

The Poetics of Neo-Classicism: Dryden and Pope

John Dryden (1631–1700)

- Born as the first of 14 children in the family of a landowning Puritan country gentleman;
 - 1644: Westminster School ;
 - 1650–54: Trinity College, Cambridge.
 - after graduating he worked for Cromwell's Secretary of State in London;
 - *Heroique Stanzas* (1658), a eulogy on Cromwell's death;
 - *Astraea Redux* (1660), a panegyric to celebrate the restoration of the monarchy;
 - *To his Sacred Majesty* (1660), a panegyric on the coronation.
- 1663–1681:** the career of a popular dramatist (29 plays);
- one of the initiators of the comedy of manners; his best known comedy is *Marriage a-la-Mode* (1672);
 - 1670: *The Conquest of Granada* – introduced the genre of the "heroic drama";
 - *All for Love* (1678), a regular tragedy (rewriting of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*);
 - *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), a long historical poem on the events of the year 1666;
 - **1668:** poet laureate; **1670:** historiographer royal.
- 1681–1687:** political, poetical and ecclesiastical controversies; the period of satires and of didactic poems

Absalom and Achitophel (1681): probably his greatest satire;

- the background: the Exclusion Bill crisis (against James, Charles's brother, heir presumptive);
 - 1678: Titus Oates and the Popish plot (for more information, see Thomas 6–10);
 - the issue divided the people and the Parliament (Tories and Whigs);
 - 1679: Exclusion Bill drafted (by the Whig majority, led by Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury): some supported the Duke of Monmouth, the King's Protestant but illegitimate son;
 - King dissolved the Parliament receiving financial support from Louis XIV of France;
 - 1681: Bill defeated in the House of Lords;
- the work itself:
 - written at the King's request and published just before the defeat of the Bill;
 - gives an account of the conflict on the analogy of the biblical story of King David (Charles II) and his illegitimate son Absalom (the Duke of Monmouth);
 - includes a series of satirical portraits.

Mac Flecknoe (1682)

- an early example of **mock heroic** satire;
- **mock heroic:** based on a juxtaposition of form and content – typically: high, elevated, heroic form used to relate low, petty, trivial everyday reality; theatrical conventions played upon:

In thy felonious heart, though venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen iambics, but mild anagram:
Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command
Some peaceful province in acrostic land.
There thou may'st wings display and altars raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways.
Or if thou would'st thy diff'rent talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute.
He said, but his last words were scarcely heard,
For Bruce and Longvil had a trap prepar'd,
And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.
Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
Born upwards by a subterranean wind.
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art.

(201–217)

Religio Laici (1682): praises the “middle way” of the Church of England.

- Poetic form: heroic couplets – explained in a kind of poetic creed:

Thus have I made my own opinions clear:
Yet neither praise expect, nor censure fear:
And this unpolish'd, rugged verse, I chose;
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose:
For, while from sacred truth I do not swerve,
Tom Sternhold's, or Tom Shadwell's rhymes will serve.
(451–456)

The Hind and the Panther (1687): praises the Roman Catholic Church (Dryden converts to Catholicism).

- Samuel Johnson: Dryden was “the first who joined argument with poetry.”
- 1685: Charles II dies, succeeded by his brother James II (Catholic);
- 1688: the Glorious Revolution, William of Orange enthroned: Dryden loses his laureateship and pension.

Translations: *The Works of Virgil* (1697), *Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1700); translations/adaptations of Homer, Ovid, Boccaccio, and Chaucer in heroic couplets.

Criticism

- Samuel Johnson called him “the father of English criticism . . . the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merit of composition” (*Lives of the English Poets*);
- occasional and unsystematic criticism;
- dialectical openness that saves him from dogmatism or pedantry and results in generosity, tolerance, and open-mindedness (e.g. *Of Dramatic Poesie: An Essay* [1668], Preface to the *Fables* [1700]);
- lucid, easy, and clear prose – arguably the originator of modern prose style.

