

The Nature of Verse and its Consequences for the Mixed Form

KRISTIN HANSON and PAUL KIPARSKY

One of the essential properties of phonological opposition is the fact that the two members of an oppositional pair are not equivalent; one member possesses the mark in question, the other does not; the first is designated as 'marked', the other as 'unmarked'.

Roman Jakobson¹

1 Introduction

In this essay we sketch a particular approach to the theory of verbal art that brings together insights of Roman Jakobson with those of generative grammar, and derive from it a perspective on the mixed forms that constitute the theme of this volume.² We draw on two leading ideas. One is that MARKEDNESS, the means through which language effects differentiation, is inherently hierarchical and asymmetrical. The other is that verse is by definition a form of language marked by requirements of the REGULAR RECURRENCE OF LINGUISTIC EQUIVALENCES. From these two formal considerations follow a set of expectations about the functions in literary traditions and texts of not only verse but also the literary form from which it is most radically differentiated, prose.

In section 1 we review the concept of markedness and use it to construct a rudimentary theory of literary form and literary genre. This theory provides a principled basis for two claims rooted in familiar observations: that verse is the unmarked form of literary language while prose is the marked form; and that the unmarked function of verse is lyric, while the unmarked function of prose is narrative.

¹ Jakobson 1932, 1; cf. Jakobson and Pomorska 1980.

² We would like to thank the following people for helpful discussions that have contributed to the development of this paper: Gianluigi Bellin, especially for help with Dante and for showing us David Young's comments on his translation of Rilke; Cleo Condoravdi, especially for calling Odysseus Elytis' *To Axion Esti* to our attention; Elise Tompkins Partridge, for detailed comments on an earlier draft and for showing us Howard Nemerov's 'Because You Asked About the Line Between Prose and Poetry', and the participants and coordinator, Marc Dominicy, of the meeting in June 1995 at the Libre Université de Bruxelles of the URA de la Poétique (du CNRS), where an oral version of this paper was presented. We are also grateful for financial support from UBC-ISS grant no. 5-70927.

This theory depends on the assumption that the requirements that mark verse are stylizations of requirements which already inhere in the structure of language, an idea which we elaborate in section 2. We do not attempt to survey the many varieties of verse forms found in the world's written and unwritten literatures with reference to this idea; instead we lay out an explicit theory of one verse form, poetic meter, which takes this assumption to be axiomatic, and show how the properties of some metrical systems of English support this approach.

Equipped with these essentials, we then turn in section 3 to the significance for the mixed form of the markedness relations of verse and prose which follow from this conception of verse. Because markedness is hierarchical and asymmetrical, the terms of an opposition defined through it can never be simply interchangeable. Consequently verse and prose can never exist side by side in a simple state of stylistic heterogeneity. The distribution of the two in a text must always be governed by the writer's intention of exploiting default expectations about their formal opposition for compositional ends, which is itself situated in a specific historical context partially determined by the same markedness relations. These expectations include the dominance of one form, normally verse at the beginning of a literary tradition and prose at the end, the use of verse for narrative functions only if it is also used for lyric functions, and the use of prose for lyric functions only if it is also used for narrative.

While these claims are consistent with the instances and descriptions of the mixed form and its historical contexts which we have seen, our limited familiarity with the vast variety of mixed forms in world literature means that we cannot hope to verify them in a systematic fashion. We instead offer them here for scrutiny by the collective expertise of our colleagues. If they prove to be correct, they will support the theoretical assumptions of which they are consequences; if false, they may point the way to how those assumptions ought to be revised.

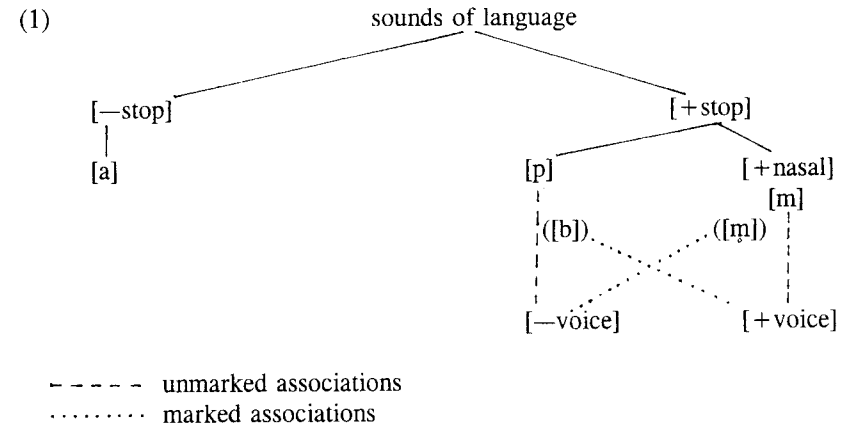
2 *Markedness and the Language of Literature*

2.1 *Markedness in Language*

It is an idea familiar from its repercussions in literary theory that fundamental linguistic entities are defined by difference. Markedness is the usual means through which such difference is constituted. The concept can be illustrated by the way a child masters the sound inventory of its mother tongue (Jakobson 1949; 1960b). Typically the first linguistic sounds distinguished are [a] and [p], then [m]. Why should this be so? All speech sounds are made by modifying in various ways the flow of air otherwise involved in breathing, and [a] is basically the one that results from doing nothing in particular to modify that flow of air except to make it resonate; [p], in contrast, involves the most drastic possible modification, namely, blocking that flow of air entirely by closing off any passage through the mouth.³ In turn, among

³ We abstract away from the exact place of articulation.

sounds where the flow of air through the mouth is blocked, the most drastic modification possible is to permit the air to flow freely once more, by allowing it to flow out of the nose instead, as in [m]. These strategies represent the formal phonological features [stop] and [nasal] respectively: thus, at the highest level a class of speech sounds is differentiated by being marked as [+stop], in opposition to a class which simply remains unmarked; and then a class at the resultant level is further differentiated by being marked as [+nasal], again in opposition to a class which simply remains unmarked. These categories themselves are further differentiated into marked and unmarked subcategories by other features: for example, the resonance of [a] comes from vibration of the vocal cords, or the phonological feature [voice], which comes naturally when air flow is unobstructed, but not when it is obstructed. These are not necessary correlations: it is possible to suppress voice when airflow is unobstructed, as in the unvoiced nasal [m] occurring in Burmese and other languages (Ladefoged 1971), or to add it even when airflow is obstructed, as in [b]; but to do so requires some extra articulatory effort. Thus, [+voice] is unmarked in nasal stops (as well as non-stops), but marked in non-nasal stops. These relations are diagrammed in (1):



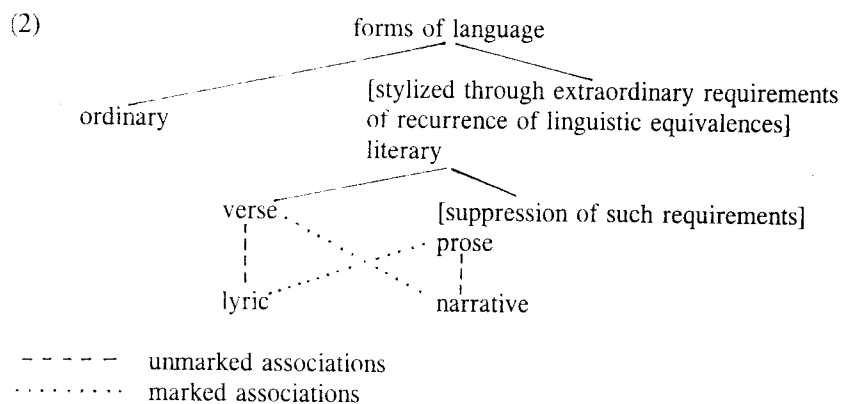
Although this limited illustration does little justice to the complexity of markedness relations within language, it suffices to show that because the marked category depends on the existence of the unmarked one but not vice versa, they give rise to a structure of implicational relations and consequent default expectations. These are not only manifested in language acquisition, but also govern the structure of the world's languages and the ways in which they change over time. For example, in the absence of any differentiation by marking some stops [+nasal], all stops will be non-nasal; thus [p] may exist without [m], but [m] will not exist without [p]. Similarly, in the absence of any differentiation by marking some non-nasal stops with [+voice], all non-nasal stops will be unvoiced; thus [p] may exist without [b] but [b] will not exist without [p].

2.2 Markedness in Literary Language

In the same way, the forms of verbal art can be constructed by a series of differentiations at successive levels, each the result of an increment of complexity within a category at the preceding level. At the highest level, literary language is marked by a conventional stylization which differentiates it from ordinary language. Such an opposition of literary to ordinary language is found in virtually all societies.

