

## Rhythm and meaning: “Rhythmical deviations” as italics

*In memory of M. L. Gasparov*

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**Abstract:** English iambic pentameter allows rhythmical deviations that occupy three (seldom four, more often two) adjacent metrical positions. These deviations, though metrical, are noticed by the listener or reader. Starting from the first quarter of the 16th century, poets (Surrey) have used rhythmical deviations to emphasize (“italicize”) semantically important segments in the line. Such rhythmical deviations have become part of the English poetic traditions. It has turned out that rhythmical deviations used to italicize meaning are filled with recurring rhythmical and grammatical structures and repeated lexicon. M. L. Gasparov used a special term to denote the recurring rhythmical-grammatical structures: “clichés”; while calling clichés incorporating recurrent lexicon “formulas”. I have discovered that formulas are part of the English poetic tradition: the same formulas recur in poetic texts of the 16th–20th cc. They are not plagiarisms, allusions or reminiscences; they are a common basket of goods that belong to all English poets, used by all and owned by none. The recurrent deviations usually occur on metrical positions “weak-strong-weak-strong” and as a rule contain a monosyllabic (rarely – disyllabic) verb-predicate followed by a monosyllabic grammatical word (e.g. an article), an adjective-attribute and a noun – a direct object to the verb. The recurring lexicon includes verbs of motion, particularly verbs of fast, aggressive motion, an action directed downwards or causing an injury or death, and recurring nouns referring to moving objects or agents (hands, arms, wings; spear, sword). I term such recurring formulas “rhythmical italics”.

M. L. Gasparov was interested in the problem of verse form and meaning all his life. He wrote several articles on this subject, and finally, a book, *Meter and Meaning* (1999). It had a significant subtitle: *On One of the Mechanisms of Cultural Memory*. Gasparov thoroughly analyzed hundreds of Russian poems written in ten metres, and demonstrated thematic and stylistic preferences and

even phrasal recurrences that historically developed in each metre in the Russian poetic tradition, so that each metre developed its own thematic associations.

I have also been working on the problem of metre and meaning. In the “western” literary criticism the subject of metre and meaning had become notorious: when I, together with my doctoral student Naira Oganeseva, submitted an article titled “Metre and meaning: On the semantic associations of English iambic and trochaic tetrameter” to *PMLA*, it received a furious review written by some English professor who, probably without even having read the paper and having just taken a look at the title, spluttered that he had been hoping such “speculations” had stopped a long time ago, that he had recently undergone an open-heart surgery, and such essays were sure to kill him! And yet our paper did not claim anything outlandish, similar, for example, to what the 18th-century Russian scholar Mikhail Lomonosov wrote; he claimed that iamb, because of its rising foot structure, was particularly suited for the elevated poetry of odes. We presented a detailed semantic field analysis of the lexicon of hundreds of lyrical English poems written in the iambic and trochaic tetrameter. We proved that the metres had developed different thematic preferences in the English poetic tradition, and, moreover, gave different stylistic treatments of the same subject, for example, “unhappy love”. The article was immediately accepted and published by the *American Journal of Semiotics* (Tarlinskaja, Oganeseva 1986).

The subject of rhythm and meaning has not been given much attention within the Russian school of *Verswissenschaft*, because deviations from the metrical scheme in Russian iambic poetry are mostly limited to omitted stresses, while extra-metrical stresses are rare, they seldom combine with missing stresses, and if they do, these occur within two separate words (*Бой барабанный, клики, скрежет...*).

In English versification, deviations from the metrical scheme are a regular occurrence, part of a five-century-long poetic tradition, and take place in adjacent syllables, two or three, sometimes more. For example: ***Duck with French*** *nods and apish courtesy*, ***Smile in men's*** *faces, smooth, deceive and cog* (Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 1.3.49, 48), ***Spread the slow*** *smile thro' all her company* (Tennyson, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, 95), instead of something more regular, something like *And slowly smiled...* In English literary criticism, however, this subject of research did not develop at all, and for several reasons. The first reason has been an aversion to counting. The second one is the

traditional failure to recognize the opposition between metre as an abstract scheme and stressing of actual lines (sometimes called "rhythm"). Only if we recognize the two entities, can we notice deviations from the metrical scheme in actual lines, and evaluate their frequency, the reason of their appearance, and their possible functional use by poets.

Iambic pentameter, the most widely used metre in the English poetry of the 14th–19th cc., has a long tradition. Because it originated over six hundred years ago, it had time to become consolidated in the works of generations of English poets. During its evolution iambic pentameter went through several stages of wave-like strengthening and loosening of the constraints that the metre imposes on the selection and combination of the language material. But in all periods, authors had to master "the rules" first, before they could write their own poetry and become innovative – or not, as the case may be. How could a poet write a sonnet if he had not read many sonnets previously, if he did not have iambic rhythm humming in his head? The question arises: how much of writing poetry is inspiration and how much is craft? What is unconscious and what is conscious?

