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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO VICTORIAN POETRY

EDITED BY
JOSEPH BRISTOW

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Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 1–6.

31 Webster's "Circe" is reprinted in *Victorian Women Poets: An Anthology*, eds. Leighton and Reynolds, 428–33, and in *Nineteenth-Century Women Poets*, eds. Armstrong and Bristow with Sharrock, eds., 591–9.

32 Leighton, *Victorian Women Poets: Writing against the Heart*, 193–95.

33 Leighton, *Victorian Women Poets: Writing against the Heart*, 195.

34 While Levy herself committed suicide, one would want to avoid attaching the statements of this speaker too directly to the poet. The genre in which she chose to explore these sentiments, the dramatic monologue, demands that some distance be assumed between the poet and the poem's speaking subject.

5

YOPIE PRINS

Victorian meters

In Victorian poetry we see a proliferation of poetic forms, departing from eighteenth-century heroic couplets and neoclassical odes, and further developing the Romantic revival of ballads, sonnets, and blank verse into increasingly refined and rarefied metrical experiments. Alongside the English fashion in Italian sonnets, French stanzaic forms, Germanic accentual verse, and various kinds of dialect poetry – as well as a fascination with the literary recreation of songs, ballads, hymns, refrains, and other musical forms – there was a return to meters inspired by ancient Greek and Latin poetry. Victorian prosody – the study of meter – also became increasingly elaborate: in addition to counting the number of stresses or syllables per line, as in the tradition of English accentual-syllabic verse, prosodists tried to measure the length (or "quantity") of syllables in English according to the tradition of classical quantitative verse. The publication of historical surveys and theoretical treatises on meter rose dramatically throughout the Victorian period, ranging from Edwin Guest's *A History of English Rhythms* (1838, revised 1882) to George Saintsbury's *History of English Prosody* (1906–10), and peaking mid-century with the New Prosody of Coventry Patmore and his contemporaries, and again at the end of the century, with the circulation of numerous polemical pamphlets and scholarly debates about meter.[1] What are the implications of this preoccupation with form? In my own history of Victorian meters, I will begin telling the long and short of that story.

Nineteenth-century theories of meter are often considered antiquated by twentieth-century readers, as metrical analysis has been reformulated on a linguistic model and traditional foot-scansion called into question.[2] Rather than setting aside Victorian metrical theory as an obsolete science, however, let us take more seriously John Hollander's claim that "prosodical analysis is a form of literature in itself."[3] It is a literary genre that raises important historical and theoretical questions about the interpretation of poetry, beyond a merely technical, seemingly ahistorical approach to the

scansion of a particular text. Hollander calls for a diachronic as well as synchronic approach to metrical analysis, demonstrating how meters operate contextually and intertextually: "To analyze the meter of a poem is not so much to scan it, as to show with what other poems its less significant (linguistically speaking) formal elements associate it" (162). The formal elements of a poem that appear to be "less significant (linguistically speaking)" but nevertheless have historical significance are its non-semantic properties: the phonemic arrangement of the poem and its graphic notation, or what Hollander calls "the poem in the ear" and "the poem in the eye." The relationship between these "material" forms of language – how a poem materializes in sound and how it materializes on the page – proves to be a central concern in Victorian metrical theory, as it develops an account of meter that is neither an imitation of voice nor a script for voice but a formal mediation that makes "voice" a function of writing.

The Victorians increasingly conceptualized meter as a formal grid or pattern of spacing, created by the alternation of quantifiable units. Their interest in quantification has the effect of detaching poetic voice from spoken utterance, and marks – literally, in the making of metrical marks – a graphic distinction between meter and rhythm. Thus, when Patmore writes in his "Essay on English Metrical Law" that "the sequence of vocal utterance shall be divided into equal or proportionate spaces," the very process of measuring such "proportionate spaces" turns "vocal utterance" into a temporal or spatial "sequence."[4] Voice is no longer understood in terms of "natural" speech rhythm but measured in predictable intervals. This abstraction of metrical law is enforced by the rules of scansion and recitation taught in schools, where schoolboys learn to distinguish "false" from "true" quantities, and to modulate their voices accordingly. A popular schoolbook such as *English Lessons for English People* (1871) describes the modulation of speech rhythms into a metrical pattern in order to make the voice "rise" from prose to poetry: "Now just as the voice rises from (a) conversational non-modulation to (b) rhetorical modulation, and from modulation to (c) singing, so the arrangement of words rises from (a′) conversational non-arrangement to (b′) rhetorical rhythm, and from rhythm to (c′) *metre*."[5] The idealization or uplifting of the voice depends on turning speech into song and rhythm into *metre* but the analogy between singing and metrical form also raises a question about what befalls the spoken utterance. Does speech fall silent as "the voice rises"? Does meter follow the rhythms of a speaking voice, or does voice follow meter? The measurement of utterance by division and quantification turns voice into an abstract pattern: a series of intervals for enumeration rather than enunciation.