Two critical issues

1. **Neo-Classicism**, the problem of Shakespeare

- Neo-Classicism imported by Charles II from France (influence of Corneille, Molière, Boileau, Rapin, etc.);
- basic principle: rules govern the arts (from Aristotle through Horace);
- the problem: English tradition goes very much against the rules, especially Shakespeare;
- Thomas Rymer, *A Short View of Tragedy* (1692) vs. Dryden's generous attitude: “I admire [Jonson], but I love Shakespeare” (*Of Dramatic Poesie*).

2. The **Collier controversy**

- Jeremy Collier, *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698): attack on Congreve and John Vanbrugh;
- Dryden's friends respond by satirizing Collier but the *Short View* influences English audiences;
- the Middle Class begins to emerge.

Coffee House culture: Will's Coffee House frequented by Congreve, Wycherley, Walsh, Dennis etc.; Dryden presiding.

Alexander Pope (1688–1744) and the Augustan Age

Leading figure of the poetry of the first half of the century, in spite of his

- **social handicap:** Roman Catholic (severe discrimination); **BUT** a very influential figure in his age;
- **physical disability:** spine deformed due to Pott's disease (a variant of tuberculosis).
- 1704: makes friends with William Wycherley.
- 1709: *The Seasons* – four pastorals.
- 1711: *An Essay on Criticism* – first major poem, a brilliant synthesis of the Neo-Classical aesthetic attitude.
- 1712/14: *The Rape of the Lock* – mock-epic poem; this is what Pope is best remembered for (see below).
- Founding member of the Scriblerus Club (members John Gay, Jonathan Swift, John Arbuthnot); aim to mock bad taste and misdirected learning.
- **1717:** the peak of his career marked by the publication of *The Works of Alexander Pope* (edited by himself). However, his father died the same year, after which Pope bought an estate in Twickenham, where he moved with his mother (after her death, in 1733, he lived on his own).
- 1715–20: Homer's *Iliad* translated.
- 1725–26: Homer's *Odyssey* translated.
- 1728: *The Dunciad* (expanded in 1742) – satire on the dullness of Pope's adversaries, who had attacked his translations of Homer.
- 1733–34: *An Essay on Man* – philosophical treatise published anonymously lest the author's damaged reputation should disadvantage the work.
- 1730s: *Imitations of Horace*.

Augustan Britain (1700–1750)

From 1700: two distinct strands of culture instead of the remarkably unified Restoration culture:

- 1) Aristocratic high culture (associated with the names of Pope, Swift and Gay, the Tories):
 - a) Neo-Classical;
 - b) urbane and witty (continuation of Cavalier culture);
 - c) sceptical and pessimistic; suspicious of passion and enthusiasm.
- 2) Middle-class culture: newly emerging (novels).

Neo-Classicism

1. **Rules govern the arts** (three unities, strict boundaries between genres, etc.); art should reflect the existing order of the universe (the first rule-giver is Nature): "And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite, / One truth is clear, 'Whatever is, is right'" (Pope, *An Essay on Man*).
2. **Rules found in Nature but set down by the classics** (translation and imitation): "Those rules of old discovered, not devised, / Are Nature still, but Nature methodized" (Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*).
3. **No thematic originality aimed at;** poetry concerned with the general, the universal, common experience: "True wit is nature to advantage dressed, / What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed, / Something, whose truth convinced at sight we find, / That gives us back the image of our mind" (Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*). **BUT:** "If ever any author deserved the name of an *original*, it was Shakespeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of Nature; it proceeded through Egyptian strainers and channels and came to him not without some tincture of the learning or some cast of the models of those before him. The poetry of Shakespeare was inspiration indeed; he is not so much an imitator as an instrument of Nature; and 'tis not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him" (Pope, Preface to *The Works of Shakespeare*).
4. **Technical perfection;** cf. Dr. Johnson's opinion about Dryden: "Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with such variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctness of our sentiments. [...] What was said of Rome adorned by Augustus may be applied by an easy metaphor to English poetry embellished by Dryden [...] he found it brick, and he left it marble." **OR:** "True ease in writing comes from art, not chance, / As those move easiest who have learned to dance" (Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*).
5. Poet as a **learned scholar:** proper erudition, learning, cultivation in art and the sciences: "A little learning is a dangerous thing / Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring; / There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, / And drinking largely sobers us again" (Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*).

