TOWARDS A THEORY OF PROSE

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: A critical analysis of several approaches to prose, and an attempt to construct a theory of prose as art, on which a language of prose criticism might be based.

PREFACE

English criticism, as we know it today, is without a clear idea of its own function. One result of this situation is the lack of a critical terminology for describing the basic forms of expression--poetry and prose. Poetic terms are so narrow and vague that they can hardly supply an adequate language for criticizing all types of poetry. The state of prose criticism is far worse. Although prose as a literary form has existed since the Anglo-Saxon period, there is no theory of prose as an artistic medium, nor any language to describe its technical nature. The only significant theories of prose advanced in recent years have attempted to transfer to prose the critical terminologies of the other arts, especially those of music and poetry. It is the purpose of this paper to establish the basis of a theory of prose as art, and, by so doing, to offer a foundation for a language of prose criticism. It does not pretend to offer a systematic, detailed account of prose art, but simply to suggest guidelines along which a full approach might be developed.

I wish here to express my gratitude to my husband and to friends for their critical suggestions and help in formulating my ideas. Most of all, I wish to thank Dr. Gordon Vichert, not only for his guidance in the writing of this paper, but also for his keen interest in the subject of prose and his encouragement to

investigate a topic which is virtually untouched.

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INTRODUCTION

The history of prose criticism has been restricted to two fundamental approaches, prescriptive and descriptive. From Aristotle to the mid-Nineteenth Century the study of prose was dominated by an inductive, prescriptive approach, which attempted to confirm a general, unverifiable hypothesis by citing specific examples. The principles of rhetoric, formulated by Aristotle and observed by English oratorical prose until the Seventeenth Century, did not analyze written prose; they simply dictated the proper method of composition. This assertion of principles presupposed the existence of a single "correct" style. If it persuaded the audience, style was "correct". Thus, Aristotle's discussion of metaphor, simile, rhythm, cadence and all other figures of speech was restricted to teaching their proper uses. Typical of this prescriptive approach was the following law of prose:

> It is clear therefore that successful composition will have an air of novelty without betraying its art and a character of lucidity, and these, ...are the virtues of rhetorical speech.[1]

In opposition to rhetorical theory there arose a "scientific" concept of prose in Seventeenth-Century England. This approach attempted to replace the elaborate rhetoric of earlier prose with

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[1] Lane Cooper, Theories of Style, (New York: MacMillan Co., 1930), p. 58.

a clear and naked style approaching mathematical plainness.[2] However, because this theory laid down a criterion for good prose and rejected all that did not comply with it, because it prescribed a certain manner of writing as "right" and any other method as "wrong", and because it rejected rhetoric, not on the basis of its unsuitableness to scientific themes, but on the basis of its "immorality", this approach was essentially prescriptive. Like classical philosophy, it rejected analysis in favour of theory.

Non-prescriptive approaches to prose have been either mechanical, based on evidence produced by machines, or sensory, based on aural perceptions. Psychologists first attempted to discuss language in non-prescriptive terms about the year 1870. Concerned chiefly with perceptual grouping, psychological studies were confined to that aspect of prose which most clearly revealed the tendency of the human mind to coordinate similar events. This aspect psychologists termed "prose rhythm". To this single quality most literary and psychological approaches to prose style have since been restricted.

The experimental, mechanical nature of the psychological approach, the analysis of voice records, photographs and phonographs, encouraged emphasis on spoken prose. Thus, elements such as pitch, tone, duration, stress, length of breath pauses and the rate of breathing and speaking, gradually came to embody the entire concept

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[2]Thomas Sprat, History of the Royal Society, ed. Jackson I. Cope and H. Jones, (St. Louis: Washington University Studies, 1959), p. 113.

of rhythm, although on the written page such qualities are often negligible. This restriction of the investigation of prose to sound rhythm has considerably altered the development of prose criticism. None of the succeeding approaches, whether sensory, like those of Saintsbury,[3] Lipsky,[4] Tempest,[5] and Clark,[6] or mechanical, like that of Griffith,[7] or whether based on stress, duration or pitch, has proceeded beyond the examination of sound rhythm.[8]

The fallacy of examining only the aural aspect of prose has produced two serious errors: the confusion of prose and poetry, and the equation of words with sounds. A theory which fails to distinguish between two media as different as prose and poetry can hardly provide a valid criterion for approaching prose. Why is this? Spoken prose and spoken poetry are often indistinguishable. If the difference cannot be heard, how, then, can poetic and prose

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[3]George Saintsbury, The History of English Prose Rhythm, (2nd ed.; London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1922).

[4]Abram Lipsky, Rhythm as a Distinguishing Characteristic of Prose Style, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1907).

[5]Norton R. Tempest, The Rhythm of English Prose, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1930).

[6]Albert C. Clark, Prose Rhythms in English, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913).

[7]Helen Griffith, Time Patterns in Prose, (Princeton: Psychological Review Co., 1929).

[8]Paull F. Baum, in ...the other harmony of prose..., (Duke University: Duke University Press, 1952), considers "thought rhythm" as well as "sound rhythm" a major constituent of prose rhythm.

rhythms be differentiated? This lack of distinction invites an approach to prose based simply on the application of concepts of poetic rhythm. Consideration of prose rhythm in poetic terms has resulted in an emphasis on certain oratorical types of prose, which combine poetic effects with a prose sentence structure. On the basis of this single type, several theorists have defined as prose rhythm the repetition of similar stress groups and recurrent cadences; however, stress patterns alone can never constitute rhythm. For, while poetic structure is frequently dictated by a rigid stress system, it is the structure of the sentence pattern alone which determines the organization of prose. Stresses in prose, therefore, represent only its acoustic aspect.

Because psychologists made little distinction between poetic and prose rhythms, and because poetic rhythm arises largely from recurrent stress patterns, the psychological definition of prose rhythm has usually occurred in terms of repetition. The word "rhythm", in fact, has never broken its connection with music and poetry; it still implies recurrence. This attempt to apply a theory of recurrent patterns to prose has encouraged a conception of prose rhythm as balance, syncopation, "swing", and repetition of "beats". Almost all of the psychological and literary theories of rhythm, including those of Lipsky, Griffith, Tempest, Baum, Clark, and Classe,[9] were based on this theory of recurrence.

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[9] André Classe, The Rhythm of English Prose, (Oxford: Kemp Hall Press Ltd., 1939).

Moreover, psychologists' reliance on mechanically produced sounds--hammer strokes, finger taps, and telephone clicks--encouraged a strong inclination among literary critics to consider prose as repeated sounds rather than organized words. Restricted by the concept of prose as sound, and limited by scientific methods of investigation, the study of prose could not emerge from a primitive stage nor establish itself on an aesthetic basis.

Since the psychological approach restricted analysis to the observer's reactions to prose rhythm, it cannot offer a valid critical method. However, psychologists' attacks on the vagueness of literary methods, their demands for clear, verifiable data which could be produced only by machines and by classification of scientific observations, have led many literary critics into the fallacy of supposing that nothing can be said about literature unless proven by graphs or statistics. But how can a theorist, on the evidence of graphs and statistics, evaluate the effectiveness of certain types of prose, judge the qualities of a particular piece of prose, or appreciate prose as a work of art? To rely on mechanical measurements, therefore, is to reject aesthetic judgment. Just as a painting cannot be appreciated by analyzing samples of the paint used, nor by measuring the proportions of the objects painted on the canvas, neither can prose be validly criticized unless the aesthetic judgment is exercised.

Thus, the basic flaw of both mechanical and sensory approaches lies in their failure to consider language aesthetically. Attempting

to "describe" prose, they are, nevertheless, "prescriptive". This is not a contradiction of terms. For, although neither approach simply dictates what prose "ought" to be, each attempts to lay down an absolute "law" of prose. To discover one factor which will explain all types of prose structure is the aim of all significant approaches dealing with prose rhythm. By limiting the cause of rhythmic effects to a single "right" element, either to stress, to time relations, or to pitch, and by limiting the approach to a single "right" method, either mechanical or sensory, each approach attempts to interpret all prose literature. Their "descriptions" of prose, therefore, consist only of applications of this one, hypothetical "law" to individual samples of prose.

Psychologists, for example, began with the theory that the human mind coordinates similar elements; based on this presupposition, the definition of rhythm was necessarily restricted to the repetition of similar groups. Likewise, theories which explained rhythm as variety and recurrence, those of Saintsbury, Tempest, Clark, Lipsky, and Classe, derive from a classical concept. In Aristotle's Rhetoric their thesis originated:

> That composition which is entirely devoid of rhythm is indefinite. The indefinite or unlimited is displeasing and cannot be known. It ought to be limited only not by metre like verse. So soon as a definite measure is caught the ear waits for its return.[10]

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[10]Abram Lipsky, Rhythm as a Distinguishing Characteristic of Prose Style, p. 2.

In all of the attempts which have been made to discuss prose rhythm, whether experimental or literary, it is this limiting of the investigation to one method or to one aspect of prose which has prevented the development of a valid approach to prose rhythm. Therefore, the first section of this paper will attempt a critical analysis of these approaches, disclosing the fallacies of their presuppositions, the faults of their methods, and the inconsistencies of their theories, which have hindered this development. Discovery of the weaknesses of individual prescriptive approaches, it is hoped, will lay the foundations for a descriptive approach to prose.

I

MECHANICAL AND SENSORY APPROACHES

In 1893, the American psychologist, Bolton, initiated a study of rhythm intended to explore psychologically a question which, until that time, had belonged strictly to the literary field. He attempted to "push the lines of exact science a little farther forward into a field that borders more closely on the field of aesthetics than any other that experimental psychologists have tried."[1] Although the subject was an aesthetic one, Bolton approached it from a scientific direction. In fact, Bolton formulated the original "universal" concept of rhythm, and made the only attempt to relate rhythm to ordinary human and cosmic activity. "To regard rhythm as the manifestation or the form of the most fundamental activities of mind seems a clearer view and to offer less difficulties than to regard it as an ultimate fact in itself."[2] In order to define rhythm according to this hypothesis, it was necessary to discover why the mind experienced pleasure in the rhythmic flow of words and sounds. Bolton's experimentation, therefore, did not focus on the actual rhythmic qualities of

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[1]Thaddeus L. Bolton, "Rhythm", The American Journal of Psychology, VI (1893), 146.

[2]Ibid., 146.

sounds and words; it investigated the mind's reaction to them. It is this subjectively-oriented theory which stimulated most psychological experimentation concerning rhythm between 1890 and 1930, and, to a great extent, influenced many so-called literary studies of rhythm.

In order to account for the mind's experience of rhythm, Bolton drew evidence from natural and physiological cycles. He maintained the impossibility of continuous motion and continuous rest in the cosmos. Light alternated with darkness, winter with summer, cold with heat, growth with decay. The human body underwent a regular alternation of periods of activity and repose, or of lesser activity. Since the mind belonged to this cycle, it too had to follow the basic pattern typified by the rhythmical bodily activities--pulse, respiration, walking and speech.

From this postulation of the mind's rhythmical character arose Bolton's theory of Attention and Periodicity. According to this principle, the mind could not concentrate on one object for more than a few seconds, but vacillated from one object to another in a wave-like motion. How, then, asked Bolton, could the attention span of the mind become so enlarged as to comprehend a massive work such as *Paradise Lost*? In order to synchronize the entire structure of the poem, the mind had to be able to coordinate and subordinate some elements to others according to their time relations, intensities and aesthetic forms, and, from these several, separate elements, create a unity.

To investigate how the mind reacted to a series of simple,

auditory impressions, identical in intensity, pitch, quality and time interval, Bolton organized an experiment in which twenty-nine subjects attempted to determine whether a series of telephone clicks showed equality in time or intensity, or any signs of grouping. Immediately he noted a discrepancy between the sounds which were actually played and those which the subjects heard. Most of the subjects, in fact, grouped all sounds into series of fours. This formation of groups, Bolton deduced, occurred because the length of one group corresponded to the normal period of a wave of attention and because the mind unified all impressions within the temporal period of a wave. Uniform impressions appeared different from one another, therefore, because the mind forced fictitious values on them.

To determine further how sound properties affected the formation of rhythmical groups, Bolton performed several experiments in which regular variations in intensity and time-intervals occurred separately and together. The conclusions reached from these experiments formed the basis of the psychologists' definition of rhythm. Bolton discovered that, in any series of sounds, a regularly recurrent impression which differed from the other sounds subordinated the other impressions to it, so that the groups formed consisting of one dominant and one or more subordinate impressions. What Bolton actually demonstrated was that the human mind made no distinction between rhythmical or unrhythmical material; it grouped all impressions into rhythmical patterns. Rhythm, according

to Bolton, therefore, consisted of "a series of groups of sounds."[3] It is this theory, that rhythm depends on groups and on sounds, that directed the course of investigations of rhythm in prose and poetry from Bolton's period to the present.

Bolton's explanation of the mind's rhythmic experience originated with his observation that most of the subjects accompanied the sounds with muscular movements, such as beating time with the foot, nodding the head or tapping the finger. When asked to restrain all movements, they experienced obvious difficulty in maintaining rhythmical grouping. These movements, Bolton claimed, were the conditions, not the results, of rhythmical grouping. This theory of Kinaesthesis or motor action formed the fundamental principle of leading psychological concepts of rhythm, including those of Meumann, MacDougall, Wundt, Miner, Patterson, and Ruchmich. Ribot explained the theory: "Every mental state is accompanied by manifestations which are physically determined."[4] The Kinaesthesis theory restricted the psychological approach to one line of inquiry. In disregarding the possibility of an objectively existing rhythm, psychologists narrowed the scope of their investigations to the relationship between the subject's consciousness and his conditioned environment. But how did such a subjective concept become related to prose literature? The connection occurred eventually, it seems,

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[3] Ibid., 158.

[4] T. Ribot, "Psychologie de l'Attention", in C. A. Ruchmich, "Role of Kinaesthesis in the Perception of Rhythm", American Journal Of Psychology, XXIV (1913), 312.

because psychologists attempted to apply their abstract principles to objective language.

The most significant of the early applications of psychological theory to prose was made by William Patterson in _The Rhythm of Prose_. Patterson's study focused, not on the nature of rhythm, but on individual differences in the rhythmic experience of prose. According to Patterson, only one type of individual could experience rhythm fully; only the "aggressively rhythmic timer"[5] was capable of organizing any irregular series of sounds into a regular pattern. Because he believed that the timer's experience was more comprehensive, more definite, and more intelligible than that of the "stresser", especially with regard to irregular series of sounds, he considered the description of a timer's experience the most advisable approach to a definition of rhythm. When syllables of five passages from Pater, Henry James, Chopin, a haphazard arrangement of words, and one of musical notes, tapped out by one subject on a record, were played to twelve observers, only one of them pronounced all of the passages musical. This was the "aggressively rhythmic timer". His reaction, Patterson explained, resulted from syncopation. According to the theory of syncopation, the mind contained a subjective time-unit, sometimes affected by the heart-beat, but generally corresponding to the average walking step—a little over .7 seconds. The impression

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[5]W. M. Patterson, _The Rhythm of Prose_, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), p. 84.

received by the mind when auditory sensations combined with subjective time-units resembled a melody and its accompaniment. Patterson quoted the following sentence from Pater to demonstrate syncopation of regular word accents with the beats produced by the subjective time-unit:

> It is the landscape, not of dreams or of fancy, but of
> *   *   *   *
> places far withdrawn and hours selected from a thousand
> *   *   *   *
> with a miracle of finesse.[6]
> *   *

On this theory Patterson proposed to base the distinction between prose and poetry. In the coordination of the accented syllables of the text with the subjective time-unit, the experience of prose rhythm depended on the predominance of syncopation over coincidence. If syncopation predominated, the material was prose; if coincidence, the material was poetry.

Patterson's theory of rhythm presupposed that human perception of exact degrees of stress and precise intervals of time was hopelessly inaccurate. By supporting the psychologists' definition of rhythm as movements repeated at apparently equal intervals, it maintained that man's impression of time relations, not their objective values, were significant. This theory, however, denied the possibility of objective analysis. Rhythm existed only

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[6] *Ibid.*, p. 69. (Asterisks mark the places accented by the subjective time-unit; these should be heard against the ordinary word stresses. Subsequent quotations used for the purpose of analysis will be double-spaced in order to ensure maximum clarity.)

in the observer's patterns of tension and relaxation; only in a transferred sense, as a stimulus, did it exist on the printed page. "Prose rhythm", Patterson explained, "must always be classed as subjective organization of irregular, virtually haphazard, arrangements of sounds."[7] To describe prose as irregular is to assume that rhythm involves the recurrence of certain patterns. Similarly, the theory of poetic regularity assumes the existence in poetry of similar intervals between words. When Patterson describes prose as irregular he actually means that the syllabic intervals of ordinary prose, mathematically, form a haphazard series. But how, one might ask, can the intervals between words be measured mathematically when all measurement is based on individual readings which differ widely in timing and the placing of pauses?

Patterson himself admitted a serious disadvantage of his approach: "Rhythmic experience is so complex and individuals differ so largely in the enjoyment of it, that a new phrasing of its meaning would be necessary for each person."[8] The critic might add that, if only one person out of twelve could organize all of the passages into a rhythmical pattern, then eleven of the twelve were incapable of a satisfactory rhythmic experience. Furthermore, what value lies in organizing irregular groups of words into musical tunes without the possibility of distinguishing actual rhythmic patterns? Perhaps the

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[7] Ibid., p. xxii.

[8] Ibid., p. 88.

most serious flaw in Patterson's method, however, is his substitution of drumbeats for words. Observers attempted to organize a series of drumbeats which represented an individual's interpretation of five separate passages. They did not examine prose, therefore; they merely heard a series of sounds. Because these sounds represented only one set of impressions, the observers heard only that particular interpretation, not the original passages. Thus, Patterson's theory cannot provide a valid criterion of prose rhythm, mainly because it cannot go beyond the individual's impressions.

Following the most active period of experimentation arose two basic reactions to the psychological approach. The "sensory" approach attempted to turn attention not only from the evidence of the machine to the impressions of the human ear, but also from the human consciousness to the actual written text. Even those theories which retained a mechanical approach insisted on the rejection of subjectivity in favour of an objective examination of language. However, at the basis of most non-psychological theories existed two concepts derived immediately from the psychological approach: the dependence of rhythm on the time relations between stress accents, and the isolation of sound as the major quality of rhythm. This emphasis on time and sound in theories which rejected the psychologists' hypothesis of subjective organization encouraged attempts to measure, by ear and mechanically, the quality of duration.

The research of E. A. Sonnenschein indicates the earliest

stages of the "timers'" approach. Without discounting experimentation, he believed that rhythm could best be studied by the aural examination of relative durations. He maintained that stress and pitch were not basic elements of rhythm and could be removed from a sequence of sounds without destroying the rhythm. Sonnenschein's approach foreshadowed later theories of rhythm based entirely on time factors, and his definition of rhythm anticipated those non-psychological theories which restricted rhythm to the element of time:

> Rhythm is that property of a sequence of events in time which produces on the mind of the observer the impression of proportion between the durations of the several events or groups of events of which the sequence is composed.[9]

Later developments of the "time" theory carried to an extreme the concept of proportionate durations. In fact, the popular theory of Isochronism maintained the existence of equal intervals between accented syllables. André Classe's The Rhythm of English Prose presented the most thorough study of isochronism in prose: "*A priori*, one is led to believe that an observer will experience a feeling of rhythm in speech when successive portions of a sentence have particular durations."[10] Based on the idea that two successive stresses limited every syllable, Classe's study examined the relative lengths of time-intervals between accents under varying circumstances. Equal

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[9]E. A. Sonnenschein, What is Rhythm?, (London: Basil Blackwell, 1925), p. 16.