This metrical mediation of voice is already implicit in earlier nineteenth-century accounts of meter. In his 1802 "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, William Wordsworth endorses metrical composition in so far as it serves to regulate an "unusual and irregular state of the mind" with "the co-presence of something regular," and thus creates "an intertexture of ordinary feeling."[6] Not only does the regularity of meter impart "ordinary" feeling through repetition and habituation but it also introduces an "intertexture" between voice and text: an intermediate voice, composed by the meter rather than spoken aloud. Wordsworth consciously enacts this kind of metrical manipulation in his own lyrical ballads. But in his 1815 "Preface" he also warns against meter when its rules and regulations begin to dictate how a poem should be voiced: "The law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible, – the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification, – as to deprive the Reader of all voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem."[7] Here Wordsworth insists on the reader's "voluntary power" to breathe life into a poem and modulate its music according to the "spirit of versification," rather than reading mechanically according to "the letter of metre." There is, however, the possibility of becoming involuntarily overpowered by the meter, which – while seeming "impassive to the spirit" – animates the poem. Rather than reading the music of the poem "in subordination to the sense," we might find our reading subordinated to another kind of sense: the material properties of language that materialize, in part, through meter. Spiritual and material elements are therefore intertwined in a way that complicates the opposition between vocal utterance and the dictates of meter, the spoken and the written, the spirit and the letter, in order to create another "intertexture" between voice and text.

Victorian poets develop this Wordsworthian insight into a vision of voice – one that reflects "a doubled consciousness of metrical language itself," as Eric Griffiths suggests.[8] Emphasizing how Wordsworth points to a "break with the organic functions of metre, by virtue of rendering the passage from visible to audible rhythmic patterns less secure" (74), Griffiths argues that Victorian poetry arises out of that very break. If the circulation of poems in nineteenth-century print culture already troubles the relation of person to voice, then in Victorian metrics we see a further transformation of voice into a spectral form, simultaneously present and absent, and strangely detached from spoken utterance. In close readings of various Victorian poems, Griffiths seeks to demonstrate how "the printed page which retains the poetic voice ('retains' in the double sense of 'keeps back' and 'preserves') becomes the dramatic scene of [a] searched and searching utterance" (70). What Griffiths calls the "printed voice of Victorian poetry"

can no longer be located in a single speaker. Instead, the reader discovers it in a mediation between the ear and the eye that produces the possibility of multiple voicings: "The intonational ambiguity of a written text may create a mute polyphony through which we see rather than hear alternatively possible voicings, and are led by such vision to reflect on the inter-resonance of such voicings" (16). Nevertheless an investment in an idea (or ideal) of voice remains central to his understanding of Victorian poetry. In this respect Griffiths is a very Victorian reader, his ear attuned to the resounding echoes and interruptions of sounds that cannot be heard, except by reflecting on their "inter-resonance." Other contemporary critics, such as Dennis Taylor and Matthew Campbell, have likewise turned to Victorian prosody in order "to re-create or listen again to the voice of nineteenth-century poetry," hoping to hear the rhythms inspired by a living, breathing voice through "understanding the breadth of nineteenth-century innovations and experiments in verse."[9]

While these critics read Victorian poems (still) as dramas of speaking, however, I wish to emphasize that the figure of voice also resists being reduced to utterance in Victorian poetry. One of the legacies of the New Criticism – by now not so new – is to understand poems as the representation of a personal utterance that may or may not be attributed to the "actual" author but nevertheless assumes the actualization of a speaking voice. On this theory we approach all poems as if they were dramatic monologues, by inferring a "speaker" whose utterance is "overheard" by the reader. But if New Criticism seems to derive its theory of reading from the Victorian dramatic monologue in particular, then this poetic genre already points to the difficulty of locating voice. Indeed, the historical emergence of the dramatic monologue revolves around the problem of reading a poem as a spoken utterance, rather than resolving that problem. Although twentieth-century readers would like to discover the spiritualization of voice in Victorian poetry, I will argue that nineteenth-century theories of meter also uncover a form of linguistic materialism that complicates the claim to vocal presence. Instead of hearing voice as breath or spirit, we see it materialize through the counting of metrical marks. It is important, then, to read the poetry in conjunction with the prosody of the period, in order to develop a critical understanding of Victorian meters.