The stylization which defines literary language is almost always a recurrence of linguistic structures that goes beyond what arises naturally in ordinary language. Verse is defined by a requirement of a regular recurrence of this kind; thus, the unmarked form of literary language is verse. Prose is defined in turn by the suppression of any such requirement.⁴ It follows that literary prose is at two removes from ordinary language: it represents the marked category of non-ordinary language, and within that category the marked subcategory of non-verse. Its apparent ordinariness has all the complexity of innocence after the fall; its nakedness is that of the lady in *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

When a formal differentiation is associated with a functional differentiation, a genre results. Literature itself makes the aesthetic function of language dominant through its stylized form (Jakobson 1935a). Within literature, there is a differentiation between lyric, dramatic, and narrative (epic) functions, traditionally associated with the primary deictic categories of first, second, and third person. The unmarked association of verse is with the lyric function, and that of prose with narrative (Jakobson 1935b); the parallel with (1) is illustrated in (2):



Frye (1974, 886) suggests that the stylization which marks prose involves a subordination of all patterns of recurrence to sentence structure, and hence to discursive thought. But his distinction of literary prose' from 'pure prose' rests on his observation of recurrence as a stylistic feature of his sample of literary prose, Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*: '... we notice at a specific literary intention is visible in Gibbon beside the descriptive one. He is suggesting a meditative interest in Rome, and for this meditative interest a certain formal symmetry in the style is appropriate.' Thus, the stylization he posits is precisely the illusion offered by literary prose, not reality.

The intrinsic affinity of verse to the lyric function derives from its formal constitution by extraordinary requirements of recurrent linguistic equivalences. Such requirements establish a dichotomy between the speaker's own control on the one hand, and a world beyond his control on the other, because they necessarily introduce significant relations beyond those which are asserted. It is a commonplace of literary criticism that the line may be interpreted independently of the sentence to which it belongs, and the equivalences in phonological or syntactic structure which make up rhyme, alliteration and syntactic parallelism may be interpreted independently of semantic structure. Those equivalences, however selected and arranged, are drawn from a set of possibilities given by language, and hence from a world beyond the control of the speaker. The effects to which this may be put may be as various as the effects of literature itself: the speaker may seem helpless, or invested with all the authority of truth itself; the world may seem absurd, or so well ordered that the relation between linguistic forms and their meanings could not have been otherwise (Wimsatt 1954). But it is this invocation of a world beyond the control of the speaker which is shared by all canonical subjects and uses of lyric — passion, lamentation, foolishness, prayer, prophecy, incantation, instruction and universal truth. Even the virtuosity often characteristic of lyric takes its force from this invocation, as do politically motivated rejections of verse itself.⁵

Prose, in contrast, by eschewing any extraordinary requirement of the recurrence of linguistic equivalences, purports to conceal the independence of language, and asserts the speaker's full control.⁶ Its suppression of formal elements which invoke a world which is given allows for a world which is changeable, with room for volition, action, consequences. Hence prose has a natural affinity with narrative.

The two propositions that verse is the unmarked form of literature and that lyric is the unmarked function of verse depend on the idealizing assumption that the forms of verbal art are constructed exclusively within the domain of language itself. Most importantly, it is only because of the immanence of its constitutive constraints that verse is naturally associated with the lyric function: only in this case are the non-asserted relations they introduce perceived as given by the language, and hence necessary rather than contingent. We therefore turn directly to an elaboration and justification of this assumption of the linguistic nature of verse.

⁵ Godzich and Kittay (1987: ch. 3) argue, on the basis of a comparison of an Old French poem to its contemporary prose paraphrase, that verse and prose each have advantages in communicative function and in signifying practice that the other lacks. An example they give of such a difference is that verse can readily mime the voice and actions of a character, while prose can readily 'testify' to unseen internalized events, such as emotions. It seems clear that these differences really have to do with differences between oral performance and writing, and that the authors' unquestioned identification of this opposition with the difference between verse and prose, which is not even tenable for thirteenth-century France, seriously compromises their argument.

⁶ Again the effects to which this property may be put are various: in *Tristram Shandy*, for example, it is precisely the failure to fulfill this expectation which is the main joke.

3 The Nature of Verse

3.1 Equivalence

Recurrence always entails equivalence, and of a slightly abstract nature, inasmuch as concretely different events are understood as the same at some level of abstraction. Language depends on equivalence in just this way: a fundamental aspect of our experience of language consists in recognizing across discrete instances of speech that some linguistic structures are the same: this is the basis not only of comprehension and production, but of grammatical structure itself (Anderson 1985).

Equivalence in language may thus be understood in two ways. In one sense, any repeated pieces of text (oral or written) recognized as repeated must be equivalent, such as the many instances of the collocation 'regular recurrence of linguistic equivalences' throughout this paper. Similarly, pieces of text may share incidental properties with respect to which they are equivalent, such as consisting of three words. But the sense in which equivalence functions in grammatical structure is more specific. The rules which constitute the internalized grammar of a fluent speaker of a language refer to certain syntactic and phonological equivalences. An English speaker knows intuitively, for example, that a verb phrase like *ultimately flourished* requires a preceding noun phrase to make a well-formed sentence: *my rose ultimately flourished*, *the primroses that were eaten by the birds ultimately flourished*, *all ultimately flourished*. Similarly, an English speaker knows intuitively that words with final voiced sounds make their plurals with a [z] sound while words with final unvoiced sounds make their plurals with an [s] sound: *begonias* ([z]), *palms* ([z]), *shrubs* ([z]), *grapes* ([s]). Equivalences like verb phrases, noun phrases, final sounds, voiced and unvoiced sounds, belong to a repertoire of grammatical structures made available by universal grammar — the capacity to learn language which all humans share — and figure in the constraints on well-formedness which constitute the grammars of particular languages. While all kinds of equivalences may certainly be important to literary form, we assume that it is specifically the equivalences which figure in grammatical constraints whose recurrence is required in verse forms (Jakobson 1960a; Kiparsky 1973; 1987).

For meter, while this assumption often characterizes theoretical statements, it is not always followed through on in particular descriptions. For example, isochrony is often invoked as an important principle of certain metrical systems, but time is not a linguistic entity. We argue next that the equivalences which recur in meter are exactly those which figure in the grammar of rhythm in natural language.

3.2 Rhythm

The term RHYTHM is commonly applied to virtually all phenomena in both nature and art which are characterized by recurrence.⁷ The recurrence may be

irregular, as with red hair in a family or the falls through the holes in the earth in *Time Bandits*; or regular, as with the ebb and flow of the tide or the spacing of the columns on a Classical façade. The equivalence which defines the recurrence may be based on kind, as with the colors of a bird's feathers or the shapes of the pieces in a patchwork quilt; or on prominence, as with the pulse of a heart or the steps of a waltz.

If the essential principle of literary language is an extraordinary recurrence of linguistic equivalences, then all literature is rhythmic in the most general sense of the term. VERSE is distinguished by the regularity of its recurrences, and METER is distinguished from other verse forms in that its recurrences are defined by prominence. Meter is thus defined by the requirement of a regular recurrence of a linguistic equivalence defined by prominence, and represents the literary form which is rhythmic in the most restrictive sense of the term. We show next what measures of regularity and what categories of prominence are available in language to figure in meter.

3.3 Prosody

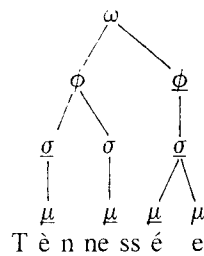
All language, whether ordinary or literary, prose or verse, is itself rhythmic in the most restrictive sense, organized to ensure the regular recurrence of prominence. The core principles of this PROSODIC STRUCTURE are universal, but because some of the principles admit language-specific variation, individual languages show different rhythmic patterns.

In all languages, utterances are parsed at successive levels into a set of hierarchically organized constituents. At the most primitive level of parsing, each of these constituents is at most binary; thus, regular intervals are established. In each constituent, one element is designated as the most prominent, or HEAD. The constituents are drawn from a small fixed universal set: at the lowest level, within words, segments are grouped into MORAS, then moras into SYLLABLES, syllables into FEET and feet into PROSODIC WORDS, a rhythmic constituent which usually but not always coincides with the morphological word. Familiar categories of linguistic prominence denote formal properties of this structure: for example, a syllable is STRESSED if it is (infelicitously enough) the head of a foot, and HEAVY if it contains the full complement of possible moras, namely two. Because the structure is hierarchical, these categories are cumulative: PRIMARY STRESS, for example, is the property of being the head of the foot which is the head of the prosodic word. Some less familiar categories defined on this structure also play a role in grammar: for example, a constituent is STRONG if it is the head of a binary constituent at any level, a category which we will see is relevant to English meter.