Its long evolution makes it possible to abstract the iambic pentameter as a metrical scheme; the line has a restricted number of syllables and recurring placement of stress. Even positions tend to be filled with stressed syllables, and some positions accept omitted stresses more readily than others. Even positions are called metrically strong (S). Odd positions tend to be unstressed, though different odd positions tolerate extra-metrical stresses more readily than others. Odd positions are called metrically weak (W). An iambic line scheme is a string of alternating positions: W S W S W S W S W S. The number of deviations tolerated on S and W depends on the epoch, genre and the individual style of a poet.<sup>1</sup>

In a constrained iambic pentameter, such as those dating from early Renaissance or Classicism, the most frequently stressed even positions are 4 and 10; they support the ends of hemistichs. Positions 2 and 6 are stressed the least often. The omitted stresses in position 2 mark the beginning of the line and of a phrase; the "dip" in position 6 coincides with the beginning of the second hemistich and usually of another phrase: English phrases often begin with one or more unstressed grammatical words, e.g.: *For of my life I must a riddle tell; My mouth doth water, and my breast doth swell* (Sydney, *Astrophil and*

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<sup>1</sup> All subsequent information on English iambic pentameter has been taken from my numerous publications, including two books (Tarlinskaja 1976 and 1987).

*Stella* 37: 5, 1). In a looser iambic pentameter, such as those appearing in Jacobean or post-romantic poetry, the “stress dip” in midline shifts from position 6 to position 8, the stress in position 4 falls, while stress grows in all W positions. Extra-metrical stresses (on W) in the English iamb are frequent. They are, in part, caused by numerous stressed monosyllables in the English lexicon, and in part – by French and Italian versification models. Combinations of losses of stress with extra-metrical stresses move iambic pentameter in the direction of purely syllabic verse (Tarlinskaja 1976: 183–198). Italian verse influenced Thomas Wyatt, the creator of Modern English iambic pentameter such as we know it; in his early translations of Petrarch’s sonnets Wyatt imitated Italian syllabic versification. In his later poetry he moved to smoother iambs.

Two and more adjacent syllables whose stressing deviates from the metre are called **rhythmical figures**. The number of deviations within the same phrase is usually 2–3. These occur in positions WS, WSW and SW. Deviations on WS and WSW typically occur at the beginning of the line, more rarely – at the beginning of the second hemistich. Normally they correspond to the beginnings of phrases; exceptions are rare, and, prior to Romanticism, practically non-existent at the end of a phrase. Compare: *And peace proclaims **olives** of endless age* (Shakespeare, *Son.* 107. 8) is an actual line, while *\*And peace proclaimed **olives**. Then all rejoiced* is an improbable construct. In the verse of romantic and post-romantic poets such instances sometimes occur: *Who yet remain **stubborn**. – I overrule* (Shelley, *The Cenci*, 5.2.185).

Robert Frost, a twentieth-century heir to the English iambic pentameter tradition, moved to more varied and longer rhythmical figures: from SWS and WSW to SWSWSW. He knew exactly what he was doing: **Regular** verse **springs from** the strain of rhythm Upon a meter, strict and loose iambic (*How Hard It Is To Keep From Being King*, 213–14). And so: **Once she found for a bookmark in the Bible A maple leaf she thought must have been laid... But forgot to put the leaf** back in closing And lost the place **never** to read again (Frost, *Maple*, 62–63, 67–68). (... and mother came) A bride, to help take care of such a creature And **accommodate her young** life to his... She had to lie and hear love things made dreadful By **his shouts in** the night. He’d shout and shout... (*A Servant to Servant*, 122–123, 127–128, 130–131). Frost used all these deviations to emphasize what was being said in the text.

Rhythmical figures that accompany a micro-context to emphasize (and sometimes iconically reproduce) the contents, not unlike onomatopoeia, are

called **rhythmical italics**. Using deviations to emphasize meaning became a conscious device early on; it began to show technical skill in handling the material. Here are examples of rhythmical italics, from Surrey to Frost:

In positions WS and WSW: ***Weapons*** of wreke his gylty minde gan seeke, ***Stuff with armed*** men; about the which there ran (Surrey, Translations from *The Aeneid*, 2: 123, 289); ***Playinge*** on yvorie harp with silver string; ***Fought with*** the bloudie Lapithaes at bord (Spenser *Virgils Gnat*, 16, 42); ***Stopped in*** my soul, and would not let it forth; ***Dabbled*** in blood; ***Makes the night*** morning... (Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 1.4.38, 77); ***Straight the three*** Bands prepare in Arms to join; ***Spreads his black*** Wings... (Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, 3: 29, 4: 88); ***Floated*** the shattered plumes...; ***Locked in stiff*** rings... (Shelley, *The Revolt of Islam*, 222, 229); His breast ***heaved, his lips*** foamed...; And ***his head*** swam, and ***he sank*** down to earth (Arnold, *Sohrab and Rustum*, 455, 693); ***One by one he*** subdued his father's trees; And a cold chill ***shivered*** across the lake; I saw ***by the way you whipped*** up the horse (Frost, *Birches*, 29, *A Servant to Servant*, 31, *The Fear*, 80).

In SW: ... and ***he shrieked*** out aloud (Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 1.4.38); When ***your eyes*** roll so (*Othello*, 5.2.41); While ***the Fops*** envy (Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, 4: 104); Slide giddily as ***the world*** reels; And holding ***his breath***, died (Shelley, *The Cenci*, 3.1.12, 5.2.183); And ***his head*** swam, and ***he sank*** down to earth; ... and ***the wind*** fell (Arnold, *Sohrab and Rustum*, 693, 522); So ***the crown*** fell and ***the crown*** jewels scattered (Frost, *How Hard It Is To Keep From Being King*, 6); And ***the saw*** snarled and rattled... (Frost, "Out, Out –" 7).