The English ear

Ranging "from the twelfth century to the present day," Saintsbury's three-volume *History of English Prosody* chronicles an historical progression culminating in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Volume 3 ("From

Blake to Mr. Swinburne") of this rather idiosyncratic narrative summarizes prior developments in the history of English versification – "the progressive constitution of rhythm up to Chaucer; its emphasizing and regimenting by him; the break-up under his successors, and the restoration by Spenser and his contemporaries; the rise of blank verse, its decay in drama, and its reorganisation as a non-dramatic form by Milton; the battle of the couplets and the victory of the enclosed form; its tyranny, and the gathering evasions of it and opposition to it" – in order to conclude quite confidently in the present tense: "These stages are past: each of the progressive and constructive ones has left its gain, and each of the retrograde and destructive intervals its warning, for good and all. Now, things are different" (III, 170). With the "abolition of the strict syllabic theory" and "the admission of Substitution and Equivalence," Saintsbury claims that nineteenth-century verse has entered a new era of freedom (III, 171), and by the middle of the century Victorian poetry has gained "full entrance on the heritage which had been gained in the past: the exercise, deliberate and unrestrained, of the franchise of English prosody" (III, 296).

Presenting prosody in a series of "stages," Saintsbury seems to open English literary history itself to a form of metrical analysis: he marks out "intervals" that are alternately "progressive" or "retrograde," and measures these alternations as part of a larger historical pattern that can only be discerned in retrospect. From a very late- (or even post-) Victorian perspective, Saintsbury surveys the entire history of English poetry as conveyed by Victorian poets in particular, whose poetry exercises "the franchise of English prosody" with new variety and freedom (III, 296). "Tennyson is at once the earliest exponent, and to no small extent the definite master, of this new ordered liberty" (III, 296), and its latest exponent is Algernon Charles Swinburne, whose "unsurpassed versatility and virtuosity" reflects "the growth and development of seven centuries of English language and English literature" (III, 351). Saintsbury's reconstruction of the past newly enfranchises Victorian poetry through a genealogy of English poets including Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton (with Shakespeare standing in the wings), whose prosodies are historically embedded in the English language, and now inherited by poets such as Tennyson and Swinburne. English prosody becomes a national heritage, with a political as well as a poetical purpose in resisting "tyranny" and establishing a "new ordered liberty" for the English nation. It has its own law and order, and even while appropriating other traditions of versification, it will not be ruled by any tradition except its own.

In keeping with this nostalgic and nationalist strain in his reading of lyric history, Saintsbury often emphasizes the difference between an English ear

and foreigners who are deaf to English prosody. He criticizes a "loose *sloppiness* in the German or Germanised ear, which cannot understand elasticity combined with form" (III, 336), and asks with patriotic fervor, "What law can a French ear give to an English tongue?" (III, 468). Neither the German ear nor the French ear is attuned to the harmonization of order and liberty in English prosody, according to Saintsbury: the Germans are "prone to exaggerate the accentual and 'irregular' element in English" while "the French try to introduce syllabic regularity" (III, 463). And finally, most emphatically in his conclusion to *History of English Prosody*, Saintsbury refuses all forms of prosodic analysis "foisted in from abroad, and developed by persons lacking English tongues or English ears, and mostly under the domination of an artificial and arbitrary system of phonetics" (III, 511). He patriotically rallies to the defense of an early Tennysonian lyric, criticized by some for its apparent metrical irregularity: "One reads it, wondering how any human ear could be 'tortured' by it, but wondering still more how any *English* ear could be in the least puzzled by its meter" (188). Likewise he quotes two lines in the context of his discussion of Swinburne as self-evident examples of poetry that "should appeal to every one: 'To doubt its music were to want an ear, / To doubt its passion were to want a heart'" (III, 390). Although Tennyson and Swinburne inspired very different political sentiments in late-Victorian England,[10] what they have in common is an appeal to the human heart that seems inseparable from their appeal to the English ear – as indeed, the very word "ear" is already contained within the "heart" of the English language.

And yet Saintsbury's *History of English Prosody* is haunted by an unspoken question: How can meter be heard by ear? In the concluding remarks to his third volume, Saintsbury celebrates "the great multiplication of metres" in the nineteenth century, and praises Victorian poetry in particular for "the strenuous and constant endeavour to increase the range of appeal to the reader's faculties of mental sight and hearing" (III, 508). But in doing so he also points to the abstraction of Victorian meters: they are recognized, by the faculties of "mental sight and hearing," as a function of reading. The notion of an inner ear suggests why Saintsbury is skeptical of phonological, acoustical, and musical approaches to prosody, all of which are emerging in nineteenth-century England alongside comparative philology and scholarly inquiry into the history of the English language. The study of Old English pronunciation, for example, seems as obscure to Saintsbury as attempts to reconstruct the sound of ancient Greek. He finds phonetics of limited use even in analyzing the sound of English: "Phonetics may possibly tell us something about a certain sound when heard; and it may tell us, for ought I know infallibly, by what physical movements that

sound is produced. But how can it tell us what a sound *was*?" (III, 432). The question resonates not only in our reading of dead languages but also in the way that we "hear" English poetry, where hearing proves to be a figure for reading a text that cannot really ever "tell us what a sound *was*." Saintsbury complains of "the phoneticians who are frequently deaf, though unfortunately not dumb, guides" to English prosody (III, 467) because they have too much to say about the sound of spoken English, and not enough about its appeal to an inner ear.