These levels are illustrated in (3), where the prosodic structure of the English word *Tennessee* is represented by a tree diagram in which moras are symbolized by μ , syllables by σ , feet by ϕ , the prosodic word by ω and heads are underlined:

⁷ See, for example, the welter of definitions derived from actual usage in the *American Heritage Dictionary*, 3rd edition.

(3)



Here the heavy syllable *-see* in which the long vowel makes a second mora is distinguished from the light syllables *Te-* and *ne-*;⁸ the stressed syllables *Te-* and *-see* which head feet are distinguished from the unstressed syllable *-ne* which does not; and the primary stressed *-see* which heads the foot which heads the word is distinguished from the secondary stressed *Te-*. The constraints on grammatical well-formedness which constitute an English speaker's intuitive knowledge of his language make reference to these equivalence classes defined by this structure: for example, unstressed vowels may be reduced to schwa (*Tenn[ə]ssee* (but not **T[ə]nnessee* or **Tennessee[ə]*);⁹ expletives may be inserted at foot boundaries (*Tenne-fuckin'-see* (but not **Te-fuckin'-nessee*)); and a primary stress adjacent to a stronger stress may shift to a preceding syllable with secondary stress (*Ténnessèe wàltz*).

The constraints which a particular language imposes on this structure arise from fixing a few PARAMETERS within the basic set of constraints given by universal grammar. For example, does the language distinguish between heavy and light syllables? (English does, Polish doesn't.) Can a foot consist of any two syllables, or does their weight matter? (In English, words are parsed into feet that consist of either a single heavy syllable [*-see*] or a light syllable followed by another syllable, the first being the head [*Tenne-*].) What is the most prominent foot of the word? (In English it is the final foot, under certain additional conditions; in Finnish it is always the initial one.)

Lexical words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and most adverbs) are parsed into feet in the part of the grammar devoted specifically to word structure, the lexicon, and hence acquire stress independently of context. Grammatical words on the other hand (prepositions, conjunctions, determiners, pronouns and some others), are parsed into feet only within the context of the sentences in which they occur. Moreover, the rhythmic structure of sentences is affected in complex ways by their syntax and meaning, and by the speaker's stylistic choices. Thus, it is within the word that the rhythmic principles of prosodic structure are most clearly manifested.

⁸ Of course these structures are based on phonological segment structure, not spelling; in particular the double *n* and *s* represent single segments.

⁹ * indicates ungrammaticality (and analogously below, unmetricality).

3.4 Meter

Poetic METER is a stylization of this prosodic structure. It imposes on language a set of constraints which require the regular recurrence of some subset of these prosodic constituents and prominence categories, beyond what arises naturally in the surface forms of the language, and across all the language of a poetic text rather than only within words, thus heightening the rhythm of the language at some level.

Cross-linguistic comparative study of metrical systems suggests that the core properties of metrical constraints are common to all meters, with limited parametric variation arising across languages (Hanson and Kiparsky 1996). All meters draw on a set of hierarchically organized, binary, headed constituents modelled on prosodic structure. At the lowest level, METRICAL POSITIONS are grouped into METRICAL FEET; the feet are then grouped into COLA, and so on up to the level of the line. Because the constituents are binary and headed, there is necessarily a contrast between STRONG (head) METRICAL POSITIONS (S) and WEAK ones (W).

There are a limited number of parametric options as to how these constituents may be organized. Is the meter rising or falling (is the rightmost or the leftmost position in each foot strong)? How many feet are in a line? Are word boundaries mandatory or prohibited at certain points (caesuras, bridges)? These variations have been extensively investigated in traditional metrics. They are not generally dependent on the prosodic structure of the language of the verse; hence, they are readily borrowed from one language to another, always consciously recognized by the poet, and often interpreted as the locus of important conventional associations. The distinctions in the English tradition among poulter's measure, common meter, iambic pentameter and trochaic tetrameter, for example, all arise only from making these choices in different ways.

The structure defined by fixing these parameters is not by itself a meter, however, but an abstract template which must be interpreted. Hence all meters also define how the template will be concretely realized in linguistic material, again by fixing a limited number of parameters. A meter chooses one prosodic constituent of the language — mora, syllable, foot or prosodic word — to define the maximum size of a position and thus a regular interval. It chooses one category of prominence in the language — weight, stress, or strength — to define a recurrence. And it formulates its requirement that this prominence recur at this regular interval either as a requirement that the strong positions of the template contain only (or some) prominent constituents, or as a requirement that the weak positions contain only (or some) unprominent constituents, or as both. The actual language of a given line is then METRICAL if it can be matched with the template in a way consistent with these constraints; this is what it means for a line to be SCANNED.

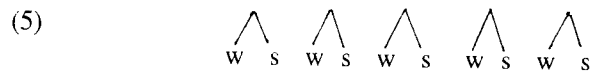
The parameters of this second type may be fixed without any conscious knowledge of the prosodic constituents and prominence categories on which they draw. Just as the internalized mental system which enables speakers of

a language to produce and understand new utterances is one thing, and their explicit knowledge about grammar is another, so the internalized metrical system that poets follow in their work is one thing, and their overtly articulated notions about it another. An epic singer may fluently improvise verses in an intricate meter without a single mistake, yet be unable to explain the principles he is intuitively following. Internalized metrical systems are not directly accessible to introspection, but we can infer what they are like on the basis of intuitions about the acceptability of lines, and of the actual metrical practice of poets. Such evidence shows that the internalized systems tend to show more fine-grained regularities than any explicitly codified norms identify; they also tend to deviate from the codified norms in certain systematic directions. Both these divergences show the shaping force of prosodic structure.

For example, what prominence-based equivalence recurs in Shakespeare's iambic pentameter, and at what interval? It cannot be unstress and stress on alternate syllables, or traditional metrics would not also include a theory of substituted spondees, pyrrhics, trochees and anapests to account for lines like those in (4) which do not have this surface iambic structure:¹⁰

- (4) a. Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws (*Sonnet* 19.3)
- b. Than are dreamt of in your philosophy (*Hamlet* 1.5.166)
- c. Come to one mark, as many ways meet in one town (*Henry V* 1.2.208)

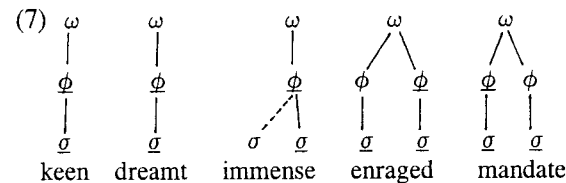
The relevant category of prominence is actually strength within the prosodic word, the abstract category defined above. Moreover, what the meter requires of strong constituents is that they do not occur in weak positions of the meter's template, which we assume is rising and five-footed as in (5):



Thus, unstressed syllables such as *the*, *of* or *-phy* occur freely in S, as in (6a,b (=4a,b)) and stressed syllables such as *keen*, *fierce* and *dreamt* occur freely in W as in those same examples. But syllables like *-mense* or *-raged* or *man-* which are strong within the prosodic word as shown in (7)¹¹ never occur in weak positions as in the unmetrical constructs in (6c,d), except at the beginnings of certain major units such as the line¹² (see for example (10b) below), where in all meters prominence constraints are relaxed:

- (6)
 - a. Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws

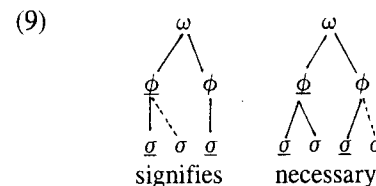
- b. Than are dreamt of in your philosophy
- c. *Pluck immense teeth from enraged tigers' jaws
- d. *Than we mandate in your philosophy



This constraint, that strong syllables do not occur in weak metrical positions, is implicit in Gascoigne's injunction in his *Certaine notes of instruction concerning the making of verse or ryme in English* (1575) to 'place euery worde in his natural *Emphasis* or sound' (Smith 1904, 49). But the refinement with which it is implemented in poets' practice goes astonishingly far beyond that, and beyond what any traditional metrist has ever made explicit. No pentameter poet hesitates to put an unstressed syllable into a strong position (such as the final syllable of *philosophy* in [6b]). Why isn't that contrary to the word's natural emphasis? The answer is that the meter does not restrict strong positions. Shakespeare also writes many lines like (8), where *deathbed*, which has the same stress pattern as *mandate* in (6d), is placed contrary to its natural emphasis. Such compounds are positioned freely because it is strength within the prosodic word which the meter restricts, and compounds consist of two prosodic words (Kiparsky 1977):