Tetrasyllabic and longer figures. WSW: ***One by one he*** subdued his father's trees (Frost, *Birches*, 28); ***Looking back over*** her shoulder at some fear (Frost, *Home Burial*, 3); ***SWSW***: I saw by ***the way you whipped*** up the horse (Frost, *The Fear*, 73); ***SWSWS***: And ***a cold chill shivered*** across the lake (Frost, *A Servant to Servant*, 31); ***SWSWSW***, cited above: And ***accommodate her young*** life to his.

The examples illuminate several points: (1) Rhythmical figures seem to appear in the earliest Modern English iambic pentameter (below we shall look into late Middle English and early Modern English verse: Chaucer and Surrey). (2) Figures WS and WSW are particularly frequent at the beginning of the line: this is where most "deviations" occur. (3) Longer than three-syllable figures are rare: they make it hard to go back to iambic pentameter rhythm. (4) The authors of four-syllable and longer figures had an excellent command of iamb, manipulated the iambic rhythm easily and counted on their readers' habit of reading iambic verse, keeping the iambic rhythm in their mind, and identifying

the deviations. (5) Most figures seem to be used for emphasis, particularly the longer ones. Such figures, called rhythmical italics, accompany a narrow range of micro-contexts.

Frequently rhythmical italics accompany and emphasize *action*. This probably stems from the iconic potential of irregularities, of the perceived deviations from the prevailing iambic rhythm. A breach of the iambic momentum was experienced as breaking or stumbling and began to be paired with micro-situations dealing with motion, particularly uneven (*shake, tremble, quiver*); directed downwards (*kneel, bow, bend*); aggressive, violent and hurtful (*stab, pierce; batter*); interrupted (*cease, stop, stifle*). Here are examples of “motion” rhythmical italics on positions WS and WSW: ***Stabbed by*** the selfsame hand..., ***Stopped in*** my soul..., ***Kneel at*** my feet..., ***Swills your warm*** blood..., ***Wept like two*** children (*Richard III*, 1.2.11, 1.4.37, 2.1.108, 5.2.9, 4.3.8). On SW: *Heaven stops the nose at it, and ***the moon*** winks; When ***your eyes*** roll so... And ***she died*** singing it... (*Othello*, 4.2.78, 5.2.41, 4.3.31).*

When other, non-verbal parts of speech fill WS, the poets, again counting on the audience noticing the deviations from the iambic rhythm, inserted semantically and stylistically important words in places of its breaches. Look at these examples: ***Fairer*** thou art by far... (*Richard III*, 2.2.151), ***Fair is*** my love... (*The Passionate Pilgrim*, 7: 1), and Robert Herrick’s ***Fair was*** the Dawne... (*Faire Dayes*: 1). *Fairer* and *fair* are coupled with an inversion of stress on positions WS and emphasized by grammatical inversion. The inverted word order can be easily changed: *My love is fair, the Dawn was fair*, yet the poets chose to use inversions, obviously, for emphasis.

Do rhythmical italics indeed emphasize action more often than other semantic contexts? Do figures WS and WSW contain more verbs, and more verbs of action, than the verse text outside rhythmical figures? To check this out I took a 19th-century poem by Shelley, *The Revolt of Islam* (Tarlinskaja 1987, Tables 7.5 and 7.6). The tradition of iambic pentameter had been well consolidated in the works of neoclassical authors, and Romantic poets skilfully used its expressive potential. I wrote out all figures WS and WSW (514 in 4518 lines) and, first, analyzed their part-of-speech composition. I differentiated between nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and “other”. The latter were so few that I discarded them from later analysis. Verbs were further differentiated into “verbs of action” and “other” including static position of the body or mental state (*sit, rest; know, feel*). Verbs of action fell into “verbs of violent action”, such as *strike, shake, tremble, quiver, choke*, and “non-violent action”, such as *go, walk,*

look. Then I took Canto IV (at random) and wrote out all nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs that occurred *outside* rhythmical figures WS and WSW. The verbs were again differentiated into "verbs of action" and "other". Here are the results of a part-of-speech analysis (in percentage of the total) in Shelley's *The Revolt in Islam*.<sup>2</sup>

Parts of speech	In figures WS, WSW	Outside the figures
Nouns	19.6	<u>50.8</u>
Verbs	<u>59.5</u>	22.7
Adjectives	11.9	19.9
Adverbs	8.9	6.6
Total	494	1222

As we see, *nouns* are the most frequent part of speech in the text outside the figures. Nouns outside the figures are two and a half times more frequent than in the figures. In the figures, the most frequent part of speech is, markedly, the verb; verbs are two and a half times more frequent in the figures than in the text outside the figures. The correlation between nouns and verbs in the figures and outside them is almost the reverse. Adjectives are also preferred outside rhythmical figures where they are one and a half times more numerous than in the figures; adverbs are not many everywhere, but prevail in the figures: sentences often begin with *Sudden(ly)*... Thus, the first test has shown that rhythmical figures "prefer" verbs to other parts of speech. What about their semantic features? The table below shows the proportion of "verbs of action" and "other" (in percentage of the total number of verbs) in the figures and outside in Shelley's *The Revolt in Islam*:

Types of verbs	In the figures	Outside the figures
Verbs of action	87.1	62.7
Other	12.9	37.3
Total	294	277

<sup>2</sup> In Tarlinskaja 1987, Chapter 7, I analyzed samples of prose by three authors, but only disyllables with the first syllable stressed; in these texts, nouns are even more frequent than in the verse outside rhythmical figures, and verbs are less frequent: disyllabic verbs are often stressed on the second syllable.