[10]André Classe, The Rhythm of English Prose, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Mott Ltd., 1939), p. 2.

intervals indicated isochronous prose. The following sentence is divided according to the exact time intervals between two stress accents:[11]

I will / lift up mine / eyes unto the / hills, from / whence
.93 sec. .90 1.15
cometh my / help. My help / cometh from the / Lord, which
1.05 2.24 1.16 1.67
made / Heaven and / Earth.
.94

Marked discrepancy among the figures proved to Classe the impossibility of perfect isochronous prose. Despite the absence of isochronism in prose which Classe termed "ordinary", he maintained its existence in more rhythmic types consisting of word groups with similar numbers of syllables in similar phonetic structures, and parallel grammatical structures with similar connections between the groups. However, one must realize that prose in which word groups were so constant as to create equal durations between accents for any length of time could hardly avoid falling into a monotonous jingle. It seems impossible, therefore, to accept the theory of isochronism in ordinary or rhythmic prose.

Classe's theory postulates a non-random distribution of stresses, determined by certain, discoverable, natural laws or tendencies. The vague generalizations concluding his investigation, however, offer no indication as to the nature of these tendencies, but maintain only that the length of a component syllable must vary within wide limits according to the character of the context, and, secondly,

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[11] Ibid., p. 53.

that short groups occur more frequently in English prose than long ones. Classe's own statement reveals most clearly the inadequacy of his approach: "It is admitted that research of this kind will not give a recipe for writing rhythmical prose or musical verse; it will not even help to recognize and appreciate them."[12] Furthermore, Classe's approach ignores the basic distinction between different kinds of rhythm. Having entitled his book The Rhythm of English Prose, Classe conducted his first experiment on poetry, "as allowing a freer feeling of rhythm".[13] It is not difficult to evaluate the validity of this approach. Since reliance on the criterion of isochronism as the basis of rhythm allows this easy interchange between such rhythmically different forms as prose and poetry, the theory must be rejected.

The equation of poetry and prose, characteristic of all of the previously examined approaches, resulted from a failure to realize the existence of more than one type of rhythm. The first awareness of the problem shown by the "timers" appeared in Helen Griffith's Time Patterns in Prose. It attempted to investigate and categorize fundamental rhythmic types of prose and to distinguish characteristic prose rhythm from poetic rhythm. The greatest value of this study was its willingness to consider prose as literary material, rather than as a combination of sound patterns, although

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[13] Ibid., p. 24.

it continued to use a mechanical approach.

The weakness of earlier methods, claimed Miss Griffith, lay in the use of apparatus which could accurately record sound but not language. Serious disadvantages resulted from Bolton's phonograph method because changes in speed at which the record was manufactured distorted the facts of speech and created pauses where none existed. Likewise, Patterson's photographing of sound waves could not indicate what occurred during the absence of the speaker's voice. Intervals might be filled by voiceless consonants or simply by pauses. She cautioned further against the assumption that conclusions reached for simple impressions, such as the ticking of an electric key, hammer strokes, flashes of light, and musical notes, could be transferred without qualification to language. Therefore, she rejected those approaches which reduced language to sound or studied prose as the result of individual differences in rhythmic experiences of sound. It is this distinction between words and sounds which directed Miss Griffith's approach and allowed her to discuss language in a way which previous time theories had neglected.

In order to insure the closest resemblance between words and sounds, several individuals read selected passages of prose. Vibrations begun by the tones of nine readers were recorded on a band of smoked paper revolving around two drums of a kymograph, so that five lines were traced: the mouth and nose tone line, the line of breath pressure from the mouth and nose, and the line indicating the reader's gestures of emphasis. According to Miss Griffith, observation of the regular and irregular patterns recorded by these lines would

reveal all movements of the reader's speech organs. And since time entered prose in the duration of sounds, in pause and in the varying rate of speech, examination of each of these factors in relation to the patterns recorded by the kymograph would disclose how time factors influenced the development of different prose types.

All of the experiments investigated the kind of distinctions possible between three different types of prose, attempting to establish a particular set of characteristics for each. The "spaced" prose of Donne, Bacon, and Raleigh was chosen as representing balance typical of oratorical prose, and the "fluid" prose of Pater and Ruskin, as conveying a greater sense of movement than of balance. "Non-rhythmic" prose and nonsense syllables, composed of separate syllables from the preceding passages, provided a standard for estimating contractions and expansions of the syllables of fluid and spaced prose. Blank verse offered a criterion of poetic rhythm to which prose rhythm could be compared. Such an approach anticipated modern computer methods of analyzing style by counting recurrent features.

To examine the basic nature of pause, a preliminary experiment was performed. In six different recordings of five passages of fluid prose, the number of breath pauses out of the total number of pauses made by each reader was calculated. The percentage of pauses used for breathing ranged from 36.1% to 93.7%. No reader, Miss Griffith concluded, breathed at even approximately equal intervals; therefore, the number of pauses was not determined by the frequency of breathing. Long pauses occurred simply because

the text demanded them, not because time was needed for breathing. By showing that the reader adjusted to the text, rather than the text conforming to his physiological habits, Miss Griffith disproved the psychological interpretation of rhythm. Experimentally, she refuted the Kinaesthetic theory. With the refutation of subjectivity, Miss Griffith believed that experiments could be continued on a purely objective basis.

Her examination of the percentage of pauses in the three types of prose and blank verse revealed a striking similarity between spaced prose and blank verse. Both contained approximately 19% pauses—almost one-fifth of the total speaking time. Fluid prose, on the other hand, with approximately 14% pauses, showed a greater similarity to non-rhythmic prose, with about 11%, than to spaced prose. Pause, therefore, differed markedly for different kinds of prose and provided a criterion for distinguishing between these types.

What, then, asked Miss Griffith, determined the distribution of pauses? To discover why readers paused more frequently for some types of prose than for others, the following experiment was performed. English students were asked to distinguish between poetry and prose when both were printed as prose, and, as a result, blank verse with regular form but prosaic subject matter was judged by the majority to be prose. From this and similar experiments, Miss Griffith concluded that, for most readers, printed form and subject matter determined the manner of reading. In non-rhythmic prose, with its direct word order, minimal pause and numerous restrictive clauses and phrases, subject matter determined a rapid

reading; in fluid prose, a more flexible structure as well as subject matter allowed greater range in the number of pauses. Because the comparatively short phrases of spaced prose were balanced against one another, the structure determined a higher percentage of pause and a slower reading. Spaced and fluid prose, therefore, formed opposite rhythmic types, the one characterized by balance and the other by progression.

From the discussion of pause Miss Griffith raised the question of sound units. Groups of words set off by pause, sound units established the larger movement of prose. The rhythmical nature of this movement depended on syllabic content and the length of component sound units. The following tables, which recorded the frequency of these two features, indicate the type of result offered by Miss Griffith's method.[14]

Syllabic Content and Length of Sound Units

Syllabic Content

Material	Number of Sound Units	Average No. syllables per sound unit	Range in No. syllables per sound unit	Span of range
Non-rhythmic prose..	65	12.61 +	3-40	37
Fluid Prose.........	752	9.68 -	1-34	33
Spaced Prose........	185	7.42	1-23	22
Blank Verse.........	168	6.3	1-21	20

[14] Helen Griffith, Time Patterns in Prose, p. 39.

Length

Material	Average time of Sound Unit	Range in time of Sound Unit	Span of Range	Median	Mode
Non-rhythmic Prose...	12.96-	.3 -37.5	34.5	11.35	None
Fluid Prose.........	11.37-	.65-43.3	42.65	9.62	9.4
Spaced Prose........	9.1 -	.9 -25.68	24.78	8.4	6.6
Blank Verse.........	9.5	2.1-26.5	24.4	8.95	7.95

Examination of these figures, she concluded, reaffirmed the close relationship between blank verse and spaced prose, and between fluid and non-rhythmic prose. Fluid and non-rhythmic prose units were longer than those of spaced prose and blank verse. 53.73% of the sound units of non-rhythmic prose contained from two to ten syllables, fluid prose contained 57.97%, spaced prose, 78.38%, and blank verse, 93.21%. Although only 57% of fluid prose units exhibited groups of two to ten syllables, 87.5% of the groups ranged from two to sixteen syllables. Furthermore, the irregularity of non-rhythmic prose was confirmed by the larger number of syllables in its average sound unit, the greater range in the number of syllables, the greater speed at which its sound units were spoken, and the absence of any frequently recurring length. The gradual increase of syllabic lengths from blank verse to non-rhythmic prose offered Miss Griffith a distinction between poetic and prose rhythm: prose contained more longer units than poetry. As, far as length and syllabic content were concerned,

the difference between spaced prose, fluid prose and blank verse was based on degree rather than type.

Further experiments revealed that prose, as opposed to poetry, preferred sound units with an odd number of syllables. Rhythmic prose exhibited a high percentage (20.06%) of five and seven syllable groups. Fluid and spaced prose, moreover, favoured the recurrence of similar syllable groups. For example, readers of a passage by Walter Pater discovered that often four of the eight sound units were composed of groups of eight syllables each. For one reader, they were grouped 6, 12, 5, 5, 8, 8, 8, and for another 2, 4, 12, 10, 8, 8, 8, 8.[15]

Miss Griffith concluded that, in sound units with varying lengths and equal numbers of syllables, "...this playing of numbers against time may very possibly be one of the elements (unanalyzed) that enter into our appreciation of the rhythm of the passage."[16]

The remainder of the study concentrated on fluid prose. As signs of its particular composition, a number of characteristics were postulated. Because of its recurring syllabic groups, its regular, stable, yet widely-ranging sound units and pauses, fluid prose differed from non-rhythmic prose. In fact, the pauses of fluid prose were as uniformly arranged as those of blank verse, for, in groups containing up to twenty syllables, the length of the sound unit and of the succeeding pause maintained a regular relation to the number of syllables in them. On the other hand, because fluid prose

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[15] Ibid., p. 44.

[16] Ibid., p. 45.

exhibited greater variety in the length and placing of pauses, its rhythmic time pattern depended less on duration than on changes in rate.

Miss Griffith's investigation of the role of rate in the rhythm of fluid prose involved this question: How did the greater variety in the length and content of sound units and in the length of pause affect the movement of the prose? Or, how did changes from one sound unit to the next, in syllable number, length and rate, give the sentence its propulsive force? To discover the number of syllables in various sound units, the following sentence by Pater was divided:

> In the windless weather (4) 1.22† all seemed to be listening to the roar of the immemorial waterfall, (9) 2.35 plunging down so unassociably among these human habitations, (9) 2.72 † and with a motion so unchanging from age (5) .39 to age (2) 1.92† as to count, (8) 1.88† even in this time worn place, (9) 2.05† as an image of unalterable rest.[17]

The number of syllables in each unit was:

> 25 / 19 / 11 / 5 / 7 / 11.[18]

Changes in the number of syllables, successive lengths of sound units or successive lengths of syllables within sound units formed a pattern of gradation ranging from long to short; this pattern caused one to read faster, then slower, faster, then slower. "These changes",

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[17] Ibid., p. 29. (Numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of records in which readers paused, the total number of records used being nine; beside this is the average length in seconds of all pauses made at that point.)

[18] Ibid., p. 61.

explained Miss Griffith, "start a progression that carries us along with it; we feel that something is impending; we recognize it when it comes, or miss it when it fails to come."[19]

Miss Griffith's concluding comments on quantity cast serious doubt on those approaches to prose based on scansion and cadence. It is a common observation, she agreed, that short final sound units ended a sentence slowly, while long final sound units, by increasing the rate of speech, ended it rapidly. But, she argued, qualities of "long" and "short" were relative to the average length of the sound units composing the sentence. For example, two sentences each concluded with an eleven syllable sound unit. One was read in 1.84 seconds, and the other in .96 seconds. This discrepancy occurred because the eleven syllable group of the first sentence followed twenty-two and eighteen syllable groups, so that the rate of speech was retarded by the sudden decrease of syllables. The eleven syllable group of the second passage, however, followed five and seven syllable groups, so that the rate was increased by the sudden increase in the number of syllables. Those who assigned static values to syllables failed to understand that rhythm did not arise from absolute length, time or number. It resulted from the structural relations of these elements. Rate was determined, therefore, not by the number of syllables in the sound unit, but by the relation of the sound unit to the complete sentence. On this basis, Miss Griffith concluded, pleasure received from the rhythmical experience resulted from the

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[19]*Ibid.*, p. 57.

accelerations and retardations of speech.

The word "rhythm" implied by this theory meant "an immediately perceived pattern":[20]

> A sense of rhythm comes from a succession of such patterns. The patterns need not be identical with one another. If there is something about the second that suggests the first, and something about the third that suggests the second, and so on, we are satisfied.[21]

This definition suggests why simple essay prose has been considered throughout the study as non-rhythmical, for Miss Griffith's theory recognizes only two types of rhythm—recurrent pattern and movement. Although both types were found occurring in spaced and fluid prose, recurrence dominated the first and movement, the second. But essay prose exhibited neither of these qualities.

Against Miss Griffith's experimental approach, several serious criticisms may be advanced. Although the study of voice records, the basis of all conclusions, claims to be an entirely objective method of measuring the physical "facts" of a given passage, it is necessary to recognize two disadvantages of this method. Voice records deal with speech, not with written texts. Therefore, results obtained from voice records apply only to speech rhythm. And since all individuals read at different rates, the objectivity of such an approach is seriously marred. Furthermore, Miss Griffith's approach deals only with the time element of speech. Other important factors of prose rhythm—pitch, stress, and intensity—which are essential to a complete

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[20] Ibid., p. 14.

[21] Ibid., p. 14.

understanding of sound rhythm, are disregarded in favour of a full treatment of time relations.

A philosophical criticism concerning the nature of time should also be considered. What correspondence exists between actual time, measured in seconds, and the length of the lines marked by vibrations from a voice record, which supposedly represent time durations? There is no reason for equating a certain length with a certain amount of time, for time cannot be drawn on the page. Furthermore, measurement of duration in fifths of a second or in numbers such as 25.68 seconds are impractical. To differentiate between two types of prose on the basis that the reading of one takes a fifth of a second, or even a second, longer than the other, is to set up a criterion which cannot be verified without the use of machines. If two rhythms are so similar that they can be distinguished only by fifths of a second, the difference between them is unimportant. Nor does this difference constitute a valid criterion for devising a theory of rhythmical types. Despite Miss Griffith's attempt to consider rhythm as a stylistic quality rather than as a physiologically produced reaction to stimuli or as a collection of sound patterns, her mechanical approach nullifies the value of much of the study, for it presupposes that style is an element which can be measured.

Up to this point, two basic approaches to prose have been examined--mechanical and sensory--each based on an entirely different concept of prose. It is significant, therefore, to investigate the research of Abram Lipsky, which attempts to combine into a consistent theory both of these contradictory approaches. His major work,

Rhythm as a Distinguishing Characteristic of Prose Style, represents a crosscurrent of conflicting attitudes toward prose. His method is not entirely mechanical, for it relies heavily on the impressions of the ear; nor is it completely sensory. Lipsky's approach is mathematical and scientific, depending for results on the counting and categorizing of certain recurrent features found in several prose specimens.

Lipsky's work marked the beginning of a gradual shift from the explanation of prose rhythm as the result of time relations between words, syllables and phrases to an approach based on the counting of recurrent stress accents. The "timers" relied on stress accent; however, they did so only in order to gauge time relations between accents. Lipsky's approach isolated the stress aspect of prose, thus anticipating Saintsbury's scansion method expounded in 1913. As opposed to the "timers'" emphasis on rhythmical types, Lipsky and the group of analysts later called "stressers" concentrated on the rhythms of individual writers. Whereas Miss Griffith began with a rhythmical type and attempted to categorize each writer under one or the other type, Lipsky began with the scansion of an individual passage and derived from several such scansions a possible general type.

Lipsky's theory of prose rhythm was based on poetic theory. Just as various forms of metre produced different rhythms in poetry, so in prose, Lipsky believed, writers as different as Scott, Stevenson, Carlyle, and De Quincey could be distinguished by their use of various prose rhythms. If distinct rhythmical types of prose existed, as well as poetical types, it followed that the only valid results would be achieved by scansion. However, without the rigid stress pattern of

poetry, the prose scanner had to mark accents on the basis of feeling. Lipsky qualified this statement by adding that individual differences in scansion would not be frequent enough to blur differences between rhythmical types.

In the first experiment, selections from Scott, Stevenson, Thackeray, Carlyle, Ruskin, Hawthorne, and Lotze were arranged in consecutive paragraphs and, while one person read them aloud, another marked the syllables which he thought were accented. The following sentence demonstrated the result:[22]

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        1     5         5               4     4     1
You might sooner get lightning out of incense smoke than
 5    4         6              5      4       6
true action or passion out of your modern English religion.
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Lipsky then counted and scanned, in the same manner, approximately one thousand words from the works of thirty-five different authors. When the total number of accented and unaccented syllables had been counted, the average number of unaccented syllables between a paid of accented syllables was calculated. Each of the following combinations of strong and weak accents represented a "foot": (0) — —, (1) — — —, (2) — — — —, (3) — — — — —, (4) — — — — — —, (5) — — — — — — —, (6) — — — — — — — —. Calculation of the frequency of each type of foot, that is, the number of times each combination occurred, would reveal the dominant type of foot. This dominant foot determined the peculiar rhythmic quality of the passage. According to calculations, the first 1,004 words of Cooper's *Red Rover*

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[22]Abram Lipsky, *Rhythm as a Distinguishing Characteristic of Prose Style*, p. 7.

contained 1,593 syllables, 498 of which were accented and 1,095 unaccented; the average unaccented interval was 2.20 syllables and the average word 1.59 syllables. The following chart indicated three comparative scansions of a passage from Cooper's Red Rover.[23]

First 1,000 words of Red Rover

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
A.L.	20.75	75.48	96.23	72.96	35.85	9.43	1.88
M.R.	25.82	79.37	98.12	71.25	33.12	8.75	2.50
L.T.	8.75	56.25	82.50	71.25	40.62	14.37	6.25

Lipsky also demonstrated the distribution of feet on a graph. The following figures represent the scansion of the first thousand words of a passage from Milton's prose:[24]

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
28.93	107.00	78.74	82.10	26.24	6.73	.67

When placed on a graph, the passage took the following shape:[25]

[23]Ibid., p. 14.

[24]Ibid., p. 11.

[25]Ibid., p. 13.

