to the 'monuments / Of princes' mentioned at the outset. (177)

Felperin's assertion that alliteration is "not causal or integral to signified meaning" denies that the words are there because of the alliteration--those precise words and not other near-synonymous ones were either chosen by the poet or associated within his composing mind by alliteration. Further, Felperin's assertion assumes what cannot be assumed, that there is meaning, clusters of signifieds, apart from signifiers, or at least independent of the alliterative properties of those signifiers, if not from other, and in his

analysis, unspecified aspects of their materiality. In short, the materiality of language is in his analysis subordinate to concerns with meaning, and the connection of sound and sense, the involvement of sound in sense, the sensefulness of sound, and the sonority of sense are not adequately theorized and explored.

Related to this is the position summarized by Anthony Easthope, "that iconicity in poetic discourse can only be perceived in a reverse movement from the semantic to the phonetic" (104), which is to say that one can only appreciate an utterance as an evocation or enactment of its sense if one has first understood that sense. Where this leads in criticism, however, is toward a devaluation of sound as interpretative material, and a confinement of criticism to the other side of signification. The theoretical problems that these critics present rhythmic analysis are developed at greater length in Chapter Three.

This tendency is coincident with the decline of an aesthetic criticism,² the concomitant hegemony of a historical criticism reconstituted along materialist lines, and the

² Or indeed a literary criticism that attempts to define itself, as Northrop Frye attempted to define it in The Anatomy of Criticism, in terms of an inductive survey of literature and "principles shape[d] . . . solely out of . . . [a] knowledge of that field" and not "taken over ready-made" from other disciplines (7). Frye's chapter "Manual of Style" in The Well-Tempered Critic influences my own conception of poetic rhythm.

emergence of literary theory as a distinct mode of criticism.³ Eagleton's participation in this tendency is noteworthy. Having opened with the question "what is literature?" Eagleton closes with the proposition that since the question is unanswerable (that is, no one satisfactory answer can be proposed), we stop asking the question, dismantle the pursuit, and reconstitute literary studies along political lines: "the final logical move in a process which began by arguing that literature is an illusion is to recognize that literary theory is an illusion too" (204). Eagleton is in the unfortunate position of advocating silence, an end to discussion of aesthetic concerns. But there are still issues--like the rhythms of poems, and the constitutive impact of end of line pauses or their absence in shaping those rhythms--that make an aesthetic criticism worthwhile and necessary.

Line-endings in poetry, and what is done with them in poems, are significant phenomena. Interestingly, in the article referred to earlier, Helen Vendler defines her second act of criticism as description of lineation and stanza breaks (5). If verse lines never ended, one would not have poetry, but prose. If rhythmic units, like iambs, were not grouped together in lines of one length or another (trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter), one would have an unending gallop, again, not poetry. If the lines so constituted of smaller rhythmic units did not also form semantic units, one would

³ See Edward Said, The World, the Text, and the Critic (1).

have nonsense (in fact, the use of verse lines to contain half semantic units is one of the devices of comic and nonsense verse). If, in an interpretation of a poem, one does not consider these and other related technical questions, one is not really dealing with poetry, but instead with something else, meaning in tranquility.

Further, if lines of poetry did not end in a variety of ways, poetry would be deadening. And again, if one gives no scan of the varied organization of lines and of strategies employed in that variety (by "strategy" I do not necessarily mean something consciously done by the poet, nor do I suggest that there need be scheme or pattern or purpose in the arrangement), one is not interpreting poetry as poetry.

My point of departure is the standard distinctions that are made between kinds of line-ending, familiar to most readers. I offer the following brief definitions and examples only in the interest of clarity. For what I do in the rest of the thesis is refine these standard distinctions in an effort to describe with greater precision the rhythmic experience that poetry offers and that most readers probably do enjoy.

An end-stopped line is one with a grammatical pause at its end; that is, a line which ends where, in the speaking of a language, one would naturally pause, even if only slightly; it is often marked by punctuation: a comma, a semi-colon, a colon, or a period. The first four lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet #1 are all end-stopped: "From fairest creatures we desire increase, / That thereby beauty's rose might never die,

/ But as the riper should by time decease, / His tender heir might bear his memory." An enjambment (or a run-on line) is the opposite: a line whose sense spills over (or runs on) into the next line without pause; the 10th line of Shakespeare's Sonnet #2 is enjambed: "If thou could'st answer, this fair child of mine / Shall sum my count. . . ." Shakespeare's Sonnet #3 contains a few enjambments: "For where is she so fair whose unear'd womb / Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry? / Or who is he so fond will be the tomb / Of his self-love to stop posterity?"

What has been known as a "masculine ending" is simply an accented final syllable, the usual line-ending in iambic verse. A "feminine ending" is an unaccented final syllable. Shakespeare's Sonnet #20 is made up entirely of lines with feminine endings: "A woman's face, with Nature's own hand painted, / Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion-- / A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted /" For Shakespeare, this was probably a good joke, since the sonnet's theme is masculine endings.

What readers do at the line-ending is my subject. Presumably readers do various things, and the whole rhythm of a line shapes those actions and their effects. Not all end-stops and enjambments for this reason are equal. In turn, the effects of line-endings shape the whole rhythmic experience of a poem. These are the basic matters that I will scan.

Consequently, some discussion of the principles of prosody conditioning my analysis is in order. The following

standard distinction between rhythm and metre, already implied in my earlier analysis of the two cookbook poems, should be understood: rhythm is "the total music" and metre "its systematic reduction."⁴ Or as John Hollander, following I.A. Richards, writes, metre is "the frame," and rhythm the "flow, . . . the series of actual effects upon our consciousness of a line or passage of verse" (Hollander 78).⁵ Specifically comprehended by the term "rhythm" are phonetic patterns (alliteration, assonance, rhyme, consonantal clusters and sequences, vowel sequences), grammatical structure, and syntactic structure.

Approaches to the description of iambic pentameter poetry in English roughly form three schools of thought: the four-stressers, the counter-pointers, and the phrasalists.⁶ I treat these separate positions at some length because my own approach, "practical and occasional metrics" (a fluid metrics shaped by the concatenations of metrical and other rhythmic events within particular lines of poetry), borrows freely at different times from all three views, eschewing their methodological rigidity. Further, my analyses of line-endings

⁴ The descriptions are, respectively, Harvey Gross's and Stanley Kunitz's (quoted from Gross, "Toward" 9/8).

⁵ See I.A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism: "Through its very appearance of artificiality metre produces in the highest degree the 'frame' effect, isolating the poetic experience from the accidents and irrelevancies of everyday existence" (145).

⁶ My discussion is based on George T. Wright's summary of these positions in Shakespeare's Metrical Art (10-16).

in Chapters Two, Four, and Five are activated by metrical assumptions that I do not always make explicit there; hence the need for this discussion of the reading of metre and of its relation to other rhythmic events.

In The Crowning Privilege, Robert Graves gives memorable expression to the view of the four-stressers, that vestiges of the Old English accentual pattern are found in iambic pentameter poetry (86-109).⁷ In his examples, there is a fairly clear alternation of lines with five and four main stresses, even while all lines, the five- and four-stressed alike, are unambiguously iambic pentameter.

Let's experiment:

Look in thy glass and tell the face thou viewest,

Now is the time that face should form another,

The first line is perhaps an example of the four-stresser. "Look," "glass," "tell," "viewest." The fifth stressed word, "face," need not in this line be unduly emphasized--what else does one see when one has looked in one's glass? One test of the cogency of this principle is perhaps whether or not one can stress any one word in the line to the peril of all the others and still have a line of civilized sense, if not perhaps of poetry. "LOOK inthyglassandtellthefacethou viewest": fine. "lookinthy GLASS andtellthefacethouviewest": reasonable. I think the same could be said of readings that overemphasized "tell" and "viewest," but not a reading that

⁷ Northrop Frye's presentation of the view in The Anatomy of Criticism (251-262) is somewhat more dogmatic.

emphasized only "face."

But of course, the alternating five and four stress reading could be applied to these lines, possibly with greater propriety, the other way:

LOOK in thy GLASS and TELL the FACE thou VIEWEST,

NOW is the TIME that face should FORM aNOther,

This example is thus inconclusive.

As another experiment with the four-stressers' principle, I will now simply type the opening two lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet #129, without thinking about count, capitalizing and uncapitalizing as I go and as I say them (readers are encouraged to perform a similar experiment before proceeding):

Th' expENSE of SPIRit in a WASTE of SHAME

is LUST in ACTION, and till ACTION LUST

I have not yet looked, and I have not yet paused to think about what I have just typed so that I might prejudge my scansion of these lines. Now, before I look, I should say that I was conscious of not capitalizing one foot within the middle of line 2, but I am fairly sure that I have scanned both lines as containing four stresses. Now I will look. Correct. Both lines contain a stress on a minor word--the first line a preposition, "in," the second, a conjunction, "and." Among the Sonnets, this is probably one of the ones more likely to strike the reader as passion-filled, and we have now paused on the first two lines only; it gets better as it goes along. The loading of the lines with heavy words--phonetically, let alone semantically--and the pyrrhic

propulsion of the third foot of each line (the two lines are metrically identical) are marks of the poem's passion. George T. Wright's conclusion strikes me as acceptable. One need not appeal to a theory of vestiges of Old English accentuation in iambic pentameter poetry to understand this expressiveness (298). Wright comments on the distinctive features of a five stress line: it cannot be symmetrically divided in two; its pulse will therefore be less present than with tetrameter or hexameter lines. The pulse of a shorter uneven-footed line (trimeter) will likewise be more noticeable. Heptameter lines or fourteeners (as in Southwell's "The Burning Babe") naturally divide into shorter units (tetrameter, trimeter). These differences make a pentameter line more speech-like than other metres (Wright 4-5). Further, by demanding a longer consciousness in phrasing, iambic lines inevitably will sometimes contain a stress on things like "in the," "in a," "and the," "and a." Enough perhaps said.

The idea that poetry is defined by the counterpoint between speech rhythm and metrical phrase is probably the most widespread view of metre, and is the first notion to which I remember being exposed in high-school English classes. As my experience of poetry has broadened, however, I have thought of counterpoint so defined less and less. It is attractively simple and seemingly comprehensive in principle, but difficult in practice. How does one locate the "speech rhythm" of a line as distinct from its metre? Are they not generally, or often, inseparable?

Sometimes, it is true, there is a striking tension between a "natural" speaking of a line and its metre. I think of Donne:

That I may rise and stand o'erthrow mee and bend

Your force to breake, blowe, burn and make me new.

Perhaps my modern Canadian pronunciation makes me expect "Overthrow" and not "o'erTHROW." Also, I think, my natural tendencies toward a staccato rhythm of breaks and pauses and timidity makes me expect, "That I may rise and stand u OverTHROW mee and bend your forceu to BREAKE, BLOWE, BURN, and MAKE ME NEW," and not the intensity of the struggle that is "That I may rise and stand [no pause, instead crescendo] o'erTHROW mee and BEND [now pause, or at least suspend]/ Your FORCE [crash down on it] to BREAKE blowe BURN [fight the temptation to stress "blowe"] and MAKE me NEW [shudder and shake and quiver]."

This same complexity is in the opening of another of Donne's Holy Sonnets:

As due by many titles I resigne

My selfe to thee, O God, first I was made

By thee, and for thee, and when I was decay'd

Thy blood bought that the which before was Thine.

I am thy sonne, made with thy selfe to shine, (1-5)

The double enjambment (lines 1-2, 2-3), the pronounced caesuras (lines 2 and 3), the trochaic inversion that gives

emphasis to "first," the lurch-filled third line^{*}--no one variation extraordinary in isolation, but in combination outrageous--and the devolution of these patterns in the metrically regular and caesura-less fourth line enforce a wheezing, convulsive, and choking penitence that is built around what can be seen as a tension between speech rhythm and metre. However, in this Donne is an exception; this principle can hardly be enlarged into a general theory of iambic pentameter writing. And even with Donne, the complexity of metrical variation creates an elaborate rhetorical presentation that a narrowly defined theory of counterpoint need not be invoked to describe.

The position of the phrasalists--that Chaucer, Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, and other early pentameter writers actually wrote in half-line phrases and not decasyllabic lines --can hardly be credited. The phrasalists exaggerate the incidence and significance of lines of various length (eleven and nine syllables) and of variant feet within iambic pentameter poetry, and disregard the pervasiveness of the five-stress pattern. Aside from these general limitations of a phrasalist theory, there is the case of Shakespeare, particularly in whose later plays critics have seen a

* An essay could be written on attempts to scan it. I think it is, "By THEE, and FOR thee, AND WHEN i WAS deCAY'D." But overlaid on this has to be, in the first half of the line, "BY thee, and FOR thee" and "by THEE, and for THEE," and in the second half, "and WHEN i was deCAY'D," and "AND when i WAS decay'd." My scansion should then be understood not as a flattening of these differences but as a chiasmizing of complexity.

breakdown in the iambic pentameter, a growing incidence of rhythmic irregularities and syllabic ambiguities. Dorothy Sipe has shown, through an analysis of variant forms of words in Shakespeare's plays--early and late--that he wrote "carefully constructed iambic verse" (vii).

Wright's own view is that poetry is made up of two orders, phrase and metre, and that we joy in the harmony of their convergence and in the discord of their divergence in poetry, which is a celebration of the expressive possibilities of both phrase and metre.

In contradistinction to these approaches, I advocate, in things metrical, a practical purism. When reading and analysing the poetry of any iambic pentameter lines, one must coldly and with complete inattention to their sense identify the pulse of the iambic pentameter in them: ti-Tum, ti-Tum, ti-Tum, ti-Tum ti-Tum. Even in the most bizarre lines of a Donne or a Hopkins, it can be accomplished. Only then can one begin to consider what is going on in addition to, in violation of, in counterpoint, or in harmony with the metre. And as in my earlier comments on Donne's lines, this approach suggests rhythmic readings that a less rigorous attention to the metre, a too hasty commitment to sense, may overlook. Consider the opening of Hopkins's "Spring":

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring --

When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
In the first line iambic scansion (first foot inverted) suggests a disyllabic "beau", harmonizable with sense as an

elongated, luxuriated vowel sequence, and in the second the elision of "ly and", tripping the line towards its close.'

Wright's view of phrase and metre is thus perhaps another neat simplification. Sometimes a phrase may pull a line one way, sometimes a mere word, or even a phoneme, alliterating with another, or a part of some assonance.

Wright's study itself provides example of some of the problems of an overarching allegiance to one school or another and of a narrow view of the subject of metrical analysis. Wright addresses the lightness and nimbleness of Chaucer's verse, in large part due to Chaucer's exploitation of the pronounced final "-e" sound that allows a repeated movement "from one strongly stressed word-stem to another over unstressed syllables that are hardly more than grace notes" (20-21). Noting that many of Chaucer's lines do include "one or two weaker syllables in stress positions" (21), he cites the following lines:

Upon an amblere esily she sat,

Ywimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat

As brood as is a bokeler or a targe (GP 460-71; quoted by Wright 21, his italics)

First, there is a certain capriciousness to Wright's analysis of stress. A disyllabic locational preposition ("Upon") receives somewhat more stress than Wright allows (in the first

* A consideration of Hopkins's sprung rhythm is beyond the scope of the present thesis; it has been noted, however, that "his description overlooks how much of the basic iambic framework remains in his sonnets" (Frye, Baker, Perkins 439).

line, therefore, the only "weak" stress is "esily"). Of course, the second line as scanned by Wright is a striking example of what advocates of the four-stress school would see as an instance of the vestigial accentual pattern. This passes without comment; were Wright to scan the first line as also containing four strong stresses, his example could more easily be turned against him in favour of the four-stressers whose theory he has earlier (11) refuted.