6. **Heroic couplets** (two rhyming lines of iambic pentameters). Suitable for all types of poems because
 - perspicuous, inviting a lucid approach;
 - flexible (lends itself readily to sententiousness, obscenity, tenderness, rhapsodic changes, etc.);
 - poetically neutral, applicable to all genres of poetry;
 - 2×2 half-lines fit a wide range of Neo-Classical rhetorical figures eminently;
 - require the reader's conscious reading but then stick in the reader's mind quite quickly (persuasion).
7. **Satire** – public poetry (poetry and the poet have a social function). The most characteristic and greatest poetic achievement of the age: **parody** of the epic genre.

The Rape of the Lock (1712/14)

- 2-canto version completed in 1712 (published in haste for fear a pirate copy should be launched); 5-canto version published in 1714 (supernatural machinery and dedication to “Mrs Arabella Fermor” added); Clarissa's speech added in 1717.
- Motif taken from real life: the strife of Arabella Fermor (Belinda) and Robert, Lord Petre (the Baron).
- Simple plot reflecting the frivolous, empty, superficial life of the aristocracy.
- Mock-heroic form: trivial actions related in an epic form and style. Though everything is derived, everything is part of an original whole entirely Pope's.
- Formal sources:
 - classical epics (Homer, Virgil): in his notes, Pope even refers the reader to Dryden's and his own translations of these works;
 - Restoration comedy: five-canto structure, unities of time, place, and action.
- Main strategy: shifting scales; juxtaposing the great, the elevated, and the heroic with the frivolous, the petty, the superficial: “And now, unveil'd, the Toilet stands display'd, / Each silver Vase in mystic order laid. / First, rob'd in white, the Nymph intent adores, / With head uncover'd, the Cosmetic pow'rs” (l.121–124).
- Playful and easy, no serious moral content except for the satirical mockery of contemporary society.
- Symbolic function of the lock: a playful representation of the war of the sexes.

Epic elements parodied

Invocation (l.1–6)

Ariel's premonition (l.27–114; “but most beware of Man”)

Sacrifice (Toilet scene, l.121ff.; the Baron's pyre of romances, gloves, and other trophies, ll.35ff.)

Begins in medias res; flashback technique (e.g. ll.35; “ere Phoebus rose”)

Supernatural machinery (Sylphs, Gnomes, deus ex machina ending)

Enumeration (Sylphs, ll.73ff.; card game, ll.31ff.)

Arming the hero (the “Forfex” presented by Clarissa, ll.125ff.)

Journey to the Underworld (Umbriel in the Cave of Spleen, ll.11ff.)

Apotheosis (Belinda's lock turned into a constellation)

From “The Rape of the Lock”

Canto I

What dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
 What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
 I sing—This verse to CARYL, Musel is due:
 This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
 Slight is the subject, but not so the praise, 5
 If She inspire, and He approve my lays.

And now, unveil'd, the Toilet stands display'd, 121
 Each silver Vase in mystic order laid.
 First, rob'd in white, the Nymph intent adores,
 With head uncover'd, the Cosmetic pow'rs.
 A heav'nly image in the glass appears, 125
 To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
 Th' inferior Priestess, at her altar's side,
 Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.

Canto III

Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flow'rs,
 Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,
 There stands a structure of majestic frame,
 Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name.
 Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom 5
 Of foreign Tyrants and of Nymphs at home;
 Here thou, great ANNA! whom three realms obey.
 Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes Tea.

Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
 To taste awhile the pleasures of a Court; 10
 In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
 Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
 One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
 And one describes a charming Indian screen;
 A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes; 15
 At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
 Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
 With singing, laughing, ogling, and *all that*.