In Tennyson's poetry, however, Saintsbury discovers the perfection of an English ear attuned to the mediation of voice by meter. Saintsbury presents the poet's early lyric, "The Dying Swan" (1830), as "a diploma piece from the prosodic point of view" (III, 192). He reads it in detail not only to display Tennyson's precocious metrical skill but also to insist on the interplay between meter and voice, or "body" and "soul": the material and spiritual dimensions of poetry. In Saintsbury's reading of the poem, the spiritualization of voice cannot be separated from the way it is embodied or materialized in the meter: one must apprehend "the soul-substance" without "stripping it of its essential and inseparable body of poetry" (III, 193). The poem introduces the dying swan as a solitary figure in a melancholy landscape, where the river runs "with an inner voice" (*AT* 5) and the wind seems to "sigh" (15) through the reed-tops and weeping willows. But by stanza 3, these barely audible murmurs and whispers are amplified into resounding echoes of the swan's lament:

> The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
> Of that waste place with joy
> Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear
> The warble was low, and full and clear;
> And floating about the under-sky,
> Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
> Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;
> But anon her awful jubilant voice,
> With a music strange and manifold,
> Flowed forth on a carol free and bold;
> As when a mighty people rejoice
> With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,
> And the tumult of their acclaim is rolled
> Through the open gates of the city afar,
> To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.
> And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
> And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
> And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,
> And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,

And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeds and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song. (21–42)

While "we have merely had the *fact* of the swan's lament noted" in the first two stanzas, Saintsbury emphasizes that the final stanza simultaneously describes and enacts "the death-song itself" through metrical manipulation: "the metre lengthens, unrolls, is transformed by more and more infusion of the trisyllabic foot, till the actual equivalent of the 'eddying song,' the 'awful jubilant voice,' the 'music strange and manifold,' is attained" (III, 192–93).

With this remark, Saintsbury marks the meter as a necessary condition for hearing the sound of the poem. He notices how the poem gathers momentum from stanza to stanza in tetrameter, with an increasing number of anapestic feet. We can extend this reading of the poem into our own metrical notation. (I will use the following metrical notation: / = stressed syllable, x = unstressed syllable, [ ] = foot boundaries, and || = caesura.) For example, the seemingly despondent spondees in

[x /][/ /][/ /][x /]
The wild swan's death - hymn took the soul

give way to trisyllabic rhythms as follows:

[/ x x][/ x][x /][x x /]
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear

[x /][x x /]
The warble was low.

Here dactyls and anapests emerge from the iambic meter to reanimate the lament, rapidly accelerating in the description of the swan's voice:

[x x /][x /][x /][x x /]
But anon her awful jubilant voice,

[x x /][x /][x /][x /]
With a music strange and manifold.

The strange music of the second line makes the meter itself seem manifold, as two iambs shade into a dactyl in the word "manifold." This orchestration of manifold meters is conveyed in the description of music that follows,

[x /][x x /][x x /][x /]
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold

and further echoed by nature in a gradual amplification of anapests:

[x x /][x /][x x /][x /]
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,

[x x /][/ /][x x /][x x /]
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank

This musical crescendo has its climax in the final line:

[x /][x /][x x /][x x /]
Were flooded over with eddying song.

It is through this kind of metrical reading that Saintsbury asks us to find "various forms of 'suiting sound to sense'" hidden in Tennyson's poem (III, 192), just as in Tennyson himself he would find a poet with true "command of sound" (III, 193). Much as the "inner voice" of the river is heard when the "echoing bank" resounds with the song of the dying swan, so also the inner ear is meant to hear the resonance of this strange music in the manifold meters of the poem.

Yet the swan, doomed to die at the very moment of singing her "death-hymn," also serves as allegorical figure for a voice that is no longer heard; the resurrection of song is predicated on its death. Indeed, when Saintsbury introduces "The Dying Swan," he does so in order to resurrect Tennyson himself as "a fresh Phoenix-birth of an English 'poet of the century'" (III, 192) – a poet who rises from the ashes with a new kind of song, giving life to its dying cadences through metrical manipulation. The survival of his poetry depends on the death of a living breathing voice, so it may materialize in written form: an appeal to the inner ear that is mediated by an appeal to the eye. Of course from Saintsbury's late-Victorian perspective, the afterlife of Tennyson as "poet of the century" necessarily presupposes such a death. But even when Tennyson was still alive his poetry was read as a dying cadence.