Second is Wright's comment on the lines: "we can see Chaucer using a high proportion of small words whose rhetorical function is to highlight the more substantial content words (usually nouns, verbs, and adjectives). . . . This is a stylistic feature especially familiar to readers of Chaucer; he invites the reader to race comparatively swiftly over the minor words to get to the words of greatest importance" (21). The swiftness of the second and third of the lines quoted is due not only to the metrical arrangement, but also to the alliteration, and more, to the particular sounds alliterated, aspirates and plosives.¹⁰ Wright's subject is metre, so he permits alliteration and its specific impact to go unnoticed.

These are more than amusing examples of critical blindness; they can lead to a falsification of the subject. Verse is an overdetermined use of language--metrically,

¹⁰ cf. my page 13 above, where I have described a different alliterative pattern, of t's and th's, as creating friction rather than propulsion.

phonetically, syntactically, semantically. Patterns, progressions, variations, and deviations within and among the various elements are exploited simultaneously. A concentrated scholarly treatment of any one element must consider the interrelations among disparate elements. Examples from poems must be granted their complex truths. A synthetic approach is necessary. My subsequent analysis of Shakespeare's Sonnets, while much more narrowly focused than Wright's or others', will strive for such synthesis.

We need not only a more comprehensive and conflictual criticism, but also a comprehensive and conflictual prosody.

CHAPTER TWO: Shakespeare's Sonnets #1-6

Shakespeare's mastery in the Sonnets of the verse line and its possibilities is often acknowledged; one critical challenge, however, as Stephen Booth writes in An Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets, is that "a Shakespeare sonnet is organized in a multitude of different coexistent and conflicting patterns--formal, logical, ideological, syntactic, rhythmic, and phonetic" (ix). Variations in line-ending are only one such pattern; however, the end position of lines is also a site where conflicts between different patterns can be clearly viewed. Line-endings, be they end-stopped or enjambed, masculine or feminine, rhyming or non-rhyming (or, of course, shades in between these distinctions), are structurally important to the dance of any verse form; this is particularly so in the sonnet, a most forbiddingly set lyric form. By focusing on one structural element in relative isolation from others within the Sonnets, I can describe its importance to a sonnet and the form generally with a clarity not otherwise possible; further, an attentive inspection of this one feature and Shakespeare's use of it can focus other structural patterns--particularly, the total music of the sonnet, and Shakespeare's expressive lineation.

Within the space of this chapter, I will not--and probably should not--treat every line-ending in as much detail as some others, nor will I account for every feature contributing to the music of each of the six sonnets. Further, I must to some extent suspend considerations of

meaning to focus on the description of sound and its effects on the semantic thrust. As much as is possible, however, significant rhythmic phenomena will be scanned and the interrelations between sound and meaning suggested. Throughout, my aim is to see what distinctions between kinds of line-endings the individual poems enable me to make.

This chapter was first composed as an experiment. I began only with the standard distinctions between kinds of line-ending already discussed; I did not start with my seven kinds of line-ending known in advance. These emerged out of this analysis. I approached the sonnets with experience of the speaking of poetry, asking myself as I proceeded, what happens as I negotiate my way through these poems? As Paul Fussell observes in Poetic Meter and Poetic Form, "at the moment of his first apprehension of the poem . . . [the reader] functions less as semanticist than as a more or less unwitting prosodist" (4). I try in my readings to err by being less rather than more unwitting. My prime methodological assumption might bear repeating: our negotiations with the surface of a poem, its metre and its rhythm, create the text we read and the meaning we find.

So I began reading the first six sonnets, playing with their sounds, hearing the sounds, performing the poems, and thinking about the poems. Particularly, I listened to the line-endings, and considered how the whole rhythm of a line affects the line-ending. As I proceeded through the first six sonnets sequentially, I compared some line-endings to others,

discriminating between what to my ear are subtly different effects. The seven kinds of line-ending are the result of this process. Their names describe their sensations and effects.

One part of my approach should be stressed: in some places, I consciously consider different ways in which the metre of lines can be scanned and the rhythm read. Having considered what seem the available options, I then argue for a particular reading as "best." What I wish to avoid is the arbitrariness and dogmatism often present in prosodic discussions. Something of this arbitrariness has already been noted in George T. Wright's study of Shakespeare's metre. One finds further example of it in Fussell's comments on Keats's use of the terminal trochee:

Consider, for example,

Bright Star, would I were steadfast as / thou art! /
or the opening of "To Sleep":

O soft embalmer of the still / midnight. / (Fussell
59)

I have generally scanned both lines as ending iambically; the ending of the first I think has to be at least a spondee. Further, as Keats and the star are the only characters present and posited by the poem's first line, neither personal pronoun need receive the emphasis that Fussell's reading suggests. In the second line, I have tended to think that Keats's reversal of the normal stress of the word communicates something of the calm, stillness, and profound majesty of "midnight" that sleep

embalms. Nonetheless, Fussell's readings are possible, interesting, and bold. What I often try to do when I suggest any such bold reading is consider it as something that is arguable, and I try to argue for the reading by describing its effect, even if only briefly, as I have done here with my regular scansion of the last feet of these lines, rather than simply declaring that the reading is "in" the line. I find this the preferred course in prosodic analysis. Such freedom from dogmatism recognizes that some features are in a line, but many in dynamic individual readings.

Particularly, I tend to assume metrical regularity (until lines suggest otherwise) and consider and describe total sound effects as occurring around and within that basic pattern, so that such things as variant feet are described in their concatenations with other sonic constituents--described, that is, as readers experience them, not in isolation but in combination.

In sum, this chapter originated in a subjective empiricism. I have preserved its experimental structure through its revisions, not only to record the process by which my method took shape as I read the poems, but also to enable readers to share in the process and to judge for themselves the merits of the method.

For these reasons, this chapter lacks synoptic statement of the kinds of line-ending and their usual effects. This awaits in Chapter Four. Further, I spend a great deal of time on the line-endings of the first two or three sonnets, where

I am first making distinctions, and less time as I go along, where I apply these distinctions. In particular, Sonnets #5 and #6 are analyzed more rapidly and more on-the-run than earlier ones. I ask the reader to bear with this final part of the chapter and to trust that organized statement will come in its time.

This thesis argues for the efficacy, ineluctability, and centrality to criticism of a rhythmic reading process, exemplified and discussed in my reading of the two cookbook poems and differentiated from all current prevailing prosodic schools in Chapter One. I hope it is fitting that the thesis itself endeavour in its structure to embody that process.

Sonnets #1-6 form a discrete narrative unit and exhibit the development and disruption of patterns and strategies of line-ending. Effects in them can be analyzed in their concatenations in the poems considered sequentially. Moreover, in considering these patterns and individual line-endings within them, I can begin to articulate a vocabulary for describing the complex differences between seemingly similar phenomena. For example, the similarly end-stopped lines of the first two quatrains of Sonnets #1-2 are in some instances subtly different. Within the second quatrain of Sonnet #1 there is a "partial enjambment" that is then played off in various ways in the succeeding lines; in Sonnet #2, the end-stopped lines in the second quatrain become progressively more "loose," which culminates in the enjambment of lines 10-11. This enjambment, similar to some enjambments in Sonnet

#4, is different from what may be the enjambment of lines 1-2 in Sonnet #3, which is different still from that of the opening of Sonnet #5. Making these and other distinctions is my important task.

Sonnet #1

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
 That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
 But as the ripper should by time decease,
 His tender heir might bear his memory:
 But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
 Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
 Making a famine where abundance lies,
 Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
 Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
 And only herald to the gaudy spring,
 Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
 And tender churl mak'st waste in niggarding.

Pity the world, or else this glutton be,

To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

Sonnet #1 is measured and careful, at least in its first quatrain, all of whose lines are end-stopped, as, arguably, are all lines in the poem. Further, before line 8, no lines have a heavy mid-line cæsure (only 4 of the 14 lines in the poem--8, 12, 13, 14--have such mid-line pauses). In 8--"Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel"--the cæsure serves the double antithesis: the key terms being, on the one hand, thyself, thy (sweet) self, and on the other, thy foe.

too cruel. In line 12 the pause is occasioned by a parenthetical remark ("tender churl"), and in 13 by a kind of antithesis, as I suppose is true of line 14.

Two rhythmic moments in this poem are particularly noteworthy. First, line 5 is less end-stopped than the preceding lines in the poem, a forward pressure being exerted by the subject pronoun ("thou") on the verb ("feed'st"). Rhythmic phenomena such as this do not, clearly, exist in isolation. Here the poem swells, as two lines-worth are comprehended in one gulp. So far in the poem, a gulp's-worth has been measured as one line. These two lines (5-6) are a departure from a pattern established in the first four lines, of lines pressing steadily toward their unanxious end-stopped final syllables. Lines 1 and 2 are unambiguously end-stopped, clearly separated from each other by the poem's methodical building of its sense. The poem's first rhyme in Line 3 ("decease" with line 1's "increase") clings to the line momentarily,¹ and line 4 neatly closes the first quatrain: the internal rhyme ("heir . . . bear") compensates for the off-rhyme that ends it ("memory" with line 2's "die"). All four lines have "decisive" or "stately" end-stops. So gentle and harmonious does this make the quatrain's close that the reader is prepared for some disturbance in what follows.

In lines 5-6, two rhythms are combined. The reader,

¹ Otherwise, the line could be pressed forward, since it is a subordinate clause placed before the main (an inversion of the structure of lines 1-2).

primed by the poem's first four lines, expects a pause, and wants to pause--

But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
--and can pause, since "contracted to thine own bright eyes" is parenthetical, and at the same time cannot pause: to do so would be to ignore the energy of the rhetorical presentation, and specifically, to wrench the subject from its awaited verb. In this moment of minor aural and semantic strife, a tension is present between backward and forward momentums. Pressure is exerted on both sides of "eyes." In contradistinction to the end-stopped lines of the first quatrain, line 5 can be described as a "partial enjambment."

This line-doublet (5-6) also exemplifies the way in which individual features in a poem are wedded to their context, prepared for by what precedes and producing a ripple-effect on what follows. For instance, the decisive close that the internal rhyme provides the first quatrain establishes a ground for the expansiveness of lines 5-6.

Further, the formation of the next two lines is affected by the rhythmic disruption of this partial enjambment. The trochaic inversion of the opening of line 7 ("Making") is paired with, answers that of 6 ("Feed'st"). The end-stopping of lines 6 and 7 reasserts the earlier pattern just violated, and the first solid cæsure of the poem--in 8--is placed as a dam, a stop to these ripples, before the last 3 metrical feet of the line close the second quatrain:

Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.

After rhythmic disruption, a balance is regained and a temporary closure achieved.

These rhythmic features serve the poem's meaning in ways that are easily apparent: the second quatrain, with its rhythmic ripples, has introduced the sonnet's complication, after the first quatrain's measured statement of the proposition.

The second moment of interest is in the third quatrain. Its opening may lead the reader to expect a return to the pattern of onwardly pressing end-stopped lines that open the sonnet, until she encounters the separation of the subject of the sentence's main clause ("Thou") from its first verb ("buriest"),² this time by two and a half verse lines. These three lines (9-11)--all end-stopped--are all partially enjambed. The first disruption (5-6) was thus merely a prelude to this more forceful uniting of four verse lines.

In this sonnet, the use of partial enjambment is clearly a technique of persuasion. The complication, invested by its swelling rhythm with an emotive immediacy, can be stated without the threat of dismissal, and the sonnet brought to its crisis in a dazzlingly modulated third quatrain that, after a pause, is concluded with a parenthetical and touching chiding through abrupt diction:

And tender churl mak'st waste in niggarding.

Considering the first few of Shakespeare's sonnets

² The second verb, "makes," awaits in line 12, the fourth line from the subject of the sentence.

sequentially gives rise to interesting observations, for the second opens with a restatement of the cæsura-less end-stopped lines of the first. This is by no means an inevitable opening strategy in a sonnet: Sonnets #4, #5, #6, #7, #9 (perhaps), #10, #11, #13, #15 all open with enjambed lines (to confine myself for the moment within the first twenty). The pattern here is at once both more forcefully stated, and more relaxed:

Sonnet #2

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
 And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
 Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
 Will be a tottered weed of small worth held:
 Then being asked where all thy beauty lies,
 Where all the treasure of thy lusty days;
 To say within thine own deep sunken eyes,
 Were an all-eating shame, and thriftless praise.
 How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
 If thou could'st answer, this fair child of mine
 Shall sum my count and make my old excuse,
 Proving his beauty by succession thine.

This were to be new made when thou art old,

And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

As evidence of the more forceful statement of the end-stopped pattern, consider the separation of the subject from its verb, which we have twice observed in Sonnet #1 creating an effect of partial enjambment, in lines 3-4:

Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,

Will be a tottered weed of small worth held:

The end-stopping of 3 is not threatened; the adjectival phrase demands to be set apart, with a cæsure and an end of line pause. The regularity of the first foot of line 4--"Will be" (- /)--contributes to the end-stopping of line 3, just as the trochaic inversion of line 5 in Sonnet #1--"Feed'st thy" (/ -)--half-created the partial enjambment of its preceding line. Here, the syntax is arranged to maintain the end-stopping of the line more systematically than in the first sonnet.

The relaxation found within this maintenance of a pattern can be seen in lines 1-2: line 1 can receive a healthy pause at the end without disturbing the prosaical rhythm of the combined predicate ("shall besiege . . . / And dig").

Sonnet #2 thus picks up a pattern of line-ending from the first sonnet, and naturalizes it: where, in the first sonnet, the first four lines were measured and somewhat stately, outlining in balanced doublet lines the different components of the argument, in this sonnet the syntax is molded to accommodate the pattern without calling attention to it. The first sonnet opens with an audible formality, the second partakes more of conversation. Indeed, the first sonnet is unmistakably an argument, the second is a projected narrative. To distinguish between the different kinds of end-stop that we see in the first quatrains of these sonnets, we can call the first four line-endings of Sonnet #1 decisive or stately end-stops, and the line-endings of lines 1 and 3 here

in Sonnet #2 conversational end-stops.

Further, the more conversational, more gently persuasive, and more systematically end-stopped Sonnet #2 is rhetorically more linear than Sonnet #1. Sonnet #1, with a few instances of defiance of the end-stopped pattern, is semantically circular, moving back upon itself. The second and third quatrains are written through the first, rewrite it and are rewritten by it: juxtaposing "thy" behaviour with that of the impersonal, generic, "his." The swelling of the poem in its partial enjambments complements and counterpoints this process.

In Sonnet #2, an interesting pattern emerges. Within the first two quatrains, two "static" lines are followed by two "active". The two first lines of each quatrain form a dependent clause (5-6 being elliptical), and further, the second line of each quatrain is a parallel reinforcement of the first, adding to (in the case of 2) or restating (as 6) the first. As the poem turns in line 9, the proposition, which has been delayed, is stated conditionally, and itself contains a quoted utterance:

How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
If thou could'st answer, this fair child of mine
Shall sum my count. . . .

Within this linear, more systematically end-stopped sonnet, there is a progressive loosening of the ends of lines starting in line 7:

To say within thine own deep-sunken eyes,

Were. . . .