- (8)
 - As the deathbed whereon I must expire (*Sonnet* 73.11)

Most strikingly, syllables with secondary stress may or may not be strong depending on the foot structure of the word; the third syllable of *necessary* is, but that of *signifies* is not:¹³



The distinction is scrupulously respected in Shakespeare's practice: when secondary stressed syllables are not strong, they sometimes occur in weak

¹⁰ Quotations from Shakespeare are from the *Riverside Shakespeare* (Evans 1974).
¹¹ See n. 16 for additional discussion of the structure of *immense*, as well as of the words in (9).
¹² Or in Shakespeare the phrase; thus not only
 Kissing with golden face the meadows green, (*Sonnet* 33.3)
 but also
 And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp (*Macbeth* 2.4.7)

¹³ The final syllable of *signifies* contains a diphthong, hence is heavy, hence heads a foot, hence is stressed, as evidenced by its intolerance of [ə] (**signif[ə]s*).

positions as in (10b),¹⁴ but those which are strong never appear in analogous configurations as in (10d). Strong syllables are always in S, even when that means putting two syllables instead of one in a position as in (11) (Kiparsky 1977):

- (10) w s w s w s w s w s
 a. What signifies my deadly standing eye (*Titus Andronicus* 2.3.32)
 w s w s w s w s w s
 b. Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck (*Julius Caesar* 2.2.87)
 w s w s w s w s w s
 c. It were but necessary you were waked (*Henry VI, Part II* 3.2.261)
 w s w s w s w s w s
 d. *Necessary it was that you be waked

- (11) w s w s w s w s w s
 This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see it? (*Othello* 3.2.5)

Thus, it is a subtle linguistic equivalence never singled out by poets or critics — the class of syllables that are strong within the prosodic word — which defines the prominence which recurs in Shakespeare's iambic pentameter.

The example in (11) raises our second question: just what is the regular interval at which this absence of strong syllables occurs, if it can consist of two syllables as well as one? In fact, it is the prosodic foot which figures in the prosodic structure of English (Hanson and Kiparsky 1996; Hanson 1995). In Shakespeare's practice, two syllables are allowed in one metrical position if both are unstressed, as in *in one* in (12a = [4c])¹⁵ as opposed to the unmetrical *in large* in (12b). Two are also allowed if the first is light and stressed while the second is unstressed, as in *many* in (12a) as opposed to the unmetrical *sundry* or *diverse* in (12c,d), the phenomenon traditionally described as RESOLUTION (Young 1928; Kiparsky 1977):

- (12) w s w s w s w s w s
 a. Come to one mark, as many ways meet in one town
 b. *Come to one mark, as many ways meet in large towns
 c. *Come to one mark, as sundry ways meet in one town
 d. *Come to one mark, as diverse ways meet in one town

Putting these practices together with the commonplace fact that a single syllable is allowed in a position regardless of whether it is stressed or unstressed, as with *as* or *ways* in (12a), all the various metrical ways of realizing a single metrical position are as shown in (13a). What these have in common in contradistinction to the unmetrical realizations from (12b-d) shown in (13b) is that they do not include any linguistic material beyond

¹⁴ Recall that the first syllable, though also strong, can occur in W because of the universal tendency to allow relaxation of prominence constraints at beginnings of lines referred to above.

¹⁵ We assume *one* is a determiner (the syntactic class to which articles belong), and not an adjective as on traditional accounts; hence grammatical; hence not assigned foot structure and hence stress in the lexicon.

what will be parsed at the most primitive level¹⁶ in the lexicon as a prosodic foot, which we saw in section 3.3 to consist of either a single heavy syllable or a light one followed by another one, with the light one the head, and therefore stressed:

- (13) a. b.

Again, although trisyllabic metrical feet were of course discussed in treatises like Gascoigne's, Shakespeare and his contemporaries never made explicit this choice of the prosodic foot as their measure, not surprisingly given that crucial differences between syllable weight and stress, orthography and pronunciation, Latin and English phonology were not fully understood at that time. Yet they followed the dictates of that choice unerringly.

In sum, Shakespeare's meter can be characterized as one in which there are five right-headed metrical feet, realized concretely in the actual prosodic structure of the language through constraints that weak positions must not contain syllables that are strong within the prosodic word, and that no position may contain more linguistic material than can initially be parsed as a prosodic foot. Other metrical systems in English make different choices. Many of Shakespeare's Classicist predecessors, such as Sidney, or neo-Classical successors, such as Milton, differ primarily in limiting the size of a position to a syllable (Hanson 1995). Hopkins' sprung rhythm and related 'strong stress' systems differ primarily in requiring that strong positions contain stressed syllables (Hanson 1992; Hanson and Kiparsky 1996). But these different choices all have in common that it is specifically linguistic equivalences which define prominence and regularity.

Interestingly, the particular choices actually taken in a given language represent only a small subset of those formally possible. Once some choices are taken consciously by a poet, the remainder seem to follow unconsciously from a simple principle that the best set of choices for fixing the parameters will be that which allows the full vocabulary to be used in the greatest variety of ways. Periods of literary renewal afford particularly instructive instances of this principle. Shakespeare's constraint against prosodic strength in weak

¹⁶ On the initial parsing, some syllables may not meet the structural conditions to be parsed as a foot; these are adjoined later to the feet constructed on the initial parsing. The final syllable of *sundry* and the initial one of *diverse* are examples of this: they are neither heavy, and so able to make a foot themselves, nor able to join together with a following syllable, there being none following in the case of *sundry*, and none not already parsed in the case of *diverse*. The initial syllable of *immense* in (7) above, the middle syllable of *signifies* in (9) and the final syllable of *necessary* in (9) are also adjoined later in this way. In the latter cases we have shown the later adjunction of these syllables by a dotted line, but omitted to do so here in order to show more clearly the results of the initial parsing.

positions was inherited from his predecessors, for whom it was in fact the only choice compatible with their assumption of a strict syllable count based on Romance models. Note that if the most a metrical position can contain is a syllable and if strong positions were required to contain stressed syllables, the many words in English with two adjacent unstressed syllables such as *philosophy* could not be used; if weak positions were required to contain unstressed syllables, the many words with adjacent stressed syllables such as *mandate* or *deathbed* could not be used, and so forth. The requirement which came to prevail, in contrast, allows most of the vocabulary to be freely used; and the poets — most especially Sidney (Thompson 1961) — gravitated to it almost immediately. One small class of words which remains problematic in this system is those like *fortification* in which there are two strong syllables with an interval of two syllables between them; here again the shift from the syllable to the prosodic foot as the measure of the size of a metrical position which gains currency in Shakespeare's practice allows these too to be freely used, as we saw in (11). This constraint on the size of a metrical position is in turn compatible with the nineteenth-century reassertion of the requirement of stress in strong positions characteristic of the native Germanic tradition in a way that a syllabic constraint is not, since adjacent unstressed syllables of a word like *philosophy* need not be in separate positions (Hanson and Kiparsky 1996; Hanson 1992). That this principle should govern metrical choices makes sense not only because the expressive power of a system violating it would be limited, but also because it would so compromise the fundamental effect of meter, that of heightening awareness of the prosodic structure of the language, if it took suppressing half the language to use it.

Because artistic forms are always being renewed, ever new meters may arise within a tradition. And because languages are themselves diverse, ever various meters exist across traditions. But the possibilities do not vary without limit.¹⁷ All such diverse metrical systems consist fundamentally of constraints which mandate the regular recurrence of equivalences which figure in the rhythmic structure of language. A template could not have every fifth position strong; the size of a position could not be defined by time, e.g., as much speech as can be uttered in a second; and the contrast between weak and strong positions could not be defined by sound quality, e.g., as loudness, because groupings of five and seconds and loudness do not play any role in the rhythmic structure of language.

3.5 Performance

A corollary of this conception of meter is that metricality is a structural property of a text itself, and not something a text acquires through performance, either by the speaker or the hearer. When a piece of language is actually spoken, its phonetic realization has physical properties of duration, intensity and so forth which may themselves be rhythmically distributed. But

¹⁷ Indeed, within a language the natural possibilities can presumably be exhausted, provoking crises and radical changes in artistic traditions.

meter is distinct from such rhythm: otherwise it would not be possible for one and the same piece of verse to be recited or sung in rhythmically different ways. Whether verse is iambic, trochaic, anapestic, dactylic; weight-based or stress-based; or indeed metrical at all in fact makes no difference to whether it can be sung as a march or a waltz or a samba. Whether blank verse is recited with emphasis on every second syllable and a pause between lines or with the natural rhythm of speech makes no difference to whether the text is blank verse. Norms of recitation are in part fixed by tradition and open to individual variation; on the English stage, where the blank verse is expected to be hidden, a recitation which laid it bare would be rejected as incompetent, except perhaps as a distancing effect of some bold experimental production, while in the Comédie Française foregrounding the metrical structure of the alexandrine is expected. But whether the language of the text conforms to the constraints which define its meter is independent of what the conventions of recitation are, and whether those conventions are followed or not.