Arthur Henry Hallam's early review of the 1830 *Poems*, for example, famously praises "the variety of his lyrical measures and exquisite modulation of harmonious words and cadences to the swell and fall of the feelings expressed."[11] The expression of feelings is so exquisitely modulated in Tennyson's poetry that "the understanding takes no definite note of them" but "they leave signatures in language" (194) when the "tone becomes the sign of the feeling" (195). Although the reader takes "no definite note," the modulation of lyrical measures produces "the tone" of which the signature is a metrical *notation*, the reinscription of *notes* as *tones*. Like Saintsbury's later reading of Tennysonian meter, Hallam maintains that "the proportion of melodious cadences" in Tennyson's poetry "could not be diminished without materially affecting the rich lyrical expression" (195); the expression can only materialize through its metrical reinscription, the measuring

of the cadence. "A stretch of lyrical power is here exhibited which we did not think the English language had possessed," Hallam proclaims, and his review demonstrates this lyrical range by taking note of the continual rise and fall of tones in Tennyson's poetry, "the soft and melancholy lapse, as the sounds die" (196).

The "stretch of lyrical power" through Tennysonian tones can be understood within the context of nineteenth-century theories of language. As Donald S. Hair points out, Victorian philology associated "tone" (derived from the Greek verb *teino* and the Sanskrit *tan*, to tense or stretch out) with the extension of voice, and the etymology of "cadence" was also common knowledge: "The word is derived from the Latin verb *cadere*, to fall, and refers, strictly speaking, only to the dropping of the voice, but in practice the word refers to the whole rhythmical unit, with its swelling and falling, tensing and relaxing."[12] But if Tennyson's poetry seems to stretch the voice, it does so by extending vocal utterance into rhythm, and rhythm into meter. The cadence of speech falls into measured units before it can be sublimated or uplifted into "voice." Even in reading his own poems aloud Tennyson performed a peculiar kind of voicing, more like a low drone or monotonous chant, according to various auditors. Edward FitzGerald heard the poet reading in "his voice, very deep and deep-chested, but rather murmuring than mouthing," and Aubrey de Vere also describes hearing the poems in "the voice which rather intoned than recited them." While Hair interprets such "ear-witness accounts" as "evidence of the voice's expressive power" (64–65), they also leave the impression of a voice haunted by writing. In his low-voiced "murmuring," Tennyson "intoned" a metrical pattern inscribed in the poem rather than "mouthing" words to be recited in a speaking voice. His recitation was a meticulous reinscription of the meter, which Tennyson considered inadequately voiced in any reading except his own.

Tennyson's "natural" ear for meter was created by extensive metrical training. Like most well-educated boys in Victorian England, he learned to scan Greek and Latin meters by marking the long and short syllables, and later in *A Memoir* he claimed to know the quantity of every word in the English language except "scissors."[13] This double-edged comment ironically holds open and closes down the possibility of writing English poetry based on quantities: How can words be divided and measured when even "scissors" – an instrument for cutting and dividing – is a word that can not be quantified with any measure of certainty? Only a poet with an educated ear should be able to tell the difference between false and true quantities. But in order to transform this seemingly mechanical process of quantification into voice, his ear must also be naturally attuned to the innate music of

the English language. Another anecdote in *A Memoir*, recollected by the poet himself at the age of 80, serves as a primal scene for this revelation of voice: "Before I could read, I was in the habit on a stormy day of spreading my arms to the wind and crying out, 'I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind'" (I, 11). The voice is seemingly without origin, as it is heard simultaneously in the sound of the wind and the resounding cry of the child: a moment of inspiration when hearing and speaking seem to converge. The perfect ear coincides with the perfect voice, whose utterance is written in iambic pentameter:

[x /] [x /] [x /][x /][x /]
I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind

This reinscription of metrical convention turns the act of "spreading my arms to the wind" into a scene of reading where voice is mediated by meter.[14] Thus Tennyson's anecdote records a voice that proves to be a prior inscription, even if it is remembered as pure inspiration

The memory is included in *A Memoir* because it supposedly inspired Tennyson's earliest poem, a quatrain written around age eight and inserted in the second stanza of a later poem entitled "Whispers."[15] Here again Tennyson recalls "a voice that's speaking in the wind" as whispers that seem to rise and fall without clear articulation:

> What'er I see, where'er I move,
> These whispers rise, and fall away,
> Something of pain – of bliss – of Love,
> But what, were hard to say.
> I could not tell it: if I could
> Yet every form of mind is made
> To vary in some light or shade
> So were my tale misunderstood. (*AT* 9–16)

In lines 9 to 12 (Tennyson's poem from boyhood) a whispering is heard all around. But exactly what these whispers are heard to say proves "hard to say"; they are heard but not understood. The second four lines further suggest that any attempt to "tell" their tale will also be "misunderstood"; neither the wind nor the "I" has a voice to speak.