Although structurally this separation of the subject from its verb is similar to Sonnet #1's lines 5-6 ("But thou . . . / Feed'st"), here there is not quite a partial enjambment. A pause is needed at the end of 7 to set up the antithesis of "To say . . . shame," which is simply bridged by the copula verb, which deflects attention from itself onto its complement. "Were an" may not be a trochaic inversion. I do not think the line can simply be scanned,

Were an all-eating shame. . . .

/ - / / - /

and perhaps not even as

/ - - / - /

Rather, the line contains several features that argue for metrical regularity. The first option, by loading the first two metrical feet with an extra stress (the second foot scanned as a spondee) detracts from the emphasis on "shame" essential to the meaning; "shame" becomes one stressed word among many instead of the operative word. The second reading plucks "eating" out, since two unstressed syllables precede it, and swamps "shame." Only the third, in which a prose rhythm (which is basically what either of the two first readings give us) is resisted, allows the weight of the first half of the line to fall on "shame."

We are now a long way, perhaps, from the end of the preceding line. However, the partial enjambment of 7-8 can be defended if the trochaic inversion of the opening of line 8 is

asserted. My brief demonstration of the opposing case serves the argument that the end-stopping of the lines in this sonnet is starting to loosen--but only slightly. Line 7 has to partake of end-stopping if the next line's point is to be clear.

Certain generalizations can already at least tentatively be made. In the composition of sonnets, end-stopping is more preponderant than enjambment: readerly expectations seem to favour the end-stopping of lines; lines tend to be end-stopped until proven otherwise. One way for a poet to vary the composition of end-stopped lines is, of course, to have thought units straddling two or more verse lines (as in lines 5-6 and 8-12 of Sonnet #1, and as in every two lines so far in Sonnet #2). Multiple effects are thereby created. In the first quatrain of sonnet one, the relative grammatical autonomy of lines in the first quatrain creates stately end-stops; in Sonnet #2, however, combined predicates over two verse lines (or predicates withheld until the second line) create conversational (or naturalistic) end-stops. Out of the stateliness of the line-endings in the first quatrain in Sonnet #1, the partial enjambments of the next two quatrains effortlessly arise. One rhythmic feature that can half-create a partial enjambment is the trochaic inversion of the first foot of the next line, as in line 6 of Sonnet #1: the occurrence of a stress earlier than expected minimizes whatever pause has been placed before it. When at the same time the sense is pressing the line forward, partial

consonantal range of English is exercised. The decisiveness of the enjambment is accentuated by the opening consonant of line 11 ("sh"), which emerges out of the s's and m's, echoing while elongating the earlier "ch".

In Sonnet #3, a dance begins; procreate, the speaker commands:

Look in thy glass and tell the face thou viewest,

Now is the time that face should form another,

Questions present themselves; unprecedented options are available to the reader. Is line 2,

Now is the time. . . .

/ - - /

an attractive reading, that by matching the first line in rhythm and jauntiness, breaks with the stately, measured manner of Sonnet #1, which had developed into the conversationality--albeit a sombre, serious, and pointed conversationality--of #2, or,

Now is the time. . . .

- / - /

which would, after the trochaic opening of line 1, recall the norm established in the first two sonnets, and signal that this sonnet is a development of style and tactic, and not a radical departure? It is an important question, for if we adopt the first reading, lines 1-2 can be partially enjambed; if the second, decisively end-stopped.

In this sonnet, much hinges on how we consider this first line-ending. In the enjambment just examined--the orchestral

lines 10-11 of Sonnet #2--phonetic patterning graces the fall of one verse line into another. Here, on the other hand, we are in the presence of a crisis-ridden prosodic moment. If we enjamb, the sonnet becomes uncomfortably insistent; if we don't, we can almost hear ourselves feel we should have.

Further, in this sonnet numerous effects of line-ending interrelate to form a larger rhythmic context: Shakespeare seems here to be experimenting with variety itself. The first two lines present a moment of crisis--does the speaker dare to push his point?--then the end-stopping of lines 2 and 3 restores a balance, and 4 completes the quatrain: crisis, restoration:

Look in thy glass and tell the face thou viewest,
 Now is the time that face should form another,
 Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
 Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.

All four lines, however, have feminine endings, though "viewest" and "renewest" could almost be considered, respectively, a mono- and a di-syllabic word, since their final consonants further shorten already short vowels, giving the endings of lines 1 and 3 a pensive precision. Combined with these "cross-dressed" feminine endings, the unambiguously feminine endings of lines 2 and 4 add extra complications to the rhythmic developments just examined. In 2 the effect is to unsettle the line further and make more necessary the balancing act of 3; in 4 the feminine ending renders what is otherwise conclusive (the poem could end after its first

quatrain) less so--the extra syllable leaves the line and the thought hanging, incomplete. It seems noteworthy that the word is "mother", the central notion in this sonnet, yet one rarely mentioned in the sonnets as an argument for procreation (the recurrent argument being instead narcissistic); it is perhaps the source of some anxiety for the speaker.

But to return to our tracing of the rhythmic developments in this sonnet: after this crisis-restoration (which is, however, slightly inconclusive), the second quatrain opens with the insistence of a question involving a fairly offensive bucolic depiction of woman, womb, and wedlock that straddles two lines united by enjambment. The repetition of the pattern in the following two lines (7-8) normalizes the disruptive insistence:

For where is she so fair whose uneared womb
 Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
 Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
 Of his self-love to stop posterity?

In 9-10, the opening of the third quatrain, enjambment starts to return towards end-stopping:

Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
 Calls back the lovely April of her prime;

The assonantal "she in thee" catches the reader, and compels a suspension. We can identify this variation as a suspended enjambment. Interestingly, this is a sentimental appeal. The poem returns to a more tidy poetic orbit.

These rhythmic happenings--the "does one enjamb or not

enjamb" question of 1-2, the pattern of crisis-restoration, the insistence that is then checked by its repetition--look forward to certain features in Sonnet #4, the first sonnet with a heavy mid-line caesura in its first line:

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
 Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?³
 Nature's bequest gives nothing but doth lend,
 And being frank she lends to those are free.

In this sonnet as in #3, there is a harshness of tone, a coarseness in the speaker's choice of conceits, an insistence, and a chiding that goes beyond the gentle chiding of Sonnet #1 ("tender churl"), together with an experimentation with different and wild rhythmic interrelations created over and around the ends of lines. This sonnet's structure seems similar to #3's: lines 1-2 truly enjambed; lines 2, 3 and 4 end-stopped (2 and 4 decisively, 3 conversationally); lines 5-6 (as in #3, forming a question) enjambed, pattern repeated lines 7-8; end-stopping returns third quatrain. Consider, however, the enjambment of lines 5-6:

Then beauteous niggard why dost thou abuse
 The bounteous largess given thee to give?

³ Here and in Sonnet #3, the secondarily stressed "y" endings slow the poem down after the enjambments:

For where is she so fair whose unear'd womb
 Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
 Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
 Of his self-love to stop posterity?

These vowels, coupled with the question marks, offer recuperative pauses that decisively end-stop the lines.

Several phonetic patterns combine to create an effect of end-stopping in an enjambed line. The first stressed vowel sound in the line ("beauteous") is the last ("abuse"): the last word of the line is thus caught momentarily by the echo. The opening of the second line parallels the first ("Then beauteous . . . / The bounteous"): the lines are thus separated as balanced halves; this is further enhanced by the occurrence of the alliteration on either side of the line-ending ("abuse / The bounteous"), and by the final vowel's being a diphthong ("abuse"), and thus occupying more air time.

A similar effect of end-stopping is created in a slightly different way in the next doublet (7-8):

Profitless usurer, why dost thou use

So great a sum of sums yet canst not live?

In the two lines s's are preponderant; more to the point is their occurrence side-by-side over the line divide: "use / So". A slight pause is required if the space between the two words is not to be elided; while notions about the speaking of poetry throughout its history are, I believe, unequivocal in their opposition to the joining of words thus linked by the identity of the last and first sounds, in this case simple sense alone provides sufficient argument: here the two sounds are a voiced and an unvoiced "s"; one cannot not separate the words without corrupting the sound and sense of "So".

Having observed these effects of end-stopping, look backward for a moment to the preceding sonnet, #3, and two of its enjambments:

For where is she so fair whose uneared womb
 Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
 Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
 Of his self-love to stop posterity?

In contradistinction to the enjambments just examined in Sonnet #4, in these enjambments one other element, the fact that the vowel in "womb" and "tomb" is not closed by a final consonantal sound, but instead by a lingering, labially articulated nasal sound, combine to create a more involved effect. These enjambments are not quite like those in Sonnet #4, which I have chosen to call enjambed lines with an effect of end-stopping, but instead are similar to "she in thee" in Sonnet #3, a suspended enjambment.

In Sonnet #4 the speaker's harsh vein of advice first introduced in #3 is developed through the presence of many more lines with heavy mid-line cæsuras than in the previous sonnets and enjambed lines in which effects of end-stopping are in evidence. This would be enough to give the sonnet a lurching fierceness; it is further aggravated by the many patterns of alliteration: of s's in the first two lines (plus a few spat th's), of b's that are introduced in line 2 and explode through lines 4-6, at which point z's and s's take over again to make lines 7-8 first a buzz, and then a hiss of sibilants.

After this cacophony, the first line of Sonnet #5 seems to return to the lilting of the first two sonnets:

Those hours that with gentle work did frame

The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell

These lines are an exemplary instance of the suspended enjambment: after the two opening expansive vowel sounds ("Those hours") the line trips through a sequence of short vowels and crisp consonants ("that with gentle work did") towards "frame", the final "m" of which invites it momentarily to linger; the tempo increases, the first foot and a half of line 2 is glided over ("The lovely") and the vowel of the first word decisively plucked ("gaze") echoes that of "frame."

In the first two sonnets the melliflence of intra-sonnetic patterns of assonance and alliteration is coincident with decisively and conversationally end-stopped lines and partial enjambments (though Sonnet #2 has one true enjambment). In #3 and #4, cacophony coincides with enjambments--some with effects of end-stopping, some suspended, one outright enjambment (the opening line of Sonnet #4). These sonnets, however, especially #3, settle down in their final quatrains. Examine, for a moment, line 8 of Sonnet #4: "So great a sum of sums yet canst not live?" Where in earlier lines (e.g., "Profitless usurer . . .") fierceness of attack is embodied in the p's, f's, and t's, line 8, in which s's are more nearly isolated as the only alliteration, cannot be attacked in the same way or the line would be reduced to hissing nonsense; this "stage direction" in its phonemes lightens its enunciation.

Here in Sonnet #5, the earlier manners criss-cross in a combination of melliflence and suspended enjambment.

But then,

Will play the tyrants to the very same,

And that unfair which fairly doth excel:

P's, t's, and f's predominate, and both lines are decisively end-stopped. From this point forward in the sonnet, harsh and sweet styles are interspersed and interplay across verse lines and within lines:

For never resting time leads Summer on,

To hideous winter and confounds him there,

Sap checked with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,

Beauty o'ersnowed and bareness everywhere.

The first line methodically outlines the progress of time: the trochaic inversion that gives emphasis to "leads" pulls the line smartly to its close; the assonantal vowels ("never resting") and alliterative patterns ("resting time leads Summer") ensure that its course is melodious. Then, after the end-stop the next line pounces with its pointed prophecy: "To hideous winter and confounds him there." The line's consonants exercise the mouth's air-bursting capacities: "hideous winter and confounds him there." The line takes us forward then backward then forward, backward, and forward again in the mouth. The phonetic disjunction between lines 3 and 4 effectively makes the end-stop of 3 decisive, where otherwise it would be conversational. The next line embodies a struggle between harsh and sweet sounds: its opening bursts with plosives and affricates that constrain its tense vowels; but then the luxurious alliteration ("lusty leaves") and

expansive diphthong recalls the gentleness with which the sonnet opened. "Beauty o'ersnowed and bareness everywhere" is conclusive and rounded, its two b's, however, leaving us gasping, wondering which way the sonnet is going to go.⁴ Unlike what happens in the preceding two sonnets, these phonic struggles--explosion and expansion, gunfire and gentleness--are contained within decisively end-stopped lines and do not burst their bounds. The decisive end-stops function less as ways of separating units of thought than as momentary silences between eruptions of sound.

Through the combination of these patterns, this sonnet has been brought early--in its first, let alone its second quatrain--to its crisis. The last quatrain and its couplet witness the slow unravelling of its conclusion, its argument, its way to prevent its dire prediction. This is the first sonnet in which the couplet is not merely a recapitulation, or an antithetical conclusion, but a continuation of the last quatrain. This is the first sonnet that moves steadily to its end:

Then were not summer's distillation left
 A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
 Beauty's effect and beauty were bereft,
 Nor it nor no remembrance what it was.

But flowers distilled though they with winter meet,

⁴ An effect later achieved, though in a gentler key, in an echo of the line in Sonnet #97, "What old December's bareness everywhere!" (l. 4).

Leese but their show, their substance still lives

[sweet.

The harshness is gone; the sweetness that in this sonnet has been coincident with alliterated l's dominates. The first line quoted is probably an end-stopped line. However, the alliteration on either side of the line divide (distillation left / A liquid) creates a further variation on the end-stopped pattern. The lines, while separated, sound more closely united: an effect of enjambment has been created in an end-stopped line.

Sonnet #6 triumphantly emerges from Sonnet #5:

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface

In thee thy summer ere thou be distilled:

The outright enjambment carries the auditor with the poem's speaker. The poem's sinews are held taut in the running on of the line by the spondaic foot opening line 2 ("In thee"--/ /). The speaker's newly-claimed solidarity with his implied auditor is a moving development after the tension-filled modulations between harshness, grossness, antagonism, mellifluence, and love of the preceding three. The first and third enjambed lines cascade down to end-stopped lines 2 and 4. Consider the way in which the poem arrests itself, and sits, and waits, a silence descending, at the end of line 2:

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface

In thee thy summer ere thou be distilled.

Line 3, when it is spoken, seems to me a near whisper,

Make sweet some vial;

This regular line, whose first foot is between an iamb and a spondee, lightly trips to the brief pause at the caesura.

. . . treasure thou some place

The yearning for a trochaic inversion, implicit in the first half of the line, is gratified in the second half, though in fact the line is absolutely regular, the deception created by the di-syllabic "vial" on the "left" side of the caesura splitting the line's third metrical foot in half; the metre is struggled against even in regularity--DA da DA da DA--and the line is truly enjambed:

With beauty's treasure ere it be self-killed.

The quatrain gently closes.

That use is not forbidden usury

("Use . . . usury": the making of that point creates an effect of end-stopping in the enjambed line)

Which happies those that pay the willing loan;

"Which" is whipped out, then the thread is picked up again,

That's for thyself to breed another thee,

The point is made. The rest of the sonnet, except for the couplet, rings changes on "ten:"

Or ten times happier be it ten for one.

Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,

If ten of thine ten times refigured thee:

Then what could death do if thou shouldst depart,

Leaving thee living in posterity?

The rhetorical game is furthered by the decisive end-stopping; the sequence builds slowly upwards in intensity. In word-

count the lines go from nine, down to eight, remain at eight, back to nine, plummet to five, a morphemic drama complementing the metrical one, as the poem climaxes in semantic and sensual euphoria.

Be not self-willed, for thou art much too fair,

To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.

A certain mini-section of evolving patterns of line-ending--of argument and of tension and release--feels ended.