As the title suggests, the romantic *The Revolt of Islam* is a poem mostly about action. So it is not surprising that “verbs of action” prevail over “other”; however, their correlation is dissimilar. In the figures, verbs of action are almost seven times more frequent than “other”, while outside the figures – only one and a half times. If we differentiated verbs of action further, we would see that *tremble, shake, quiver, fall, strike* and such are more frequent within the figures, while *go, walk, look* – outside them. Examples from *The Revolt of Islam*: **Fell to the sea** (249), **Fell like bright Spring** (56), **Fell on the pale oppressors** (114), **Fell o'er the snowy child** (4655), ... **fell on the fields like rain** (2388), **Falling in pauses** (2087), **Fell like a shaft loosed by the bowman's error** (4020), **Sunk in a gulf** (1998), **Sunk on my heart** (4282), **Sinking upon their breasts** (638), **Wake the green world** (654), **Waked in those ruins** (756), **Locked in stiff rings** (229), **Mock the fierce peal** (2737), **Shakes with the sleepless surge** (2907), **Wound his long arms** (2908), **Winding among** (377), **Quivered like burning emerald** (159), **Quivered beneath** (3178), **Drooped through the air** (212), **Pour on those evil men** (1660), **Shedding soft dew** (3654), **Closed their faint eyes** (4455), **Close their faint orbs** (3770), **Borne like a cloud** (4744), **Borne by the ready slaves** (4483), **Borne on the storm** (1070), **Borne on the winds** (2727), **Bear ye the earnings** (3356), **Waved by the wind** (3463), **Waving swift language** (2336), **Pierce like reposing flames** (4494), **Bursts like one sound** (4532), **Burst through their ranks** (4518), **Burst from her looks** (4266), **Burst o'er the golden isles** (1298), **Bursts on that awful silence** (4510), **Knelt for his mercy** (4527), ... **kneel in the public way** (3585), **Clasped by the winds** (4561), **Clasp the relentless knees** (1656), **Clasped that bright shape** (4649), **Hung in one hollow sky** (4814), **Stream through the city** (3890), **Choked with his country's dead** (3859), **Trembles before her look** (1598), **Trembled, as with a zone** (3827), **Dipped in scorn's fiery poison** (3376), **Wound his long arms** (2908), **Winding among...** (577), **Winding above** (2490), **Bent his thin head** (2716), **Sinking upon their hearts** (638), **Sunk in a gulf** (1998), **Strike with her shadow** (2693), **Smote on the beach** (1415), **Stabbed in their sleep** (1772), **Spreading swift wings** (2591), **Spread through the multitudinous streets** (4451), **Stream through the gates** (2367), **Poured from her fairest bosom** (2300), **Sprang from the billows** (400), **Sprang from the depth** (355), **Sparkled like stars** (4753), **Shone through the plumes** (203), and **Shone through the woodbine-wreaths** (486).

The first thing that strikes the eye is the narrow range of semantic groups as well as recurrence of words: the verb *fall* recurs 7 times, *burst* and *bear* – five times each, and most others occur at least twice. The semantic spectrum of the



verbs in positions WS(W) is narrow; often they are each other's synonyms or members of a narrow semantic group: *droop-dip-kneel-bend-sink-tumble; tremble-shake-quiver-flutter-totter-stagger; hit-strike-beat-smite-batter-stab-strangle-choke-murder-slay-die*. Recurrences and self-repetitions have been typical of all poets, starting with early Elizabethans, through the neoclassical period to Romanticism, to say nothing of oral traditions and archaic poetries. Rhythmical italics keep recurring in the works of dissimilar poets writing in different genres and divided by time; for example: ***Trembling*** for age, his curace long disused; ***Tremble*** and roar, the oaks come from the hill (Surrey, *Aeneid*, Book 2: 659, Book 4: 653); ***Trembling*** their forces, sound their praises lowd (Spenser, *Virgils Gnat*: 615); ***Trembling*** upon his breast (Marlowe, 1 *Tamburlaine*, 2.1.242); ***Trembled*** and shook (Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, 3.2.166); ***Tremble*** and start (Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 3.5.7); ***Trembling*** begins the sacred Rites of Pride; ***Trembling*** and conscious of the rich brocade (Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, 1.128, 3.116); ***Trembling*** I gazed (Wordsworth, *In My Mind's Eye...*, 13); ***Trembling***, I look (Wordsworth, *Processions*, 64); ...it turns ***Trembling*** to you! (Wordsworth, *To the Sons of Burns*, 6); ***Trembles*** before her look; ***Trembled***, as with a zone (Shelley, *Islam*, 1598, 3827); ***Trembling*** beneath the scourge (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 2.74: 8); ... my frame ***Trembles***; my forehead's veins swell out; ***Trembling*** so much (Browning, *Paracelsus*, 633, 385); ... ***trembling*** with rage (Arnold, *Sohrab and Rustum*, 449); ***Trembled*** and stirred (Frost, *I Will Sing You One-O*, 63); ***Shakt his long*** locke (Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 2.5.15: 8); ***Shaking*** the burden; ***Shaking*** their swords; ***Shaking*** her silver tresses; ***Shake with*** their weight; ***Shaking*** and quivering (Marlowe, 2 *Tamburlaine*, 4.1.131, 4.2.26, 5.2.78, 288, 5.3.68); ***Shaking*** her wings (Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, 57); ***Shaking*** the bloody darts (Shakespeare, 2 *Henry VI*, 3.1.366); ***Shaking*** the horrors (Pope, *Dunciad*, 2.327); ***Shaking*** the burden (Marlowe, 2 *Tamburlaine*, 4.1.131); ***Shake his red*** shadow (Byron, *The Curse of Minerva*, 306); ***Shake the red*** cloak (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 1.64: 6); ***Shak'd with*** this ague (Donne, *The Storm*, 54); ***Shook from*** the midnight-slumber (Thomson, *Winter*, 346); ***Shook from*** the tangled boughs (Shelley, *Ode to the West Wind*, 17); ***Shook its*** portentous hair (Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*, 168); ***Shakes with*** the sleepless surge; ***Shook with*** the sullen thunder (Shelley, *Islam*, 2907, 2735); ***Shook as*** he stumbled (Browning, *Sordello*, 752); ***Shaking*** a fist (Browning, *Fra Lippo Lippi*, 154); ***Kneeling*** for mercy (Marlowe, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, 2.1: 198); ***Kneeled at*** my feet (Shakespeare, *Richard III*, 2.1.108); ***Kneel to*** his own disgraces (John Ford, *The Queen*, 1517); ***Kneeling*** at prayers

(Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, 4.364); **Kneeling** before this ruin (Shakespeare, *King John*, 4.3.65); **Kneeling** amid the wilderness (Wordsworth, *The Russian Fugitive*, 165); **Kneeling** with many tears (Shelley, *Rosalind and Helen*, 532); **Knelt for** his mercy; ...**kneel in** the public way (Shelley, *Islam*, 4527, 3585); **Burst on** the mountains (Wordsworth *The Borderers*, 789); **Bursts from** the troubl'd Larch's giant boughs (Wordsworth, *Descriptive Sketches*, 229); **Bursts from** his winged heels into his ear (Keats, *Lamia*, 1.23); **Burst from** her look; **Bursts from** your lead (Byron, *Walz*, 136); **Burst from** her looks and gestures; **Bursts like one** sound; **Burst through** their ranks; **Burst o'er** the golden isles; **Bursts on** that awful silence (Shelley, *Islam*, 4266, 4532, 4518, 1298, 4510); **Bursting** to light (Byron, *Childe Harold*, 2: 122); and **Burst his own** wyvern (Tennyson, *Aylmer's Field*, 516). None of these verbs is frequent in the poetic lexicon.<sup>3</sup> And these are not just recurrences of lexicon, but recurrences of lexical-syntactic patterns projected against the metrical scheme and coupled with rhythmical deviations.

Recurrences of lexicon in rhythmical italics permeate the whole of the English poetic tradition. I started my work on the problem, first, looking through many thousands of lines, after that using the poets' concordances. I took a key word as a centre of my search, for example, the noun *wings* or the verb *shake*. Now the program LION has become available. Here is a shortened list of recurrences clustered around *wings*. Deviations are in positions WSW: **Spread thy broad wings** over my love and me (Spenser *Epitalamion*, 319); **Spread thy broad wings**, and souze on all the kind (Pope, *Epilogue to the Satires*, *Dialogue* 2, 15); **Spread her broad wings**, that flutter'd with affright (Coleridge, *To The Honourable Mr. Erskine*, 2); **Spreads his black wings**, and slowly mounts to day (Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, 4, 88); **Spread thy soft wings**, and waft him o'er (Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, 9.4); **Spread his light wings**, and in a moment flies (Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard*, 75); **Spread his light wings** of saffron and of blue (Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 523); **Spreading swift wings** as sails to the dim air (Shelley, *Islam*, 2591); **Clapp'd his glad wings**, and sate to view the fight (Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, 5.54); **Clapp'd her strong wings**, and sought the cheerful isle (Wordsworth, *Lines written at a School Exercise*, 46); ... **claps his broad wings** over the battle (Blake, *Prologue*, 9); **Mounts on rapt wings**, and in a moment's flight (Wordsworth, *The Source of the Danube*, 7);

<sup>3</sup> See Miles 1951, Table B, "Primary Vocabulary in Five Centuries". The verb *fall* is listed as "majority" only in the 1840s, no other verb participating in rhythmical italics is frequent. In fact, several times these appear in "minority".

***Climb with swift wings*** after their children's souls (Shelley, *The Cenci*, 1.3.85); ***Fall with soft wings*** stuck with soft flowers (Crashaw, *Temperance*, 46); ***Weighs his spread wings***, at leisure to behold (Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 2.1046); ***Closed his dark wings***, relaxed his eye (Walter Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*, 2.524); to say nothing of numerous cases with deviations in WS: ***Borne on whose Wings*** (John Wilmot, *A Satire Against Mankind*, 84); ***Born upon wings, Lifted his wings*** (Keats, *Cap and Bells*, 66: 8, 56: 2); ***Ride on thy wings*** (Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 4: 974); and ***Flirting their wings*** and saying *chikadee* (Frost, *Snow*, 231). *Plumes* and *pinions* can also be found in similar lexical and rhythmical contexts.