And yet the poem does "tell" something without saying it, not only in the interplay of rising aspirated rhythms ("What'er I see, where'er I move / These whispers rise") and low susurrations ("and fall away, / Something of pain – of bliss – of Love") but also in its careful counting out of the meter. Tennyson's anecdote is reframed in iambic tetrameter, fading into trimeter and echoing in diminished form the iambic pentameter of his earlier outcry. It is as if "I hear" were left out of that pentameter line, leaving only "a

voice that's speaking in the wind." This metrical reinscription is both a misunderstanding of the prior utterance and a way of understanding it after all; indeed, since "every form of mind is made / To vary in some light or shade," it is only by varying the form that the poem can retell its tale, not as something heard but as something written. The variation from tetrameter to trimeter in the fourth line is telling because we see the missing foot *without* hearing it; what is missing is difficult to tell, unless we count the space between "but what" and "were hard to say." We seem to find an answer to the question that haunts Saintsbury – how can any poem "tell us what a sound *was*?" – in the telling example of Tennyson's poem: "I could not tell," but "if I could," it would be told by measuring the meter. Thus we come to understand Tennyson's meter not as the transcription of voice but as a form of inscription, where "telling" turns out to be the counting and recounting of metrical marks.

The hexameter mania

The viability of writing verse in classical meters was an ongoing debate, if not an obsession, among poets and prosodists throughout the Victorian period. Not since the sixteenth century had there been as much interest in classical meters in English poetry, with an appeal to educated readers in particular. The quantitative movement in Elizabethan England was influenced by Latin prosody taught in grammar schools, where schoolboys scanned poetry on the model of classical verse: after marking the long and short syllables of a Latin text and dividing lines into feet, they would read it aloud according to the rule that they had memorized. Such techniques of scansion emphasized the intellectual apprehension of durational patterns through the written rather than the spoken word, as Derek Attridge has argued in further detail: Elizabethan verse in classical meters tried to move "away from any conception of metre as a rhythmic succession of sounds, akin to the beat of the ballad-monger or the thumping of a drum" toward an abstract mathematized order "where words [were] anatomised and charted with a precision and a certainty unknown in the crude vernacular."[16] This transformation of the vernacular proved unpopular (by definition) until the nineteenth century, when poets returned with new enthusiasm to the transformation of classical meters into a popular form.

If sixteenth-century experiments attempted to classicize English verse by removing it from the vernacular, then Victorian experiments had the reverse effect of popularizing classical meter by drawing it closer to the vernacular. While Elizabethan verse in classical meters was primarily modeled on Latin prosody, Victorian prosody increasingly turned to Greek

models, especially Homeric hexameter (a six-beat line written mostly in dactyls). With the proliferation of nineteenth-century translations of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the idea of reviving dactylic hexameter became a popular ideal – so popular that Saintsbury devotes an entire chapter to "The Later English Hexameter and The Discussions On It." He does not take a favorable view, however, of "the battle of the hexameter" that dominated early Victorian metrical theory (III, 173), and subsequently developed into "the hexameter mania in the middle of the century" (III, 207). His chapter is a long tirade against "English Quantity-Mongers" (III, 411) and "classicalisers" (III, 422), who introduce quantities that are difficult to measure or hear in English. "With the self-styled quantitative hexameter you must either have a new pronunciation, or a mere ruinous and *arrhythmic* heap of words," writes Saintsbury (III, 400). His own unspoken ambivalence about the problem of pronouncing meter is intensified by the question of quantitative verse, and he therefore dismisses the recreation of Homeric hexameters in English as an experiment "reinforcing lack of ear" and "foredoomed to failure" (III, 415).

Even Tennyson seems doomed to fail in writing a hexameter couplet, as quoted by Saintsbury: "These lame hexameters the strong-winged music of Homer? / No, but a most burlesque, barbarous experiment." The syllables must be forced into improper pronunciation to make the quantities audible, according to Saintsbury: "you have to pronounce, in a quite unnatural way, 'experim*ennnnnnt*,' 'hexamet*errrrr*'" (III, 421). Of course the poetic success of Tennyson's hexameter couplet is measured precisely by that apparent failure of pronunciation. But Saintsbury takes Tennyson at his word. Quantitative versification is a "barbarous experiment" that reduces syllables to meaningless sounds, rebarbarizing the English tongue by forcing it into an "unnatural" composition, derived from a dead language that is taught in schools but no longer spoken. To emphasize that scanning ancient Greek is not the same as reading English verse, Saintsbury scans the phrase "dons, undergraduates" and ironically points to the difficulty of pronouncing "und*errr*graduay*te*" according to antiquated rules of quantity – an instructive academic exercise for dons and undergraduates, perhaps, but too artificial for those of us ready to graduate from metrical instruction and begin reading English verse on its own terms. "Our business is with English;" Saintsbury insists, "And I repeat that, *in English*, there are practically no metrical fictions, and that metre follows, though it may sometimes slightly force, pronunciation" (III, 434–35).[17]