End-stopped lines, enjambed lines; partial enjambments, suspended enjambments; stately end-stops, conversational end-stops; enjambments with effects of end-stopping; end-stops with effects of enjambment; masculine, feminine, and cross-dressed endings: the phenomena are there in verse, the effects numerous, the rhythms complex.

CHAPTER THREE: The Critical Importance of Rhythm

In Chapter One, I identify and question a tendency in contemporary criticism to devalue sound as interpretative material. Terry Eagleton's ideological project and Howard Felperin's and Barbara Everett's thematic readings of Shakespeare's Sonnets exemplify this tendency. My opposite critical project, however, presents a theoretical problem: rhythmic analysis seems to suppose that it neutrally reveals meaning within the sounds of the words, but in fact one can only interpret the sounds of poems in the light of a prior determination of a sense. Paul de Man lucidly describes this hermeneutic circle as applicable to any formalism in Blindness and Insight (29-32). In this view, which Felperin's comments on Jakobsonian analysis illustrate, meaning in criticism takes precedence over sound.

Since my analyses combine technical description of sounds and impressionistic description of their effects, my method touches this problem, and in turn, the problem may invalidate the method. Shakespeare's line-endings constitute one case study in a necessary critical procedure, if not a comprehensive critical project, the consideration of sound in literature. It follows that I should be prepared to assert the value of this procedure in terms of other poets (as briefly done with some analyses of Donne, Hopkins, Chaucer, and commercial verse in Chapter One), and other literature. My principal examples here are from Edgar Allan Poe and Oscar

Wilde.

Further, in treating Poe and Wilde, I engage the question of the relation of sound and sense in a different way than I have with Shakespeare. I have been treating Shakespeare's Sonnets and the line-endings in them as established texts. That is, while certainly recognizing the range of readings that rhythmic and thematic phenomena encourage, I have not considered textual-critical questions and the light that they might throw on the involvement of sound and sense. After all, the 1609 Quarto is the only source for the Sonnets (with the exception of two of them). Working from Stephen Booth's edition and having brought my text closer to the Quarto's in punctuation, I have simply proceeded on my way in Chapter Two. The text has been a given.

Conversely, with Poe and Wilde I will examine the text-in-process: by altering a sentence of Poe myself and comparing my version and his, and by examining one of Wilde's revisions of The Importance of Being Earnest and different versions of another line from the same play. These two discussions are prefaced by an examination of another text-in-process, a sentence from an earlier version of this thesis. When examining texts-in-process one can see sound and sense as they are hammered out in relation to each other; this illuminates the reverse activity, performed in Chapter Two and beyond this chapter, considering line-endings in Shakespeare's texts-as-givens.

I

When I was working on this thesis, one reader targeted a problematic sentence within Chapter One: "Anyone can tell me or anyone and make us understand, more or less, what 'From fairest creatures we desire increase,' the line or the whole of Shakespeare's Sonnet #1, means, in one way or another." It is probably a flawed sentence: my friendly reader had to read it several times before she caught its meaning, particularly because of the bizarre sequence, "Anyone can tell me or anyone and make us. . . ." Of course, one is encouraged in expository writing to minimize such strain on the reader, and not to try the reader's patience. Aspirations toward lucid simplicity and rhythmic clarity underlie contemporary linguistic values, at least when it comes to expository prose.¹

When my reader gave me the sentence to read, I of course launched in: "Anyone can tell me [decisive stress, slight pause] or anyone [quizzically inflected upward, to differentiate it from the first "anyone"] and make us understand ['us' is the union of me and the second anyone]" For my reader, her confusion over the sentence and my complete understanding of it illustrated the problem at the heart of a prosodic analysis: one would only know to stress

¹ This may be a principle in the teaching of fiction and poetry, too. Timothy Findley has said that he will revise any sentence that a friend, reading Findley's manuscript for the first time aloud, trips over, presumably on the assumption that impediments to a first-time understanding should be eliminated.

"me" and the second "anyone" if one first knew (as I did) the meaning.

However, in trying to figure out the meaning, anyone other than me (the writer) would only find it when in the process of figuring it out he experimented with rhythms and then one time accidentally landed on "me"--and suddenly grasped it. This same reader would then probably read the sentence again, exaggerating the rhythm to confirm the sentence's shape--notice I say "shape"; of course, I mean "meaning" as well, but in the case of this difficulty, meaning is inseparable from shape. The reader would then read the sentence a third time, without the exaggeration, this time performing the sentence with a natural expressivity.

What is true of this difficult sentence is true of all sentences and all utterances: one only catches the meaning if one catches the rhythm (provided that as well, of course, one knows the meanings of the words used). Usually, this is automatic and unconscious. However, misunderstandings such as this one, in print or in speech, can result from breakdowns in rhythmic understandings.

So while I perhaps seem to assert that rhythm and sound are prior to meaning, really I assert that meaning is rhythm: manifest rhythmically, coincident with rhythm, and dependent on a rhythm, which is often an otherwise unregistered punctuation.

According to Saussure, the connection between sound and sense within language systems is arbitrary. For speakers and

users of language, however, arbitrariness reigns or ceases according to their self-consciousness. Poets, and all highly conscious users and lovers of language, continually seek the fusion of sound and sense, the best sounds making the best sense, or often even the best sounds independent of the sense. Poets often strive, as Shakespeare often does, and perhaps never so much as in the Sonnets, for a naturalness of expression and a seemingly unself-conscious ease and directness of language. While she adumbrates the "difficulty" of the Sonnets, Barbara Everett nonetheless comments, "A few of Shakespeare's sonnets are formulaic, tricky or drudging. But he is in general the most superbly serious and direct, even naked of writers. At his best, he achieves over and over again the concentration of live thought" (12). Or poets may strive for great artifice and rhetorical effects through artifice, as Milton in his violations of normal word order, and as Donne or Hopkins in their indulgence in sound.² In neither case is the texture of language inconsequential: the art that conceals art is nonetheless high artifice; the art that flaunts art often achieves effects of stunning naturalism (as my earlier brief analysis of two of Donne's Holy Sonnets may reveal). Surely the opposite is never true, that a poet strives to express a sense independent of its sound.

Whenever we are in the presence of stirring or powerful

² The preceding few sentences are meant merely to identify certain extremes, and are by no means offered as a definitive description of the range of poetic practice.

ideas in literature or in other writing, our experience of pleasure and excitement is usually inseparable from the physical text, the sound text. Our intellectual pleasure is inseparable from its physical correlatives--an accelerated heartbeat, a tingling spine, a churning stomach, a tremor in our entire organism, a fuller intake of breath.

For instance, the evocation of a sombre, depressed, dull mood that is nonetheless tremulous and querulous (or however one wants to describe it) at the beginning of Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" is inseparable from the first sentence's length and periodicity:

During the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. (216)

We cannot really say that "melancholy" doesn't have a melancholy sound, or that "dreary" doesn't have a dreary sound, partly inherent in the word, partly in a reader's sensitive response to the words, and partly in Poe's maximizing of the effect of the word through its placement in the sentence and in a particular sequence of words: "through a singularly dreary tract of country." The line rises in pitch towards "sing"--would probably be scanned - - / ("through a sing")--and descends more dramatically than it rose towards "dreary." Were one timing the line, probably

"through a sing" and "gularly drear" would occupy the same space of time. The effect is of sudden rise (over two unstressed syllables), and then dramatically clattering descent (over three unstressed syllables). The fall eclipses the ascent; the line abases itself as do the narrator's spirits. This form is this content. Poe is undoubtedly using sound expressively and mimetically, self-consciously crafting his sense through sound in context.

Of course, to really make this point, we would have to demonstrate that the particular rhythms described are bound up with the sense, not merely appreciable in what Anthony Easthope calls "a reverse movement from the semantic to the phonetic" (104). Or in Harvey Gross's words, we need to suggest that "a particular rhythmic form . . . [is] isomorphic with the feeling it designates. That is, each element of the rhythmic form must correspond to the feeling in the way that the lines and points on a map correspond to the region mapped" ("Toward" 15).

So divorce this statement from its context, and consider the one sentence under discussion, and imagine that the sentiment were antithetical: "I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly lovely tract of country." Does the same or a similar rhythm "work" in an opposite context? I do not quite think it does. These things are of course debatable. But for me, something does not fit. The tonal rise and fall of the phrase just examined qualifies the loveliness. The line seems strained, and false. The rise and

fall checks the expression of the loveliness. The inferences that I might draw from this would be either 1) that this speaker is deliberately not telling us the truth, 2) that he is not telling us the truth and is unconscious of it--something in his heart is restraining his joy at the loveliness of the country, 3) he is a pedant, pretentious, a bore, incapable of freely and sensually expressing his pleasurable feelings.

In short, in Poe's original and in my altered version, sound in large part creates the meaning: this example suggests that these rhythms are isomorphous with their different feelings. To borrow Gross's words, something is happening rhythmically in these texts nearly independent of a "symbolic transaction" ("Toward" 14). The signifiers are sending their own messages in relative autonomy of the meaning, and the precise qualities attached to the signs--the precise signifieds and their significance--are substantially shaped by the sound.

Were I to revise the sentence to make it an unambiguous expression of joy, as in the original it is an unambiguous expression of vibrant gloom, what would I do? "[T]hrough an ineffably lovely tract of country": that is one option. The rhythmic ascent towards "ineff" is here longer than the descent (in opposition to "singularly dreary" and "singularly lovely"); the aspirate "eff" communicates something appropriate here just as the pensive, piercing "sing" does in Poe's original. Here the movement over the downward tripping

unstressed syllables involves not only the "l" shortly to be alliterated, but also the exquisite "b," so that "ineffably," with its labially articulated "ff" and plosive "b" makes the line breathy, even breathless. We can say, through a chiasmatic phonetic parallel, that "ineffably" suggests a speaker baffled by the loveliness. That is, were we within an interpretation drawn to suggest such a thing, the sound is in large part what would guide us, however unconscious we are of its guidance.

And if we were to revise "through a singularly lovely" to something else--"through an ineffably lovely, "through an unutterably lovely," "through an exquisite and lovely," "through a lovely tract of country," "through such lovely country," "through some beautiful country"--we would be guided by a range of things, among them sound. And of the things guiding us, if we are sensitive users of language, sound might even be chief.

Thus, sound-focused analysis reveals truths about why certain writing engages us more than others--about why we study what we study, why certain communications are impressive, others dry and lifeless--and also reveals truths about writing, and the creative process, the creative process of writers of poetry and of all writers of even the meanest most functional prose.

I do not claim my phonetic and prosodic readings of texts as definitive: they are mine and can be disputed, both my analyses of sound and the conclusions about sense I draw from

the analyses or from which they follow. Sound and sense are involved, entwined, inseparable. What I do claim is that this activity--involving ourselves practically and deeply in this interconnection--is central to criticism, because central to enjoyment and understanding of what we read and to the creation of something enjoyable, understandable--and even more--engaging and effective when we write.

II

In 1898, less than a year after his release from prison, Oscar Wilde corrected the proofs for the first edition of The Importance of Being Earnest. He made several changes, changes that were not compositor's omissions and had not, in fact, been part of the text as first performed in 1895. In Lady Bracknell's interrogation of John Worthing in the first act (the celebrated "handbag" scene), one of Lady Bracknell's speeches as given in the original text ran as follows:

I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate, exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence. What is your income? (266)

Wilde changed the second last sentence: "If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead

to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square" (my italics).³

This play is filled with such telling lines: lines that unquestionably are better because certain things are there, or not there, lines whose strange rhythmic excellence is appreciable when we compare early and later versions and can identify Wilde's changes.

Wilde's change raises questions of meaning, but in a way different than is usual in criticism. A formulation of Ezra Pound's is appropriate here: "The term 'meaning' cannot be restricted to strictly intellectual or 'coldly intellectual' significance. The how much you mean it, the how you feel about meaning it, can all be 'put into language'" (47-48). Further, meaning is also a question of how much meaning; Wilde's changed line is superior because it contributes an extra bit of meaning. The quantitative addition of meaning gives the line its special something. That rather than the particular meaning is significant. After all, we can probably agree that the line is superior even if we forget (or do not know in the first place) that Grosvenor Square is not just any square but a residential square for the upper classes, possibly the very square where Lord and Lady Bracknell live, or where their friend Lady Harbury lives, with whom Lady Bracknell has had crumpets before coming to Algernon's flat in the first act. All this is presumably inessential to the line's effect.

³ This and other changes Wilde made are documented in Richard Ellmann, Oscar Wilde (561n).

The line particularizes Lady Bracknell's prophecy of the violence and revolution that effective education would produce quite independently of the line's denotative or connotative meanings. The fact of particularity--and the greater length that this gives the line's cadence--is more important than the meaning of the particularity. Meaning is certainly added to the line, but as a rhythm and for the sake of rhythm.

Thus while analyzing sound, we are in a realm of meaning as well; here, however, as with Poe's sentence, the constitutive impact of rhythm is unmistakable.

When I worked at Canada's Stratford Festival in 1993 on a production of Wilde's play, these questions occupied me. The rehearsal hall, with its daily performance variations and the presence of a diverse but sympathetic audience (the production staff and others), was a laboratory for the discovery and investigation of the importance of rhythm in the experience of literary art. I recall one particular textual discrepancy:

Miss Prism: And you do not seem to realize, dear Doctor, that by persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. Men should be more careful; this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

Chasuble: But is a man not equally attractive when married?

Miss Prism: No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.

Chasuble: And often, I've been told, not even to her.

Miss Prism: That depends on the intellectual sympathies of the woman. Maturity can always be depended on. Ripeness can be trusted. Young women are green. [Dr. Chasuble starts.] I spoke horticulturally. My metaphor was drawn from fruits. But where is Cecily? (279)

So the text of the play we were working from had recorded the lines. One afternoon, the scene was being run several times. In one of the repetitions of the scene, Barbara Bryne, the actor playing Miss Prism, happened to deliver the second last line in a slightly different way: "I spoke horticulturally. My metaphor was drawn from fruit." Laughter erupted from the group, where earlier it had been muted, if present at all. My attention was caught, not only by the laughter from the group, but also by the qualities of the line. The singular was funnier than the plural.

I was delighted, but somewhat wary; it could not be that Wilde, of all playwrights, had not written his line in the funniest possible way. I checked other editions of the play: some gave "fruit," some "fruits." While I was pursuing these investigations, the scene was periodically rehearsed again; Barbara Bryne went back to "fruits"; the "faulty" reading was obviously an accident, the occurrence and the effects of which she was unaware. Anchored by the textual discrepancy and the effects of the singular on my sensing membranes and those of

an audience, I believed that Wilde must have written "fruit."

Mulling it over after the fact, I came to two conclusions about the artistic superiority of "fruit"; interestingly enough, one semantic and rhythmic, one phonetic. First, within its context in the play, the lesser substantiality of the singular heightens the ridiculousness of Miss Prism's hasty justification. Of course, the lesser substantiality is a sensual lack as well. "Fruit" is crisp, clean, pert, and indeed, prismatic; a quality entirely altered by addition of the final sibilant. Second, and this reason is purely phonetic, the decisive closing consonant ("t") would seem to provide an audible cue for laughter.

Several practical and theoretical conclusions that support my current endeavour can be drawn from this example of the effects of rhythm and sound:

1. In matters of rhythmic effectiveness, authorial intention is finally irrelevant. While I would not have had the courage of my convictions had textual evidence not suggested there were grounds for supposing that Wilde had written "fruit," what finally matters is what is demonstrably more rhythmically effective.