Mean while, declining from the noon of day,
 The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray; 20
 The hungry Judges soon the sentence sign,
 And wretches hang that jury-men may dine;
 The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
 And the long labours of the Toilet cease.
 Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites, 25
 Burns to encounter two advent'rous Knights,
 At Ombre singly to decide their doom;
 And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
 Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
 Each band the number of the sacred nine. 30

Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes, 155
 And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
 Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,
 When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last;
 Or when rich China vessels fall'n from high,
 In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie! 160

Canto IV

“And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
 Expos'd thro' crystal to the gazing eyes,
 And heighten'd by the diamond's circling rays, 115
 On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
 Sooner shall grass in Hyde-park Circus grow,
 And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;
 Sooner let earth, air, sea, to Chaos fall,
 Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!” 120
 She [Belinda] said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
 And bids her Beau demand the precious hairs;
 (Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain,
 And the nice conduct of a clouded cane)
 With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face, 125
 He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case,
 And thus broke out—“My Lord, why, what the devil?
 “Z—ds! damn the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
 Plague on't! 'tis past a jest—nay prithee, pox!
 Give her the hair”—he spoke, and rapp'd his box. 130
 “It grieves me much” (reply'd the Peer again)
 “Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain.
 But by this Lock, this sacred Lock I swear,
 (Which never more shall join its parted hair;
 Which never more its honours shall renew, 135
 Clipp'd from the lovely head where late it grew)
 That while my nostrils draw the vital air,
 This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear.”
 He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread
 The long-contended honours of her head. 140

Canto V

This the Beau monde shall from the Mall survey,
 And hail with music its propitious ray.
 This the blest Lover shall for Venus take, 135
 And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake.
 This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
 When next he looks thro' Galileo's eyes;
 And hence th' egregious wizard shall foredoom
 The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome. 140
 Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn thy ravish'd hair,
 Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
 Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
 Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.
 For, after all the murders of your eye, 145
 When, after millions slain, yourself shall die:
 When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
 And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
 This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
 And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name. 150

Dryden, "An Ode for St Cecilia's Day"

I

From harmony, from Heav'nly harmony
This universal frame began.
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
Arise ye more than dead.
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And music's pow'r obey.
From harmony, from Heav'nly harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man.

II

What passion cannot music raise and quell!
When Jubal struck the corded shell,
His list'ning brethren stood around
And wond'ring, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound:
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot music raise and quell!

III

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thund'ring drum
Cries, hark the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.

IV

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling lute.

V

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs, and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains and height of passion,
For the fair, disdainful dame.

VI

But oh! what art can teach
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their Heav'nly ways
To mend the choirs above.

VII

Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place;
Sequacious of the lyre:
But bright Cecilia rais'd the wonder high'r;
When to her organ, vocal breath was giv'n,
An angel heard, and straight appear'd
Mistaking earth for Heav'n.

GRAND CHORUS

As from the pow'r of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the bless'd above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And music shall untune the sky.

Dryden, "Ode on the Death of Purcell"

I

Mark how the Lark and Linnet Sing,
With rival Notes
They strain their warbling Throats,
To welcome in the Spring:
But in the close of Night,
When Philomel begins her Heav'nly lay,
They cease their mutual spite,
Drink in her Music with delight,
And list'ning and silent, and silent and list'ning,
And list'ning and silent obey.

II

So ceas'd the rival Crew when Purcell came,
They Sung no more, or only Sung his Fame.
Struck dumb they all admir'd the God-like Man,
The God-like Man,
Alas, too soon retir'd,
As He too late began.
We beg not Hell, our Orpheus to restore,
Had He been there,
Their Sovereign's fear
Had sent Him back before.
The pow'r of Harmony too well they know,
He long e'er this had Tun'd their jarring Sphere,
And left no Hell below.

III

The Heav'nly Choir, who heard his Notes from high,
Let down the Scale of Music from the Sky:
They handed him along,
And all the way He taught, and all the way they Sung.
Ye Brethren of the Lyre, and tuneful Voice,
Lament his Lot: but at your own rejoice.
Now live secure and linger out your days,
The Gods are pleas'd alone with Purcell's Lays,
Nor know to mend their Choice.

Some Principles of Versification with Examples from Pope and Others

1 METRE

1.1 QUANTITATIVE METRE (Greek, Latin, Hungarian, etc.) – basis of versification is length of *syllables* (ˉ = long, ˘ = short).

Ōd(i) ět ā | mō, quār(e) | ĭd fācī | ām fōr | tāssĕ rĕ | quīrīs, Gyűlölök és szeretek. Hogy mért teszek így, sose kérdezd:
Nĕsciő, | sĕd fĭĕ | rī || sĕntī(o) ět | ěxcrūcī | ōr. Nem tudom. Érzem: emészt, s kĭnja keresztrefeszít.