The grammatical composition of the recurrences on WSW is quite uniform: a verb plus a direct object modified by an adjective. M. L. Gasparov called recurring rhythmical-grammatical patterns *clichés*, and lexical recurrences in rhythmical-grammatical clichés make them *formulaic*,<sup>4</sup> even more so than what Milman Parry defined as formulas in Homeric verse (Parry 1971). Clusters of formulas are generated around a relatively narrow range of words: verbs *shake* and *tremble*, *stab* and *pierce*, nouns *wings*, *hands*, *arms*, the adverb *sudden(ly)*. At one time I was toying with the idea of putting together a dictionary of formulas in English literary verse, not unlike what Otto Schumann put together for formulas in Latin hexameters (Schumann 1979–1982).

Recurrence of formulas does not compromise the poetic skills or unique individuality of an author; it once again shows that literature is a continuous process and that literary tradition is created by many hands. The frequency and expressiveness of rhythmical italics is one indicator of a poet's skill and maturity as a versifier. Look how Shakespeare increased the number of rhythmical italics calculated per 1000 lines: *The Taming of the Shrew* 42.0, *Love's Labour's Lost* 92.7, *Henry V* 138.6, *Macbeth* 194.7, *The Tempest* 206.2. Compare early Elizabethans with later Jacobean: Greene, *Alfonso, King of Aragon* 27.6, Peele, *Edward I* 36.0 – and Ford, *Perkin Warbeck* 162.1, Middleton's scenes in *The Changeling*: 172.7. Versification skills had on the whole grown.

When did English poets begin to use rhythm to support meaning? I went back to Chaucer, and analysed the "Prologue" to his *Canterbury Tales*, 858 lines. I concentrated on the beginnings of lines, and discarded words of Romance origin that were frequently end-stressed (*fortune*, *curteys*). Chaucer's stressing differed from Modern English; he must have stressed heavy suffixes,

<sup>4</sup> Gasparov 1999: 84, and in earlier published articles; Tarlinskaja 1989: 115–128.

such as *-ing(e)*, *-ness(e)*, *-ess(e)*, particularly in trisyllabic words (Halle, Keyser 1971), and his iambic pentameter had some features of Italian hendecasyllable. In the 858 lines of the Prologue I found 34 cases that, from the point of view of Modern English language and versification can be interpreted as shifts of stress from the second to the first syllable. Five of these are disyllabic words, (one noun and four verbs) ending on *-ing(e)*, so these might have had at least a secondary stress on the second syllables: ***Lordinges***, *quod he...* (790), ***Souninge*** *alway...* (275), ***Souninge*** *in moral vertu...* (309), ***Livinge*** *in pees and parfit charitee* (532), and also *Of cloth **making** she hadde swiche an haunt* (449). The remaining words are three nouns, seven verbs, ten adjectives and nine adverbs. Obvious preference is given to adjectives and adverbs, not verbs, as in Modern English verse. Adjectives and adverbs are often paired with grammatical inversions: ***Short was*** *his goune* (93), ***Whyt was*** *his berd...* (332), ***Bold was*** *his face, and fair* (460), ***Strong was*** *the wyn* (750), ***Fayn would*** *I doon yow mirthe* (766), ***Wel coude*** *he dresse his takel yemanly* (106), ***Wel coude*** *he singe* (236), ***Wel coude*** *he in eschaunge sheeldes selle* (280). This is where Modern English iamb inherited the rhythmical-grammatical structure. The frequency of “rhythmical inversions” in Chaucer’s *Prologue* is 29 per 1000 lines, close to some early Elizabethan dramas, e.g., Greene’s *Alfonso, King of Aragon*.

To look further for the origin of rhythmical italics I analyzed Surrey’s translation of Book 2 of Virgil’s *Aeneid* (1525), 1068 lines. Surrey wrote his translation in blank iambic pentameter, which since then began to be associated with historic and heroic themes. Though the text is on the whole iambic, it bears some features of syllabic verse, particularly, unexpectedly, towards its end. I wrote out disyllabic words that according to Modern English pronunciation ought to have stress on the first syllable. Remembering that this was early Modern English, I again excluded words of Latin and French origin (*fortune, altar*), and paid particular attention to words with heavy suffixes: *-ing*, *-dom*, *-esse*, *-nesse*, *-ship*, *-less*, *-full*. I also paid attention to words with “pseudo-suffixes”, such as *-er* in *father, mother* and words ending in *-ow(e)*, a heavy syllable too, as in *furrow, followe*. At least sometimes such words might still have had a secondary stress, or even the main stress on the suffix: *Worship was don to Ceres the **goddesse*** (944), *Unto the sonne of Uenus, the **goddesse*** (1046). The total number of cases of “inversions of stress” on positions odd-even (can these be called WS?) is 148. I probably missed some WS realizations by monosyllables, particularly if they were adjacent to other deviating syllables. The number of disyllabic deviations is more certain. Here is the breakdown by

parts of speech of what might be considered deviations on WS, absolute numbers and percent from the total:

Nouns	34 (23.0)
Verbs	87 (58.8)
Adjectives	10 (6.7) (including one numeral)
Adverbs	17 (11.5)
Total	148