2. There is in this case no possible argument that meaning alone makes one reading or another better.

3. I could not have discovered the superiority of one reading in what Anthony Easthope describes as "a reverse

movement from the semantic to the phonetic" (104). This reading occurred and was experienced as a sensual difference--a phonetic and an aural difference--that only later could be understood and described as meaningful. The progression is directly from sound to significance, and not the reverse. I could not have known that the line could have been more rhythmically effective, had an accident not suggested that Wilde's genius had made it so.

4. Rhythm is thus greatly significant: its nature mysterious perhaps, but its effects primal. I responded, as did an audience, instinctively and immediately to a phonetic difference.

5. My convictions about rhythm are not altered, even if one chooses to uphold the superiority of the first reading, "fruits."⁴

I said at the beginning of this discussion that the theatre, because of the performance of text and character, is a laboratory for the investigation of rhythm. This is even truer when what is being performed is a comedy, because of the precise gauge that audience laughter provides of something's rhythmic effect. However, the insights revealed in the theatre, where texts cannot help but be in process, reveal

⁴ David William, the director of the production, believed "fruits" to be better.

truths applicable to the experience of rhythm in other literary forms.

III

Ezra Pound declares, "Rhythm must have meaning," and my foregoing examples confirm his insistence.⁵ But perhaps no comment by a poet on poetic practice lends more support to my critical practice than this from Hopkins:

Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind by way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning. Some matter and meaning is essential to it but only as an element necessary to support and employ the shape which is contemplated for its own sake. (quoted from Gage 383)

Now to be sure the poetics of Hopkins, Pound, Eliot and Auden --and the related aesthetics of Poe and Wilde--are certainly of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Are these poets not, however, identifying something transhistorical and transcultural in rhythmic experience and in rhythmic awareness as a large part of what it means to be creative? It is,

⁵ Quoted from Paul Fussell, Poetic Meter and Poetic Form (3). There Fussell also cites W. H. Auden ("Themes and subjects for poems, Auden maintains, are less interesting to the real poet than technique, and 'all my life,' he says, 'I have been more interested in poetic technique than anything else.'") and T. S. Eliot ("the conscious problems with which one is concerned in the actual writing are more those of a quasi musical nature, in the arrangement of metric and pattern, than of a conscious exposition of ideas'" [quoted from Fussell 4]).

perhaps, often exaggerated how much our century's formal vocabulary in criticism and formal consciousness of art is time-bound. George Watson has said that "the average schoolboy of today is probably capable of analysing more closely and more accurately than Dryden or any of Dryden's contemporaries, and the ordinary reviewer enjoys a similar unearned advantage over the greatest of English critics before the twentieth century" (18). But let us listen for a moment to a part of a conversation between Byron and Shelley on Shakespeare's art:

Shelley: Is not a line . . . a whole, and only as a whole, beautiful in itself? as, for instance, "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank." Now, examining this line, we perceive that all the parts are formed in relation to one another, and that it is consequently a whole. "Sleep," we see, is a reduplication of the pure and gentle sound of sweet; and as the beginning of the former symphonizes with the beginning s of the latter, so also the l in moonlight prepares one for the l in sleep, and glides gently into it; and in the conclusion, one may perceive that the word "bank" is determined by the preceding words, and that the b which it begins with is but a deeper intonation of the two p's which come before it; sleeps upon this slope, would have been effeminate; sleeps upon this rise, would have been harsh and inharmonious. (quoted from Bate 339-40)

Byron objects, "But the beauty of the line does not lie in

sounds and syllables, and such metrical contrivances, but in the beautiful metaphor of the moonlight sleeping" (340); Shelley concludes, "But what makes this metaphor beautiful? To represent the tranquility of moonlight is the object of the line; and the sleep is beautiful, because it gives a more intense and living form of the same idea; the rhythm beautifully falls in with this, and just lets the cadence of the emphasis dwell upon the sound and sense of the sweet word 'sleep;' and the alliteration assimilates the rest of the line into one harmonious symmetry" (341).

What the comments of Hopkins and Pound on poetic practice and of Shelley on poetic effect exemplify is an engagement with poetic language--as writers and as readers--that fuses rhythmic and semantic concerns. To say it in a slightly different way, and in the words of another Romantic, they vindicate a criticism that retains some "Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason" (768).

These examples--and the doubtless countless others that can be documented from different periods--of artists viewing mastery of their different arts as mastery of form as well as and often more than as (or at the very least, as inseparable from) expression of theme urge a rhythmic criticism. Rhythmic consciousness and a striving for rhythmic perfection form a key part of the history of literature and of its creation. It is no great imaginative leap to apply these insights to texts

(like Shakespeare's Sonnets) whose origin is uncertain, and of whose revision we must remain uncertain. Whether the result of conscious craft, unconscious inspiration, or the simple striving of an undissociated sensibility, the beauties in minutiae await us.

The rhythmic events in Shakespeare's texts-as-givens are the end results of the kind of rhythmic events observable in Wilde's and Poe's texts-in-process and their constitution of those texts' effects and meanings. A rhythmic criticism--a criticism of sound and sense--surely cuts to the quick of poetic creation and effect.

CHAPTER FOUR: Shakespeare's Expressive Lineation

In my second chapter, I proceeded experimentally. There are end-stops, and there are enjambments: this much is recognized in prosodic theory. Not all end-stops or enjambments are equal: this is my prime contention that the analyses in Chapter Two argue in relation to the first six of Shakespeare's Sonnets. Line-endings are a central unexamined determinant or structuring component of the rhythm of verse. What readers do at the line-ending--pause or drive on, and to what degree--shapes the whole rhythmic experience of a poem.

In turn, what enables the distinctions drawn in Chapter Two between kinds of line-ending is a consideration of the larger sound effects of lines and sequences of lines, the metre and other determinants of rhythm: phonetic patterns (alliteration, assonance, rhyme, consonantal clusters and sequences, vowel sequences), grammatical structure, and syntactic structure. As I argue in Chapter Two, these combined patterns affect the rhythm of a verse line at its end, as they also (subtracting metre, of course) affect phrasing and its effect in prose.

A few generalizations remain to be made further to my discussion in Chapter Three about the effects of sound and to my discussion in Chapter Two about the distinctions between kinds of line-ending that I have drawn.

Sound is often mimetic and expressive: it imitates action or process, or it is expressive of feeling or thought. My use

of the terms "mimetic" and "expressive" in discussing the significance of sound is based on Harvey Gross's discussion of theories of rhythm ("Toward" 11-17). He notes, "there has developed no comprehensive theory on the genesis, nature, or function of rhythm. We have, to put it in philosophical terms, neither an ontology nor an epistemology of rhythm" (9). He continues "to adumbrate a larger referentialist theory of both poetic form and art," commenting, "My sympathies are generally on the side of referentialism: if rhythms are mimetic, they must imitate aspects of human thought and action outside the poetic structure" (14). Gross sides with referentialism because of the difficulties of an expressivist theory of rhythm.¹ I alluded to the central difficulty in the last chapter when discussing the sentence from Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher." Gross writes, "[if rhythms are] expressive, they must serve as phonetic signs for human feeling and emotion" (14); that is, the "particular rhythmic form must be isomorphic with the feeling it designates [E]ach element of the rhythmic form must correspond to the feeling in the way that the lines and points on a map correspond to the region mapped" (15). Expressivist theories must demonstrate that rhythm functions independently of "a symbolic transaction" (14).

¹ I should note, however, that in Gross's discussion, the distinction between a "mimetic" and an "expressive" theory occasionally disappears; for instance, Gross acknowledges that for Wimsatt and Beardsley "the function of rhythmic forms is mimetic-expressive" (14).

To situate these comments in terms of some of the critical problems we have looked at, an expressivist theory effectively mounted would constitute a large challenge to the views of de Man in his analysis of formalism and of Felperin in his comments on Jakobson. These views are presupposed in Eagleton and Belsey, restated and enlarged in Easthope, and underpin much current criticism: its concentration on the symbolic transactions of the text and the ideological constitution of those transactions; and its "flight from the aesthetic," to use Harold Bloom's words in The Western Canon (17). I cite Bloom not to participate in his argument (which is far beyond my scope) or necessarily to align myself with it; instead, I wish simply to indicate what I sense is at stake in rhythmic analysis and how such analysis can intervene in larger critical debates. Bloom's study is well worth referring my readers to for two reasons: first, his is a defense of the aesthetic, and rhythmic analysis (as I define it) is necessarily aesthetic; second and more important, his involves (as mine does not) a persuasive criticism of the reduction of "the aesthetic to ideology" (18).

Bloom's arguments on this second point deserve some discussion:

The cardinal principle of the current School of Resentment ["'cultural materialist'" (Neo-Marxist); 'New Historicist' (Foucault); 'Feminist'" (3)] can be stated with singular bluntness: what is called aesthetic value emanates from class struggle. This principle is so broad

that it cannot be wholly refuted. I myself insist that the individual self is the only method and the whole standard for apprehending aesthetic value. . . . The freedom to apprehend aesthetic value may rise from class conflict, but the value is not identical with the freedom (23-24; my italics)

I can search out no inner connection between any social group and the specific ways in which I have spent my life reading, remembering, judging, and interpreting what we once called 'imaginative literature.' (23)

To defend the aesthetic--the power of art apprehended by the individual--as in some way beyond ideology, one needs to establish some space for the individual outside of ideology. One needs to argue the possibility of human intellectual and imaginative freedom. The idea of the free reader creating the text and its meaning through her rhythmic response and deriving a value--an experience of the beautiful--not reducible to ideology is implicit in my argument from its beginning. Bloom provides the necessary prior defense of an endeavour such as mine.

For these reasons, Bloom's study is anterior and apposite to the present thesis. Where he and I diverge methodologically is crucial: for Bloom, the power of the aesthetic is centred in "the will to figuration, the motive for metaphor" (12); for me, in rhythm, the stimulus of song and the design of dance.

An expressivist theory of rhythm could contribute significantly to a comprehensive critical theory by demonstrating the independence of rhythm from symbolic transactions, perhaps its priority to those transactions, or at the very least the inseparability of rhythm from concerns with meaning. An expressivist theory could argue persuasively for the maximum discrete space for rhythm within criticism, and the centrality of those concerns to criticism.

An expressivist theory would realign critical concerns, for even in the work of a prosodist one can find the following comment: "Until we have ventured to bring it to bear on the evaluation of a whole poem, we cannot say that we have really done anything worth doing with metrical analysis. Prosodic study justifies itself only as an adjunct to criticism . . ." (Fussell 90; my italics). An expressivist theory could make prosody more central, and other criticisms perhaps more adjunctive. And yet, as Harvey Gross is aware in setting forth the terms of expressive and mimetic theories of rhythm, expressivism is a difficult row to hoe. Gross offers his discussion as an "outline [of] the problems and possibilities of an elaborate theoretical task" ("Toward" 14). According to Richard D. Cureton, in a recent article, the problems outlined by Gross continue to await resolution (1).

The discussions in Chapter Three have moved progressively toward elaborating an expressivist theory of rhythm. In the first text, rhythm is inseparable from meaning, and meaning difficult without a rhythmic understanding. In the second

text, from Poe, rhythm is functioning nearly independent of a prior symbolic transaction and co-creating the terms of the transaction. In the third text, the two examples from Wilde, the constitutive impact of rhythm is greater still: in the first example ("in Grosvenor Square") meaning is added for rhythmic reasons; in the second, rhythm exclusively creates a meaning and an effect. The testimony of particular poets (Hopkins, Pound, Eliot, Shelley) suggests further that in poetry sounds are sought as "phonetic signs for human feeling and emotion," not merely as imitation of "aspects of human thought and action outside the poetic structure" (Gross, "Toward" 14).

Even without a more fully developed expressive theory of rhythm, the case for rhythm in criticism need not be closed. A combined mimetic and expressive theory can lead us toward an "enabling" or "constitutive" theory of rhythm. A mimetic theory of rhythm identifies the role of sound in terms of the correlation between sound and something in the physical world; the second in terms of the origin of sound in something in the writer's or the creator's mind. Where sound is mimetic and expressive, it is evocative for the reader: for example, the opening enjambed line of Keats's "On the Sea", "It keeps eternal whisperings around / Desolate shores," evokes in the reader either a memory of the sound of the sea, or an image of the sea, or a feeling of being by the sea--or all, or some combination of the above. Likewise Eliot's "A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps" will evoke a sound, an image, or a

feeling in the reader.

With some examples, however, it is less apparent that language is both mimetic and expressive. Shakespeare's "Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame" may evoke a feeling of anger, frustration, outrage, or righteousness in a reader, and so be sonically expressive of emotion and thought. The first half of the line may also evoke an image of ejaculation, and "waste" in the second half of the line may make some readers think of a trash-can, a garbage dump, or spent rocket fuel. However, in this case, at least for me, the mimetic potential in the line is less clear, because the signified is abstract and without a clear referent.

And of course, in all cases, the effect of the sound is bound up with the sense. Keats's mimetic-expressivity is only "caught" on a first reading if the title has been read and the reader thus knows the antecedent of the "It." We must be careful, as Samuel Johnson writes, not to "ascribe to the numbers the effect of the sense" (quoted from Gross, "Toward" 12). However, we must also be careful about the too easy separation of sound and sense implicit in Johnson's remark. For in all of the above cases and in all other cases, whatever the sound is specifically doing--imitating something, expressing something, evoking something in the reader--it is simply there: enabling meaning, constituting meaning, coterminous with meaning. To use an outworn metaphor, sound is always meaning's dress, and meaning is never naked. Paradoxically, meaning perhaps seems most naked when an

emotional content invests a statement's body with an enlarged materiality.

Thus, I offer here no unified theory to account comprehensively either for the effects of rhythm or for the interrelation between separate rhythmic elements in poetry: in different lines, different patterns assume different prominence, as my analyses demonstrate. My aim is to treat the interrelations case by case. For this reason no table detailing the incidence of my different variations of line-ending within the whole of Shakespeare's Sonnets is included. It would not make much sense merely to list line 7 of Sonnet #104 as a decisive end-stop: the precise nature of its decisiveness in relation to the surrounding line-endings in the sonnet is there to be experienced by any reader, and that rhythmic experience can only be appreciated and thoughtfully described if argued in relation to its context. Statistical charts have a limited use, as do unified prosodic theories. They are neither sufficient nor necessary to rhythmic experience and its description, nor can they account for the ranges of rhythmic experience that different readers can have of the same poem. To make the distinctions that I draw in Chapter Two between kinds of end-scopping and enjambment, one need only a reasonable sample, such as the first six sonnets.

My analyses describe two extremes of line-ending, one more frequent in verse than the other: more frequent, a line-ending that is a break, a beat, a slight pause, a silence of a certain duration, that even if slight, enables a reader or

hearer to hear and feel each line as separate, while connected; less frequent, a line-ending that is no pause at all, so that the separability of the lines might not be felt. The first I call a decisive or stately end-stop, the second an outright or true enjambment.

Between these two extremes, I have identified certain variations, which can be listed in order of increasing relaxation of pause:

- decisive or stately end-stop
 - conversational or naturalistic end-stop
 - [progressively loosening end-stops]
 - * end-stop with effect of enjambment [end-stop]
-
- * enjambment with effect of end-stopping [enjambment]
 - * partial enjambment
 - * suspended enjambment
 - outright or true enjambment
 - * = zone of temporal ambiguity

The dividing line indicates where the standard distinction between end-stopping and enjambment fits into my scheme.