(Catullus, “Poem Nr. LXXXV” – collation of several translations; Gábor Devecseri, Lőrinc Szabó, etc.)

1.2 ACCENTUAL-SYLLABIC VERSE (English) – same feet as in quantitative metre, but the basis is accent rather than length.

1.2.1 Feet:

(i) **Iamb:** $\boxed{X /}$ (X = unstressed; / = stressed), e.g.:

|| x / | x / | x / | x / | x / ||

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

*Thomas Gray (1716–1771),
“Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard”*

(ii) **Trochee:** $\boxed{/ X}$ (X = unstressed; / = stressed), e.g.:

|| / x | / x | / x | / x ||

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river

Flowing down to Camelot.
*Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892),
“The Lady of Shalott”*

(ii) **Anapaest:** $\boxed{X X /}$ (X = unstressed; / = stressed), e.g.:

|| x x / | x x / | x x / | x x / ||

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

*George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824),
“The Destruction of Sennacherib”*

(iv) **Dactyl:** $\boxed{/ X X}$ (X = unstressed; / = stressed), e.g.:

|| / x x | / x x ||

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young and so fair.

Thomas Hood (1798–1845), “The Bridge of Sighs”

(v) **Spondee:** $\boxed{/ /}$ (/ = stressed); rarely found in English poetry, cf. second foot of Catullus' poem (“...mo quare...”).

Degenerate foot: \boxed{X} or $\boxed{/}$ on its own, e.g. “Lift her with care” (/), or “To be or not to be; that is the question” (X).

(i) and (ii): **rising feet** (at least one unstressed syllable precedes stressed syllable);

(iii) and (iv): **falling feet** (stressed syllable at the beginning, followed by one or more unstressed syllables).

Substitution of related feet (e.g. anapaest for iamb, or dactyl for trochee) is possible for greater poetic freedom.

1.2.2 Lines:

(i) **Monometer:** one foot to the line;

(ii) **Dimeter:** two feet to the line (e.g. Thomas Hood, “The Bridge of Sighs”: dactylic dimeter);

(iii) **Trimeter:** three feet to the line;

(iv) **Tetrameter:** four feet to the line (e.g. Lord Byron, “The Destruction of Sennacherib”: anapaestic tetrameter);

(v) **Pentameter:** five feet to the line (e.g. Thomas Gray, “Elegy...”: iambic pentameter);

(vi) **Hexameter:** six feet to the line (e.g. the first line of Catullus' poem) – also called Alexandrine, usually if the two trimeters are separated by a caesura;

(vii) **Heptameter:** seven feet to the line.

2 RHYME

2.1 Types

Full rhyme: end of syllable (both the vowel and the consonant[s]) is perfectly the same in two words, e.g. lend / bend.

Near rhyme: two words sounding similar, but not having full rhyme, e.g. supper / butter. [Also *slant rhyme*, *off rhyme*.]

Assonance: repeated vowel sound, e.g. lip / give.

Consonance: same consonants surrounding different vowels, e.g. lip / lap. [Also *consonantal rhyme*, *pararhyme*.]

Alliteration: deliberate repetition of the same consonant sound for a special purpose, normally at the beginning of a stressed syllable, e.g. “weary way” in Gray's “Elegy...”.

End rhyme: rhyming syllables are at the end of two or more lines, e.g. “Willows whiten, aspens quiver, / Little breezes dusk and shiver...” [Also *terminal rhyme*.]

Internal rhyme: rhyming syllables are within the same line, e.g. “And a good south wind sprung up behind; / The Albatross did follow, / And every day, for food and play / Came to the mariner's hollo!” (Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” Part I); “See the size of her thighs, the part of her lips...” (John Betjeman).

Masculine rhyme: occurs on stressed syllables, e.g. day / play.

Feminine rhyme: occurs on stressed plus unstressed syllables, e.g. quiver / shiver.

Some Principles of Versification with Examples from Pope and Others

2.2 Structures based on rhyme and metre

Couplet: two lines connected by the end rhyme.

Heroic couplet: couplet of two iambic pentameters (cf. Pope, "An Essay on Criticism").