Since he believed that rhythm was largely determined by the predominant type of foot, Lipsky attempted to categorize various types of rhythm according to the predominance of strong or weak accents. To illustrate this theory, he stated the following evidence. In a strongly accentuated style, accents were numerous and close together. Addison's prose, for example, revealed considerable excess of 4th, 5th, and 6th types of feet, whereas Carlyle's prose exhibited an excess of the (0) (__ __) type of foot. If (1) and (2) types occurred at a high rate, however, they did not constitute a distinct rhythm, since they could be scattered throughout the passage as isolated groups of syllables, rather than as groups of feet. Dismissing the terms usually applied in scansion methods--anapest, dactyl, iamb, trochee--he concentrated on the recurrence of (2) and (3) types of feet. These he termed duple and triple rhythms. The following chart tabulated the percentage of both types of feet as they occurred in passages from five different authors.[26]

	Duple Rhythm %	Triple Rhythm %
Stevenson	26	5
Barrie	18	12
Ruskin	22	4
Macaulay	12.5	13
Cooper	8	13.5

One would expect Lipsky's approach to attempt to identify particular authors by their distinctive rhythms, but he denied this

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[26] Ibid., p. 21.

possibility, for, said Lipsky, a writer's rhythm constantly changed. For example, from "Watch and Ward" to _The Ambassadors_, Henry James' rhythm developed from duple to triple. But if it is impossible, as Lipsky claimed, to discuss an author in terms of a particular rhythm, it is difficult for the reader to understand the purpose of his entire study, since it provides only two very broad categories, duple and triple rhythm, into which specimens of prose may or may not be fitted. It fails to provide any sure criterion by which individual styles might be examined. The failure of these categories to offer a valid, practical criterion of rhythmical types is attested by Lipsky's collection of authors under similar types. By comparing figures in columns (0), (4), (5), and (6) with one another, he classed Lamb, De Quincey, Johnson, and Howells with Addison, and in another classification he placed Barrie, Kipling, Browne, Henry James and Carlyle. To say that the prose styles of Johnson and Addison, of Browne and James, contain similar recurrent "feet", is possible. But, to suggest, on this basis alone, that the elaborate rhetoric of Johnson's style compares with the straightforward simplicity of Addison's prose, is to reveal the futility of such an approach.

The second part of the method, Lipsky explained, provided an additional method of discovering rhythm. Sentences were divided at each pause into phrases, each phrase corresponding to a line of poetry. The number of accents per phrase was then calculated in order to distinguish rhythmical types. According to this method, the prose of Browne, Lamb and Emerson disclosed a preference, far above average, for triple-accented phrases, and since most writers revealed a higher

number of triple-accented word groups, Lipsky concluded that this particular formation constituted the natural unit of English prose.

A third type of rhythm was logical. "Accentual rhythm", said Lipsky, "is the eternal form of thought rhythm, the significant in thought coinciding with the phonetically accentuated."[27] Logical rhythmical units, such as the parallel word groups of the Bible, consisted of thoughts repeated in form or substance or changing in a regular way. These units produced a rhythm above the basic accentual rhythm. In a more subtle form than that of the Bible, this type of rhythm occurred in modern languages as balanced phrases and clauses. But because Lipsky's examples of logical rhythm were limited to the works of writers such as Boswell, Burke, and Stevenson, the study dealt with only one type of prose. Only the rhetorical and elaborate effects achieved by balance and repetition were examined. His treatment of logical rhythm, therefore, hardly proceeded beyond the idea of repetition.

Lipsky's final analysis of rhythm can hardly be said to derive from the theories of rhythm postulated earlier in the book. He concluded that:

> The foregoing studies of prose rhythm point to a conclusion that style and rhythm in prose are, to a very large extent, identical. Rhythm in prose plays the same part that voice, gesture and facial expression play in oral speech. And just as we practically never have expressionless speech, so we never have rhythmless or styleless prose.[28]

Lipsky interpreted rhythm as an index of the author's personality, as

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[27] Ibid., p. 33.

[28] Ibid., p. 40.

a means of revealing to the reader the writer's individuality. The rhythmically expressed thought held the reader's attention, therefore, because it allowed him to share in anticipation the writer's own excitement. On this basis, Lipsky distinguished between strong and weak rhythm. A strongly marked rhythm, a sign of the writer's emotion, stimulated the reader's feeling, but a weak rhythm, on the other hand, failed to coordinate meaning and accent. The following sentence by Addison exemplified this fault: "In the next place we may observe that where the words are not monosyllables, we often make them so, as much as lies in our power, by our rapidity of pronunciation."[29] Because he felt that accents fell on words with poor content and created a vague accentual pattern, Lipsky pronounced the sentence rhythmically structureless. From his use of examples throughout the book, however, one suspects that Lipsky's theory of strong rhythm applies only to rhetoric, and that of weak rhythm, to all other types of prose. Furthermore, if rhythm is style, as Lipsky maintained, how can patterns of accents be so distinctive as to offer an index of the author's individuality? Rhythm cannot be both style and accentual pattern. If it were, style would be reduced to accentual pattern. This reduction, however, is the most serious flaw of Lipsky's theory of rhythm.

Neither the psychological approach nor the sensory and mechanical approaches based on psychologists' theories offer a single, clear-cut theory of rhythm. In fact, each approach seems to propose a

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[29] _Ibid._, p. 43.

theory directly opposed to the preceding one. Not only is there disagreement as to whether prose ought to be examined by machine or by ear, but even among theorists agreed on a mechanical approach, some measure the reader's reactions to a text, and others examine relations among words in the text itself. Since mechanical approaches based on time factors, which dominate the earliest stages of investigations of rhythm, offer no valid solution to the question, it is necessary to consider later approaches which discuss rhythm from a sensory point of view, using neither diagrams nor graphs, and concentrating entirely on the stress aspect of prose.

II

SCANSION AND CADENCE

Despite the possibilities offered by Lipsky's scansion theory, his work did not greatly influence literary approaches to prose rhythm. This is due, perhaps, to his basically scientific method which substituted experimentation and classification for judgment based on sense perception. The *magnum opus* of the scansion theory is George Saintsbury's *A History of English Prose Rhythm*. This is not to say that its approach is entirely literary; it does, however, reject the mechanical approach in favour of the literary.

In opposition to the experimental method, "based on those mechanical devices which I regard as utterly valueless",[1] Saintsbury began the history. At the basis of his theory was Aristotle's description of prose as "neither possessing metre, nor destitute of rhythm".[2] Having based his approach on classical theory, he also chose a classical method: the Greek number system in which syllables were designated "long" and "short" according to their duration. However, since English syllables, unlike Greek and Latin syllables, have no fixed length, but are differentiated by stress accent as

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[1]George Saintsbury, *A History of English Prose Rhythm*, (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1922), p. x.

[2]Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, as in Saintsbury, p. 1.

"strong" and "weak", Saintsbury equated the terms duration and stress. To all strongly stressed syllables, he assigned the value "long"; to all weakly stressed syllables, he assigned the value "short". This interchange of terminology produces confusion, and Saintsbury's adoption of the traditional poetic terms for stress accent—iambic, trochaic, anapestic, and spondaic—along with the Greek terms of duration—paeonic and dochmiac—adds further ambiguity to the theory of rhythm.

According to this theory, groups of syllables constituted "feet", and the combination of various kinds of feet produced prose rhythm. Saintsbury's method, therefore, involves nothing more than the application of poetic scansion to prose. It is obvious from his scansion of the following sentence of Anglo-Saxon prose that such an approach is impossible:

And then / ongat / the cy / ning that /
And he / to the door / way yode /.[3]

The difficulty of accepting this type of scansion lies in the arrangement of foot divisions which disregard both pause and logical meaning. Since poetry is governed by a rigid stress system which cuts across logical word groups, division of lines into feet is natural, but in prose, which lacks a superimposed rhythmical pattern, logical progression must be observed. Sentences can be divided only where pauses occur or where grammatical units end. Why, for example, does Saintsbury split the word "cyning" or the phrase group "to the door

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

way"? Likewise, Saintsbury's judgment of Malory's rhythm as dominantly iambic on the basis of the following scansion is erroneous because the sentence divisions are not logically placed.

◡ — / ◡ — / ◡ ◡ — / ◡ — ◡ / ◡ — ◡

And so / Sir Lan / celot and / the damsel / departed /..[4]

Division of the word "Lancelot" follows the laws of poetry rather than the laws of prose. Moreover, when read at a normal rate, the sentence discloses no dominant iambic rhythm, and, even if read very slowly, does not enforce a long stress on "so" or "and". Since the distribution of foot divisions and syllable accents determines rhythmical pattern, and since Saintsbury's placing of divisions and accents is not regulated by logical meaning, it is necessary to recognize that this method allows, and perhaps necessitates the forcing of certain words into a prearranged metre.

Such a method is necessarily subjective. In fact, the purely arbitrary nature of prose scansion is revealed by disagreements among various "scanners". For example, Mason, an Eighteenth-Century theorist of prose rhythm, scanned the first three words of Genesis in this way:

— ◡ ◡ / — —

In the be / ginning /.[5]

Saintsbury replaced this with

◡ / ◡ — ◡̄ / , — ◡ / ◡ — ◡̄

In / the beginning / , or In the / beginning /.[6]

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[4]*Ibid.*, p. 90.

[5]*Ibid.*, p. 475.

[6]*Ibid.*, p. 475.

When Mason scanned the opening of St. John's Gospel as

In the be / ginning was /,[7]

Saintsbury criticized it for spoiling the words of the Gospel "in the teeth both of his own principles and of manifest rhythmical requirements."[8] But, can a criticism based on "going against one's principles" be objective? In another instance, Saintsbury maintained that the Authorized Version of the Bible was predominantly iamboid (iambic, anapest, amphibrach and paeon), but that an unbroken pattern would contravene the great law of prose rhythm—variety. In order to check monotony, he suggested, the author had added a small number of trochees and monosyllables. A statement such as this which attempts to interpret an author's intention gives the distinct impression that Saintsbury imposed his own criterion of variety on the text. Consider another example. Concerning the marking of a paeonic foot, Saintsbury cautioned: "Anti-word splitters can have another dochmiac if they like. It will be good, but not, I think, so good."[9] But how, the critic asks, does one decide "good" or "bad"? How can the substitution of one foot for another possibly affect the goodness or badness of a sentence? Saintsbury dismissed all such questions by admitting that scansion was "a question of taste",[10] and could, therefore, not be regulated by a definite standard.

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 475.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 475.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 248.

In fact, the only criterion of prose rhythm, according to Saintsbury's theory, was the absence of poetic rhythm. This was the only standard offered. "Thus rhythmical prose, in its perfection, is distinguished from poetry...most of all, and most essentially, by the absence of definite and ostentatious correspondence in rhythmical-metrical character, and of equivalent or definitely corresponding 'lines.'"[11] "As the essence of verse-metre is its identity (at least in equivalence) and recurrence," Saintsbury claimed, "so the essence of prose rhythm lies in its variety and divergence."[12] The "various" prose of a passage from Thomas Browne's Urn Burial, according to Saintsbury's scansion, contained no two consecutive feet:[13]

> Now:since:these:dead:bones / have already out-lasted / the living ones / of Methuselah,/ and in a yard / under ground,/ and thin / walls / of clay,/ out-worn / all the strong / and specious / buildings / above it; / and quietly / rested / under the drums / and tramplings / of three / conquests; / what Prince/can promise / such / diuturnity / unto his reliques,/ or might not / gladly / say,...

However, if the division lines are rearranged and some of the doubtful stresses changed, "variety" disappears. The phrase "in a yard / under ground, / and thin walls / of clay" easily produces a number of anapests, and "what Prince / can pro/mise such / diu/turnity"

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[11] Ibid., p. 345.

[12] Ibid., p. 450.

[13] Ibid., p. 184.

is arranged into an obvious iambic pattern.

Saintsbury's claim that the essence of prose rhythm lay in its variety and divergence presupposes the existence of a norm or standard which can be departed from. At times, recurrent stress pattern seems to supply this norm. But, unlike theorists such as Lipsky and Baum whose definitions of rhythm were based on recurrence, Saintsbury did not maintain that recurring foot patterns produced the basic rhythm of prose. On the contrary, he considered such recurrence dangerous. Prose, he said, was more tolerant of repeated tetrasyllabic feet than of shorter, more noticeable ones. When all of Saintsbury's statements are combined, the word "variety" simply means failure to lapse into a predictable or recurrent pattern.

Saintsbury's criticism of the lack of variety in Augustan prose, however, derived from a very different criterion. Dryden's prose, he said, "...exacts considerable runs of unemphatic and almost unaccented syllables which can hardly be got into any rhythm, certainly not into any rhythm capable of notation in feet."[14] Here, Saintsbury's use of the word rhythm seems to mean recurrent foot patterns. But he argued further that the conversational tone of Augustan prose and "the absence of accompaniment--of sound to the sense, of music to the meaning..."[15] blurred the distinction between "strong" and "weak" syllables. Neither arrhythmic nor elaborately rhythmic, it could be divided into feet, but not easily scanned. The

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[14] Ibid., p. 231-2.

[15] Ibid., p. 290.

superiority of Seventeenth-Century Prose, on the other hand, arose from its greater "variety", from a rhythm based on the sharp contrast of long and short syllables.

The greatest ambiguity of Saintsbury's theory arises from his inconsistent use of the word "variety". Of Wulfstan's prose he said: "As for pure rhythm, there is little but the trochaic and sometimes dactylic ending..."[16] But if the criterion of prose rhythm is variety, why, one wonders, are metrical runs described as "pure rhythm"? The following statement answers this question. Saintsbury commented on a Middle English passage: "...though the prose runs quite fluently there is no attempt at poetic rhythm."[17] This statement confirms the fact that Saintsbury's theory of rhythm is concerned chiefly with the degree to which poetic rhythm determines sentence rhythm. Beyond an attempt to establish certain poetic feet in prose, his theory disregards the existence of a distinctive prose rhythm.

Good prose, according to this criterion, approached poetic rhythm without developing metre. Saintsbury chose the opening lines of Browne's _Hydriotaphia_ to represent the ideal rhythm:

When the fu/neral pyre / was out/
And the last / valedic/tion over.[18]

The metrical pattern of the sentence, he said, invited completion, but this was denied by the non-correspondent rhythm of the succeeding

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[16] _Ibid._, p. 38.

[17] _Ibid._, p. 48.

[18] _Ibid._, p. 195.

clause "men took a lasting adieu."[19] Its rhythmical beauty derived from "the attainment of that undulating movement, balanced but varied, parallel but not stichic, which constitutes the rhythm of prose."[20] The poor rhythm of Dicken's prose, on the other hand, arose from a preponderance of blank verse lines. The term "variety", as applied in these examples, implies the absence of any tendency toward regularity. However, according to the theorists who limited the basis of rhythm to recurrence, such variety destroyed the possibility of prose rhythm. Completely irregular material, they argued, could not create rhythm.

Inconsistent use of the term "rhythm" is only one aspect of the obscure, figurative language which characterizes Saintsbury's entire discussion of prose. Fisher's prose rhythm, said Saintsbury, produced

> ...that peculiar wave-like motion--insurging, and recoiling, and advancing again; with individual movement not mechanically or mathematically correspondent, but rhythmically associable and complementary--which is essential to harmonious prose; and already this fluctuance demands and receives the more elaborate accompaniment in expression of paeons and dochmiacs.[21]

Jeremy Taylor's style presented "baroque luxuriance, tangled with tropic bloom of phrase."[22] The description of Hooker's rhythm, typical of several others, offered jargon in place of serious criticism:

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[19] _Ibid._, p. 196.

[20] _Ibid._, p. 51.

[21] _Ibid._, p. 97.

[22] _Ibid._, p. 134.

> The abrupter and more intrusive parallelism or balance, as we find it in Lyly and others, being widened, softened, and moulded out into great undulating sweeps of phrase, rising, hovering, descending, with a wing-like motion.[23]

Few of Saintsbury's comments concern rhythm. Not only does he fail to explain the reasons for particular word divisions and scansions, and the implications of these, but instead he substitutes background information or generalizations concerning stylistic and musical effects.

One aspect of Saintsbury's theory of rhythm dealt with structure. Poorly constructed, almost incomprehensible prose, said Saintsbury, could not possess distinct rhythm. Bacon's prose sacrificed rhythm to "solid erudition, which he must needs impart by strings of concatenated variations on the same thought, and, above all, by the effort to pack two or more meanings into one word."[24] Because Bacon did not possess "Hooker's ear for the music of long periods",[25] his prose did not flow. Likewise, Milton's arrangement of longer and shorter feet produced a sustained level or a very flat curve, and revealed much less rise and fall than Hooker's prose. But rhythm, according to Saintsbury's definition, derives only from combinations of various types of feet. And since this definition disregards logical word groupings, Saintsbury cannot criticize structure for the failure of rhythm without contradicting his own definition. Is it not possible, one might ask, for poorly constructed

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[23] _Ibid._, p. 136.

[24] _Ibid._, p. 164.

[25] _Ibid._, p. 164.

sentences to contain various types of feet? If so, such sentences, according to Saintsbury's definition would necessarily be rhythmical.

As well as structure, Saintsbury also graded different prose styles according to the quantity and quality of their rhythms. His comment that Jonson's style revealed "no absence of rhythm and no inferior quality of it"[26] implies, first of all, that prose can exist without rhythm, and, secondly, that some prose rhythms are superior to others. That is, some prose styles have more rhythm than others. Evidence of this concept is Saintsbury's constant praise of Seventeenth and Nineteenth Century prose and his refusal to consider Eighteenth-Century essay prose as more than inharmonious conversation.

This concept of rhythm as something which exists in greater or lesser quantities implies that rhythm is distinct from style and that it exists as an entity in itself. This dichotomy between style and rhythm is obvious in Saintsbury's discussion of style. Lyly's prose, he said, could be considered significant to the history of prose style, but not to the history of prose rhythm. Furthermore, Saintsbury's comment that Dryden's prose rhythm was rarely elaborated by any device except the usual balance and antithetic emphasis implies that rhythm exists previous to, and apart from, the arrangement of phrases and clauses that compose the sentence. For, how can rhythm be elaborated if it does not already exist? In another instance, Saintsbury praised Burke as the only Eighteenth-Century writer to add variation of stresses to balanced and parallel clauses. The impli-

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[26] Ibid., p. 206.

cation here is that rhythm, the variation of stresses, can be superimposed on the sentence structure rather than that sentence structure creates the rhythm.

After reviewing Saintsbury's theory, the final question remains: What factors of prose rhythm can be discovered by scansion? Perhaps the analysis of prose feet may prove valuable to the study of oratorical prose common to the Seventeenth and Nineteenth Centuries which frequently contains metrical inlays, but as a criterion of ordinary essay prose common to the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries, it must be rejected. And when a criterion does not apply to all types of prose it cannot be accepted as a valid general approach.

Furthermore, Saintsbury's theory deals only with the sporadic imposition of poetic effects on prose, not with the basic unit of prose--the sentence. Such an approach is also necessarily devoid of results because the criterion of good prose--variety--is not only ambiguous, but meaningless when applied to individual styles. Even if someone were to prove that all great prose consisted of various types of feet, what would this principle reveal about the rhythm peculiar to each author? It would simply offer a generalization about the nature of prose which could not be carried into the practical application of distinguishing one style from another.