My remarks on the temporal distinction between decisive end-stopping and outright enjambment become complicated once we introduce further distinctions. If decisive end-stops and outright enjambments can be temporally distinguished, the others may not be. Hence the zone of temporal ambiguity. A

decisive end-stop is a relatively long pause, a conversational end-stop a shorter pause, an outright enjambment no pause. However, the others may not occupy a scale of descending temporal prominence. An affective difference is introduced. A difference in auditorial and corporeal sensation of rhythmic pulse and an attendant different play of emotions in the reader may define these other different line-endings as well as and apart from a temporal difference. For instance, a partial enjambment may not involve a longer pause than a suspended enjambment, but instead will feel different. Further, as I have noted in Chapter Two, the combined determinants of rhythm in a poem in large part create the different sensations of these different line-endings. What follows are some summary generalizations that can be made based on the examinations in Chapter Two.

Decisive or stately end-stops

As in the first four lines of Sonnet #1, the main determinant of a decisive end-stop is the relative grammatical autonomy of individual lines, whatever their connection through phonetic patterns developed over several lines. Within the first six sonnets, one obvious generalization can be made: quite apart from the occurrence of decisive end-stops elsewhere in the poems, each quatrain, and of course the concluding line, is decisively end-stopped. The impression created by several decisive end-stops (as in the first quatrain of Sonnet #1) is that sense is being created and offered to the reader line by line; decisive end-stops in

succession suggest method, calm, and coolness and give a poem an audible formality. A decisive end-stop after other line-endings most often signals emphatically that a certain unit is ended; if it is not the whole poem that is ending, then the end-stop gives us a momentary pause for breath, reflection, and recuperation before proceeding.

Less frequent, presumably, would be a pair of lines (as lines 5-6 of Sonnet #5), which are not relatively autonomous, grammatically, but which are separated nonetheless by phonetic violence:

For never-resting Time leads summer on,

To hideous winter and confounds him there,

I discussed the phonetic disjunction between these two lines in Chapter Two. The presence of the aspirate in the first stressed vowel of the second line quoted is what particularly seems to argue for the decisiveness of the preceding end-stop.

Conversational or naturalistic end-stops

The marked pause of a decisive end-stop is shortened particularly through the combining of predicates over two verse lines or the withholding of a predicate until the second line. As I noted in our examination of Sonnet #2, conversational and stately end-stops can easily alternate within a poem; conversely, as soon as several lines are grammatically interdependent (as lines 9-12 of Sonnet #1), conversational end-stopping becomes partial enjambment: a reader feels less pause and separation of lines as the sense continuously drives forward. Further, conversational end-

stopping seems most common when there is no trochaic inversion of the first foot of the following line; when a trochaic inversion of the first foot presents the withheld predicate, as in line 6 of Sonnet #1, what might otherwise be a conversational end-stop becomes a partial enjambment--less of a pause, because more emphatically denied.

Where conversational and decisive end-stops alternate within a poem (as in Sonnet #2), the end-stops may progressively loosen, prior to enjambment. As distinct from a decisive end-stop, a conversational end-stop is a lighter, shorter, more springing and sprightly beat between lines.

End-stops with effects of enjambment

This is a line-ending that can easily be a conversational end-stop, except for the presence of another connective pattern. In one example, line 9 of Sonnet #5, it is an alliteration:²

Then were not summer's distill~~l~~ation left

A liquid prisoner pent in wall~~s~~ of gl~~a~~ss,

In performing the lines, one would be less likely because of the phonetic connection to experience the two lines as fully separable, an experience central to the definition of the end-stop range. At the same time, it seems difficult to hold that the lines are in any precise sense of the word enjambed. Unmistakably a subtle and rare occurrence.

² In the second example seen so far, it is a polyptoton:

That use is not forbidden usury
Which happies those that pay the willing loan;

Enjambments with effects of end-stopping

Closely related to end-stops with effects of enjambment, though the inverse, these enjambments tend to be caught by myriad sound echoes, or sonic separations ("use / So"). Lines whose sense is pressing on, but that feel and sound separated, are enjambments with effects of end-stopping. The feeling of an enjambment with an effect of end-stopping is of a lurch in the poem, of wanting to press forward but of being unable to easily. As we have seen, if there tends only to be one sound echo, a suspended enjambment is the more likely effect.

Partial Enjambment

As already mentioned, a partial enjambment is what would otherwise be a conversational or even a decisive end-stop, were it not for the violation of the end of line pause by the trochaic inversion of the first foot of the subsequent line, or the presence of a great number of interdependent lines sequentially. As example of the first, we have examined the interesting case of line 1 of Sonnet #3, which could be either a decisive end-stop or a partial enjambment depending on one's reading of the first foot of line 2. As example of the second, we have examined lines 9-11 of Sonnet #1, where the poem develops from the partial enjambment in its second quatrain to encompass two partial enjambments in its third. The sensation of a partial enjambment is of an acceleration in the poem, a forward pressure, or a swelling of the poem, even while other features in the lines still lead the reader to resist the full-forwardness of enjambment.

Suspended Enjambment

A suspended enjambment is similar to an enjambment with an effect of end-stopping in an enjambed line, but instead of the lurching of one line into another through a concatenation of phonetic patterns, a suspended enjambment typically involves one sound echo catching at the poem and tilting it over the line divide, as in "she in thee" of Sonnet #3 (line 9) , or no sound echo and a distinct expansive final vowel sound after a series of shorter vowel sounds, the final vowel sound unclosed or closed by a nasal consonant (and even more particularly, an "m"), as "womb" and "tomb" of Sonnet #3 (lines 5 and 7), or "frame" of Sonnet #5 (line 1).

While partial enjambment is a felt swelling of the poem, pressing it forward to make its point, a suspended enjambment is a lifting followed by a gliding fall, which in the examples we have seen ("whose unearned womb / Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry"; "will be the tomb / Of his self-love to stop posterity") ironically lightens the insistence of enjambment.

Outright or true enjambment

Because of the wealth and complexity of phonetic patterns creating enjambments with effects of end-stopping and suspended enjambments in the sonnets we have examined, outright enjambments are seldom seen. Interestingly, of all the line-endings, decisive end-stops and partial enjambments have been the most numerous, with conversational end-stops and suspended enjambments a close second. Shakespeare's lineal practice within the first six sonnets favours end-stopping,

with the subtler intermediate kinds of enjambment as the principal variations. In the examples of true enjambment we have seen (lines 10-11 of Sonnet #2, line 1 of Sonnet 4), little separation of the lines can be adduced, together with one interesting feature, the opening of the subsequent line with a spondaic or pyrrhic foot:

If thou could'st answer, this fair child of mine
Shall sum [/ /] my count and make my old excuse, (#2,
10-11)

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
Upon thyself [- - - /] thy beauty's legacy? (#4, 1-2)

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface
In thee [/ /] thy summer ere thou be distilled: (#6, 1-
2)

It is necessary to compare some of these examples with examples of suspended enjambments to note the impact of phonetic patterns and of the scansion of the first foot of the subsequent line on the degree of enjambment of the preceding one. To my ear, in some of the examples from the first six sonnets, there is an audible difference, in the rhythmic suspension created, between an unclosed vowel sound, particularly when it echoes an earlier occurrence of the same sound in the line, and one that is closed. Consider the following "touchstone" example of the suspended enjambment:

Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee

Calls back the lovely April of her prime; (#3, 9-10)
 This example, set against the earlier examples of outright enjambment, I think bears out my claim that the suspended enjambment involves a lifting then a gliding fall (enhanced by the regularity of the first foot of the second line quoted), where in the outright enjambment there is a decisive crashing of one line into the next (enhanced by the pouncing of a spondaic foot or the acceleration of a pyrrhic).

Further, when a final vowel is closed in a line pressing forward, there seems to be a special effect created by the kind of final consonant. While the "n" of "mine," the "nd" of "spend" and the "ce" of "deface" permit the crashing of one line into the other of outright enjambment, the "m" of "frame," "womb," and "tomb" produce the different lifted lingering of suspended enjambment.

From the formality and pause of decisive end-stops, to the relaxed light beats of conversational end-stops, the flexibility of progressively loosening end-stops, the pressing through a stop of end-stops with effects of enjambment, the lurching of enjambments with effects of end-stopping, the swelling of partial enjambments, the lilting of suspended enjambments, the crashing of outright enjambments, immense lineal differences are present that we have already seen Shakespeare use, through the small sample of Sonnets #1-6, with immense flexibility and variability.

A hasty summary characterization of the lineal differences within the first six sonnets can focus this

flexibility. Sonnet #1 progresses from the stateliness of decisive end-stop to the swelling of partial enjambments, and Sonnet #2 from the sprightliness of conversational end-stop through loosening to the crashing of enjambment. Sonnet #3 opens with the insistence and crisis of partial enjambments, then moves through suspended enjambments lightening that insistence. Sonnet #4 introduces within the sequence a new tonality, harsh and lurching through its enjambments with effects of end-stopping. Sonnet #5 combines sweet and harsh styles, while its suspended enjambments give way to decisive end-stopping. Sonnet #6 opens with triumphal enjambment, and then resolves the drama of the first six sonnets through its decisively end-stopped rhetorical gamesmanship.

Shakespeare is never at work doing merely one rhythmic thing; instead, tones give way to other tones, stateliness to swelling, conversationality to crashing point-making, lurching to decisive end-stopping, phonetically enacting the feeling of thought. At the same time, the first six sonnets do not feature large, dramatic disjunctions between decisive end-stopping and outright enjambment, but shadings through the middle range. The pervasive and ever-shifting irony of the sonnets dovetails with this lineal practice; line-endings and what we do with them as readers are themselves vitally ironic: there is more to them than meets the ear.

Sonnets #18 and #29 exemplify Shakespeare's gentle and controlled variation of complex rhythmic patterns. In them even more than in Sonnets #1-6 Shakespeare never strays very

far: both sonnets are systematically end-stopped, and in the case of #29, to such a degree that in maintaining the end-stopping the most fascinating effect of line-ending that I have seen in the Sonnets is created at the poem's climax.

First consider Sonnet #18:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

The poem opens with two decisive end-stops.

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date.

In the first line quoted, the poem's first conversational end-stop emerges, and is then followed by a decisive end-stop.

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, [convst.e.s.]

And often is his gold complexion dimmed; [looser e.s.]

And every fair from fair sometime declines, [even looser]

By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:

[dec.e.s.]

While in Sonnet #2 the conversational end-stops would have become partial enjambments (as in Sonnet #1) were they not consistently alternated with decisive end-stops, here the recurrent addition of a complete parallel clause per line over two lines preserves the tautness of the poem through its emergent fluidity; the poem's first solid caesura in line 8--occurring dramatically after the line's first foot--suspends the poem slightly before the second quatrain (or the octave,

since the poem is about to turn) is decisively resolved.³

So far in the poem, a particular pattern, of decisive end-stops, has been introduced; in line 3 a second pattern --a conversational end-stop--is added to the poem's rhythmic composition. The decisive end-stop of line 4 ends the first quatrain with the first pattern playing off the first. In the second quatrain, the second pattern--conversational end-stops--reasserts itself and is explored through the progressively loosening end-stops of the next three lines, until the caesura prepares for the repetition of the poem's first pattern, a decisive end-stop.

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.

After the decisive end-stop closing the second quatrain, line 9 brings us back to a conversational end-stop, not quite as loose as line 7's, though looser than the poem's first conversational end-stop in line 3. It is an extraordinary rhythmic creation. Through the second quatrain the poem has been moving onward toward a climactic enjambment; the last line of the second quatrain pulls us back from that onward progress, giving us a momentary recuperative decisive end-stop. As the poem again begins its forward march in line 9, it has moved backward slightly from its earlier rhythm,

³ The comma in "By chance," is in the Quarto, not in Stephen Booth's edited text.

partaking of the influence of the decisive end-stop. Line 10 charts again the second quatrain's rhythmic territory, loosening and driving forward, and the next line is looser still. Line 11 is the poem's loosest end-stop--almost, though not quite, a partial enjambment. Line 12, in announcing the poem's, and the whole of the Sonnets', supermimetic project culminates in a decisive end-stop.

In the poem's end is its beginning, as the poem comes back to the opening rhythm, both lines of the couplet decisively end-stopped.

In subtlety of rhythmic development--and in the rigour with which expected enjambment is wryly denied--Sonnet #29 is even more remarkable, revealing a Shakespeare who in his exuberance and triumphalism is more than ever the controlling poet, sensitive to the air-sculpture of his rhythms:

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,

I all alone beweepe my outcast state,

The first line is a decisive end-stop, and with fine cunning, while the reader probably wants the second to be a decisive end-stop as well, that expectation is denied as the poem ceases to relax and instead springs forward over line 2's conversational end-stop:

And trouble deaf heav'n with my bootless cries,

And look upon myself and curse my fate,

Only with line 4 is the poem again decisively end-stopped, once the whole (or so it may feel) situation is laid out with mournful yet springing languor. But no, after the decisive

end-stop, the poem tells us more, and proceeds with its elaboration:

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope, [convst.e.s]
 Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
 [convst.e.s.]
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope, [tighter
 convst.e.s.]

With what I most enjoy contented least; [dec.e.s.]

With extraordinary lineal expressivity of the speaker's emotional state, the conversational end-stops through this second quatrain, instead of loosening progressively as they had in expression of a different mood in Sonnet #18, only begin to, and then tighten (in line 7), remarkable since normally recurrent parallelism will create acceleration. Note how this defeat of acceleration is accomplished. Line 5's ending is the loosest so far in the poem, propelled more forward than the earlier conversational end-stops of the first quatrain by its caesuralessness and the trochaic first foot of line 6. Then the caesura after the second foot of line 6 ensures that the ending leans more toward decisiveness. The reader might feel launching into line 7 that the poem's tempo will now increase, until the caesura after the third foot defeats that impulse, as if the speaker in this state can go a little further than in the earlier line, but not too far. And even in line 8, before the decisive end-stop, the central antithesis--"most enjoy[,] contented least"--begets a caesura where otherwise there would not be one.

However, as the poem turns, new complexities and differences are added to the existing ones:

Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
If the "yet" is stressed it could conversationalize the earlier decisive end-stop; but line 9, however one reads the ending of line 8, decisively end-stops. Then,

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
The trochaic opening of the line picks up the poem's pace more successfully than any earlier line in the poem; there is no extreme departure from the poem's distinctive pattern; however, the caesura and conversational end-stop alert us that the poem's world is shifting as clearly as does the words' significance.

Like to the lark at break of day arising

From sullen earth sings hymns at heaven's gate;

The acceleration continues through the trochaic inversion of the first foot of line 11 and the alliteration of the first two stressed syllables of the line. The line-ending of 11 is probably that most rare of things: an end-stopped line with an effect of enjambment, created by the repetition in "arising / . . . sings" despite their separation by the expressive "from sullen earth," which in its vowel sequence emerges whence it speaks.

Then with the couplet decisive end-stopping returns.

In Sonnets #18 and #29, the speaker is exuberant and triumphant, though here in #29 the triumph emerges from an enunciated initial despair. In each sonnet the triumphant

mod and its development is contained within systematic though subtly varying and shifting kinds of end-stop--even to the point of denying, in line 11 of #29, the expected unambiguous enjambment. What is particularly striking is the combination in these sonnets of a structural and thematic formality (through the developing conceits and bipartite structure of Sonnet #18 and the calculated and even formulaic binarism of Sonnet #29) with a rhythmic propensity for conversational end-stop, making these sonnets in every way a blending of the unexpected and disjunctive.