But if, as Saintsbury concedes, pronunciation may (and even must) be forced by the meter "sometimes," the widespread reinvention of dactylic hexameter in the nineteenth century shows to what degree this metrical

fiction can be naturalized in English, and was already circulating as a popular idiom. Indeed, the popularity of English hexameters makes it increasingly difficult to distinguish between reading meter as a sign of advanced literacy or as a sign for common literacy. Early in the century Robert Southey caused controversy with his defense of dactylic hexameters in *The Vision of Judgment* (1821), and by the 1840s the conversion of quantitative into accentual hexameter – in which quantity is made to coincide with a pattern of accents, or is replaced by stressed syllables – became increasingly common, as in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Evangeline* (1847) and Clough's *The Bothie* (1848). Saintsbury is suspicious of both these efforts in hexameter, albeit for different reasons. He first acknowledges "the distinct popular success" of *Evangeline*, if only as an appeal to "popular taste" that is "cheap enough" (III, 404), and then remarks how "its marked singsong is a quality which undoubtedly appeals more to untrained ears" (III, 406). By contrast, he considers Clough's attempt to retrain the ear of the reader to be lacking in melody. While the American popular prosody of Longfellow seems too smooth, the manipulation of meter by Clough is too rough, and too much like prose (III, 408–09).

An assessment of Clough's hexameters as rough, irregular, and prosaic is not unusual among his critics. Even the headnote to *The Bothie* encourages such a reading: "The reader is warned to expect every kind of irregularity in these modern hexameters: spondaic lines, so called, are almost the rule; and a word will often require to be transposed by the voice from the end of one line to the beginning of the next."[18] Combining the conventions of classical epic with more conversational rhythms of speech in *The Bothie*, Clough asks the reader to mediate between what is written and what is spoken. Words must be "transposed by the voice" to make the meter of his poem audible. Yet this assumption of "voice" also depends on scanning the lines visually. His "modern hexameters" move beyond an imitation of classical meter, however, by breaking the rules of scansion that educated readers have been taught to expect. Instead, the reader must expect the unexpected. In a detailed analysis of Clough's "radical metre" in *The Bothie*, Joseph Patrick Phelan traces the early outlines of a radically innovative theory of musical prosody: "a new and essentially musical understanding of the hexameter as a series of 'isochronous intervals' between accents, intervals which can be filled with words or pauses and which can span written line-endings."[19] Placing Clough within the context of scholarly debates about classical prosody in the 1840s and 1850s, Phelan demonstrates how traditional modes of reading Greek and Latin prevent Clough's critics from understanding his English hexameters. Further, he argues that the metrical innovations of *The Bothie* should be

understood in the broader social context of nineteenth-century university reform. Written just after Clough left Oxford, his poem is a critique (in its metrical form as well as its narrative content) of Oxford's narrowly traditional approach to the Classics.

Thus, although Clough can certainly be counted among those "dons, undergraduates" trained to scan classical meters, *The Bothie* reflects quite self-consciously on the remaking of its own metrical form. The poem narrates "A Long-Vacation Pastoral" of a group of Oxford students, led by their Tutor on a pastoral retreat to Scotland, and begins with a reflection on the formal appearance of each character, dressed for dinner like epic warriors armed for battle. The introduction of the Tutor in particular suggests how self-consciously tutored the writing of this poem will be:

> Still more plain the Tutor, the grave man, nicknamed Adam,
> White-tied, clerical, silent, with antique square-cut waistcoat
> Formal, unchanged, of black cloth, but with sense and feeling beneath it;
> Skilful in Ethics and Logic, in Pindar and Poets unrivalled;
> *Shady* in Latin, said Lindsay, but *topping* in Plays and Aldrich.
>
> (*AHC* I. 20–24)

The Tutor's style of dress suits the style of the poem, measured out in "antique, square-cut" hexameter that may appear "formal, unchanged" to the eye at first but "with sense and feeling beneath it." The appearance of the Tutor, like the seemingly traditional use of meter in *The Bothie*, is animated by "skilful" exercise of intellect: "Skilful in Ethics and Logic, in Pindar and Poets unrivalled" – a perfect line in dactylic hexameter to emphasize the performance of poetic skill. But if the Tutor has mastered the meters of Pindar in Greek (quite a feat), he remains not so well-versed in Latin, as we learn in the next line, where the elevated formal diction falls into a colloquialism, "*Shady* in Latin." The ideal model for Clough's hexameters is ancient Greek, it would seem, but the combination of formal and informal language in the poem, along with its "irregular" deployment of metrical rules, produce a more hybrid and heterogeneous form, illuminated by Greek but also shadowed by Latin.