For similar reasons, metricality remains a property of a text whether or not it is perceived. The grammaticality of the speech of a refugee at a border crossing is not affected by whether anyone there recognizes his mother tongue. The language in the Bergman parody *De Duva* is English, however much the melodies with which it is spoken trick us into thinking it is Swedish. In the same way the metricality of Blake's fourteeners in *Jerusalem*, his 'terrific numbers. . . reserved for the terrific parts', is not affected by their having been taken for free verse.¹⁸ And *Romeo and Juliet* would remain iambic pentameter in an edition which printed it without line breaks, even if readers unfamiliar with the meter and accustomed to recognizing verse by its presentation on the page were to take it for prose. Either a piece of language formally satisfies the constraints which define a meter or it does not. From the fact that a particular cultural experience and context may be required in order for one to notice that it does or does not (Fish 1980), it does not follow that the meter is a perceptual phenomenon only.

3.6 Rhythm in Prose and Mixed Forms

A further corollary is that meter is different in kind and not merely in any degree of surface regularity from the rhythm we have seen language has naturally, common definitions of meter as 'more or less regular poetic rhythm' (Fussell 1974, 496) notwithstanding. Because all language has rhythm, all prose has rhythm; one common property of artful prose is arrangement of this rhythm for rhetorical effect, which in some cases may consist in enhanced regularity at some level. But such regularity will only be metricality if it derives from conformity to a set of constraints on the regular recurrence of linguistic equivalences drawn from prosodic structure as described.

¹⁸ Blake's preface: Erdmann 1982, 146; see Nemerov 1967, 409n.

Furthermore, whether those constraints will be called to mind to play a role in interpreting a text may itself be played with by a writer; particularly if part rather than the whole of a text is metrical, the perception of the meter will be influenced by such factors as how much of the text conforms to its effects, how radical a departure from ordinary language they exact, and so forth. Thus the relation of verse to prose in an individual text might range from accidental to deliberately ambiguous to clearly delineated, as Dronke (1994, 96, 111) finds in the contrast between the mixed works of Mechthild and Marguerite, and those of Dante. In Mechthild and Marguerite, 'the poetry grows out of the prose and grows back into it. Prose sentences spill over into lyrical passages . . .; often too, if the prose itself is charged with lyricism, it changes gradually, rather than instantly, into a more regular pattern; the return journey, into irregularity, is just as easily and unselfconsciously made.' In Dante, 'the poems always remain very deliberately detached from the surrounding prose . . .' The possibility of ambiguity itself may be stylized in rhetorical forms where certain cadences recur in clusters, just enough to invoke the sense of a necessity beyond the speaker we have claimed verse induces, and just little enough to maintain the appearance of achieving its persuasive effect through the content of the assertions alone. But meter is still simply always present or not present, whether or not, as Howard Nemerov notes in 'Because You Asked About the Line Between Prose and Poetry', we can say just why we know it is or isn't there (1980, 85):

Sparrows were feeding in a freezing drizzle
That while you watched turned into pieces of snow
Riding a gradient invisible
From silver aslant to random, white, and slow.

There came a moment that you couldn't tell.
And then they clearly flew instead of fell.

3.7 Other Forms of Verse and Non-Verse

We have exemplified our conception of verse with respect to meter, which as we said earlier represents the canonical verse form, inasmuch as it is defined by the regular recurrence of just those linguistic equivalences which measure intervals and distinguish prominence in the rhythmic structure of language. It is of course not the only verse form. Rhyme, alliteration, and syntactic parallelism all likewise mandate the regular recurrence of specifically linguistic equivalences (Kiparsky 1973; 1987). The exact statement of the equivalence in any particular case is never a simple matter, and yet to be achieved for many of the vast variety of verse forms in world literature. But it may be useful here, however, to briefly note a few ways in which these differ from meter.

Rhyme and alliteration differ first in that the kinds of equivalences they require — portions of syllable structure — are based on distinctions in kind, and not in prominence (Hayes 1988). Moreover, the intervals at which these

recur are not naturally regular in language. Thus, for rhyme or alliteration to become a principle of verse structure, the interval of recurrence must be measured by some other linguistic element; and it is meter which normally serves this purpose, defining where the alliterating or rhyming equivalences must be found. A consequence of this is that while alliteration or rhyme distributed according to a metrical structure may be a principle of verse structure, other instances of these within poems are not, though as linguistic recurrences they are of course aspects of literary structure, and may be more apt to be made and considered significant in the context of verse which already foregrounds the structure of language (Wimsatt 1954). Thus, rhyme and alliteration typically add complexity to verse forms involving other structural constraints.

Syntactic parallelism may have more in common with meter, in that syntactic structure does impose a regular recurrence on language: sentence follows sentence; within each sentence verb phrase follows noun phrase or, depending on the language, the other way around; and so on. Thus, a verse system which imposes constraints which heighten this regular recurrence might be expected to stand on its own. Very strict forms of syntactic parallelism which allow only a limited change — sometimes one word — from line to line thus resemble complex verse forms which combine rhyme or alliteration with meter, in that an additional equivalence based on kind is defined on this recurring structure.

Finally, some forms of verbal art may establish recurrences and hence extraordinary, non-asserted relations within the language of a text through non-linguistic means, such as the arrangement of writing on a page, or modulation of the voice in performance. A case in point may be David Young's translation of Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, which takes as its model 'Williams' triadic line, made up of three "variable feet", units equal in length of speaking time', specifically to address the problem of reproducing Rilke's metrical effects on the page (Young 1978, 16):

not to give meaning
to roses
and other such
promising things
in terms of
a human future
(Rilke, *First Elegy* 60-61, translated by Young)

If Young's form is what he says it is — though we have seen that poets' actual practice does not always conform to their articulated intentions, and close study could reveal wholly linguistic principles at work here — then technically this is not verse as we define it. Instead, it represents a kind of multimedia verbal art, in which linguistic elements interact with elements from other domains of perception, such as vision and hearing. It goes without saying that drawing the distinction carries as little judgment of artistic value as drawing one between theatre and film does, as we hope the example testifies.

In sum, we have adopted a strict definition of verse as a form of language marked by constraints requiring the regular recurrence of linguistic equivalences which play a role in grammar; and we have illustrated and argued for this definition by demonstrating its explanatory force in accounting for subtle aspects of Shakespeare's metrical practice. On this definition, and this definition only, the equivalences which recur are facts of the world, and not only of a composition. They therefore invest verse, and prose by opposition to it, with their intrinsic semiotic charge.

4 Consequences for the Mixed Form

4.1 Consequences for Literary Traditions

We are now in a position to return to the consequences of this definition of verse for the mixed form. We suggested in section 2.2 that verse shares its mark of extraordinary recurrence of linguistic equivalences with prose, defining literary language in opposition to ordinary language; the difference between them is that the requirement which defines verse, that such recurrences appear regularly, is suppressed in prose, making verse the unmarked function of literary language and prose the marked form. We also argued there that the linguistic equivalences evoke a world beyond the control of the speaker, so that their requirement in verse gives it an unmarked association with the lyric function, and their suppression in prose gives it an unmarked association with narrative. Finally, we saw in section 2.1 that the relations among any set of terms defined through markedness are inherently hierarchical and asymmetric. Jointly these claims define a hierarchy of genres which we suggest is in principle replicated within the evolution of a literature in the elaboration of its formal repertoire, creating a complex historical context for any mixed work.

It is a commonplace that all literature in its infancy is verse. In unwritten and early written literatures, verse is the dominant form: Homer's epics, the *Rigveda*; the twelfth-century lyrics of French troubadours and trouvères; Russian *byliny*; and the majority of oral literatures to this day. This follows directly from the assumption that verse is the unmarked form of literature because it is the most highly stylized. An artistic tradition would not begin with stream-of-consciousness prose any more than a child's first sounds of language would be [b] and [m].