However, despite the inconsistencies of Saintsbury's theory, it is necessary to recognize its influence on later theories of rhythm. Most scansion theories, as well as several cadence theories, developed, in one way or another, from Saintsbury's.

For example, Saintsbury's concept of variety recurs in a

modern analysis of rhythm. Paull Baum in *...the other harmony of prose...* defined rhythm as:

> a series of units or elements or groups which are similar not necessarily in themselves or necessarily in their duration, but the more alike they are in both characteristics the more obvious is the rhythm, and the more unlike they are in one characteristic or the other, provided the impression of similarity is maintained or induced, the more interesting the rhythm is.[27]

At the basis of the definition lies a belief that repetition of similar events creates expectancy in the reader's mind. This is the psychology of rhythmical perception: "Our awareness either that a similar event has preceded the present one or our expectancy that a similar one is to follow. Perception of A, perception of B united with memory of A, perception of C united with...and so on."[28]

Like Saintsbury, Baum realized that recurrence alone could not constitute prose rhythm, for prose lacked the surest means of creating expectancy—metre. Its patterns excluded metrical regularity because prose rhythm depended on "acoustic and expressional values."[29] Although certain repeated rhetorical or syntactic arrangements could create an extended metre, prose rhythm, in general, depended on relatively short rhythmic groups. Otherwise, elements would recur often enough to create the impression of poetry. Lacking this formal metrical pattern, every prose writer had to face the problem of creating an artificial structure, often based on parallelism, balance

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[27]Paull Baum, *...the other harmony of prose...*, p. 24.

[28]*Ibid.*, p. 23.

[29]*Ibid.*, p. 27.

or metrical inlays, which would distract attention from the plain sentence pattern. The history of prose rhythm, according to Baum, would summarize the various methods of creating this structure.

Since Baum viewed all language as a union of sounds and meanings, his discussion of rhythm concentrated on both of these properties. Sound consisted of four elements--tempo, pitch, duration, and stress. Tempo or rate played a double role in speech. By emphasizing pauses, a slow tempo accentuated sound units and latent rhythms; by decreasing the number of pauses, a quick tempo reduced stressed and unstressed elements and blurred distinctions between rhythmic groups. The element of pitch, the rise and fall of voice inflections, created frequent melodic waves which, when forming recurrent units, produced distinct rhythmic effects. For example, in the sentence "When he narrated,/ the scene was before you",[30] the voice rose gradually, reaching its highest pitch at the pause and then descended to its lowest pitch at the conclusion of the sentence. Successive repetition of similar curves would create a rhythmical pattern consisting of an upward glide and a downward fall. The two elements of tempo and pitch, Baum said, were factors of rhythm only in spoken prose. And, since his research did not include voice records, he considered them minor factors.

As far as time represented an essential feature of rhythm, duration, or the length of a given syllable, word or word group, was of primary importance. However, it was stress which played the key

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

role in the creation of rhythm, for it was stress which separated events in time and made it possible to measure duration. Unlike Saintsbury, Baum maintained the essential difference between stress and duration. All heavy stresses were not long, nor all weak stresses short. In the following four sentences, in fact, the word "how" received four different stresses and four different durations.

♩ Hów did you / knów?

♪. How d' you / dó?

𝅗𝅥 Hów? / you ásk.

𝅗𝅥. Hów, / whén, / whý did it / háppen?[31]

Both stress and duration, therefore, varied considerably with context.

Disagreeing with Saintsbury a second time, Baum insisted that word stress rather than syllable stress gave a true indication of rhythm. Instead of dividing words into stressed and unstressed syllables, therefore, Baum marked the entire word. According to Saintsbury's scansion, "every" would contain three syllables—one long and two short, but, according to Baum's one stress fell on both "éach" and "évery".

However, Baum did recognize syllabic scansion as one aspect of rhythm. He quoted the following line from Cowley to demonstrate the anapestic rhythm and the dactylic hexameter which resulted when the first two syllables were removed: "There is no sáying shócks me so múch..."[32] "For," explained Baum, "if one is unwilling to hear and

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[31]Ibid., p. 41.

[32]Ibid., p. 87.

feel this organization of sounds, this rise and fall of accents, this undulation, beneath the surface, one must be ready to repudiate an important aspect of prose rhythm."[33] But this rhythm was not primary. Metrical pattern formed a secondary movement, an undertone beneath the dominant structural rhythm of the sentence. "Scansion," said Baum, "is only a basis of rhythm, not the rhythm itself."[34]

While alternations of stress and unstress formed a secondary sound rhythm, the primary rhythm of prose was thought rhythm. Instead of being regulated by accents, sentence structure was determined by rhetorical emphasis and marked by grammatical groups, phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs. Baum clarified the difference between sound and thought rhythm by referring to a similar distinction between prose and poetry. In poetry, he explained, prose rhythm varied the predominant metrical rhythm; in prose, suggestions of metre enhanced the predominant rhetorical rhythm.

From this concept of dual rhythm, Baum's methodology derived. It involved an attempt to discover both sound and thought rhythms. Each sentence was to be divided logically into groups of words according to punctuation or slighter pauses. Thought rhythm, then, was basic. Within each group, the dominant words were to be marked by stress accents; consequently, the lengths of groups, which Griffith and Classe measured by time relations, Baum calculated by the number of stress accents. Because stress served as a measure of time, Baum

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

used the term "unit group" to refer to a relative duration of time, which was marked off by the stress and the unstressed elements surrounding it. Comparison and contrast of the lengths of these groups would reveal their essential rhythms. Baum discovered, for example, that a two-unit group dominated the rhythm of English because of its habitual use of two nouns joined by "and", as well as adjective and noun combinations. To illustrate this "stately and consistent two-stress rhythmical unit",[35] he chose the following passage from Gibbon's Decline and Fall:

The virtue of Trajan / appears more steady and natural,/ and the philosophy of Marcus / is more simple and consistent. / Yet Julian sustained / adversity with firmness, / and prosperity with moderation./[36]

By applying this method to Nineteenth and Seventeenth-Century rhythmical prose, Baum discovered a frequent recurrence of groups with equal numbers of stresses. A sentence from Pater's prose revealed this almost geometrical arrangement: 222. 3333. 44. 343.[37] Moreover, in balanced styles, stress groups were often arranged by gradation, creating such highly contrived patterns as the following: 1, 2, 3, 4; 2, 3, 4, 5.

As Justice, / sitting on a throne, / but with a fixed look of self-hatred// which makes the sword in her hand seem

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[35]Ibid., p. 106.

[36]Ibid., p. 106.

[37]Ibid., p. 115.

> that of suicide; / and again as Veritas, / in the allegorical picture of Calumnia, / where one may note in passing the suggestiveness of an accident / which identifies the image of Truth with the person of Venus./[38]

Relationships between adjacent stress groups formed a rising or falling curve, depending on whether the number of stresses increased or decreased, and examination of these curves revealed the rhythmical character of the passage.

One of the weaknesses of Baum's approach lies in the arbitrary nature of placing pauses. The bar after "Trajan" and after "Marcus" might have been eliminated, the second sentence might easily have had a pause after "yet", and the bar after "sustained" hardly seems to be the result of a pause. Despite the disputability of some of the divisions, Baum assured the reader that there were not enough doubtful pauses to alter the divisions seriously. However, since stress groups are created by divisions, and since the dominant rhythm derives from these stress groups, it is ridiculous for Baum to deny the significance of the exact placing of divisions. If divisions alter, even slightly, the rhythm must also alter. If, for example, the division lines of the Gibbon passage were changed to

> The virtue of Trajan appears / more steady and natural, / and the philosophy of Marcus is more simple and consistent./ Yet Julian sustained adversity with firmness, / and prosperity with moderation./

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[38]Ibid., p. 153-4.

a movement of 3, 3, 5. 1, 4, 2, would be created. Or, if all pauses were removed except those definitely established by commas and periods, the rhythm would become: 5, 5, 2.

A second weakness of Baum's method occurs in the practical application of results. Failure to extend the theory of rhythm beyond certain types of style is perhaps its greatest limitation, for by restricting the study to oratorical and highly contrived types of prose, Baum necessarily limited the range of his definition of rhythm. The theory of recurrent stress groups produces few valid results when applied to Eighteenth and Twentieth-Century prose which is often based on a conversational norm lacking the elaborate rhetorical and poetical effects of Seventeenth and Nineteenth Century prose. Consequently, Baum's entire analysis demonstrated merely that certain oratorical types of prose contained elaborate sound patterns.

The second aspect of Baum's theory of rhythm, similar ideas in similar form, dealt with the appropriateness of form to meaning. Baum insisted that, in order to create a smooth rhythm, structure had to objectify meaning, for a confusing structure produced a false rhythm. Parallel ideas had to occur in parallel form, alliteration had to join only similar elements, musical effects could not predominate over meaning, and the periodic sentence which easily distorted correct relationships between clauses had to create a comprehensible structure. The form of the following periodic sentence, for example, obscured its meaning: "It is no exaggeration to say that Borrow was never, in the

long years he spent in retirement at Oulton, happy."[39] Proper harmony between the two clauses was possible; however, the intrusion of the long subordinate clause "in the long years he spent in retirement at Oulton" interrupted the main thought of the sentence. According to Baum's theory of similar ideas in similar form, then, rhythm depended on the placing of words in correct relationships with each other.

Because the position of the word in the sentence determined its meaning, variation from the simplest syntactic structure and the conventional word order altered an obvious rhythm to a more complex one. In general, the more important word, the word which answered the underlying question of the sentence, occurred last, and any alteration of this position created a new emphasis and supplanted the expected rhythm. To demonstrate this, Baum compared two slightly different arrangements of one sentence: "They once defended themselves successfully" and "They defended themselves successfully once."[40] The position of "once" in the first example implied that "they" could no longer defend themselves, but the position of "once" in the second sentence suggested that "they" defended themselves only once. Therefore, because of Baum's emphasis on the correlation of form and meaning, his theory demanded not only proper words in proper places, but important words in the most important places.

Despite this requirement for good rhythm, Baum considered all prose rhythmic: "Since all prose consists of speech sounds, all prose

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[39] _Ibid._, p. 138.

[40] _Ibid._, p. 142.

is potentially rhythmic, whatever one's definition of rhythm may be."[41] However, he did distinguish qualitative from quantitative rhythm: "...according to the ability or the intention of the writer, some prose will be <u>more rhythmic</u> than other prose in the sense that it will have more definite, more marked, more easily recognized rhythms than other prose."[42] Baum explained that between the two extremes of verse and a-rhythmic prose (expository prose without obvious rhythm), there existed several types which possessed a greater or lesser quantity of rhythm according to their proximity to either extreme. Since the quantity of rhythm, however, was difficult to measure without a clear, objective test, it was relative to other pieces, to its own context, and to the perception of different readers at different times.

To evaluate the quality of rhythm proved even more difficult for Baum. Were certain arrangements rhythmically wrong? Were some not rhythmic at all? "We should have an answer to such questions," said Baum, "an answer resting on more than mood or taste. But probably we shall find none. For the ear is independent and unaccountable."[43] Although he refused to commit himself on the question of "bad" rhythm, he suggested that good prose possessed good rhythms if one knew how to discern them and that even a-rhythmic prose might possess good rhythm. To assist in the determination of rhythmical quality, Baum offered two criterions, one negative and

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[41] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 186.

[42] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 186.

[43] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 196.

objective, the other positive and subjective. The first was economy, the absence of superfluous words or unharmonious sounds, and the second, beauty, or the quality of pleasingness, which derived from properly distributed parts. The greatest rhythmical beauty, he said, depended on the harmony of thought and sound.

Despite the fact that Saintsbury and Baum used the same basic "stress" approach, Baum produced several valid comments on prose rhythm. His theory of logical divisions, single word stresses rather than syllabic stresses, and his emphasis on the correlation of form and meaning allowed him to progress beyond earlier rudimentary attempts to discuss speech rhythm. Perhaps this is because of his willingness to place thought rhythm above sound rhythm and to discuss rhythm as a structural rather than a phonetic element. For this reason, Baum's discussion of rhythm moves far beyond a mere scansion theory.

The term "scansion theory", however, did not apply only to methods such as Baum's and Saintsbury's which divided the entire text into syllables or word groups. It had a far wider application. Closely associated with this method and depending on similar principles was a method which marked stresses and foot divisions only at the ends of sentences, clauses, and phrases. Unlike the scansion theory, it maintained that rhythm arose only from these endings and not from the rest of the sentence. This approach has been termed the cadence theory. In itself, it forms a considerable part of the study of rhythm.

Like the scansion theory, the study of cadence in English prose originated with a classical theory of rhythm. Latin and Greek sentences were theoretically pervaded by rhythm or number, that is, by patterns

of syllables with varying durations, which became more pronounced in the syllables immediately preceding each pause. There were three types of cadence based on fixed syllabic durations in Latin. The cursus planus consisted of five syllables, with accents on the first and fourth syllables, as in "servants departed". Since accents fell on the second and fifth syllables when the cursus was counted from the final syllable, numerically this cursus created a 5/2 rhythm. The cursus tardus contained six syllables with accents on the first and fourth, as in "perfect felicity", thereby forming a 6/3 rhythm. The cursus velox, containing seven syllables, with accents on the first and sixth syllables, as in "glorious undertaking", produced a 7/2 rhythm.[44] Although English measured rhythm by stress rather than by the Latin principle of duration, theorists began the study of cadence in the belief that certain Latin quantitative patterns might have been transferred into English stress patterns.

The original discovery of cadence in Middle French prose made by Noel Valois in 1880 began the search for similar patterns in English. However, the greatest impetus to the study of the cursus seems to have been John Shelley's article of 1912, "Rhythmical Prose in Latin and English"[45] which attempted to prove that the cursus employed in the liturgical Latin prayers had been reproduced in the English Book of Common Prayer. His scansion revealed that about 50%

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[44] Albert C. Clark, Prose Rhythm in English, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 5.

[45] All theorists of English cadence attribute the origins of this study to Shelley.

of all final clause endings in all of the collects imitated *cursus* forms. This discovery provided the basis for several later theories of English cadence.

With this theory of cadence originated Albert Clark's description of prose rhythm as a combination of recurrent stressed and unstressed syllables, slightly less regular than those of poetry. "The difference between the rhythms of prose and verse," said Clark, "is said to be one of degree. In verse the metre is constant and unbroken, in prose the measures are loose and irregular."[46] Therefore, the two principles of variety and recurrence governed the rhythm of prose. But since variety, if it were not modified by a system, would result in chaos, "the essence of rhythm both in prose and verse is regularity of beat."[47]

To demonstrate the existence of *cursus* endings in all rhythmical English prose was the aim of Clark's investigation. And he began by suggesting that the rhythms discovered by Saintsbury's scansion method were actually the result of several *cursus* endings. He marked these endings in the following passage which Saintsbury had previously scanned:

> Now since these dead bones have already outlasted (I) the living ones of Methuselah (2) and in a yard under ground (*) and thin walls of clay (*) outworn all the strong and specious buildings above it (I) and quietly rested (I)

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[46] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

under the drums and tramplings of three conquests.[48]

Where Saintsbury marked a third paeon and amphibrach in Gibbon's phrase "the departure of Julian", Clark discovered a cursus planus. Similarly, passages from Coleridge, De Quincey, Newman, Macaulay, Carlyle and several others were found to depend for their rhythmical effect on the repetition of cadenced endings rather than on the combination of various types of feet.

Clark's chief interest, however, lay in non-Latin endings. His study concentrated on one question: What principle dictated the formation of those endings which were not derived from Latin? He concluded that: "If we take passages which Saintsbury considers perfect--and here his judgment seems to me infallible--and mark those rhythms which are Latin in character, the probability is that the residue, and especially those effects which are wholly alien to the Latin system, are native."[49] For example, the natural trochaic rhythm of English altered the cursus planus to "these our misdoings", the tardus to "joy and felicity", and the velox to "service is perfect freedom".[50] Clark drew heavily on Shelley's results. According to Shelley's count, of the 95 endings in the Collects which did not correspond to Latin forms, 71 ended with an accented syllable. Since Latin carefully avoided final accented syllables and monosyllables at the end of the sentence, Clark deduced that these endings were distinct

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[48] Ibid., p. 12. (The number (I) marks the cursus planus; the number (2), the cursus tardus. Asterisks mark endings with no Latin equivalents.)

[49] Ibid., p. 9.

[50] Ibid., p. 10.

native rhythms. From the Te Deum Clark chose this example of a marked trochaic cadence: "We, thérefore, práy thée, hélp thy sérvants, whóm thou hást redéemed wíth thy précious blóod."[51] A further characteristic of English cadence was a collision of accents. Although the main object of the Latin cursus was to secure an interval between stressed and unstressed syllables, Clark discovered that English cadence frequently eliminated unstressed syllables in order to achieve the effect of clashing stresses. To Clark, the collision of accents found in the following sentence created sublimity in English prose: "For the Lórd is a gréat Gód, and a gréat kíng abóve áll góds."[52]

From these examples, Clark concluded that English prose rhythm arose from a combination of Latin and English elements. Native qualities--the trochaic roll and the stressed monosyllable--combined with traditional Latin patterns to form a prose which was controlled by separate and interrelated cadences.

The drawbacks of the cadence theory in general are obvious. To point out the existence in English of patterns imitated from other languages is to disregard the actual structure of English prose in favour of studying imposed poetic patterns. In this way, both cadence and scansion theories suffer from the same flaw. Because of their unwillingness to look beyond poetic and rhetorical effects, they can never produce more than vague generalizations such as: prose rhythm involves variety or recurrence. The difficulty of Clark's particular

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[51] Ibid., p. 11.

[52] Ibid., p. 12.

approach lies in his main principle--that many prose feet are actually cadences. One wonders what he has added to the discussion of rhythm by converting all of Saintsbury's foot patterns into native or Latin cadences. He is still discussing the same stress patterns, but calling them by different names.

Following Clark's equation of cadence and rhythm, several cadence theories arose which either repudiated or accepted his theory. The most influential representative of the dissenters is Morris Croll. His approach is probably the only valid one, for Croll avoided the error of Clark and Tempest by refusing to consider cadence an element of rhythm. Based on the examination of Greek and Latin cadence, his theory does not postulate the existence of a universal law of inherent prose rhythm but assumes that prose lacks rhythmic law until regulated by the conventions of oral delivery. Because the word "rhythm" implied to Croll regularity and a definite pattern inherent in the sentence structure, his use of the term "cadence" instead of "rhythm" eliminates the confusion encountered by the other approaches. Latin and English cadence, as far as Croll presented it, is merely a "euphonious fall"[53] occurring before certain pauses and at the ends of certain unitary parts of a sentence.

With Croll's research a theory originated which refuted all previous concepts of cadence. He questioned the popular concept which maintained the exact correspondence between Latin and English _cursus_

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[53]Morris Croll, "The Cadence of English Oratorical Prose" in _Style, Rhetoric and Rhythm_, Ed. J. Max Patrick _et al_. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 357.

endings. If exact Latin metrical forms were mechanically transferred to English prose, why, he asked, did English cadences occur where Latin cadences did not? Why did a given Latin ending fail to conform to the corresponding English ending? Why did a <u>planus</u> in English sometimes correspond to a <u>tardus</u> or <u>velox</u> in Latin? From his observation of such discrepancies, Croll concluded that, instead of a systematic imitation of Latin originals, translations of Church prayers reflected a purely aural, unconscious reproduction. "Instead of working by clearly-understood methods and formulated rules, as the authors of the Latin did, the translators were controlled merely by the desire to produce an effect in general like that of the Latin."[54] Croll's statement effectively repudiated Shelley's original theory of exact correspondence between English and Latin rhythmic forms.