CHAPTER FIVE:
Beyond Shakespeare: Explorations and Hypotheses

George T. Wright characterizes the Sonnets as "The Art of Small Variations." My analyses confirm his conclusions, but describe a new way of looking at and experiencing this art, through the subtle variations in line-ending created by the combined sound effects of a poem. I depart from the arguments of Wright and of recent non-metrical commentators on the Sonnets (Everett 1994, Felperin 1985) in holding that while the variations may be small, the effects created are complex and involved and reveal in the sonnets a wide range of tonal variations. I see the sonnets as more dramatic than they do.

Significantly, in the Sonnets examined we have seen few truly enjambed lines--instead an abundance of partial and suspended enjambments, and enjambments with effects of end-stopping, with phonetic patterning gracing and complicating the fall of one line into another--and a wide range of different end-stops--stately, conversational, loose, and end-stops with effects of enjambment. What perhaps distinguishes the verse of Shakespeare's Sonnets is this great flexibility within a relatively small compass, creating their naturalness, ease, and immense tonal variability.

In other poets and other poetry we might see different things. Here I will briefly explore some of the patterns that a broader study of line-endings in English poetry might reveal. Three qualifications apply to the discussions that follow. First, as these investigations are preliminary and

based on at most a few poems by each particular poet, I am only establishing in my analyses a sketch of distinctions that could be drawn between the lineal practices of Shakespeare and of other writers.

Second, I tend here to eschew, because of the brevity of individual analyses, the full range of distinctions between the seven kinds of line-ending established in my discussions of Shakespeare. Thus, where I use the unmodified terms enjambment and end-stopping, I am describing a line-ending or group of line-endings as occupying the range of end-stopping or enjambment comprehended by the terms in their standard use. Where the term is modified, I am identifying a precise effect. Often, I apply two proximate terms, identifying a line-ending as, say, a partial or suspended enjambment; in that case I am proposing a narrower range that a more detailed analysis might further refine.

Third, most of my examples are from sonnets, some not: some observations may therefore not really be tenable as descriptions of a particular poet's style, since they often involve features that are largely determined by the particular verse form in which the poet is working. For example, heroic couplets will tend to produce decisive end-stopping, and suspended enjambments; in tetrameter and trimeter poetry the felt thump of the metre likewise militates against enjambment: there, in addition to decisive end-stops, end-stops with effects of enjambment or enjambments with effects of end-stopping could be the dominant lineal features.

In Marlowe's mighty lines, for example, one typically finds a more methodical line by line sense-making than in Shakespeare, and as befits his heroic couplets in Hero and Leander, more end-stopping:

On Hellespont, guilty of true love's blood,
In view of opposite, two cities stood,
Sea-borderers, disjoined by Neptune's might;

The one Abydos, the other Sestos hight. (I, 1-4)

The resistance of heroic couplets to outright enjambment enables suspensions, particularly when the erotic tensions in the poem build or are released by comedy:

Even as delicious meat is to the taste,
So was his neck in touching, as surpassed
The white of Pelops' shoulder. I could tell ye
How smooth his breast was, and how white his belly, (I,
63-66)

After what is probably the rare true enjambment in the poem in the second line (since there is what we now hear as an off-rhyme, the ending of the line is not caught), the exclamation ending the third line--and its attendant suspension--sets up the rhyme and the comic point its completion consummates.

While in this poem methodical end-stopping is the norm, it is not without its conversational variations:

The men of wealthy Sestos every year,
For his sake whom their goddess held so dear,
Rose-cheeked Adonis, kept a solemn feast. (I, 91-93)

The appositive in the third line, and the trochaic opening

that begins it, eases the ringing end-stops to which we've become accustomed. In this case, the conversational loosening of the end-stops occurs in a bridge in the narrative and easily propels it forward.

Sometimes several lines in succession will see such variations combined:

By this, Leander, being near the land,
Cast down his weary feet and felt the sand.
Breathless albeit he were, he rested not
Till to the solitary tower he got,
And knocked and called, at which celestial noise
The longing heart of Hero much more joys
Than nymphs or shepherds when the timbrel rings,

Or crooked dolphin when the sailor sings; (II, 227-234)

Three of the eight lines quoted are enjambed, all of their enjambments suspended, twice by the forward anticipation of a rhyme--"he rested not," "at which celestial noise"--once by the rhyme's completion, though the sense runs on: "much more joys". Combined with the end-stops and the trochaic inversions ("Cast down", "Breathless"), these patterns expressively evoke Leander's fatigue and continued weary striving.

But for narrative and descriptive power, nothing in Hero and Leander can match a sequence of nearly unvaried decisive end-stops in lines with discrete phonetic coloration:

The town of Sestos called it Venus' glass;
There might you see the gods in sundry shapes,

Committing heady riots, incest, rapes;
 For know that underneath this radiant floor
 Was Danae's statue in a brazen tower;
 Jove slyly stealing from his sister's bed
 To dally with Idalian Ganymed,
 And for his love Europa bellowing loud,
 And tumbling with the rainbow in a cloud;
 Blood-quaffing Mars heaving the iron net
 Which limping Vulcan and his Cyclops set;
 Love kindling fire to burn such towns as Troy;
 Silvanus weeping for the lovely boy
 That now is turned into a cypress tree,
 Under whose shade the wood gods love to be.
 And in the midst a silver altar stood;
 There Hero sacrificing turtles' blood,
 Veiled to the ground, veiling her eyelids close,
 And modestly they opened as she rose;
 Thence flew love's arrow with the golden head,
 And thus Leander was enamored. (I, 142-162)

Against this nearly unvaried sequence of end-stops, variations within lines stand in bold relief: expressive trochees ("Blood-quaffing," "heaving"), internal phonetic repetitions ("To dally with Idalian"), and a climactic phonetic sequence in the penultimate line--affricates and sibilants flying while the line's vowel series is balanced ("Thence . . . head")--its tensions resolved by the crisp final line. The whole sequence admirably contains the modulation between exuberance and irony

around which the poem is made.

Having seen some similarities to Shakespeare in use of line-ending along with the differences partially attributable to the demands of a different form in one of Shakespeare's immediate antecedents, let us turn briefly to another, and a writer of sonnets. It has been recognized that Sidney's Astrophel and Stella (1591) is similar in metrical art to Shakespeare's sequence, that Shakespeare probably learned from Sidney's use of the tones of colloquial speech to express the mental states of his speaker (Wright 78), but that the moods Sidney expresses tend toward "greater agitation" (Wright 76).¹ In the following sonnet, Sidney's artful apostrophe and exclamatory lines exploit end-stopping more rigorously than Shakespeare does in the Sonnets, and more direct contrast between end-stopping and enjambment emerges:

With how sad steps, Oh Moon, thou climb'st the skies,
 How silently, and with how wan a face!
 What, may it be that even in heav'nly place
 That busy archer his sharp arrow tries?
 Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
 Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;
 I read it in thy looks: thy languished grace,
 To me that feel the like, thy state describes.

¹ See also 78. Wright includes a punctuation chart of Shakespeare's and Sidney's sequences, which indicates that "Sidney's work seems far more heavily punctuated, hence far more heavily emphatic, and Shakespeare's more smooth and gentle in its discourse" (76).

Then even of fellowship, Oh Moon, tell me,
 Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?
 Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
 Do they above love to be loved, and yet
 Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
 Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

Probably because of the tonal effects of Sidney's punctuation --the rises in pitch of the questions, the quizzical breathiness of the exclamation--certain line-endings are not (as I say and hear them) caught by their rhymes ("heav'nly place / That busy archer", "long-with-love-acquainted eyes / Can judge of love"). Decisive enjambment thus alternates with decisive end-stopping through lines 3-6 after two exclamatory end-stops. As the poem's litany of questions drives it towards its close, the polyptoton-filled and enjambed lines 12-13 again contrast with surrounding end-stopping, revealing a pattern of line-ending in sharp contrast with Shakespeare's loose flexibility.²

A similar decisive end-stopping is in Fulke Greville's marvelous and antithetically phrasal *Caelica* #87:

When as Mans life, the light of human lust,
 In socket of his earthly lanthorne burnes,
 That all this glory unto ashes must,
 And generation to corruption turnes;

² The fewer rhymes in Sidney's variation on the Petrarchan sonnet are a further contrasting element that contributes to the ringing end-stopping.

Then fond desires that onely feare their end,
 Doe vainely wish for life, but to amend.
 But when this life is from the body fled,
 To see it selfe in that eternall Glasse,
 Where time doth end, and thoughts accuse the dead,
 Where all to come, is one with all that was;
 Then living men aske how he left his breath,
 That while he lived never thought of death.

Sharp contrasts either divide lines ("Where all to come, is one with all that was"), with end-stopping concluding the balanced second phrase, or straddle two lines, with end-stopping exploited to enhance the emphasis.³ It is a striking use of end-stopping in spleen-filled verse, that is seen elsewhere in his works:

Oh wearisome Condition of Humanity!
 Borne under one Law, to another bound:
 Vainely begot, and yet forbidden vanity,
 Created sicke, commanded to be sound:
 What meaneth Nature by these diverse Lawes? ("Chorus
 Sacerdotum," 1-5)

While Marlowe, Sidney, and Fulke-Greville (at least in the examples here discussed) contrast in their use of decisive end-stops with Shakespeare's looseness, Milton is closer to

³ This multiplied antithesis sustained by end-stopping is seen in Shakespeare's Sonnet #66:

Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry,
 As to behold desert a beggar born,
 And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,
 And purest faith unhappily forsworne, (1-4)

Shakespeare in the looseness of his end-stopped lines, as seen in a few of his Sonnets:

How soon hath Time the suttle thief of youth,
 Stoln on his wing my three and twentieth yeer!
 My hasting dayes fly on with full career,
 But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
 Perhaps my semblance might deceave the truth
 That I to manhood am arriv'd so neer,
 And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
 That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.
 Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
 It shall be still in strictest measure eev'n
 To that same lot, however mean or high,
 Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heav'n;
 All is, if I have grace to use it so,
 As ever in my great task-maisters eye.

In contrast with the formality of the end-stops observed in the poems, particularly sonnets, of the earlier writers, here there is a pervasive looseness, a metrical and syntactic patterning matching what has been noted as a prime conceptual component of Milton's verse, its linear progression. And out of this looseness one enjambment (as I read it) pounces: "the truth / That I to manhood." Further, there is one ambiguous line-ending: line 10's "eev'n" can belong to that line or drive forward to line 11; indeed, it can probably do both.

Another sonnet might enable us to enlarge these observations, and observe in Milton many more changes in speed

than in Shakespeare--slowings down, accelerations, and bursts of enjambment:

When I consider how my light is spent,
 E're half my days in this dark world and wide,
 And that one Talent which is death to hide
 Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, least he returning chide,
 Doth God exact day labour, light deny'd,
 I fondly ask; but patience to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
 Either man's work or his own gifts, who best
 Bear his mild yolk, they serve him best, his State
 Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
 And post o're Land and Ocean without rest;
 They also serve who only stand and wait.

The variations are here on a larger scale than in Shakespeare's Sonnets. It may be that Milton has in these sonnets appropriated the example of Donne's breaking of the bounds of the verse line, and that this contributes to this poem's varied enjambments. A similar interplay between loose end-stops and enjambment is prominently featured in the opening of Paradise Lost:

Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
 Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast
 Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
 With loss of Eden, till one greater Man

Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing Heavenly Muse, (I, 1-6)

The pervasive forwardness of the verse permits large effects when after a series of loose end-stops and enjambments a decisive end-stop crashes:

Mean while upon the firm opacous Globe
Of this round World, whose first convex divides
The luminous inferior Orbs, enclos'd
From Chaos and th' inroad of Darkness old,
Satan alighted walks: (III, 417-22)

The lines build toward the penultimate one, then sudden pause, "Satan alighted walks." For the point to be made and the epic caesura to achieve its effect, the end-stop is large, and prepared for over several lines.

Some of these patterns come together to form new possibilities in two later sonneteers, Wordsworth and Keats. In Wordsworth there seems to be a preponderance of decisive end-stops, whether his mood is lyrical and descriptive, or polemical:

Earth has not anything to show more fair:

 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
 The river glideth at his own sweet will:
 Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
 And all that mighty heart is lying still! ("Composed

Upon Westminster Bridge," 1, 8, 11-14)

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,

.

The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:

Listen, the mighty Being is awake,

.

Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,

If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,

Thy nature is not therefore less divine:

Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;

And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,

God being with thee when we know it not. ("It Is a

Beauteous Evening," 1, 5-6, 9-14)

The world is too much with us; late and soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:

Little we see in Nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon; ("The World

Is Too Much with Us," 1-5)

I have, of course, omitted from the quotations the lines that exhibit some variation, to draw attention to what seems the dominant feature and to the energy that has gone into the sculpting of separate lines that come together as lists, or diverge as apostrophes or isolated descriptions connected only by the poem's thematic or affective tissues. When variation

emerges from this marked lineal separability, the effect does not always seem fortuitous, particularly when after decisive end-stops come marked mid-line caesuras:

Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
 A sight so touching in its majesty;
 This City now doth, like a garment, wear
 The beauty of the morning; silent, bare, ("Composed
 Upon," 2-5)

After the enjambment (outright or suspended) of the first line quoted, end-stopping is reasserted. The movement of the third line is impeded by the parenthesis it contains, and then the line is enjambed. The fourth line comes to a dead halt after three and a half feet, its ending further slowed by the comma separating the two adjectives; the proximity of the rhyme ("wear," "bare") grabs even more at the poem. While these combined retarding devices may usually be considered a marvelous evocation of the stillness and calm of morning over the city, for me, something is amiss. The poem is too slow! The rhyme is too close! One cannot add mid-line stops to end-stops in this abundance! A false note is struck. The same thing (for me) happens around Wordsworth's line-opening "Dear God" (in "Composed Upon") and "Dear Child" (in "It is a Beauteous Evening"). For example, at the end of this poem, after three decisive end-stops (lines 10-12), the next line's progress is impeded in its first foot ("Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;"). While marked caesuras seem easily to accord in Milton with loose end-stops and dramatic enjambment,

the combination in "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" and "It Is a Beauteous Evening" of marked caesuras and decisive end-stops is less happy. It is a question of taste, certainly; but also provides evidence of a different style and strategy of line-ending than in the other poets I have briefly examined.⁴ The third sonnet of Wordsworth from which I quoted above, "The World Is Too Much with Us," seems a more successful rhythmic production, because of the different way in which the pattern of decisive end-stops established in the first half of the octave evolves:

The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.--Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn. (6-14)

The greater syntactical fluidity loosens many of the end-stops

⁴ Harvey Gross speaks briefly of Wordsworth's "low-energy blank verse" (13). While I'm not sure that the lines Gross cites,

And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight. (Michael,
428- 430)

are particularly low in energy, in the sonnets to which I have referred, end-stop and caesura seem to create an anti-energetic rhythmic marriage.