In the Greek, Sanskrit, and Latin literary traditions a shift to prose comes very late. In Western European vernacular literatures such a shift begins in the thirteenth century; in many nations of Eastern Europe this development is replayed in fast-forward in the nineteenth century, and it is taking place before our eyes in many post-colonial emerging national literatures today.¹⁹

When such a differentiation in form arises, it follows from the unmarked association of verse with the lyric function that the natural inclination to

parallel differentiation in form with differentiation in function will be implemented by associating prose with narrative. The thirteenth-century shift from verse to prose as the favored medium of French narrative documented in Godzich and Kittay (1987) shows exactly this pattern. From a wider perspective, we can see this shift as an instantiation of a scenario with its own immanent dynamics, rooted in the very nature of the process by which the resources of language are appropriated for artistic purposes, which replays itself with local variations in virtually every literature.²⁰ Once the shift has taken place, verse is never restored to the function of narrative within that tradition,²¹ and may even be eventually eclipsed in all its functions by prose.

The revaluations that the spread of prose into the sphere of narrative effects do not appear overnight by themselves. They are enacted in the concrete struggles of writers with their material. Inconsistencies and what from the outside appears as random free play between prose and verse appear in such transitional periods, and betray a competition between an older hierarchy and a newer, revalued one. For example, the practice of paraphrasing verse into prose as a rhetorical exercise in late Latinity which Godzich and Kittay (1987) take to show the equivalence of the two forms is in fact a symptom of the shift from verse to prose as the dominant medium of narrative, with which the introduction of the practice coincides.²² Similarly, patterns of translation confirm a shift in dominance rather than an equilibrium between the two forms. For example, in French, in the period up to 1202, when verse remains the dominant form of narrative, 'all translations from Latin [verse or prose] into the vernacular [French] were done into verses...' (Godzich and Kittay 1987, xv); so are translations of mixed forms such as the fragmentary Provençal *Boecis* (eleventh century) and the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Fortune* of Simon de Fraignes (twelfth/thirteenth century). But in the thirteenth century, when prose has been established for the language, translation tends to come to be again entirely in prose, as in Jean de Meun's translation of Boethius.

In such transitional periods, the rise of prose is legitimized by claiming for it either the virtues previously alleged to support the dominance of verse, or superior virtues of its own which outweigh them. The Greek rhetoricians claim that prose has a style which excels that of verse in ornamentation and figurative richness, and a rhythm which excels that of verse in variety. French apologists for prose consider it more dignified than verse, and hence

²⁰ Godzich and Kittay are fully aware of the existence of parallel developments in other traditions, but neglect them for a parochial explanation of the French development alone, based on the rise of feudalism and its attendant commodification and devaluation of the art of the *jongleur*.

²¹ Though of course a work may take its form from a reference to an earlier or different tradition; thus Spenser's use of verse for narrative may be construed as a reference to the medieval vernacular tradition, Milton's to the Classical tradition, and Vikram Seth's in *The Golden Gate*, by his own statement, to Pushkin. Similarly, Odysseus Elytis' use of verse as the dominant form in *To Axion Esti* (see below) in an era when the dominant form in the tradition is prose derives from the work's reference to the Orthodox liturgy.

²² Curtius (1957, 143ff.) dates the introduction of the practice of paraphrasing to the first century AD, and remarks that 'in late Greek and Latin antiquity, and the Byzantine Middle Ages, paraphrase became an end in itself.'

⁹ A simple sequence is only the simplest scenario; various circumstances can delay, displace, or modify it. Old English Christian literature began with a transposition of the vigorous prose-centered Latin genres of the day, presumably by way of dissimilating to the thriving vernacular pagan poetry which it had to replace.

more appropriate for certain historical themes (Godzich and Kittay 1987, 150). Or prose is commended as the medium for clear and sincere discourse. In Johannes von Tepl's *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, written around 1400, Death acknowledges the plowman's choice of prose as a sign of his serious intent. And Dante in *Il Convivio* (I.10.12) argues that Italian prose is capable of expressing concepts 'which could not be expressed appropriately in rhyme, because of the accidental adornments which are connected with it, namely rhyme and regulated number, in the same way as the beauty of a woman cannot be seen when the adornments of fancy dress are more the cause of her being admired more than she herself':²³

Che per questo comento la gran bontade del volgare di sì [si vedrà]; pero che si vedrà la sua vertù, si com'è per esso altissimi e novissimi concetti convenevolmente, sufficientemente e acconciamente, quasi come per esso latino, manifestare; [la quale non si potea bene manifestare] ne le cose rimate, per le accidentali adornezze che quivi sono connesse, cioè la rima e lo ri[tm]o e lo numero regolato: si come non si può bene manifestare la bellezza d'una donna, quando li adornamenti de l'azzimare e de le vestimenta la fanno più [ammi]rare che essa medesima.

It appears to be at just these junctures, when the capabilities of each form are uppermost in writers' minds, that the mixed form especially flourishes.

4.2 Consequences for the Structure of the Mixed Form

If prose and verse cannot exist on equal terms within a tradition, neither can they exist on equal terms within a work. Works which mix them must consist either of verse as the dominant form, with intercalated prose, or prose as the dominant form, with intercalated verse. We cannot resist recruiting the two traditional terms 'prosimetrum' and 'versiprose' to denote these respective types, reserving the term 'mixed' as a noncommittal term which encompasses both.

Whether a narrative mixed form will be prosimetrum or versiprose depends on what the dominant narrative form in the literary tradition is. In a literature where the dominant form of narration is verse, narrative mixed forms will tend to be constructed and perceived as prosimetrum. This is consistent with Frye's (1957, 309) description of the antecedents of Menippean satire, which 'appears to have developed out of verse satire through the practice of adding prose interludes'; and with descriptions of early medieval vernacular literature where the favored mixed form appears to have been prosimetrum, as in the *Vie de Saint Alexis*, a verse text with, in one MS, a prose prologue (Godzich and Kittay 1987, 89), and possibly as in *Aucassin and Nicolette*.

Conversely, in a literature where the dominant form of narration is prose, narrative mixed forms will tend to be constructed and perceived as versiprose. Thus in Late Latin, where prose is the dominant form of narrative, mixed forms are versiprose; the outstanding example is, of course, Boethius'

De consolazione Philosophiae (sixth century). Similarly, in the vernacular languages, when the inversion in the dominance relation between verse and prose comes in the thirteenth century, mixed forms begin to favor versiprose, as in Dante's *Vita Nuova* (thirteenth century).

In Bernard Silvestris' *Cosmographia* (twelfth century), we see the confluence of two traditions defining the genre. Its language is Latin, which by this time has had for centuries the well-developed prose tradition in which the versiprose *Boethius* is situated; but its cultural situation is that of the vernacular European languages which are using verse for narrative. The result is a prosimetrum form which seems to represent an inversion of the Latin tradition, reflecting its interaction with a vernacular substratum. Thus it 'develops the Boethian relations between poetry and prose in exciting new ways . . . poetry once again grows out of the prose, developing luxuriantly what had been set down in lapidary formulations' (Dronke 1994, 49).

A corollary is that within mixed works, the same markedness relations which associate forms with functions in the tradition will associate forms with functions in the structure of the work. In prosimetrum, where prose is reserved for a specific function or range of functions, one function will be narrative. This is confirmed indirectly by descriptions of prosimetra which take it as worthy of mention that the verse advances the plot: in the *Iolaus* fragment, which may have been a predecessor of the *Satyricon*, the verses '— unlike the poetic passages in Petronius — continue the narrative and advance the plot' (Dronke 1994, 10); in *Aucassin and Nicolette* 'the function of the poetry is unusual among prosimetric narratives: it is to recapitulate the preceding prose as well as to advance the telling of the story' (Dronke 1994, 76); and in the *Cosmographia* 'at times the poetry recapitulates, but it as easily advances — not only to new ideas, but to new events in the *fabula*' (Dronke 1994, 49). More directly in a modern example of prosimetrum, Odysseus Elytis' *To Axion Esti*, a work whose intricate structure points to the Orthodox liturgy, verse is interspersed with embedded prose readings (*anagnosmata*) which relate experiences in the Albanian campaign against the Italians in World War II. The lyric and narrative functions are here sharply divided between verse and prose in the expected way.