As support for his theory, Croll pointed out the incompatibility of Latin and English. In word characteristics, in metrical patterns and customs, he explained, there existed a basic difference between Latin and English which prevented the direct transfer of entire metrical formulas from one language to the other. English could not produce the effects of the <u>cursus</u> by copying the exact metrical forms of medieval Latin because "...the relation between the fall of the accents and the number of syllables in the words on which they fall is the essence of its beauty, and is part of the actual form of the cadences themselves."[55] The <u>velox</u>, for example, was not simply 7-4-2.

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[54] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 310.

[55] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 315.

Its essence lay in the subordination of the fourth accent to the second. And since word length determined Latin rhythm, English could not reproduce the exact Latin effect without having assimilated a large number of four and five syllable words, the positions of Latin accents, and the Latin principle of placing a minor accent on the second syllable before the main accent. But, said Croll, not many such words existed in English. Because of the English tendency to recessive accent and because English did not observe the Latin positioning of minor accents, Latin polysyllabic words had been so shortened that the accent no longer fell on the penult. English therefore consisted of words such as "comparative", "justification" and "simplification" in which the minor accent had no rigid relation to the main accent.

Croll further explained the discrepancy between Latin and English by comparing Latin's stabilized syllabic length with the variable syllabic length of English. The Latin "fur" was always monosyllabic, but English words such as "power", "prayer", and "even" sometimes possessed one syllable and sometimes two. An English word like "glorious" seldom had the same value as a three-syllable Latin word. Nor could the word "flower" correspond to a Latin two-syllable word. From this comparison, Croll concluded that English cadence could never be properly described by a numerical system such as Clark's or Shelley's, for unless English cadence was permitted certain freedoms in the use of unaccented syllables, it could never reproduce the effect of Latin cadence.

Croll discovered that the discrepancy between English and

Latin cadence extended to the question of position. Although Latin cadence was restricted to the ends of parts of sentences, English cadence often occupied non-final positions. But because it lacked formal rules, it had to coincide with a syntactic unit in order to be heard; it could occur at the end of any phrase having a unitary character, whether or not it coincided with the end of a division of a sentence. In the sentence "Let the pitifulness of thy great mercy / loose us", Croll explained that "the translators have preserved the exact arrangement of accents and syllables, but not the ending, and the effect produced is that the pause after "mercy" is lengthened, there is an abrupt break in rhythm, the words "loose us" are pronounced in a different tone, and the ear is brought back to the blunt style and the native words of plain prose."[56]

But English, said Croll, could retain its own characteristics without altering the essential nature of the Latin cadence. Clashing accents, a peculiar feature of the second half of English cadence, created a pattern such as 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 or 4 - 3 - 2 - 1: "All other thy benefits and great mercies (7 - 3 - 2) exhibited in Jesus Christ (7 - 3 - 2)."[57] Or an accent could fall on the final syllable to produce a 4 - 3 - 2 - 1, 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 or 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 arrangement, as in "pureness of living and truth."[58] Croll found such

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[56] Ibid., p. 341.

[57] Ibid., p. 344.

[58] Ibid., p. 344.

a difference between English and Latin cadences that he denied the possibility of explaining the rhythmic effects of English cadence by pointing out sporadic endings. "It must be due," he concluded, "to cadences that occur with sufficient frequency to produce a pervasive and characteristic effect."[59]

On the basis of rhetorical theory, therefore, Croll established a positive theory of cadence. Latin cadence served only to ornament a larger rhythmic pattern--the sentence--and only in relation to this rhetorical design could both Latin and English cadence be validly examined. To prove that sentence structure formed the rhythmic basis of Latin cadence, Croll pointed out that classical theory identified rhythm with periodic structure. When distinguished, the two were related to each other as the means to the end.

Furthermore, oratorical prose derived its form from public speech. The period, which Croll described as neither a syntactical nor logical unit, but a psychological and rhythmical unit, was divided into members according to the laws of breathing. The rhythm of the sentence, therefore, depended chiefly on the relation of length, form and sound among its members. Consequently, the peculiar rhythm of oratorical prose derived from the frequent arrangement of its members into two or more groups having approximately equal lengths, as well as from the similarity of grammatical structures, correspondences in sound between words in corresponding positions, and parallel rhythmic constructions. Croll concluded that the study of English cadence could best be

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[59]*Ibid.*, p. 342.

approached according to these two classical principles--the ornamental function and the oratorical basis of cadence in the sentence. In this way, he removed the study of cadence from the area of rhythm and the question of rhythm from the study of stress patterns.

The most representative approaches to the problem of prose rhythm have now been examined. Having observed their flaws it remains only to investigate the possibility of synthesizing all of the previous theories of rhythm. The attempt to do so can be clearly seen in the work of Norton Tempest. Of all the theorists of rhythm, Tempest took the most ambiguous position by combining the three major approaches to prose--the psychological, the scansion, and the cadence. The first definition offered was psychological. Rhythm was "the organization of perceptions in an orderly way",[60] and rhythmical material was defined as "that which is capable of being so organized."[61] Tempest's second statement, however, contradicts the first, for while the second assumes that the mind can objectively examine prose, the first denies this. According to the first quotation, there could be no rhythmical or unrhythmical material, for the mind, as Tempest conceived of it, contained its own rhythmical principle and could arrange any disorganized piece of prose into a definite pattern. In fact, this definition contends that the mind forms rhythmical groups of ungrouped, unvarying sounds as well as of varying sounds. But if Tempest

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[60]Norton Tempest, The Rhythm of English Prose, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1930), p. 3.

[61]Ibid., p. 3.

maintained that the human mind organized identical as well as unidentical sounds and that it drew no distinction between rhythmic and unrhythmic material, he could not also affirm the possibility of determining the existence of objective patterns in prose. In other words, if rhythm exists in the mind, it is impossible to discover what Tempest calls "rhythmical material". Prose rhythm exists either in the mind or on the page. One must accept a subjective or objective approach to rhythm; to combine both is not possible.

It is this principle which Tempest's second concept of rhythm violates. Rhythm, he stated, was "that arrangement of sounds in the material which stimulates the particular effect."[62] Since sounds created rhythm it was their relationship which had to be considered. To discover this relationship, he chose the criterion of stress, al although allowing tempo, duration and pitch relative importance. The initial vowel "e" of the word "cedar", he explained, possessed the same duration as the following unaccented vowel "a"; therefore, the rhythmical character of the word had to depend on stress. Tempest divided stress rhythm into two types, subjective and objective. Auditory rhythm was the organization of sound stimulated in the mind by the repetition of a series of auditory events (stresses) in time; speech rhythm was also primarily determined by stress. Again, it is necessary to recognize the incompatibility of Tempest's definitions. If, as he claimed, accentual rhythm existed objectively in words, the ear could not organize anything; it could only perceive the actual

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[62] Ibid., p. 7.

rhythm.

From the theory of accentual rhythm, Tempest derived two qualities of rhythm: variety and recurrence. In order to produce a good rhythm, he believed, the two had to maintain an approximate balance. Although repetition could be irregular, the possibility of rhythm would be eliminated if Saintsbury's theory of complete irregularity were accurate; although certain elements could recur, they could not be regular enough to arouse the reader's expectation. In other words, variation occurred, but it was not variation from a norm. This theory of the dual nature of prose has several, far-reaching implications. The following statement made by Tempest assumes that poetic and prose rhythms can be differentiated only by the extent to which they possess variety: "As soon as particular rhythms are expected in particular places we leave the realms of prose and enter those of metre."[63]

Tempest's theory of rhythm differs from Saintsbury's criteria of variety, however, in its emphasis on the creation and destruction of pattern. The rhythm of prose, said Tempest, "does not depend upon fidelity to a fixed pattern, but on the combined satisfaction and disappointment of the sense of pattern."[64] Such unexpectedness could be achieved by alternation between long and short feet and even more successfully by the sudden occurrence of a short foot after a series of longer feet. However, between Tempest's theory and his proof is a

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[63] Ibid., p. 16.

[64] Ibid., p. 44.

considerable gap. The majority of his analyses, particularly those concerned with the prose of Browne, Gibbon, Thackeray, and Pater, reveal simply that the avoidance of successions of the same feet produces variety. His analysis of a passage of Pater's prose chosen earlier by Saintsbury merely supports Saintsbury's conclusion that only once did two identical feet occur together. Seldom could Tempest point to the actual element of recurrence by which the mind supposedly organized groups of words into a rhythmical pattern.

Tempest's final analysis of rhythm again attempted to combine two contradictory theories. Two elements, he said, constituted the rhythm of English prose: prose rhythm, determined by stress, and cadence. Instead of Saintsbury's quantitative symbols "—" and "◡", he chose the accentual symbols, "/" and "\" to represent primary and secondary stress respectively. Like Saintsbury, Tempest maintained that in any sequence of speech sounds, syllables arranged themselves in groups, with a more definite separation between groups than between individual sounds composing the groups. However, Tempest maintained the necessity of logical grouping. Since grouping was regulated by the development of thought, divisions of sounds could occur only where similar divisions of thought occurred. To this statement, however, he added another which rejected logical groupings. He claimed that almost all groups of more than two strongly stressed syllables divided into separate feet, so that feet of more than one strong stress rarely occurred in ordinary prose. Consequently, in every foot, at least one strongly stressed syllable occurred around which weaker syllables grouped, although monosyllables frequently separated from surrounding

feet. The critic realizes at once, however, that none of these considerations relates to logical grouping. In fact, Tempest's analyses are based on the theory of sound division instead of the theory of logical division, for, in order to organize certain types of feet, his divisions constantly disrupt logical structures. Consider, for example, the following word groups:

> And these / were the first / rose-trees / and roses, / both white / and red, / that ever / any man / saw; / And thus / was this / maiden / saved / by the grace / of God. / And therefore / is that field / clept / the field / of God / flourished, / for it was full / of roses.[65]

If logical grouping actually predominated in this analysis, no noun would be separated from its verb when no phrases or clauses intervened, as it was in the phrase "any man / saw". Certain combinations would adhere logically, such as nouns joined by "and", adjectives joined by "and", and adjective and noun combinations, but Tempest's analysis contravenes each of these in the divisions of "rose-trees / and roses,/", "white / and red /", and "this / maiden".

Furthermore, by limiting the types of feet which accents could form, Tempest prevented the use of logical divisions. Only four types of combinations could occur. Rising rhythm, consisted of feet with an initial weakly stressed and a final strongly stressed syllable, as x/, xx/, or x//, xx//. The feet of a falling rhythm were arranged with stresses in the opposite order, as /x, /xx, or //x, //xx. In a waved

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[65] Ibid., p. 47.

rhythm, each foot began or ended with the same type of stress, as x/x, or /x/, while a level rhythm contained combinations of strong stresses only, as /, //, ///. When each group must form one of these rigid stress patterns, how, one wonders, can logical divisions predominate?

The scansion aspect of Tempest's method cannot yield valuable results because he failed to apply his conclusions. After scanning a passage and giving the frequency of each foot type, he advised students to compare the practices of different authors in the same way. One wonders whether Tempest is here suggesting that certain authors write only certain types of feet. However, he offered no reason for the suggestion.

Besides the element of scansion, Tempest relied on cadence to provide a further element of order within individual sentences and among groups of sentences. Cadence, according to Tempest, was not prose rhythm, but a term for special rhythmical sequences. Metrical in principle, these sequences differed from the metrical combinations of poetic and prose feet and, in good prose, did not recur systematically. But because English possessed a largely monosyllabic and disyllabic vocabulary, it could not readily accomodate the _cursus_. The majority of English cadences, unlike the Latin, began and ended with a strong stress and contained only two strong stresses. "Thus, there are many endings," said Tempest, "occurring frequently and possessing beauty and finish not inferior to the _cursus_, which, however, bear no resemblance to the _cursus_."[66] The most significant

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[66]_Ibid._, p. 82.

aspect of Tempest's theory, however, lay in his placing of the cursus. Cadence, he said, could begin at any point in the sentence, not necessarily with the beginning of a word, and, within the limits of its form, could contain any number of words. Because cadence was not restricted to the logical divisions which limited rhythmical groups, cadence and prose rhythm seldom corresponded. Like Clark, Tempest found many cadences included in what were considered ordinary prose feet. Tempest's scansion produced the following divisions:

> and with wrécks / of forgótten / delírium.[67]

But he discovered also a cursus tardus beginning in the middle of a foot: – gotten delirium.

Cadence, said Tempest, provided prose with the major element of recurrence. Both sentence and paragraph rhythm frequently derived from the alternation of strong and weak endings. To demonstrate the carefully balanced endings of a paragraph by Walter Pater, Tempest selected the cadences from each sentence.[68]

Sentence	Cadence	Pattern	Count
Sentence A,	cóme to desíre,	/xx/,	4-1
B,	líttle wéary,	/x/x,	4-2
C,	-quísite pássions,	/x/x,	4-2
D,	máladies has pássed,	/xxx/,	5-1
E,	síns of the Bórgias,	/xx/xx,	6-3
F,	éyelids and the hánds,	/xx/,	5-4-1
G,	módes of thóught and lífe,	/x/x/,	5-3-1
H,	módern idéa,	/xx/x,	5-2

[67] Ibid., p. 88.

[68] Ibid., p. 96.

The success of Tempest's approach, apart from its psychological aspect, depends on the assumption that the rhythm of prose is composed of cadence and prose rhythm, and that the two can be separately analyzed. But this is not a valid assumption. If cadences existed throughout a sentence and were not limited to the ends of phrases and clauses, as Tempest suggested, it would be impossible to distinguish them from prose feet which also pervade the sentence. Since the two types of patterns cannot co-exist, the scansion and cadence methods cannot be reconciled with each other. The critic must choose one or the other. Furthermore, the psychological approach proposes a subjective criterion which is completely incompatible with either of the other two. Tempest's adoption of all three approaches seems to indicate an admission that none of these approaches alone is sufficient to account for and explain prose rhythm. However, by combining all three theories of prose rhythm, he actually developed three contradictory approaches to prose.

Two contradictory conclusions have been reached by the approaches so far presented in this paper. According to psychological theories, rhythm cannot be objectively experienced; according to the two groups known as "timers" and "scanners", it can be experienced objectively. To the psychologist, rhythm is a subjective organization of impulses received from an external stimulus; to the scanners and timers, it is a definite pattern produced in prose itself by recurrence or variety or a combination of both. But even these theorists who agree on the basic nature of rhythm disagree on questions of methodology. To the scanners, rhythm depends on stress accents, while

to the timers it arises from time durations.

The impossibility of accepting all of these results is obvious. If prose rhythm exists objectively, it cannot be discovered by criterions so widely divergent and contradictory to each other. If rhythm is a subjective organization, as psychologists claim, it cannot be objectively determined, as scanners and timers argue. If, on the other hand, rhythm is objectively present in prose, it should be possible to analyze it rather than accept the psychologist's view that such analysis is impossible. Likewise, if rhythm is based only on stress, it cannot, at the same time, be based only on the repetition of equal time durations. If it is based on variety, it cannot also be based on recurrence, for one or the other must dominate. This is not to say that all of the preceding factors cannot co-exist in a rhythmical pattern, but simply that all of them cannot be the deciding factors of the rhythmical pattern.

What is the cause of this widespread discrepancy among the results? It appears to result primarily from the inductive nature of the approaches. All show a tendency to begin with the definition of rhythm, such as rhythm equals sound, or rhythm means variety, and then to force every type of prose into this definition, instead of analyzing all different types before forming a final definition. Secondly, it arises from the narrowness of the various methods. By limiting the analysis to a single factor prescribed by the definition and disregarding all others, each method is restricted to the one type of result allowed by the definition. This kind of approach cannot produce valid results, for rhythm is not created by one factor.

Although sound rhythm is controlled primarily by stress patterns, it is also controlled by the length of pauses and the duration of syllables, as well as by the relationships of words and word groups. To concentrate on one aspect, eliminating all others, is to distort the final theory of rhythm.

Thirdly, the widely varying results may be explained by the subjectivity of the approaches. Each tends to base conclusions solely on the reader's reactions to the text. For example, the psychologist's definition of rhythm as a subjective organization of irregular patterns of sound is based on the theory of Attention and Periodicity, a theory which maintains the alternation of periods of tension and relaxation in the observer's mind. According to this theory, the mind's experience of pleasure in the rhythmic flow of words derives from the repeated experience of muscular tension and relaxation. This type of approach deals with nerve reactions and the psychology of pleasure and pain. It cannot, however, provide a valid criterion for discussing prose because it fails to distinguish between a reaction to purely aesthetic material and a reaction to any other form of pleasurable activity. Therefore, psychological analysis cannot actually explain why individuals respond to particular sounds and sights. It simply observes that the reaction arises from some kind of pleasure or pain.

Likewise, the divisions of a text into rhythmical units made by both scanners and timers and the arrangement of stresses made by scanners were based solely on the amount of pleasure received by the ear. Saintsbury's criterion of "taste", the criterion of all

previously examined non-psychological approaches, emphasizes the subjective aspect of analysis and fails to consider prose as an objective construct of parts which cannot be measured by the preferences of the senses. Except for Baum's approach which restricts rhythmical units to logical divisions, all of the other approaches rely for their definition of rhythm on patterns which give a pleasurable sense of balance or repetition to the ear. However, the human mind, in any of the experiments performed by psychologists, showed little or almost no ability to recognize recurrent elements or to distinguish between similar and dissimilar impusles, whether auditory or visual. The fallibility of the senses is further confirmed by Classe's discovery that seven hundred different scansions could be produced from a single passage.

Since the mind is unreliable, only one possibility remains in the search for a reliable criterion of rhythm. Perhaps the scientific method, the use of mechanical instruments to test the rhythm of a passage, can eliminate subjectivity. The use of mechanical measurements is an attempt to ensure the complete objectivity of all results. It is based on the idea that the more exact the measurement, the more valid the conclusion. But the fact is that all such measurements and recordings are based on a reading done by one or several individuals. The machines can only record the basic speech rhythms produced by the individual whose interpretation of pauses and rate must be completely subjective. The mechanical approach is, therefore, incapable of producing a more objective, scientific analysis and is reduced, as are the other approaches, to an individual, subjective interpretation.

All such approaches are emotive. They attempt to derive a criterion for evaluating literature from the intuitive reactions of the invividual mind. That which gives pleasure is called rhythmical, and those arrangements of sound which give the mind pleasure are considered artistic.