The correlation between parts of speech is not unlike Shelley's. Was it conscious or fortuitous? I broke down the 87 verbs into disyllabic (55) and monosyllabic, and looked at the composition of disyllabic verbs. The majority of the 55 disyllabic verbs in positions "odd-even" have the suffix *-ing*: 28, or 50.9 percent; next come verbs with the suffix *-ed*: 17, or 30.9 percent; the rest are few. Then I wrote out all disyllabic verbs stressed on the first syllable that occur outside "rhythmical figures" in the first 400 lines of Book 2. These are not too frequent (76): disyllabic verbs are more often stressed on the second syllable. The *-ing* forms are 21, or 27.6 percent, of the 76 verbs, while it is the *-ed* verbs, and not the *-ing* forms that are the majority: 53.9 percent. Granted, lines often begin with the beginning of a phrase, so the *-ing* forms at the beginning of a line were probably to be expected:

Which in those dayes at Troye did arriue,  
***Burning*** with rage of dame Cassandraes loue  
 (Surrey, *Aeneid*, Book 2, 427, 428)

Whatever the initial cause, the poet gave preference to *-ing* verbs in rhythmical figures: these are almost two times more frequent in rhythmical figures than outside them. What is even more important, "expressive verbs" (mostly, verbs of action) are particularly frequent in rhythmical figures: they constitute 60.9 percent, i.e. almost two thirds, of all verbs stressed on the first syllable and placed in "odd-even" positions. These are: *trembling* and *striking* (3 times each), *rattling*, *clasping*, *lifting*, and *dragging*. Below are examples of verbal "rhythmical figures": ***Trapt by** deceit* (249), ***Stuft with armed** men* (299), ***Sprinkling** with blood* (648), *...**clasping** my feet* (888), ***Lift to** the sterres* (906), ***Tredes on** the adder* (487), ***Murdred** alas* (878), ***Trembling** for age*, *...**trembling** doth bend* (659, 826), ***Fell to** the ground* (396, 652), ***Striken** with*

dred, ***Strake me*** with thonder, and ...***strikes with*** his spere (493, 853, 687). In the text outside the rhythmical figures there are many more semantically neutral verbs. Did Surrey, then, consciously use rhythmical deviations to denote expressiveness? *The Aeneid* is a poem about action; Book Two is all about the giant wooden horse built by the cunning Greeks, and the horrible destruction of Troy. No wonder that in the whole text there are many expressive verbs of action. However, in his rhythmical figures the poet prefers verbs of particular morphological structure and specific meaning. Words of other parts of speech in positions WS, though few, also have expressive connotations: ***Cruel*** complaintes (473), ***Reckless*** of death (521), ***Flame had*** them raught (789). Where these instances fortuitous or conscious? Later poets assumed that Surrey's rhythmical italics were a conscious stylistic device, and followed his example. It was Henry Howard Earl of Surrey who, consciously or fortuitously, pioneered the use of rhythmical figures to support meaning. How, then, was this new stylistic device followed?

Let us examine the first English tragedy, *Gorboduc* by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, written less than 40 years after Surrey's translations from *The Aeneid*. In this and other texts analyzed below, imperative verbs and vocative nouns were disregarded. Following Surrey's example, Norton and Sackville used blank iambic pentameter in their heroic and "historical" tragedy. Since then, this metre began to be associated with historical and heroic subjects, and later, also became applied in plays in other genres. Norton wrote the 973 lines of Acts 1–3, Sackville – the 815 lines of Acts 4–5. Although the co-authors share many common features, their handling of rhythm in support of meaning is dissimilar. Both poets have "dubious" cases: they (in particular, Sackville) use adjectives *aweless*, *careless*, *hopeless*, *bootless*, *dreadless*, *careful*, or nouns *kingdom*, *thralldom* on positions WS. Do these words generate "inversions of stress", or did the co-authors still stress heavy suffixes the way Chaucer did, and maybe Surrey as well? E. J. Dobson suggested that secondary stresses on heavy syllables were used at least through the first half of the 17th century and at least in an elevated register in the speech of educated people (Dobson, 1968, Volume II). I did two counts of rhythmical italics on WS for both co-authors: minimum and maximum. Norton's counts are: 53.3/55.5 per 1000 lines, Sackville's 85.9/98.2. Not only did Sackville use more rhythmical italics, but their breakdown by parts of speech differs. For purposes of comparison with *Gorboduc* I took Marlowe's 1 *Tamburlaine* (1587, 2095 lines) written a little over 20 years after *Gorboduc*, and Shakespeare's tragedy *Richard*

*III* (1591–92, 3378 lines) written 4–5 years after 1 *Tamburlaine*. Marlowe's frequency of rhythmical italics is 70.6 per 1000 lines. Shakespeare began using also figures SW and some other; the total frequency of rhythmical italics in *Richard III* is not unlike 1 *Tamburlaine*: 72 per 1000 lines, but we shall look only on WS and WSW which are in the majority. Here is the breakdown of rhythmical italics by part of speech, Surrey, Norton and Sackville (maximum count), Marlowe, Shakespeare and Shelley:

Parts of speech	Surrey	Norton	Sackville	Marlowe	Shakespeare	Shelley
Nouns	23.0	28.3	25.3	15.5	29.6	19.6
Verbs	<b>58.8</b>	30.1	<b>53.2</b>	<b>66.2</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>59.5</b>
Adject.	6.7	<b>37.8</b>	6.3	12.2	12.1	11.9
Adverbs	11.5	3.8	15.2	6.1	15.5	8.9
Total	148	53	90	148	206	494

Norton, not unlike Chaucer, gives preference to adjectives (in particular, adjectives plus adverbs), while Sackville, similarly to Surrey, gives much preference to verbs. But even Norton, it seems, was thinking of additionally emphasizing words that have expressive connotations: in positions WS, 9 nouns out of 15 and 9 verbs out of 16 have expressive connotations: *murder* (3 times), *woe* (*to*), *ruins*, *wisdom*, *threaten*, *die* (*with*), *yield* (*to*), *flowing* (about blood).