Conversely, in versiprose, where verse is reserved for a specific function or range of functions, that function will include lyric. This is true of Sanskrit tales of the *Pañcatantra* or *Hitopadeśa* type, in which narration is in prose and the moral in verse. It is also true of the Icelandic poet-sagas consisting of prose narratives peppered with skaldic lyrics attributed to the hero, or the Provençal *razos* which tell stories of how troubadors' lyrics came to be written (Dronke 1994, 67). It accords with the functions verse seems to serve in *De consolazione Philosophiae*: while the verse occasionally presents narrative there, and often serves functions of conclusion, summary and illustration, to whose relation to lyric we return more fully below, it clearly includes such canonical lyric functions as lamentation, prayer and celebration. And in the *Vita Nuova* the verse is of course devoted to the core lyric subject, love, for which Dante notes that manner of writing was invented: 'E

²³ This passage is cited by Eckhardt (1983, 29), who thinks it was the decisive influence on Chaucer's decision to do *Boece* in prose.

questo è contra coloro che rimano sopra altra matera che amorosa, con ciò sia cosa che cotale modo di parlare fosse dal principio trovato per dire d'amore' (XXV).²⁴

Just as the example of the *Cosmographia* shows that these schematic distinctions may interact in complex ways in literary traditions, so Sidney's *Old Arcadia* shows just how deeply embedded these asymmetries can be in the same text. There the four books which primarily develop the story are versiprose: the basic narrative is in prose while characters' private emotions are overheard or displayed in verse lyrics; but the eclogues which follow each book are prosimetrum: characters compete publicly in composing lyrics while changes of speaker, interruptions, etc. are briefly narrated in prose.

While there is not necessarily a single mode associated with either verse or prose, let alone the same distribution of them from tradition to tradition or from text to text, neither can there be variation between them without limit. What would be aberrant and unexpected, from our point of view, is a tradition or a text in which prose is used for lyric functions but not for narrative, or verse is used for narrative functions but not also for lyric, or both are used interchangeably for both.

4.3 Effects of the Mixed Form

A final consequence of these relations of verse and prose to lyric and narrative functions is that the mixed genre is particularly well-suited to the representation of shifts of perspective: '... the alternation between prose and verse is always bound up, in more complex, less predictable ways, with the authors' strategies of shifts of perspective, shifts of voice, shifts of the "I", shifts in the way the authors see themselves — it is their means towards self-discovery. . . . These fluctuations are an essential aspect of the poetics of the genre' (Dronke 1994, 114). On the conception of verse adopted here, an alternation between prose and verse is bound up with such fluctuations not merely conventionally, or even symbolically, but necessarily: the addition and subtraction of requirements of linguistic recurrences in verse and prose respectively invoke and conceal a world beyond the control of the speaker, and cannot help but signify alterations in perspective.

On this approach, the mixed form can be understood as a radicalization of the possibilities inherent in any alternation between loose and tight form. A transition from verse to prose or from prose to verse will be analogous to any relaxation or imposition of requirements of linguistic recurrences, and the functions of such transitions parallel, if perhaps less extreme.²⁵ Although this issue raises another area of inquiry which we cannot do more than point to here, a preliminary examination of formal variation within pure verse texts suggests that the expected analogy has some validity.

²⁴ Chiapelli 1965, 56-57. 'And this [the foregoing argument] is against those who write in rhyme about other matters than matters of love, since as a matter of fact this way of speaking has been found since its beginning to speak of love.'

²⁵ Perhaps for this reason, a favored theme of the mixed genre seems to be the consolation of individuals who are in some extreme state with reference to their relation to the world.

A verse text which is analogous to prosimetrum in that the dominant form is highly constrained and formal changes consist in relaxing the constraints is the set of Finnish tales centered on a magic object called the Sampo, which became the core of the epic poem *Kalevala* composed by Elias Lönnrot from episodes collected by himself and many others in decades of field trips to Karelia.²⁶ The verse structure consists of not only meter, but also alliteration and syntactic parallelism, as illustrated in the following passage:

kuuli miehen itkeväkse uroon urisevakse. Ei ou itku naisen itku eikä itku lapsen itku, tämä on itku Väinämöisen urajanta Untamoisen.	(she) heard a man crying a hero moaning the crying is not a woman's crying nor is the crying a child's crying this is the crying of Väinämöinen the moaning of Untamoinen (Kuusi et al. 1977, 112; ll. 71-76)
---	---

While the meter and alliterative structure remain constant, the syntactic parallelism is modulated in the singers' tales to articulate the narrative and to achieve cinematographic point-of-view shifts.²⁷ The flow of parallel lines can be interrupted by single ORPHAN lines, which lack the expected parallelism; they typically also involve a shift from past tense to present tense or lack of tense, and sometimes a deictic shift as well. Orphan lines mark several kinds of transition, and thereby foreground the narration itself. Within the narration, orphan lines may shift the scene from the actions of one character to those of another, whether on the scene or elsewhere ('meanwhile. . .'), introduce a new character, initiate a new turn in the action, or switch from sequential action to the description of a resulting state. Thus in the following quotation the scene shifts away from the hero, Väinämöinen, to the actions of another character (Kuusi et al. 1977, 111; l. 60):

Pohjan akka harvahammas	the gap-toothed old woman of the Northland
-------------------------	--

Orphan lines may also mark a shift from narration to another mode, either to dialog, or to a character's represented thought; for example the orphan line *Niin sanoopi Pohjan akka*, 'So the old woman of the Northland says' (Kuusi et al. 1977, 112; l. 90), interrupts the narrative to introduce a segment of quoted discourse, and in the following quotation the orphan line shifts to a representation of a character's thoughts:²⁸

²⁶ They are collected, among much lyric and other material, in the fourteen massive volumes of *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (Old Poems of the Finnish People). A selection of them has been translated into English (Kuusi et al. 1977). The following quotations are found in Kuusi et al. 1977; the translations are by Paul Kiparsky.

²⁷ In the *Kalevala*, Elias Lönnrot as a rule completed the parallelism with an extra line of his own composition or taken from another recension. This is one of many respects in which he 'corrected' his sources in compiling the epic.

²⁸ This case is especially interesting because it amounts to a primitive equivalent of *style indirect libre*, a technique absent in written European literature before LaFontaine, Austen and Goethe (Pascal 1977).

läksi purtta nostamahan
laivoa kohottamahan
eipä pursi liikukkana

[the old woman of the Northland]
went to lift the boat
to raise the ship
Hey, what's this? The boat won't budge.
(Kuusi et al. 1977, 125; ll. 110-12)

Or with an orphan line the singer steps back, as it were, to survey the outcome of the event he has just narrated. For example, the beginning of the Sampo episode relates (in the past tense) how the god Ukko raised a great storm, which took the helplessly drifting Väinämöinen into the Northland (Pohjola), and tossed him against a big rock; the orphan line:

Itkiä tihusteloopi there he cries, sobbing
(Kuusi et al. 1977, 111; l. 44)

then summarizes Väinämöinen's predicament. Lines like this are the epic poet's equivalent of the movie director's long shot at the close of a battle scene.

Conversely, a verse text analogous to versiprose in that constraints are sometimes added to the dominant form for particular effects might be any of Shakespeare's plays in which blank verse is sometimes tightened to couplets or to more ornate forms. In *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, in addition to the rhyme's commonly remarked functions of terminating scenes and marking social class, rhyme occurs within scenes and across characters in a wide variety of discourses. Some of these are canonical lyric subjects: complaints about love, such as Romeo's lamentations for Rosaline (I.i.163-64, 175-85, 199-203); expressions of love, such as Romeo's first vision of Juliet (I.v.43-52) and his first words with her (I.v.92-109); expressions of anxiety, of course here also always prophetic, such as Juliet's inquiry about Romeo's identity (I.v.133-34); and celebration of natural and supernatural forces, such as Friar Lawrence's soliloquy while gathering herbs (II.iii.1-30). Rhyme also appears in verbal jousts, whether genuinely hostile, as between Benvolio and Tybalt (I.i.55-62) or actually affectionate, as between Romeo and Benvolio (I.i.175-76); in commands, such as the Prince's orders to Montague and Capulet (I.i.91-92); in advice, such as Lady Capulet's instructions to Juliet about what to look for in Paris (I.iii.84-95); and in statements of resolution, such as Juliet's promise to her mother (I.iii.97-99) or Tybalt's vow to kill Romeo (I.v.59-62). Such express assertions of control by the speaker can be understood as exploiting the sense of necessity verse creates to command authority. Finally, rhyme's appearance in the Chorus' periodic summaries of the entire story and its significance (e.g. I.i) express a kind of achievement of understanding, which itself presupposes a world whose principles, whatever they may be, are beyond the speaker.