To understand this approach more clearly, it may be valuable to examine it as it appears in the history of aesthetic criticism. The theory arises chiefly from a classical concept, expounded by Aristotle, in which beauty and pleasure are closely associated. In similar modern theories of art, most notably those of Santayana and Dewey, the observer approaches a work of art by examining his reactions to it. The standards of criticism as well as the particular quality of each work are based on the psychological effects of the art object. Although the theories dealt with in this paper do not refer to prose as art, nevertheless, they rely upon the same type of subjective approach as that of the aestheticians who consider art as experience. The impossibility of forming any definite criterion from an intuitive approach to prose is too clearly illustrated by the variety of criteria produced by both psychological and so-called literary theories.

Because the methods and the theories of the approaches so far studied have yielded no consistent results, it is impossible to regard their definitions of rhythm as tenable. The idea that repeated grammatical or sound patterns alone constitute rhythm in prose must therefore be rejected. Furthermore, since it is the word "rhythm" which has caused such confusion, it is clear that it too must be eliminated from the vocabulary of prose criticism. The fallacies and

confusions arising in the previously examined theories should be sufficient warning that prose cannot be approached by simply re-applying terminology from the other arts. That prose is a separate field of investigation which requires its own critical vocabulary should also be obvious from the failures of other approaches.

Despite their failures, can nothing be gained from the study of these approaches? Can nothing be salvaged from these theories on which to erect a more valid theory? Perhaps the answer may be found by searching for a common feature among them, by examining the basic hypothesis of each theory. It may be stated that only one fundamental characteristic exists among all of the approaches to prose rhythm. Various studies of rhythm are all attempts to discover some underlying principle of organization, some order which will explain why certain passages are written in certain ways and not in others. For Saintsbury, Croll, Clark, Tempest, and Lipsky, this order consists of alternative types of stress accents. For Griffith and Patterson, it consists of related time values. The theories are different. But the belief in the existence of this universal standard is common. If this mysterious principle can be found and applied to all prose, they believe, it will reveal the reason for differences between types of prose as well as the reason for their distinctive appeals to the reader.

No approach, however, has discovered this principle. In fact, the chief result of having studied various approaches to prose rhythm has been to show the impossibility of such a principle. For prose, unlike poetry, has no superimposed metrical or rhythmical pattern. Its basic unit is the sentence. If the idea of an imposed pattern is

rejected, it is obvious that the quality called rhythm must derive simply from the nature of the sentence itself, from the way in which the different parts of the sentence are "put together". This approach to rhythm offers a broad enough criterion to avoid the errors of prescriptive methods. Therefore, in order to examine prose as a structural entity, an entirely new method must be devised which will allow an objective as well as a subjective investigation of prose. The development of this method as well as the theory underlying it will be the chief concern of the rest of this paper.

III

PROSE AS ART

In order to develop a method of approaching prose, it is necessary, first of all, to determine the nature of prose. The approaches examined in the first part of this paper make two basic presuppositions about prose. They assume that it possesses a definite principle of order. The very topic of investigation--rhythm, and the frequent equation of rhythm with pattern, indicates that the search for rhythm is a search for a definite principle of organization. Furthermore, the types of analysis, the search for musical effects and cadence, for stress patterns, for equal syllabic durations and time intervals, presupposes the existence of a highly contrived medium. In fact, the limitation of prose analysis to basically poetic terms implies a willingness to regard poetry and prose as similar media. Secondly, all of the approaches are based on the fact that the senses are, in some way, affected by reading or hearing prose. If the senses did not produce muscular reactions, the psychological theory of rhythm could never have been formulated; if the ear did not receive pleasure from certain arrangements of sound, the scansion theory would never have arisen. When these approaches recognize that prose is a structural medium capable of eliciting the reader's response, they are actually recognizing its aesthetic nature. It is their refusal to act upon

this implicit principle that causes their failures. Instead of regarding prose as an artistic, literary creation, they view it as an artifact, a product produced by deliberate craft.

Can prose, then, be validly regarded as art? This question must be answered primarily because of a view, widely accepted among aestheticians, that prose is not art or that it is art only in so far as it incorporates poetic devices. Furthermore, the tendency among literary critics to discuss poetry in aesthetic terms while disregarding prose, implies either that they do not consider prose as art or that they do not know how to discuss it on an aesthetic basis. Whether one or the other is true, the fact remains that prose is not recognized as art.

Parker's The Principles of Aesthetics explained the first view—that prose is not art. Prose, he claimed, cannot be considered one of the fine arts because "there is a conspicuous absence of beauty of form and sensation, of the decorative, in comparison with the other arts. The vague expressiveness and charm of the medium, the musical aspect, is largely lacking."[1] Coupled with this criticism is a concept of prose which has done much to prevent its being considered as art:

> ...in prose, the medium tends to be transparent, sacrificing itself in order that nothing may stand between what it reveals to thought and the imagination. It fulfills its function when the words are not unpleasant to the ear, and when their flow, adapting itself to the span and pulsation of the attention, is so smooth as to become unnoticeable, ...when it is a means to an end, not an end in itself.[2]

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[1] De Witt H. Parker, The Principles of Aesthetics, (Second ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1946), p. 185.

[2] Ibid., p. 185.

Prose, he concluded, in incompletely beautiful. It cannot be considered art in the same sense as can poetry, painting, sculpture, music, and architecture, where the medium itself is most significant.

Closely allied to this theory is Santayana's concept of prose as "watered-down" poetry. Poetic language, claimed Santayana, is intrinsically valuable and beautiful because it stimulates the emotions, while prose merely conveys information:

> When use has worn down a poetic phrase to its external import, and rendered it an indifferent symbol for a particular thing, that phrase has become prosaic; it has also become, by the same process, transparent and purely instrumental. In poetry feeling is transferred by contagion; in prose it is communicated by bending the attention upon determinate objects; the one stimulates and the other informs.[3]

In order to understand the implications of these and similar theories, it will be helpful to examine some of the reasons which have led aestheticians to reject prose as a fundamental art form. The most obvious reason is summarized by Susanne Langer in <u>Feeling and Form</u>:

> The reason why literature is a standard academic pursuit lies in the very fact that one can treat it as something else than art. Since its normal material is language, and language is, after all, the medium of discourse, it is always possible to look at a literary work as an assertion of facts and opinions, that is, as a piece of discursive symbolism functioning in the usual communicative way.[4]

In other words, because of the similarity between spoken and

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[3]George Santayana, <u>Reason in Art</u>, (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 71.

[4]Susanne K. Langer, <u>Feeling and Form</u>, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 208.

written prose, and because prose seems "natural", the reader assumes that it must have been written spontaneously. Who, for example, on first reading the following excerpt from Hemingway's prose, would believe that skill or labour had gone into its composition? Critics call this good prose, but it sounds like ordinary conversation.

> He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish. In the first forty days a boy had been with him. But after forty days without a fish the boy's parents had told him that the old man was now definitely and finally salao, which is the worst form of unlucky, and the boy had gone at their orders in another boat which caught three good fish the first week. It made the boy sad to see the old man come in each day with his skiff empty and he always went down to help him carry either the coiled lines or the gaff and harpoon and the sail that was furled around the mast. The sail was patched with flour sacks, and, furled, it looked like a flag of permanent defeat.[5]

It is difficult, too, to think of prose as art when almost everything we read and hear, such as highway signs, recipes, instructions for planting a garden, newspapers, letters, and ordinary conversation, exists in prose form.

The second type of objection to considering prose as art is based on a distinction between poetry and prose. Certain aestheticians assume that all art must reveal a complex structure consisting of certain traditional features, such as harmony, balance, symmetry, and so on. But most types of prose, even upon close examination, do not disclose the obvious artistic effects, such as rhyme, metre, or frequent figures of speech which contribute greatly to poetic beauty. Nor does prose reveal the rigid controlling form, common to the other

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[5]Ernest Hemingway, The Old Man and The Sea, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 9.

arts, which can be objectively outlined in bars, feet, lines, or colours. It is possible, for example, to discuss most English poetry in terms of a basic iambic pentameter pattern. A poem's technical value can be estimated by examining how the basic pattern is created and destroyed. It is possible also to discuss a painting in terms of its form, its symmetrical colouring and design, in general, its treatment of a basic pattern. Each of these arts possesses a universal pattern which the artist uses as a foundation for his individual expression. But what can be said about the basic pattern of prose except that it does not consist of metre or musical notes?

According to many aestheticians, the only function of prose is to instruct. Since prose is not artistically created, they claim, and yet still presents a medium of thought, it must be considered a transparent medium whose appeal is restricted to the intellect. They insist that all art must exert a definite sensual appeal, an appeal which begins with aural or visual perceptions and proceeds to a deeper aesthetic awareness. Prose, however, shows a definite lack of sensual appeal; without this sensual element, it cannot produce an aesthetic experience. How, they ask, can prose be considered art when it does not exercise over the observer the same type of influence as the other arts?

But perhaps the greatest disadvantage to the establishment of prose as art is the lack of a clear definition for the term "prose". The term "poetry" implies the existence of certain qualities; to be considered "poetry", a passage must fulfill certain requirements which are technical, aesthetic, and emotional. The word "prose", however,

includes no such critical implications. It simply describes a way of writing in sentences. There are no specific terms to distinguish between prose which qualifies as artistic and that which does not. Everything written in sentences is collected under the general heading of prose. Newspapers, magazines, letters, and even cooking instructions are called prose, although artistic arrangement of any kind is absent. It is this double nature of prose, its ability to form artistic structures on the one hand, and to provide a purely straightforward, unartistic medium on the other, which has constantly confused theorists as to the actual nature of prose.

In order to determine the validity of the objections presented, it is necessary to examine each theory individually. The first objection claims that, on the basis of the similarity of much spoken and written prose, as well as ordinary newspaper and literary prose, it is impossible to consider prose as art. The problem with this criticism is that it considers all prose as the same kind of medium. Actually it claims that, because all prose is not art, no prose can be considered art. But no one would claim that all prose is art. Instructions on an income tax form or on a highway sign are not art, even though they fulfill their basic function of instructing the reader. This is not to say that works created for a specific end, for example, a sermon, cannot still be art, but in all utilitarian works, it is more likely that the end aimed at, rather than the desire for artistic expression, will control the nature of the work. For the purpose in the author's mind will determine the kind of work he produces. Since the purpose of a document or a sign is to give

information as simply and clearly as possible, artistic effects would necessarily obstruct, or be irrelevant to, the chief purpose of that document or sign. How absurd would it be to discover the instructions on a Campbell's soup can written in formalized diction, periodic sentence structure, similes, and alliteration. Instead of the directions: "Empty soup into a saucepan and stir. Add one full can of water, a little at a time, stirring constantly", one might read: "Into a metallic receptacle, to which the volume of this vessel has been introduced, intermittently add a single measure of moisture." The language is ridiculous simply because it is totally opposed to the type of message the writer is trying to convey--how to heat the soup. The form is separate from the meaning, and, while the meaning attempts to express a simple message, the form creates rhetorical effects appropriate to an oration. Obviously, didactic prose is restricted to simple instruction and must, therefore, be excluded from the field of art.

As for the more serious criticism which points to the similarity between conversational and literary prose, let us consider once again the passage from Hemingway's The Old Man and The Sea. The impression received from the passage is one of almost child-like simplicity. But upon closer examination, it is possible to discover that this impression is due to the repetition of certain words, such as "and", particularly in sentence four: "either the coiled lines or the gaff and harpoon and the sail". Often the subject of the sentence is repeated several times. In sentence one, it is the word "he"; in sentence two, "the first forty days" is echoed in sentence three "But after forty days".

What Hemingway has actually done is to expand each idea into a separate word, so that what might have been said in few words, such as "either the coiled lines or the gaff, harpoon and sail furled around the mast", is expanded to give a "padded" effect. The simple addition of "and" before "harpoon" and a separate clause after "sail" creates a string of nouns, each surrounded by one or more modifiers. It is obvious that the passage is highly contrived, for the same characteristics could not appear so regularly if the author had written without a conscious plan. The child-like simplicity of the passage is, therefore, a deliberate effect.

The second objection to prose as art derives from those theories which consider prose on the same basis as the other arts. Let us consider the criticism that prose lacks artistic effects. One might at first be tempted to argue by pointing to the elaborate prose styles of Browne, Donne, or Ruskin, with their musical and rhetorical effects, to prove the artistic nature of prose. But this is judging prose by the same criterion as those who made the objection; it is regarding prose as art only when it contains certain recognizable features. Artistic effects alone, however, cannot create a work of art. A poem's value does not depend on the number of times metaphors, similes, alliterations, and other figures of speech occur. These are devices for heightening the poet's expression, and although they do form part of the total artistic design, figures of speech alone cannot be considered the sign of a work of art.

According to a similar objection, prose lacks a definite pattern. The basic misunderstanding of this criticism is its confusion

of the words form and pattern. Prose and poetry have form, but prose cannot usually be described as having a pattern. Although the poet and the prose writer work with the basic sentence form, the poet often imposes upon this a rigid foot pattern; the prose writer, however, must create his own devices of arrangement. His form must develop only from the specific purpose of each individual work. In no way can it be prescribed. The form of prose is, therefore, much more difficult to discover since there is no single standard pattern with which to compare the individual's arrangement. But it is not valid to conclude that because prose lacks the rigid metrical scheme of poetry, it therefore lacks definite form.

One of the most damaging concepts of prose is Santayana's theory that poetry delights and prose instructs. For, not only does it limit all varieties of prose to one basic type, but also categorizes literature according to its effect of the reader. Like all categorizations, however, it fails, simply because of its narrowness. Poetry does not only delight; prose does not only instruct. If poetry is art, it expresses the poet's experience of life, both emotional and intellectual, and may encourage the reader to develop a greater awareness of certain aspects of life. To reduce this entire experience to a matter of delight is to disregard the fact that poetry teaches by allowing the reader insight into the poet's experience.

Similarly, although prose often instructs, it does not lack the novelty and beauty which delight both ear and mind. Compare, for example, the following translations of I Corinthians 13: 4-6, the first from the King James Version and the second from the Amplified New

Testament:

King James Version

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

Amplified New Testament

4 Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy; is not boastful nor vain glorious, does not display itself haughtily.
5 It is not conceited--arrogant and inflated with pride; it is not rude, and does not act unbecomingly. Love does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it--pays no attention to a suffered wrong.
6 It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness but rejoices when right and truth prevail.

Both passages have the same aim--to instruct. But the first delights, while the second, by sacrificing beauty of language to clarity of meaning, loses much of its power to delight.

Closely linked with the previous theory is the idea that poetry is emotional, sensuous expression, and prose, intellectual, logical expression. This theory, however, is based entirely on the emotional reactions of the observer. Literary criticism cannot be concerned with the nature and analysis of aesthetic experience itself; but it can establish the fact that the distinction between emotion and intellect is false. For the expression of a thought in words is never a direct expression; it is filtered through the peculiar emotion connected with that thought in the author's mind.

> Thus, when one person expounds his thought in words to another, what he is directly and immediately doing is to express to his hearer the peculiar emotion with which he thinks it, and persuade

> him to think out this emotion for himself, that is, to rediscover for himself a thought which, when he has discovered it, he recognizes as the thought whose peculiar emotion tone the speaker has expressed.[6]

The difference between the two media is not that one appeals to emotions and the other to the intellect. It depends on the way in which this appeal is made. The poet may use musical effects which the prose writer cannot, but prose exploits parallel structure, balance of clauses, phrases and words, as well as harmonious arrangements of syllables, letters and sounds, in a way which is totally outside the scope of poetry. Moreover, since the design of poetry consists of a succession of "lines" which are usually incomplete or fragmented sentences, poetry relies more heavily upon sound effects to coordinate groups of words in which the grammatical or logical connection is sometimes obscure.

Since prose, however, does not consist of lines, and since its construction is usually more obviously logical, it has less need of sensual elements. Prose, therefore, does not affect the senses in the same manner as poetry. But it is not valid, on this basis, to dismiss prose from the field of art, for it is possible that prose affects the reader in a completely different way from other art forms.

It is obvious that each of the objections to the artistic nature of prose is based on a misconception of prose. Because prose is a medium capable of conveying, by its form alone, individual feeling, it is therefore possible to consider it as art. However,

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[6] R. G. Collingwood, The Principles of Art, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 267.

because prose does not conform to many criteria derived from the other arts, it cannot be approached by their standards. To attempt to discover in prose certain features common to other art forms, such as rhythm, metre, symmetry, or balance, is to impose a completely alien system of values upon prose. Some types of prose will, if analyzed, disclose these features, but they will necessarily exist in a far different form than in the other arts. It is not possible for critics to devise a language of criticism for painting by discussing metre and rhythm in a portrait. Nor can they devise a valid language of poetic criticism by referring to colour patterns in a poem. For, although the arts possess certain fundamental elements in common, they are also separate, each having its individual forms and qualities. Just as it is necessary to discuss poetry and painting, sculpture and music from four different viewpoints, so it is essential to approach prose with criteria based on its individual nature.

To understand the nature of artistic prose, it is necessary to distinguish between it and prose that is not artistic. Obviously there can be no simple rule for deciding what is art and what is not. But perhaps the greatest difficulty in attempting such a distinction lies in the problem raised by essay prose and simple narrative prose which is considered good literature, but appears to be only natural, colloquial language. If the prose essays of Dryden and Eliot or the simple narrative works of Defoe and Swift are considered artistic, why is it that ordinary essays, newspaper articles, or business letters—the prose of straightforward, direct statement—are not considered in the same way? Perhaps this question can be partially answered by

another question. Why is it that one can imitate all of the devices and forms of a great writer without creating a work of art such as he has produced? For example, I may write a paragraph containing two rhetorical questions, one periodic sentence, and three parallel sentences, exactly as they are found in a passage of Dryden's prose. But I can produce neither the artistic quality nor the beauty of language, nor the same effect as that achieved by Dryden. Good literature, therefore, must involve something more than the imposition of poetic effects and the careful placing together of certain types of words, phrases and sentences. In other words, craft alone is not art.

But does craft enter into the writing of good prose? Since training and skill are required to produce clear, well-constructed sentences, and since certain principles of good writing must be observed, such as varied sentence structure and length, coherent organization of words, phrases and clauses, and the proper placing of emphatic points, prose may readily be understood as "craft". Craft, to the Greeks and Romans meant "...the power to produce a preconceived result by means of consciously controlled and directed action".[7] It implied the existence of a definite end or effect to be achieved and certain means of attaining that end. The composition of poetry and prose was considered "manipulation" of the audience, the use of certain standard practices which would inevitably produce on the audience the desired effect. The practice or means was important only in so far as it produced the proper result, for, as Collingwood explains,

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[7]*Ibid.*, p. 15.

the philosophy of craft "...involves a distinction between planning and execution. The result to be obtained is preconceived or thought out before being arrived at. The craftsman knows what he wants to make before he makes it. This foreknowledge is absolutely indispensable to craft."[8]

The aim of craft is to bring the reader into certain desired states of mind. In English, there are certain arrangements of words which have certain definite effects on the reader. For example, the placing together of two related ideas in a parallel structure with close correspondence between certain words and sounds, makes the reader's perception of thought both surprising and enjoyable. Since such an arrangement cannot be produced in English without careful planning, its constant recurrence in English is a sign of highly contrived prose. Consider the following excerpts from great artistic prose of several different centuries, noticing how in each century the same basic parallel arrangement recurs constantly. The Senecan style of the Bible, particularly the New Testament, is filled with parallelisms, such as are found in I Corinthians 4: 12-13: "Being reviled, we bless, being persecuted, we suffer it; Being defamed, we intreat."