Sackville was really innovative. Verbal italics prevail in his text, similarly to Surrey, before him, and the three poets analyzed that come after him. Sackville was the first poet to use verbal rhythmical italics actively in English drama.

Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great, Part 1* turned out to be the most "verbal" text: 98 verbs out of 148 italics. Sixty-seven of these, or 68.4%, are disyllabic, and *-ing* forms constitute 68.7% of these. Surrey (and even Shelley) had less: 51 percent of *-ing* forms. Shakespeare's *Richard III* has relatively few verbs serving as rhythmical italics, though they can still be found and are very expressive. Disyllabic verbs constitute 38.6% of all his verbal italics, and *-ing* forms make up 32.3% of disyllabic verbal italics: half of Marlowe's number. In *Richard III*, there are many such nouns, particularly proper names: *Clarence*, *Edward*, *Richard*, etc.

It would be interesting to analyze more poets of different epochs and in different genres.

There are more than two links between verse form and semantics (Gasparov, Tarlinskaja 2008). I have mentioned “metre and meaning” and demonstrated “rhythm and meaning”. More work lies ahead of anyone who will venture into this fascinating area of verse study.

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### **Ритм и смысл: «ритмические отклонения» как ритмический курсив**

Метр английского пятистопного ямба допускает «ритмические отклонения», занимающие три, а чаще – два смежных слога. Такие отклонения, хоть и «метричны», замечаются читателем или слушателем. Начиная с первой четверти 16-го века (Сарри) поэты стали использовать ритмические отклонения, чтобы подчеркнуть семантически важные места в тексте. Отклонения, используемые поэтами для усиления семантически важных мест в тексте, стали частью английской поэтической традиции. Оказалось, что поэты заполняют «ритмические отклонения» от метра повторяющимися ритмическими и грамматическими структурами и повторяющейся лексикой. М. Л. Гаспаров называл повторяющиеся ритмические и грамматические структуры термином «клише», а повторяющиеся грамматические, ритмические и лексические построения – «формулами». Я обнаружила, что формулы – часть английской стихотворной традиции. Одни и те же формулы повторяются у всех поэтов 16–20 вв. Формулы – не плагиат, не реминисценции и не аллюзии, это общее «добро», принадлежащее всем английским поэтам. Повторяющиеся отклонения на метрических местах «слабое-сильное-слабое-сильное» обычно содержат односложный глагол/сказуемое, односложное грамматическое слово (например, артикль), односложное определение и определяемое – дополнение к глаголу. Повторяющаяся лексика включает глаголы движения, в частности, глаголы, обозначающие энергичное движение, прерывистое движение, движение, направленное вниз, акцию, причиняющую боль или смерть.

### **Rütm ja tähendus: "rütmilised kõrvalekalded" kui kursiiv**

Inglise jambilises pentameetris on lubatud rütmilised kõrvalekalded, mis hõlmavad kolm (harva neli, sagedamini kaks) kõrvutiasuvat meetrilist positsiooni. Need kõrvalekalded on küll meetrilised, ent lugeja või kuulaja märkab neid. Alates 16. sajandi esimesest veerandist on luuletajad (Surrey) kasutanud rütmilisi kõrvalekaldeid, et rõhutada semantilisel olulisi segmente värsireas. Niisugused rütmilised kõrvalekalded on kujunenud inglise luuletraditsiooni osaks. Ilmneb, et tähenduse rõhutamiseks kasutatavatel rütmilistel kõrvalekalletel on korduvad rütmilised ja grammatilised struktuurid ning ka korduv leksika. Mihhail Gasparov kasutas korduvate rütmilis-grammatiliste struktuuride tähistamiseks mõistet "klišeed" ning nimetas neis sisalduvat korduvat leksikat "vormeliteks". Käesoleva artikli autor on avastanud, et vormelid on osa inglise luuletraditsioonist: ühed ja samad vormelid korduvad luuletekstides 16.–20. sajandini. Tegu ei ole plagieerimise, allusioonide ega reminisentsidega, vaid kõikide inglise luuletajate ühisosaga, mida kõik kasutavad, kuid mis ei kuulu kellelegi. Korduvad kõrvalekalded esinevad tavaliselt meetrilistes positsioonides "nõrk-tugev-nõrk-tugev" ning sisaldavad reeglina ühesilbilist (harva kahesilbilist) verbi-predikaati, millele järgneb ühesilbiline grammatiline sõna (nt artikkel), adjektiiv-tribuut ning nimisõna – verbi otsene sihitis. Korduv leksika hõlmab liikumist väljendavaid verbe, eriti kiire, agressiivse liikumise tähendusega sõnu, allapoole suunatud tegevust, vigastust või surma põhjustavat tegevust.