(6, perhaps 10, 11, 12, 13). When a line comes crashing to a halt at a caesura ("It moves us not.--"), it is prepared for by an earlier succession of such loose end-stops. Rather than being composed of an uninflected slowness, the poem rhythmically creates different paces. The "Great God" here seems earned, more effective mid-line than in the other two sonnets when a similar apostrophe introduces lines, splendidly guttural in its alliteration, and in its context perhaps more expletive than apostrophe. Within the line the movement from pure vowels ("It moves us not")--three short, one sonorous--to diphthongs after the caesura ("Great God! I'd rather be) suspends the enjambment. The caesura one line later answers this enjambment, the separation of subject from verb and the parallel structure in lines 11-13 keep the end-stops loose, and the assonantal patterns in lines 13-14 give the poem's close a fully-vocalized rotundity (it could also be noted that the two lines' vowel sequences nearly correspond):

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;

Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

The presence in this sonnet of the rhetorical thrust muted in the two others contributes to these rhythmic swellings. The sonnet's restrictions and its brevity seem to require the strenuous unity that a fully-present argument gives. A five-beat line (a more conversational length) coupled with shortness in numbers of lines makes a more purely descriptive sonnet difficult to sustain, rhythmically if not thematically. "Westminster Bridge" and "Beauteous Evening" are, of course,

descriptive sonnets; the argument of the first is decidedly implicit, the second emerges only with the appearance of the child in the sestet.

Keats, whose sonnet "On the Sea" is influenced by "The World is Too Much With Us," maintains with greater ease Wordsworthian pensive-slowness and stately end-stop in flexible-bodied poems that modulate between description and argument, and not incidentally, that are rife with multiple and idiosyncratic mimetic and expressive effects. Sometimes the modulation is accomplished by an introductory and end-stopped brief encapsulation of the argument, before ranging description and loose end-stops and enjambments:

The poetry of earth is never dead: [end-stop]

When all the birds are faint with the hot sun, [loose e.s.]

And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run [enjambment]

From hedge to hedge . . .

.

The poetry of earth is ceasing never: [end-stop]

On a lone winter evening, when the frost [enjambment]

Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills [part.enj]

The Cricket's song, . . . ("On the Grasshopper and Cricket," 1-4, 9-12)

Or a similar movement from stately end-stop through loose end-stops and enjambments after an opening apostrophe:⁵

Bright Star, would I were stedfast as thou art--

⁵ A pattern seen less strictly in "To Sleep."

Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,
 Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
 The moving waters at their priestlike task
 Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
 Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
 Of snow upon the mountains and the moors-- ("Bright
 Star," 1-8)

After the opening end-stop, the rest of the first two quatrains are bound in a fluid unity; the sestet then re-asserts end-stopping.

In "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer," the octave consists of eight marching stately end-stops that loosen in the sestet once Keats has and expresses his vision.

And as example of his mimetic effectiveness in a largely descriptive sonnet, I will quote one further sonnet of Keats, "On the Sea," in its entirety, merely that attention be drawn to its varied evocative line-endings; suspended enjambments in the first-half of the octave, conversational or relaxed end-stops in the second-half corresponding to a different state of the sea, and decisive end-stops as the poem turns in the sestet to its emphatic argument:

It keeps eternal whisperings around
 Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
 Gluts twice ten thousand Caverns, till the spell
 Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
 Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,

That scarcely will the very smallest shell
 Be moved for days from where it sometime fell,
 When last the winds of Heaven were unbound.
 Oh ye! who have your eyeballs vexed and tir'd,
 Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
 Oh ye! whose ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,
 Or fed too much with cloying melody--
 Sit ye near some old Cavern's Mouth, and brood,
 Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired.

Many of the varied line-endings observed in sonnets from Sidney to Wordsworth come together in different sonnets of Keats, whose rich variations match his modulation between description and argument.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the study of variations in line-ending in other poetry would proceed from different assumptions and expectations, examining such things as the impact of the felt thump of trimeter and tetrameter on the line-ending. One further area for future study that I would like to explore here is the line-ending in some examples of free verse.

Ezra Pound sought to demystify prosodic theory in his celebrated "Treatise on Metre":

Most arts attain their effects by using a fixed element and a variable.

From the empiric angle: verse usually has some element roughly fixed and some other that varies, but which element is to be fixed and which vary, and to what

degree, is the affair of the author.

Some poets have chosen the bump, as the boundary.

Some have chosen to mark out their course with repetition of consonants; some with similar terminations of words. All this is a matter of detail. (201)

In metrical verse, the "roughly fixed" elements are the metrical pattern, and even the end-stopped line (I assume that this is Pound's "bump"), though each is fixed only "to some degree." Later writers on prosody, taking their cue from Pound and Eliot ("there is no freedom in art"),⁶ have identified some of what is fixed and of what varies in free verse. Paul Fussell discusses lack of metrical regularity and of rhyme, "typographical or orthographical" idiosyncrasies (77), and "the technique of enumeration or catalog" (78) as recurrent features in free verse, and concludes, "free verse lines, deprived of pattern in one dimension, the metrical, tend to compensate by employing another kind of pattern, conspicuous repetition of phrases or syntactical forms" (79). Given that most of Fussell's examples support the last generalization, syntactic and phrasal repetition, and that many of them are from Whitman, they exhibit a high incidence of decisive end-stopping:

The pure contralto sings in the organ loft,

.

The duck shooter walks by cautious and silent stretches,

⁶ T.S. Eliot, quoted from Fussell 76.

.

The connoisseur peers along the exhibition-gallery with
half-shut eyes bent sideways, ("Song of Myself,"
XV, 1, 6, 28; quoted in Fussell 79)

The intervening lines, which Fussell quotes only in part, are
all end-stopped with equal decisiveness. Fussell concludes as
follows:

The effect is that of public speaking. But if constant
enjambment takes place--that is, if the sense and syntax
of one line run on into the next line so that a hearer
would have trouble ascertaining the line breaks--we have
a very different kind of free verse, a kind we can
designate as meditative and ruminative or private.
(Fussell, 81)

Fussell's chief example of "constant enjambment," William
Carlos Williams's "This Is Just To Say," is curious. He notes
particularly "the way the title itself 'runs on' into the
opening" (Fussell, 81):

THIS IS JUST TO SAY

I have eaten

the plums

that were in

the icebox

and which

you were probably

saving

for breakfast

Forgive me

they were delicious

so sweet

and so cold

Are the lines really constantly enjambed? If so, which ones, and how? Read as constantly enjambed, they would be reduced to a bland prose: "I have eaten the plums that were in the icebox and which you were probably saving for breakfast. Forgive me; they were delicious, so sweet and so cold." Surely Williams's lineation is central, if not to what John Hollander has called "'the metrical contract'" established between poem and reader from its opening (quoted from Fussell, 15), then certainly to its rhythmic contract, that in the peculiar pause-filled enunciation of this apology and explanation some truth may be glimpsed. In keeping with this contract, the lines all seem end-stopped, decisively. The meditative and ruminative tones to the poem are, I think, a product of this decisiveness. In free verse, and especially that variety that Fussell identifies as meditative and ruminative, one element rarely varying, or admitting of less wide variability than in metrical verse, may be the line-ending. The rhythmic freedom that is achieved to some degree through the absence of metre is compensated for by a corresponding fixity to a great degree in the shades and tones of the line-ending.

Another instance of apparent enjambment that I think is really an expressive end-stopping (or enjambment with effect of end-stopping) is e.e. cummings's "[l(a)":

l(a

le

af

fa

ll

s)

one

l

iness

Clearly this is a poem that is nothing if not typographically idiosyncratic, and it could certainly not be comprehensible without the page, which is not however to say "off" the page. It offers a remarkable sonic experience through its lineal separation of parts of words as sounds, an effect dependent on its apparent enjambments being read as end-stopped. Its first line isolates the poem's unifying sound ("l"), and then the poem begins its textural journey, from a relatively high-pitched vowel ("a") through a series of progressive descents: the twice repeated vowel of "le / af", whose final affricate enacts the moment that the leaf detaches from the unnamed

tree's branch; enhancing the poem's sonic slow-motion effect, the sound is cinematically repeated at the beginning of the next line ("fa"), as if the moment were replayed from a different angle, perhaps a long-shot from above juxtaposed to the previous line's close-up; the low-pitched vowel of "fa" in separate stages dissolves through the consonants to suggest impact ("ll") and subsequent motionlessness ("s"). The poem's first diphthong "one" (OHn) perhaps enacts the poem's paradoxical evocation of the agony and ease of an ending; in immediate juxtaposition the "l" recalls the beginning. The final line re-enacts central moments in the poem: the moment before, through its "i" (in assonance with "le / af"); the revelation ("iness" alliterating with "one"); and the consummation ("iness" with the earlier "s"). In short, the poem's rhythmic progression--and its lineal and thematic insistence on the isolation of its separate rhythmic moments--suggests the different role of line-ending within free verse, and its perhaps more limited range of variation.

The distinctions between poets charted in this chapter indicate some of the future possibilities of line-ending study employing the distinctions developed most fully in relation to some of Shakespeare's Sonnets. Study of line-ending focuses the structure of the line in a way that prosodic study of the metrical frame alone perhaps does not. Prosodic study that focuses on line-endings suggests a new perspective for stylistic analysis.

At the same time, my perhaps outlandish analysis of

Cummings ties together and resolves the central concerns of the thesis. The poem offered me this sonic experience--shaped by a reading of its line-endings as end-stops--when I first read it. As I have acknowledged from the beginning of the thesis, no one reading is absolute: one person's performance probably cannot be and certainly need not be another's. Even the way in which one reader reads the same poem will vary with depth of acquaintance with the poem and the changing contexts of her readings. The line-endings, a primary element in the rhythm of poems, focus this individuality most closely, since they can only be appreciated when the poems are spoken and heard--when, that is to say, the poem is performed. This study may suggest a new conception of prosody, whereby the resolution of different readings is not sought, but instead the conflict between them is expressed and engaged. That my readings are mine and not in any way definitive I acknowledge throughout. They are offered as the first steps in a new dialogue about an under-emphasized rhythmic element--the line-ending.

Perhaps precisely because of the tendency in prosody towards an always elusive objective understanding of the metre and rhythm of verse, line-endings have received no focused critical attention. Line-endings have perhaps been slighted, since the requirement of variable and individual spoken engagement in order that their pause be felt (in interrelation with all other sonic constituents) directly challenges the assumption of certainty. Prosody needs to be more

conflictual: both recognizing and encouraging--not seeking to resolve--the tensions between different readings and between objective description of effects and impressionistic comments on their significance, and recognizing the limitations of unified theories of metre, or of other rhythmic elements, or of all rhythmic elements. Rhythm and its effects in poetry are best engaged and detailed case by case, since as was true when my Milton class read Paradise Lost aloud some years ago, there is never in prosodic analysis merely one text under discussion.

Even as "[l(a)]" returns us to the central argument of the thesis about line-endings and how study of them can bring about a shift in focus and aim in prosodic study, this poem of Cummings also resolves and concludes my argument with thematic criticism, and particularly those criticisms that are more or less sound blind. For of course, just as a prosodic approach will yield distinct readings--the creation of distinct poems and significance--from two or more readers, so too will different critical assumptions about sound and its role. While I have seen in this poem a beautiful sound experience, the poem can equally be seen to use no auditory feature at all, while for Barbara Everett Shakespeare's Sonnets can have no occasion but the page, and for Howard Felperin signified meaning can exist apart from signifiers. This poem can be understood as offering us the distinct pleasure of perceiving the metrical norm of two characters to a line of type, and William Carlos Williams's poem the metrical norm of three

syllables per line.

My argument is that criticism needs, not the privileging of "meaning" or "sound"--assigning sound merely a helping and not a relatively autonomous role in signification--but instead, like prosody, to be more conflictual--juxtaposing, modulating between, and tensely combining a concern for the meaning with an ear to the sound: a critic can function as prosodist, in Paul Fussell's words, upon "his first apprehension of the poem" (4), never ceasing to be prosodist as the rhythm and meaning are experienced, re-experienced, and mutually refined in discordant harmony.

In the main, this thesis is corrective: concentrating almost solely on the constitutive impact of rhythm. A larger and a necessary work would be needed to develop a model of the above-described comprehensive and conflictual criticism that I urge throughout. This comprehensiveness is not unattainable. For in "[l(a)]" several auditory and semantic features beyond those noted in my earlier analysis interrelate and interplay to make this poem perhaps just such a model of a new path for criticism.

The concern in "[l(a)]" with "loneliness" might lead us to see the poem as a meditation on unity, isolation, and singularity. We might notice that the first line could be sounded "la"--that is, the French feminine singular definite article--and that its masculine form immediately follows ("le"). The first character of the first line is also one way of typographically representing the number "one" (a lower case

"l") so that the first line could further signify "One a"--point or section number one, subpoint or subsection a. In addition to signifying the letter a, "a" could also be "a"--the English indefinite article. Taken together, the reading of the first two lines as the French singular "le" and "la," the first character as the number one, and the second as the English indefinite article might make us sense in these ambiguous and plural signs--each understandable as more than one signifier and signified--that "one" of something is being identified. The close of the poem furthers this idea: "one / l [either the letter l or 1] / iness. "Oneliness" to read the lines as one, or "onlyness" (a reading encouraged by the pronunciation of the vowel in "loneliness"): the condition of being only, or the state of being one. Or "one / [one] / iness" (see also the two lower case l's in line 5).

On the one hand, the poem is about isolation, loneliness, singularity, and unity. The extent to which one balances or expresses these ideas is highly variable, as are the entwined plural ways in which one reads the sounds and meanings not only of the poem's lines but even of its individual characters. Most broadly, the singular event that is the fall of a leaf may be the main subject of the poem, or the image through which the meditation on singularity is communicated. In my earlier reading of the poem, the singular event is revealed as a plurality of moments: from the detaching of the leaf to its falling, to impact and then to motionlessness. Singularity in another sense ("one," "l," "a," "le," "la") is

expressed in a plurality of ways, and each singular of the singularity is a plurality of sounds and meanings.

Cummings's reminder that a singular can be plural--and that neither that contradiction nor the contradiction between the separate strands of the plurality need be resolved--is an apt one for the ceaselessly singular and plural activity that is criticism.

CONCLUSION

The criticism outlined and advocated in Chapter One, exemplified in Chapters Two, Four, and Five, defended against theoretical problems and enlarged to include literature other than poems in Chapter Three, is not perhaps a criticism for everyone, satisfying to all critical tastes, at least as long as criticism is centred in the pursuit of meaning. I urge what I urge as a necessary critical procedure. I have not pushed it into a comprehensive criticism; of course, my analyses embrace such a criticism in their modulation between technical description of rhythm and impressionistic description of its semantic import. Particularly, I have not brought my analyses into sustained dialogue with other criticisms of the Sonnets except where they have problematized my approach and required the response developed in Chapters One and Three.

I have concerns about a movement from sound and rhythm to broader significance, because once effected, sound is bound to be devalued and made secondary. Within our particular context, criticism has for too long participated in what Susan Sontag calls "the revenge of the intellect upon the world" (7) for me to feel more sanguine about the prospects of a "sound" criticism.

And so this thesis rests as a preliminary study of a new way of looking at poetic rhythm (centred in the push and pull of line-endings) and as an argument with meaning-centred

contemporary criticisms.

The particular method of analysis explored here seems to me primarily useful as a way of accounting for rhythm in poetry that can suggest the continuities between various metrical and free verse forms rather than the discontinuities. However radically different various forms may be, they will share strategies of lineation and of line-ending.

If a few readers are even partially persuaded that reading is primarily--firstly and lastly--an experience and appreciation of rhythmic form, and that that experience can be the focus of a criticism instead of prior to it, then these lines end happily.

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