Even in the Augustan prose of the Eighteenth Century, which emphasized simple and plain diction, parallelism constantly forms the basic sentence structure. The following passage is taken at random from The Spectator, but this same structure may be found on almost every page of Addison's prose.

What this learned gentleman supposes in speculation, I

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[8] Ibid., p. 15.

> have known actually verified in practice. The cat-call has struck a damp into generals, and frightened heroes off the stage. At the first sound of it I have seen a crowned head tremble, and a princess fall into fits. The humorous Lieutenant himself could not stand it; nay, I am told that even Almanzor looked like a mouse, and trembled at the voice of this terrifying instrument.[9]

In the second half of the Eighteenth Century, it is difficult to discover much good prose that is not written almost entirely in parallel structures. The following passage from Samuel Johnson is one of the least elaborate examples of parallelism.

> Why this wild strain of imagination found reception so long in polite and learned ages, it is not easy to conceive; but we cannot wonder that while readers could be procured, the authors were willing to continue it; for when a man had by practice gained some fluency of language, he had no further care than to retire to his closet, let loose his invention, and heat his mind incredibilities; a book was thus produced without fear of criticism, without the toil of study, without knowledge of nature, or acquaintance with life.[10]

Nineteenth-Century prose made a greater effort to obscure its basic parallel structure. Despite Melville's attempt to disguise his constant reliance on parallel structure, careful examination of the following passage will reveal the existence of parallels beneath a seemingly loose, colloquial style.

> The twain raised the felled one from the loins up into a sitting position. The spare form flexibly acquiesced, but inertly. It was like handling a dead snake. They lowered it back. Regaining erectness Captain Vere with one hand covering his face stood to all appearance as impassive as

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[9]Joseph Addison, The Spectator, No. 409, June 19, 1712, in Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose, ed. L. I. Bredvold et al, (4th ed.; New York: Ronald Press Co., 1956), p. 298.

[10]Samuel Johnson, The Rambler, No. 4, March 31, 1750, in Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose, p. 688.

> the object at his feet. Was he absorbed in taking in all the bearings of the event and what was best, not only now at once to be done, but also in the sequel? Slowly he uncovered his face, and the effect was as if the moon emerging from eclipse should reappear with quite another aspect than that which had gone into hiding. The father in him, manifested toward Billy thus far in the scene, was replaced by the military disciplinarian.[11]

It is impossible to regard such intricate contrivance as an accident, or even, as some aestheticians maintain, as unconsciously produced by the writer's "genius". Certain authors, perhaps, automatically produce artistic prose without careful and deliberate thought. Not only is this rare, but when it occurs, is the result of several years of training and practice.

All prose is, in one sense, craft. By contrivance, it attempts to persuade the reader into a certain state of mind. However, this view of prose as craft in incomplete, for many writers are capable of using craft, but few ever produce art. To produce an artifact, therefore, is not to create art; an artifact is "...merely a combination of material parts, or a modification of a natural object to suit human purposes."[12] Parallel structure may be considered craft simply because it is a device, a ready-made form which can be imposed upon words. This is not a creation, but an arrangement of words in a given way.

A work of art is more than an arrangement of given objects. Great artistic powers may produce good works of art even though the technique is defective, but even the most polished technique cannot

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[11] Herman Melville, "Billy Budd", in Billy Budd and Other Tales, (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 59.

[12] S. Langer, Feeling and Form, p. 40.

produce good art in their absence. This is why poets and prose writers over the centuries have continued to use the same language and the same devices to produce great art. Devices such as antithesis, parallelism, periodic sentence form, cadence, and metrical effects, although they have been used countless times, can always be re-used, because the writer of artistic prose constantly transforms the universal form into his individual pattern of thought.

Consider, for example, the passage from Melville's "Billy Budd". The use of parallel structure is unobtrusive and appears as natural, conversational narrative. Looking closely at the passage, however, it is possible to see that in each place where parallelism occurs, it is camouflaged by the addition of an intervening clause or phrase between the two parallel members. In sentence eight, the clause "manifested toward Billy thus far in the scene" obstructs the obvious parallelism of "the father in him...was replaced by the military disciplinarian". Contrivance or craft occurs throughout the passage in the form of parallelism; however, it is the way in which this parallelism is used that determines the artistic quality of the prose. For, artistic activity does not depend on ready-made form; it creates language. And what Melville has done by thrusting in several clauses is to fragment the rigid parallel structure, and to create a new language which moves far beyond the use of parallel structures. It is obvious, then, that prose art consists of craft and the elements of creativity.

To discover more clearly how prose art may be approached, it is necessary to investigate the nature of the basic unit of prose—

the sentence. It is the function of language to mean, to express thought. Specific words may have specific meanings, but an intelligible thought can be expressed only by placing these words in certain, definite relationships to each other. An uninflected language such as English cannot express these relationships through word endings but only through the positions in which words occur. But all positions in the sentence are not equally important. Words at the beginning and end of the sentence and those immediately before or after lesser punctuation, such as commas or semi-colons, are heard and seen first by the reader and are therefore more likely to exert a stronger influence on his mind. It is this principle of emphasis, the placing of important words in important places, which determines the meaning of a sentence. It is the order, not the form of words, which dictates the character of English.

Because of this emphasis on order, a conventional sentence structure has formed in which each word or word group has its specific place. The way in which thought can be expressed in English has been gradually stabilized by the constant use of a subject-verb-object pattern with each grammatical unit surrounded by its proper modifiers. When words constantly recur in identical linguistic structures, that is, when the same syntactical pattern expresses every thought, the implication is that all thoughts have the same value and significance. This is a failure of emphasis and therefore a failure to place words in their proper relationships. The difference between prose art and ordinary prose, in which every sentence occurs in the same form, is that prose art involves a constant departure from the linguistic norm.

No work of art consists only of abstract patterns. A musician does not compose in ascending or descending order the notes of the scale, but puts them into an arrangement that he himself chooses. In the same way, the prose writer's arrangement of words expresses a particular intention. Is there a factor which determines an artist's use of one form over another? The use of any arrangement of words is the expression of thought in a particular, individual form. In other words, the way in which one speaks or writes reflects his orientation. Every writer's characteristic manner of conveying experience is related to his attitude toward the mind's process of acquiring knowledge. The writer, therefore, tends to exploit certain linguistic resources in characteristic ways, and his preference for certain syntactic structures is a habit of meaning which reveals something about his mode of conceiving experience. Frequent use of a particular pattern, such as parallelism, to evoke similarities, symbolizes the writer's thought and his own way of interpreting experience. For, the purpose of artistic prose is not simply to communicate a certain idea in the simplest, clearest way, but to convey it in a particular way, a way which embodies the actual patterns of the author's thought.

On the basis of this theory of prose, an approach will be erected which will attempt to treat prose not merely as craft, by searching for special contrived effects. For this is the approach which prevented theorists such as Saintsbury, Griffith, Clark and their contemporaries from forming a tenable theory of prose. This part of the approach will deal with prose as a structural complex in which certain concrete elements exist in objective relationships, and

will study the relationships between words, phrases, clauses and sentences. It will deal only with the technical aspect of prose, and will attempt to discover an objectively existing pattern, if one exists, which expresses the writer's unique way of conceiving experience. For, if we understand that art is a concrete, structural complex, and that aesthetic appreciation is grasping the nature of the elements in relation to each other, any valid approach to prose as art must abstract and examine these elements in the order constituted by such relations.

But art has another side. Besides existing as an objective form, it must communicate to others. For "what language gives us directly", says Prall, "is only words, conventional symbols, the meaning of which is to be found only in concrete, non-verbal content."[13] Through the work of art, observer and artist come into a direct relationship in which the artist compels the observer to interpret certain things in certain ways. Since prose is a form of language consisting of patterns of thought, its structure must be arranged so that the reader will think as the writer wants him to. The arrangement of words must evoke from the reader a certain response. To understand this relationship between reader and writer, a more subjective approach must be adopted. For one cannot "experience" prose by analyzing certain arrangements of words. The second part of the approach will, therefore, attempt to suggest why some prose is constructed in one way and some in another, and why a writer chooses

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[13]D. W. Prall, Aesthetic Analysis, (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1936), p. 164.

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a particular form of expression.

In one respect, prose must be considered not only as expression but also as persuasion. Language as art involves that fundamental element which propels the reader's mind onward from word to word. Furthermore, certain structures persuade the reader to think in a particular way to the exclusion of all other ways by initiating in his mind certain cognitive and emotional processes which encourage a particular organization of experience. To understand how the writer thus persuades, the critic must turn his attention to emotion as well as to epistemic choice.

All artistic language is a play of contrasts. It involves the opposition between a conventional pattern and the device which suddenly disrupts the pattern, between the linguistic norm and stylistic device, between the expected form and the unexpected form. The greatness of the artist lies in his ability to repeat a certain syntactic arrangement of words to the point where the reader becomes accustomed to it and expects it to continue, and suddenly to interrupt this pattern, thus frustrating the reader's expectations and surprising him with an unexpected, yet more pleasing, element. The effectiveness of the contrast between the context and the interrupting device is in direct proportion to its degree of unpredictability. "And since predictability is what makes elliptic decoding sufficient for the reader, <u>inescapable elements will have to be unpredictable</u>."[14]

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[14]Michael Riffaterre, "Criteria for Style Analysis", in <u>Essays on the Language of Literature</u>, ed. Seymour Chatman and Samuel R. Levin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1967), p. 416.

Postponement of subject or verb, for example, heightens unpredictability to its maximum. Prose written successfully in this way forces the reader's mind to function in a completely different way than it would normally. This is true also of the periodic sentence. The reader must keep in mind the verb before he can identify the subject. Consider, for example, the following sentence from Henry James' The Wings of the Dove, in which the reader is forced to retain a number of connected ideas in his mind before the sentence can be understood.

> The idea of his frivolity had, no doubt, to do with his personal designation, which represented—as yet, for our young woman, a little confusedly—a connection with an historic patriciate, a class that, in turn also confusedly, represented an affinity with a social element that she had never heard otherwise described than as 'fashion'.[15]

These interruptions reduce reading speed so that the attention lingers on the sudden intrusion. Richard Ohmann in his essay, "Prolegomena to the Analysis of Prose Style", explains the psychological reasons behind this phenomenon:

> A sentence, at its inception, raises questions rather than answering them. The first word or two may limit the field of possible things-to-be-said, but they do not really transmit information. They may name something, or set an attitude toward something, or indicate a shift in direction from a previous sentence, but they always give rise to questions such as 'What about it?' These demands for completion of a sequence are of course subverbal; they are the vaguest sort of dissatisfaction with suspended thought, with a rational process not properly concluded. As the sentence progresses some of the demands are satisfied, others deferred, others complicated, and meanwhile new ones are created. But with the end of the sentence comes a kind

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[15]Henry James, The Wings of the Dove, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1965), p. 124.

> of balance which results from something having been <u>said</u>. There may be a new set of indefinite expectations which remain for future sentences to gratify or disappoint, but one circle is completed, one temporary equilibrium gained. So prose builds on the emotional force of coming to know, of pinning down part of what has previously been formless and resolving the tensions which exist between the human organism and unstructured experience.[16]

In the light of these observations the term "prose rhythm" must be reconsidered. It now signifies the movement of the mind from word to word as it is halted by unexpected elements or forced onward by the expectation of fulfillment. In fact, the previous discussion of the structure of prose and the artist's manner of controlling the reader's mind has actually been a discussion of the concept of rhythm. But since the word has been abandoned, perhaps it is best, on the basis of discoveries about the construction of prose, to replace it with the word "movement". This term retains the disadvantage of the word "rhythm" because it connotes musical form, but, on the other hand, it does not imply repetition; moreover, it conveys the idea of the mind actually moving from word to word. In this sense, it is actually closer to the meaning of the term "prose rhythm".

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[16] Richard Ohmann, "Prolegomena to the Analysis of Prose Style", in <u>Essays on the Language of Literature</u>, p. 410.

IV

AN APPLICATION OF THE THEORY

In the previous chapter an approach to prose art was outlined. Consisting of two interrelated aspects, it proposes, first of all, to examine the structures of several passages of prose in order to determine their patterns of composition and the particular philosophies which dictated these patterns. This aspect of the method will be modelled on an essay by Morris Croll entitled "The Baroque Style in Prose", which appears to be the first attempt to regard structure as the key to the writer's epistemology. Croll's approach is therefore concerned only with the objective nature of prose. The second and more subjective aspect of the approach will attempt to go beyond Croll's theory by suggesting the reader's reactions to these structural patterns. By combining both of these aspects, it is hoped that a comprehensive view of prose art may be developed.

Let us first consider Croll's approach. Committed to the stylistic theory, Croll regarded literature as the relation of form and content, and literary criticism as the explication of their interdependence. Admitting that a full description of baroque prose would necessarily include elements of diction, rhythm, and sentence form, Croll stated that, as sentence form determined all other elements, it alone would be examined. By investigating what he considered the

three aspects of sentence form--the manner of progression, syntactic connectives and general structure--as they occurred in baroque prose, he attempted to describe its specific form.

By comparing Ciceronian and baroque prose according to their methods of progression, Croll found two contrary sets of features. Ciceronian prose developed logically, each member joined by connectives to the preceding one. Baroque prose, on the other hand, did not follow a logical progression. Its members stood farther apart than in a Ciceronian sentence, were not usually linked by syntactic connectives, and when connectives occurred, they bound the members together in a very loose structure. Within this general class of baroque prose, Croll discovered two variations which he termed "curt" and "loose" styles.

In the following example of the "curt" style, "No armor can defend a fearful heart. It will kill itself, within." (Felltham)[1], the first member was a self-contained and complete statement of the entire sentence. Successive members adopted a new tone or emphasis, but each expressed the original idea. It was not a logical progression in which each member contributed something further to the original idea, for, with completion of the first member, there was nothing more to be said. At the end of the sentence, the author was still stating the same idea as at the beginning. Browne, Felltham, and South, for example, often wrote sentences of two members connected by "and", "or",

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[1]Morris Croll, "The Baroque Style in Prose", in Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm, ed. J. Max Patrick et al (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 211.

or "nor", a progression which allowed conjunctions no logical "plus" force, but limited them to connecting two expressions of the same idea. "Their advance", said Croll, "is wholly in the direction of a more vivid imaginative realization."[2] As opposed to the logical movement of Ciceronian prose, therefore, baroque prose revealed an imaginative progression. In fact, Croll described the baroque movement as "spiral", for it involved a "revolving and upward motion of the mind as it rises in energy, and views the same point from new levels."[3]

On the other hand, the "loose" style, said Croll, was characteristic of Bacon and Pascal. An antithesis was stated in the opening members; then the second part of the antithesis extended a dependent member, so that the sentence was forced to discover a syntactic method of continuing and completing its idea. To do this, an absolute participle construction was used which suddenly resumed the original antithetical idea. Croll quoted the following example from Bacon's Of The Advancement of Learning:

> For as knowledges are now delivered, there is a kind of contract of error between the deliverer and the receiver: for he that delivereth knowledge desireth to deliver it in such form as may be best believed, and not as may be best examined; and he that receiveth knowledge desireth rather present satisfaction than expectant inquiry; and so rather not to doubt than not to err: glory making the author not to lay open his weakness, and sloth making the disciple not to know his strength.[4]

Words which ordinarily functioned as connecting links and created a

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[2] Ibid., p. 218.

[3] Ibid., p. 219.

[4] Ibid., p. 220.

logical progression, such as "and", "but", and "for", allowed the mind to proceed from the point it had reached, but did not necessarily refer back to any particular point in the preceding member. Although the loose style used conjunctions to join ideas logically, it also relaxed the rigid construction which they enforced. They separated the members they joined as much as possible, and were therefore forced to carry greater length and weight than ordinary conjunctions. The use of these connectives was illustrated by a single sentence from Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*:

> I could never perceive any rational consequence from those many texts which prohibit the children of Israel to pollute themselves with the temples of the heathens; we being all Christians, and not divided by such detested impieties *as* might profane our prayers, or the place wherein we make them; *or that* a resolved conscience may not adore her Creator anywhere, *especially* in places devoted to his service; *where*, if their devotions offend him, mine may please him; if theirs profane it, mine may hallow it.[5]

The arrangement of Ciceronian prose was referred to as round or circular. Each member was so arranged according to a central, climactic member that all pointed forward or backward to it. The sentence, therefore, usually reached its height of expansion and emphasis in the middle or just beyond, and ended composedly. The baroque style, on the other hand, was often described as a chain, whose links joined end to end in a lineal progression. Each member depended, not on the general idea or the main word of the preceding member, but upon its final word or phrase, so that each of the parts preserved its own emphasis and independence from the rest of the

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 223.

sentence.

Croll discovered that, while the most significant aspect of conventional or classical art, like that of the Sixteenth Century, was the symmetrical arrangement of the balanced parts of a design, the mark of a modernistic art, like that of the Seventeenth Century, was the symmetrical arrangement of unbalanced or unlike parts. He described it as "the love of some strangeness in the proportions."[6] The most striking quality of baroque prose, then, was its "asymmetry", as opposed to the symmetrical designs of oratorical prose. This sentence from Bishop Hall,

> What if they [crosses and adversities] be unpleasant? They are physic: it is enough, if they be wholesome[7],

possessed a variation among members which nevertheless produced the effect of balance. The desired effect of baroque prose, however, was more often produced by an obvious difference of form and length among its members.

Asymmetry was often achieved by a succession of members with different subjects. A sentence could begin, for example, with two members containing personal subjects and conclude with a member containing an impersonal subject. Often, each new member would involve a mental shift to a new subject. Although successive members were often asymmetrical, they sometimes began with the same word or form of words, such as the same pronoun subject. Thus, said Croll, they introduced elements of symmetry, parallelism, and regularity

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[6] Ibid., p. 213.
[7] Ibid., p. 213.

into a style whose design was contrary to such forms. However, members beginning with this suggestion of oratorical pattern usually destroyed it in the following words. Except for their beginnings, they were asymmetrical, and revealed that constant novelty and unexpectedness characteristic of the baroque style.

By examining the structural peculiarities of this style, Croll formulated a theory of Baroque prose based on the creation and destruction of symmetry. He discovered that "...out of the struggle between a fixed pattern and an energetic forward movement, [baroque art] often arrives at those strong and expressive disproportions in which it delights."[8] From this theory, Croll was able to proceed to an understanding of the philosophy which prompted Seventeenth-Century writers to create the structural forms they used. It is necessary to follow Croll's method through this second stage in order to examine how these structural forms reflect the writer's orientation.