Thus, where loosening of form is associated with narrative, tightening of form is associated with lyric expression, and the world beyond the control of the speaker it invokes. This shift in perspective explains why, for example, in the versiprose *De consolazione Philosophiae*, the verse passages invariably

mark the endings of segments of development, serving such functions as summary (1.m4, 1.m5, 1.m6, 2.m1, etc.), conclusion (2.m2, 2.m3, etc.) and exemplification (2.m6, 2.m7, etc.) in addition to the more canonical lyric subjects such as lamentation and prayer.²⁹ This cumulative function of verse makes sense in a work which assumes not only the existence of a world beyond Boethius' control, but also that his task is to develop an understanding of that world. In a prosimetrum work making similar assumptions, we might expect prose to serve a function of inception. But as we have said before, the uses to which these associations are put is far from pre-determined. In the versiprose books of *Old Arcadia*, for example, the verses tend to inaugurate new segments of development of the plot. This reflects their very different theme. The lyric mode is exploited to pose moral and political problems resulting from forfeiture of one's proper self-control and role — for example, Pyrocles' lamentation that, having disguised himself in a woman's clothes in order to gain forbidden access to the princess Philoclea, he has forfeited the opportunity to woo her and receive her love as a man — problems whose consequences and resolutions the narrative then develops.

5 Conclusion

We have suggested that the markedness relations of verse and prose define expectations about literary form and function which provide a fruitful perspective from which to approach the analysis of the mixed genre. In our sketch of some ways in which these expectations may be manifested, we have focussed on the differences resulting from this most radical differentiation within literature. In conclusion, however, we note that the genre forces us to consider not only how verse and prose are different, but also how they are alike, united as forms of literary language in opposition to ordinary language.

In addition to the purely aesthetic value noted above (Jakobson 1935a), all literature surely shares the function of conveying something which is apprehended as truth; thus Dronke (1994, 114) describes the end towards which mixing prose and verse is a means as 'self-discovery', and the ultimate effect of a mixed form such as Menippean satire as to show 'truth . . . not as ready-to-hand or imposed, but as emerging dialogically, among people who search for it together' (Dronke 1994, 4-5). From an epistemological point of view, Dominicy (1991) argues that apprehending truth through an experience of recognition is fundamental to literature: characters, events, ideas are presented as if they were already known; from the resultant experience of recognition not tied to any specific memory follows a sense that they belong

²⁹ Elaine Scarry, in an analysis of Boethius' *De consolazione Philosophiae* cited in Eckhardt (1983, 22) suggests that the verse affects the listener emotionally and psychologically, whereas prose is the medium of rational thought. But Philosophia's verse regularly presenting summaries of her arguments is inconsistent with that. Moreover, in some societies verse is systematically used for such professional documents as legal judgments and medical treatises, and for didactic literature, presumably also taken as expressions of rational thought. What such uses of verse convey in our view is an attribution of the authority of the text not to the speaker, but to a truth beyond him. At the same time, we do not deny that the means through which this is achieved may be an emotional and psychological effect on the listener rather than an appeal to reason.

to a world of universal truth. Language has many resources for creating epistemological effects — definiteness, tense and person, epistemics, and others — whose exploitation in literary prose has already been the object of several important studies (e.g. Kuroda 1973; Banfield 1982). We have argued here that the extraordinary recurrence of linguistic equivalences characteristic of verse can likewise be understood as a formal means through which an experience of recognizing a universal truth is induced. Moreover, we have suggested that at one level prose covertly shares this overt mark of verse. Exploration of the validity of this claim strikes us as a particularly interesting direction to which the nature of verse and the mixed form jointly point for future research into the nature of prose.

Bibliography

- Anderson, Stephen R. 1985. *Phonology in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: U of Chicago P.
- Banfield, Ann. 1982. *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Chiapelli, Fredi, ed. 1965. Dante Alighieri. *Vita nuova, Rime*. Milan: U. Mursia.
- , and Enrico Renzi, eds. 1986. Dante Alighieri. *Il Convivio*. Vol. 2 of *Opera Minori di Dante Alighieri*. Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice.
- Curtius, Ernst Robert. 1953. *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. Tr. Willard R. Trask. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Dominicy, Marc. 1991. 'Sur l'épistémologie de la poétique.' *Histoire, épistémologie, langage* 13: 151-74.
- Dronke, Peter. 1994. *Verse with Prose from Petronius to Dante: The Art and Scope of the Mixed Form*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.
- Eckhardt, Caroline D. 1983. 'The Medieval *Prosimetrum* Genre (from Boethius to Boece).' *Genre* 16: 21-38.
- Erdmann, David V., ed. 1982. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Evans, G. Blakemore, ed. 1974. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Fish, Stanley. 1980. *Is There a Text in this Class?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.
- Frye, Northrop. 1957. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- . 1974. 'Verse and Prose.' In *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Enlarged ed. Ed. Alex Preminger et al. Princeton: Princeton UP. 885-90.
- Fussell, Paul. 1974. 'Meter.' In *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Enlarged ed. Ed. Alex Preminger et al. Princeton: Princeton UP. 496-99.
- Godzich, Wlad and Jeffrey Kittay. 1987. *The Emergence of Prose: An Essay in Prosaics*. Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P.
- Hanson, Kristin. 1992. 'Resolution in Modern Meters.' Diss. Stanford U.
- . 1995. 'Prosodic Constituents in Poetic Meter.' In *Proceedings of the Thirteenth West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*. Stanford: CSLI Publications. 62-77.
- , and Paul Kiparsky. 1996. 'A Parametric Theory of Poetic Meter.' *Language* 72: 287-335.
- Hayes, Bruce. 1988. 'Metrics and Phonological Theory.' In *The Cambridge Survey of Linguistics*. Ed. Frederick J. Newmeyer. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 2: 220-49.
- Jakobson, Roman. 1932. 'Structure of the Russian Verb.' Rpt. in *Russian and Slavic Grammar: Studies, 1931-1981*. Ed. Linda R. Waugh and Morris Halle. Berlin: Mouton, 1984. 1-14.
- . 1935a. 'The Dominant.' Rpt. in *Language in Literature*. Ed. Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap P of Harvard UP. 1987. 41-46.
- . 1935b. 'Marginal Notes on the Prose of the Poet Pasternak.' Tr. and rpt. in *Language in Literature*. Ed. Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap P of Harvard UP. 1987. 301-17.
- . 1949. 'The Sound Laws of Child Language and their Place in General Phonology.' Rpt. in *On Language*. Ed. Linda R. Waugh and Monique Monville-Burston. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1990. 294-304.
- . 1960a. 'Linguistics and Poetics.' In *Style in Language*. Ed. Thomas Sebeok. Cambridge, MA: MIT P. 350-77.
- . 1960b. 'Why 'Mama' and 'Papa'?' Rpt. in *On Language*. Ed. Linda R. Waugh and Monique Monville-Burston. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1990. 305-11.
- , with Krystyna Pomorska. 1980. 'The Concept of Mark.' In *On Language*. Ed. Linda R. Waugh and Monique Monville-Burston. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP. 1990. 134-40.
- Kiparsky, Paul. 1973. 'The Role of Linguistics in a Theory of Poetry.' *Daedalus* 102: 231-45. [Rpt. in *Essays in Modern Stylistics*. Ed. Donald C. Freeman. London: Methuen, 1981. 9-23.]
- . 1977. 'The Rhythmic Structure of English Verse.' *Linguistic Inquiry* 8: 189-247.
- . 1987. 'On Theory and Interpretation.' In *The Linguistics of Writing*. Ed. Nigel Fabb et al. New York: Methuen. 185-98.
- Kuroda, Y.S. 1973. 'Where Epistemology, Style and Grammar Meet: A Case Study of Japanese.' In *A Festschrift for Morris Halle*. Ed. Stephen R. Anderson and Paul Kiparsky. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 377-91.
- Kuusi, Matti, Keith Bosley, and Michael Branch, eds. and tr. 1977. *Finnish Folk Poetry. Epic*. Publ. of the Finnish Literature Soc. 329. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Soc.
- Ladefoged, Peter. 1971. *Preliminaries to Linguistic Phonetics*. Chicago: U of Chicago P.
- Nemerov, Howard. 1967. 'Speculative Equations: Poems, Poets, Computers.' *The American Scholar* 36: 394-414. [Rpt. in his *Reflexions on Poetry and Poetics*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1972. 177-95.]
- . 1980. *Sentences*. Chicago: U of Chicago P.
- Pascal, Roy. 1977. *The Dual Voice*. Manchester: Manchester UP.
- Smith, George Gregory, ed. 1904. *Elizabethan Critical Essays*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Thompson, John. 1961. *The Founding of English Metre*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

- Limsatt, W. K. 1954. 'One Relation of Rhyme to Reason.' In his *The Verbal Icon*.
Lexington, KY: Kentucky UP. 153-66.
- Young, Sir George. 1928. *An English Prosody on Inductive Lines*. Cambridge:
Cambridge UP.
- Young, David, tr. 1978. Rainer Maria Rilke. *Duino Elegies*. New York: Norton.