(i) *Closed couplet:* the end of the second line coincides with the end of a complete sense unit.

(ii) *Open couplet:* the end of the train of thoughts does not coincide with the end of the couplet, e.g.:

Experience, though noon auctoritee
 Were in this world, is right enough for me
 To speke of woe that is in marriage. ——— lines linking consecutive couplets syntactically
 (Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, "The Wife of Bath's Prologue")

Triplet: three lines connected by the end rhyme. [Also *tercet*.]

Terza rima: the form of Dante's *La divina commedia*; a sequence of three-line units (tercets) with the following rhyme pattern: ABA BCB CDC DED, etc. (Cf. Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind.")

Quatrain: a stanza of four lines.

(i) *Ballad stanza:* rhyme pattern xAxA ('x' meaning lack of rhyme); e.g. Thomas Rymer.

(ii) *Heroic quatrain:* rhyme pattern ABAB, e.g. Gray's "Elegy...".

(iii) *In Memoriam stanza:* rhyme pattern ABBA. Name due to Tennyson's poem "In Memoriam."

Stave of six: rhyme pattern normally ABABCC. For a variation, see Yeats, "The Wild Swans at Coole" (xAxABB).

Rhyme royal: seven lines with the following rhyme pattern: ABABBCC. Introduced into English poetry by Chaucer, it is also known as the Chaucerian stanza. Cf. Wordsworth, "Resolution and Independence."

Ottava rima: eight lines with the following rhyme pattern: ABABABCC. Cf. last eight lines of Milton's "Lycidas," or Yeats, "The Circus Animals' Desertion." It notably occurs in Lord Byron's *Don Juan*. (Hence aka 'Byronic' stanza.)

Spenserian stanza: consists of nine lines, the first eight being iambic pentameters, and the last one iambic hexameter (Alexandrine). Its rhyme pattern is the following: ABABBBCBCC. Cf. Keats, "The Eve of St Agnes."

Blank verse: iambic pentameters without end rhymes. Cf. Shakespeare's plays, or Coleridge, "The Nightingale."

Free verse: does not conform to any metrical principles, and therefore should not be confused with blank verse.

Enjambement: the sentence or syntactic unit flows on, regardless of the end of the line. [Also *run-on lines*.]

3 FORM AND CONTENT (in Alexander Pope's "Essay on Criticism")

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance, ——— *closed heroic couplet* (complete sense unit)

As those move easiest who have learned to dance. ———

'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,

The sound must seem an echo to the sense: ——— *unity of form and content as guiding principle* (catachresis)

Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,

And when the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows; ——— *alliteration:* expresses smoothness, softness ('s,' 'm')

But when loud surges lash the sounding shore, ——— *onomatopoeia:* sounds express content ('hoarse,' 'roar,' 'lash')

The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar:

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,

The line too labours, and the words move slow; ——— *cacophony:* words which are hard to say, which sound harsh

Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain, ——— *euphony:* words pleasing to the ear, easy to speak

Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main. ——— effect further enhanced by the *hiatus* (the → th)

[...]

But most by numbers judge a poet's song: ——— *metre* should not be the only criterion when judging a poem

And smooth or rough, with them, is right or wrong:

In the bright muse, though thousand charms conspire,

Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire,

Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,

Not mend their minds; as some to church repair, ——— occasionally, three lines can be linked in a heroic 'triplet'

Not for the doctrine, but the music there.

These equal syllables alone require,

Tho' oft the ear the open vowels tire, ——— against the monotonous use of certain sound effects

While expletives their feeble aid do join, ——— against tedious grammatical constructions

And ten low words oft creep in one dull line, ——— shows precisely ten such 'low words ... in one dull line'

While they ring round the same unvary'd chimes,

With sure returns of still expected rhymes.

Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze,'

In the next line, it 'whispers through the trees':

If 'crystal streams with pleasing murmurs creep': ——— mocks untalented ('dull') poets depending on trite rhymes

The reader's threatened (not in vain) with 'sleep.'

Then, at the last and only couplet fraught ——— mocks commonplace ideas

With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,

A needless Alexandrine ends the song,

That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along. ——— what is this, then?