To determine how baroque prose reflected a writer's manner of thinking, Croll related its general structure to a definite philosophy. Why, he asked, did the writer use this particular form? What impression was he trying to convey by using an asymmetrical style based on a contrast between fixed pattern and movement? Croll's answer to this question involved the baroque theory of beauty. The baroque form, he said, was a rejection of the classical ideal of formal beauty. By omitting several of the steps by which roundness and smoothness of composition were achieved and by deliberately avoiding the processes

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[8] Ibid., p. 226.

of mental revision, the baroque writer expressed his idea when it was nearer to its original form in his mind. This theory did not simply encourage carelessness; it expressed a creed which was "philosophical and artistic".[9] The structure of baroque prose portrayed a mind thinking rather than a finished thought, for many Seventeenth-Century writers believed that an idea separated from the act of experiencing it was not the idea that was experienced. Unless the idea could be conveyed to another mind in a form similar to its occurrence, either it had changed into another idea or had ceased to exist except on a verbal level. The emphasis of Seventeenth-Century theory, therefore, lay on individual expressiveness and varieties of experience rather than on the communal ideas which the oratorical structure was adapted to contain.

Croll explained this theory of prose by referring to Bacon's epistemology which stated that the discovery of knowledge was a gradual, often painstaking process. To capture the effect of this process in their prose was the primary aim of the baroque writers. Although they accepted the fact that absolute truth was unattainable, the baroque writers maintained, at the same time, the necessity of striving constantly for this ideal and of depicting the effort of the athletic and disciplined mind progressing toward its unattainable goal. The movement of baroque prose was, therefore, one which conveyed the processes of a mind gradually discovering truth. By portraying in their style the movements of the mind arriving at a sense of reality

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[9] Ibid., p. 210.

and true knowledge of itself and the world, they rejected the sensuous appeal of oratorical rhythm. Instead of oratorical tropes and figures of sound, therefore, baroque prose relied on figures of thought and wit, such as metaphor and antithesis, to convey thought persuasively. The classical emphasis on clarity was likewise replaced by a style which conveyed feeling in brevities, suppressions, and contortions. Aiming at the expression of individual experience, baroque writers tended to disrupt the "long musical periods of public discourse into short, incisive members, connected with each other by only the slightest of ligatures, each one carrying a stronger emphasis, conveying a sharper meaning than it would have if it were more strictly subordinated to the general effect of a whole period."[10]

Two aspects of Croll's approach kept it general and objective. His investigation was limited to prose of a very specific period and type, and, even within this small area, was restricted to a historical perspective. In other words, Croll examined the genre, rather than the individual specimen, the general tendency of the period, rather than the individual variation. Moreover, because of his stylistic principles, he refused to discuss the subjective aspect of prose, that is, the effect of a particular prose passage on the reader. He divorced both reader and writer from the work in order to examine it as a separate entity.

Croll's emphasis on objectivity must be seen as an advance over the total subjectivity of approaches to prose which have already been

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[10]Morris Croll, "'Attic Prose' in the Seventeenth Century", in Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm, p. 87.

examined, for it allowed him to examine the structures of prose apart from his personal reactions to them. However, to detach any work of art completely from the responses of the observer is to destroy that relationship between artist and observer which makes aesthetic judgment possible. How can the critic appreciate a painting or a poem without allowing his personal feelings to influence his judgment? For every work of art is, in some way, an appeal to the senses; it cannot exist only as an objective pattern. And every work of art placed before an observer raises the question of value. It is this question which Croll's entirely objective method ignored.

Because every work of art raises the problem of value, criticism must be, at least in part, an estimation of the work's faults and excellencies. It is not possible to offer a criterion of style for a particular form of expression, such as the baroque form which Croll examined, because it is the way in which this form is handled by the individual that makes it good or bad. It is necessary, therefore, to go beyond the genre to the individual passage before a complete criterion of prose style can be obtained. One must begin with the passage rather than the period. If one were asked, for example, to analyze the following passage of prose without knowing its author or the period of its composition, what approach would be taken?

> There seemed little else for him to say, though her communication had the oddest effect on him. Vaguely and confusedly he was troubled by it; feeling as if he had even himself been concerned in something deep and dim. He had allowed for depths, but these were greater: and it was as if, oppressively—indeed absurdly—he was responsible for what they had now thrown up to the surface. It was—through something ancient and cold in it—what he would have called the real thing. In short his hostess's news, though he couldn't have explained why, was a sensible shock, and his

> oppression a weight he felt he must somehow or other immediately get rid of. There were too many connexions missing to make it tolerable he should do anything else. He was prepared to suffer—before his own inner tribunal—for Chad; he was prepared to suffer even for Madame de Vionnet. But he wasn't prepared to suffer for the little girl. So now having said the proper thing, he wanted to get away. She held him an instant, however, with another appeal.[11]

Critics often consider poetic criticism a search for specific figures of speech, such as similes, metaphors, alliterations, puns, and so on. But to regard any literary work as a collection of stylistic devices or an example of basic principles of good writing is to impose criteria upon the work rather than deriving them from it. It is necessary, therefore, to examine each sentence of this passage in order to determine its characteristic pattern of arrangement. This stage of the approach corresponds to Croll's examination of syntactic connectives, punctuation, and general structural principles which reflected the baroque writer's conception of experience.

Consider the structural arrangement of the preceding passage. In the first sentence, the main clause is followed by a subordinate clause. Sentence two repeats this pattern. The main clause is followed by the subordinate clause "feeling as if he had even himself been concerned in something deep and dim." Although sentence three contains a main clause followed by another main clause, it too repeats the same general pattern. In each case where a second clause occurs, the first clause is always the main one. Each sentence is so constructed that, after the main point has been stated, the subordinate

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[11]Henry James, The Ambassadors, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1964), p. 238.

clause adds a qualification to what has already been said. Because of this arrangement, the subordinate clause often seems to contain as important an idea as the main clause. In fact, in sentence one, the subordinate clause, "though her communication had the oddest effect on him", seems to have more weight than the main clause, "There seemed little else for him to say.".

This brief description of a single structural characteristic of the passage provides the key to the effect of the whole. The impression conveyed is one of spontaneous thought. The writer seems to have stated his central idea and then realized that it was incomplete without an explanatory phrase or clause. This he added to what had already been written without any concern for proper subordination of the second, lesser idea. Even the second main clause of sentence three, "but these were greater", gives the impression of having been "tacked on" after the main point has been made, although its content seems even more important than that of the main clause. If one were asked, for example, to subordinate one to the other, he would probably write "Although he had allowed for depths, these were greater", thus allowing greater weight to the original subordinate clause. The subordinate clauses often have the appearance of an afterthought, and the impression throughout is one of naturalness, haste and even carelessness. The writer does not appear to have taken the time to emphasize major points above minor ones.

Since the sentences do not follow a logical progression in which subordinate clauses lead up to and away from a central climax, and since each clause must actually be considered as an independent thought

in itself, the movement of this prose is very similar to that of the Seventeenth-Century baroque prose. It is, in fact, a loose or linked style in which clauses are joined by very weak conjunctions. Nor do the subordinate clauses follow a logical pattern. In sentence three the movement of the main thought beginning "...and it was as if..." flows smoothly, until it is suddenly interrupted by a qualifying word, "oppressively". Instead of the immediate resumption of the main thought, the word "oppressively" is itself qualified by "indeed absurdly" before the central thought is again resumed. Sentence four follows the same movement except that the interruption occurs before any information can be conveyed. The two words "It was" are broken off, their completion halted, and the main thought suspended until the clause, "through something ancient and cold in it", is concluded. This frequent interruption of the flow of thought, achieved particularly by the use of the parenthesis and the dash, is typical of almost every sentence in the passage.

What is the author attempting to convey through this pattern of "stop and start" sentences? First of all, the reader's mind cannot move leisurely from the beginning of the sentence to the end because the sentences do not slowly rise toward a main point and then gradually descend. Instead they twist and turn through several convolutions. The mind follows one simple arrangement of words at the beginning of the sentence and then is suddenly forced from that pattern into another before the original one is completed. He is forced to follow this second pattern while still retaining the original one in his mind. Then, retaining both of these, he must move on to a final member which

completes the entire thought. The mind is forced to make a very concentrated effort to grasp and retain all parts of the sentence at once, for the entire sentence cannot be understood unless all its parts are seen in relation to the conclusion, or unless all parts of the sentence cohere in the reader's mind at once. If he forgets one of them, he loses the meaning of the entire sentence. For example, in sentence seven, if, while attempting to retain the interrupting clause "before his own tribunal", the reader loses sight of the beginning clause "He was prepared to suffer", he cannot connect the final "for Chad" to any previous thought in his mind. The entire thought, therefore, disintegrates.

Many of the sentences are arranged according to another principle. At the basis of several constructions parallel structure may be discovered. Consider, for example, the number of times two words joined by "and" recur: "vaguely and confusedly", "deep and dim", "ancient and cold", or similarly, "oppressively—indeed absurdly". This parallel movement is carried out on a larger scale in sentences three and four in which "and it was as if" is parallel to "it was". The subordinate clause in four moves parallel to the qualifying adverbs "oppressively—indeed absurdly" and the final clause "he was responsible for..." moves parallel to "what he would have called the real thing". It may seem strange to outline each of the corresponding clauses, but it should be obvious that these parallels are somehow concealed and do not at first strike the eye or the ear as parallel structures at all. Why is this? In each of the corresponding clauses, the basic structure is parallel, but each of the words in the clauses is not. The author

has placed certain words exactly where they would destroy the sense of strict parallelism. Notice, for example, how sentences seven and eight begin with "he was prepared to Suffer" and are completed by the final parallel in sentence nine "But he wasn't prepared to suffer". But notice that the reader is not allowed to move freely from one parallel to the next, or to receive an impression of balance and neatness. The first clause is interrupted by the interjection "before his own tribunal", and the second, by the word "even". At each occurrence of parallelism is a similar occurrence of this interrupting device, so that the effect upon the reader is one of being constantly jolted out of his pattern of thought. It is this constant frustration of the mind as it attempts to reach the completion of the sentence that characterizes every sentence.

Why does this particular form recur? Through this arrangement, the author implies the impossibility of apprehending an idea easily and entirely. Just as words constantly obstruct the sentence flow, so, the author is suggesting, conflicting views constantly block the mind's perception of truth.

Now let us consider a second passage.

> A certain great prince raised a mighty army, filled his coffers with infinite treasures, provided an invincible fleet, and all this without giving the least part of his design to his greatest ministers, or his nearest favourites. Immediately the whole world was alarmed; the neighbouring crowns in trembling expectation, towards what point the storm would burst; the small politicians everywhere forming profound conjectures. Some believed he had laid a scheme for universal monarchy; others, after much insight, determined the matter to be a project for pulling down the pope, and setting up the reformed religion, which had once been his own. Some, again, of a deeper sagacity, sent him into Asia to subdue the Turk, and recover Palestine. In the midst of all these projects and preparations, a certain state-surgeon, gathering the nature of the disease by these symptoms, attempted the cure, at

> one blow performed the operation, broke the bag, and out flew the vapour; nor did anything want to render it a complete remedy, only that the prince unfortunately happened to die in the performance.[12]

It is obvious that almost all of the sentences in this passage are based on parallel construction; however, unlike the previous passage, the syntax is not disrupted by qualifying statements and interjectory clauses. The parallel element of each sentence varies in a different manner. In sentence one, it is based on the verbs "raised", "filled", and "provided". In two, it lies in the subjects "the neighbouring crowns", and "the small politicians". In three and four, it is a combination of subject and verb, "some believed", "others determined", and "some sent". Sentence five repeats the same verb parallelism as one.

The carefully balanced symmetrical character of the passage is obvious. It is not obscured by the sudden thrusting in of elements which destroy the obvious patterns. The mind moves easily and freely from parallel to parallel; it is not frustrated in the same manner as it was by James' prose. Nor is this the ornate parallelism of rhetorical prose found in the writings of Burke or Johnson. Instead, the balanced structure is a means of conveying an ordered pattern into which subtle variations are worked. The three parallel clauses of sentence one, for example, each with approximately the same number of words, force the reader's mind to think in a particular pattern, so that it expects a fourth parallel clause. After the three verbs "raised", "filled" and "provided" are followed by "and", the mind

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[12]Jonathan Swift, A Tale of a Tub, in Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose; p. 185.

naturally expects a fourth verb, but instead the fourth clause begins with the subject "all this". By simply omitting the expected verb "did" at the beginning of the clause, the writer has created a more effective variation. He has frustrated the parallel movement without actually changing the basic parallel structure of the sentence.

In sentence three this element of parallelism recurs, again for the purpose of surprising the reader, but it is not the subtle surprise caused by the frustration of expectation. Rather, it is the sudden shock characteristic of humorous or satirical writing. The verb "pulling down" and the exaggerated verbs used up to this point suggest war, slaughter or attack upon a definite building. The reader's mind is prepared for an object such as "cities", "battallions", or "fortresses". When the word "pope" occurs, the impression is one of surprise because one does not usually think of attacking religious forces with an "invincible fleet". The parallel verb structure of the final sentence operates in a manner similar to that of the first. After the series of verbs in climactic order, "attempted", "performed", and "broke", the reader expects another verb. When the word "out" occurs, however, his expectation is thwarted. Furthermore, the final shock, the word "vapour", is retained until the end of the sentence, its emphasis increased, and its ironic import thus underlined. Had this final clause been written "and the vapour flew out", the final shock of the word "vapour" would have been lessened by its occurrence before the completion of the entire thought. The final part of the sentence carries this technique to perfection. This is the understatement to which the words "unfortunately happened" provide the key.

They allow the reader to believe that whatever happened was very slight. When the word "die" occurs within the next breath, its impact is tremendously increased, and the reader is again jolted out of the complacency which the words "unfortunately happened" allowed him. Throughout the passage the balance of orderly parallelism against the sudden subtle jolting of order accentuates, and, in fact, creates the satirical element.

The following is the final passage to be considered.

> Ugly and futile: lean neck and tangled hair and a stain of ink, a snail's bed. Yet someone had loved him, borne him in her arms and in her heart. But for her the race of the world would have trampled him under foot, a squashed boneless snail. She had loved his weak watery blood drained from her own. Was that then real? The only true thing in life? His mother's prostrate body the fiery Columbanus in holy zeal bestrode. She was no more: the trembling skeleton of a twig burnt in the fire, an odour of rosewood and wetted ashes. She had saved him from being trampled under foot and had gone, scarcely having been. A poor soul gone to heaven.[13]

Perhaps the most obvious characteristic of this passage is the absence of logical progression and syntactic connectives. This element is so marked that, when one first reads the passage, it does not appear to be entirely written in sentences. The passage begins with pairs of adjectives and nouns with no logical connections between them except the word "and", no subject or verb to clarify their connection, and, in the first sentence, no obvious logical relation between any of the ideas. Why, for example, does the phrase " a snail's bed" immediately follow "lean neck, and tangled hair and a stain of ink"? The reason may not

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[13]James Joyce, Ulysses, (2nd ed., New York: Random House, 1961), p. 27.

be obvious at first, but if one were asked to supply a word or words to make the sentence immediately understandable, the required words are obvious. One would read: "He was ugly and futile; his lean neck and tangled hair and a stain of ink reminded me of a snail's bed." Despite the seeming ambiguity of the original, its basic sentence structure is implicit.. The writer has placed just enough words in clear enough relationships that the reader always understands the meaning of the sentence. By omitting many of the usual connectives and by disrupting the traditional sentence structure, he forces the feader's mind to recreate sub-consciously the entire pattern of which he sees only a part.

Actually, the four pairs of words joined by "and" do lead up to the climax of "a snail's bed". But the progression is not logical. Each of these pairs describing the person whom the speaker sees, presents only the speaker's impressions. "A snail's bed" is the result of all the earlier impressions combined and the final image of the speaker's repulsion. The parts of the sentence, then, are related by association rather than by logic. Each word or phrase produces another phrase associated with it, and so on, so that the pattern of many sentences follows that of the trailing or linked style. Several sentences could have been written using connectives. For example, sentence three could have been "...the race of the world would have trampled him under foot as a squashed boneless snail". Or sentence eight could have been written "She was no more, except as the trembling skeleton of a twig..." But it is obvious from the movement of the first sentence that the author has attempted to create the impression of thoughts randomly thrown together, one producing another so quickly

that the connection between them is obscured. To recreate this almost staccato movement, he has placed in close juxtaposition words and phrases which do not seem to adhere logically but are often separated only by a comma.

All of the structural qualities of this passage, and of the other two passages, form a definite pattern. However, as the analyses have shown, the pattern is not only a reflection of the writer's method of conceiving and conveying experience, but also an element of order which must be relieved by certain elements of "disorder". The writer, then, must be a psychologist as well as a creator. His ability to compel forward and halt the reader's mind at exactly the right points is one criterion of the work's value.

In the preceding analyses, an attempt has been made to apply the three basic stages of prose criticism--the descriptive, the interpretative, and the evaluative. The descriptive analysis outlines the objectively existing patterns of the passage and provides the basis of the other two approaches. For, if the work is described as poorly structured, or consisting of identical structural patterns, the interpretative approach can only conclude that the prose is simply a confused reiteration of the same pattern, or that it reflects no particular organization of experience. Similarly, the evaluative approach can only reaffirm the lack of agreement between the objective pattern and the content of the sentences.

Both the interpretative and evaluative aspects of prose analysis are concerned with a subjective description of the relationship between form and content. The interpretative aspect attempts to

discover what particular organization of experience the author conveys through certain structures. Or, expressed more subjectively, it asks the question: In what patterns does the writer force the reader to think by organizing words in a particular way?

The evaluative aspect involves the question of values. Since it is a judgment of the relationship between form and content, it cannot be made until the first two aspects have been considered. No work can be considered good from an objective standpoint. The criterion for evaluating the structure of the individual sentence must be the same as that for evaluating the structure of the entire work. Structure must objectify content. In other words, the evaluative approach follows much the same pattern as the interpretative, but instead of a descriptive treatment which suggests the philosophy behind a particular form, the evaluative approach attempts to decide whether or not this form has succeeded. Has the form successfully conveyed the meaning of the work, or could another form perhaps have conveyed it as well or better? This approach, then, requires a knowledge of the meaning of the entire work, not simply of what is said in one passage. Out of its context, a passage cannot be fully evaluated. For this reason, only a partial evaluative analysis has been made in this paper in the discussion of the author's attempts to constantly excite and frustrate the reader's expectations.

The few suggestions made, however, will lead to a full evaluation when the meaning of the entire work is known. For example, the novel from which the first passage was quoted for examination, Henry James' The Ambassadors, involves the struggle of an individual

to grasp the truth of several ambiguous situations and to see clearly the true characters of those people with whom he comes in contact. The struggle of his mind in searching for the truth behind the several facades with which he is faced is captured by the torturous, convoluted movement of the sentences. It is the critic's own judgment whether or not this form effectively conveys to him the author's meaning, and, for this reason, the final approach must be left to the individual.

The chief purpose of the second half of this paper has been to propose a criterion of prose analysis which would avoid the extreme subjectivity of the psychologists, "timers", and "scanners", as well as the objectivism of stylists such as Croll. The criterion offered is an attempt to combine both subjective and objective approaches, both evaluative and descriptive. For, without a knowledge of the objective structure of a work of art, one can hardly appreciate its beauty; but neither is it possible to appreciate a work if one cannot go beyond an objective analysis of form. Only by combining both can a full understanding of the work of art be attained. This combination is offered in the three stages of prose criticism. Description, interpretation, and evaluation are all related aspects of one approach which attempts to view the structure of prose as an objectification of its meaning.

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