To convey the range of Clough's modern hexameters, different characters embody different ways of speaking in hexameter. Indeed, in presenting these various "voices" mediated by the meter, the poem often seems to allegorize its own metrical effects. The metrical mediation of voice is most fully developed in the central character of "Hewson, the chartist, the poet, the eloquent speaker" (II. 19), otherwise known as "Philip who speaks like a book" (II. 158). In contrast to other students in his cohort, his speech is smoothly modulated in perfect dactylic hexameters, as he effortlessly

enumerates the ancient Greek authors who have taught him to speak in this way:

[/ x x] [/ x x][/ x x][/ x x][/ x x][/ /]
Aeschylus, Sophocles, Homer, Herodotus, Pindar, and Plato.

(II. 289)

But he is eager to take a vacation from books and proclaims himself ready to pursue new paths, untrodden by familiar feet: "Weary of reading am I, and weary of walks prescribed us" (II. 304). In the winding course of the narrative, as Philip ventures into the Highlands where he will discover his bride, the hexameters seemingly "prescribed" by classical convention also change their course. Here the poem begins to project another kind of metrical allegory into the landscape, self-consciously naturalizing the formal mechanism of its verse.

In Book III of *The Bothie*, for example, we encounter the detailed description of a stream that flows through the Highlands and leads the students to a swimming hole:

Springing far off from a loch unexplored in the folds of great mountains,
Falling two miles through rowan and stunted alder, enveloped
Then for four more in a forest of pine, where broad and ample
Spreads, to convey it, the glen with heathery slopes on both sides:
Broad and fair the stream, with occasional falls and narrows;
But, where the lateral glen approaches the vale of the river,
Met and blocked by a huge interposing mass of granite,
Scarce by a channel deep-cut, raging up, and raging onward,
Forces its flood through a passage, so narrow, a lady would step it.

(III. 21–29)

The stream running down from distant mountains corresponds to the movement of the verse, as it streams along in one continuous sentence, "springing far off" in the first line, "falling two miles" in the second line and "four more" in the next four lines, moving laterally across each line and ever downward, until it is forced along a channel "deep-cut." Here we see a caesura, a mid-line pause in the comma after "cut" that literally cuts the line in two and redirects the flow of language:

[/ x x][/ x x][/ ||
Scarce by a channel deep-cut

This strong masculine caesura (so designated because it comes after the accented syllable of the third foot) is followed by a double feminine caesura (a weaker pause, placed after unaccented syllables) in the next line:

[/ x x] [/ x x][/ x x ||x] [/ x ||x][/ x x][/ x]
Forces its flood through a passage, so narrow, a lady would step it

This formal play with caesuras recreates a narrow passage across the water, a lady's foot-crossing over the final trochee ("step it") where the turbulent dactyls subside briefly enough for us to cross to the next line.

The meter gathers momentum by running along in such variable feet, "with occasional falls and narrows," and even when "met and blocked" by interposing caesuras, it continues "raging up, and raging onward" with greater rapidity. The words that flow so rapidly through the hexameter lines of the poem are thus rediscovered in the natural landscape, and assimilated into the larger flow of the poem itself. This cascading verse leads to a waterfall where the water "frees itself" for a moment, as it falls into a self-mirroring pool that is measured yet again in feet:

But in the interval here the boiling, pent-up water
Frees itself by a final descent, attaining a basin
Ten feet wide and eighteen long, with whiteness and fury
Occupied partly, but mostly pellucid, pure, a mirror. (III. 34–37)

The poem artfully reflects on its own naturalization of meter, "in the interval here," where the water and the meter seem a reflection of each other. It also reflects further on some of the metrical effects Clough learned from Longfellow, whose hexameters he admired: "Mr. Longfellow has gained, and has charmed, has instructed in some degree, and attuned the ears of his countrymen and countrywomen . . . upon both sides of the Atlantic, to the flow and cadence of this hitherto unacceptable measure."[20] Longfellow's flowing cadences are recreated by Clough in the stream of his own verse, and it is possible to read the stream flowing "in a forest of pine" in *The Bothie* as a reflection on the famous opening line in *Evangeline* – "This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks."[21] Like Longfellow, Clough manipulates the caesura within each line, and enjambment between lines, to create a sense of continual flow through measured interruption.

But although Clough claims to have imitated Longfellow in *The Bothie* – "it was a reading of his Evangeline aloud . . . which, coming after a reperusal of the Iliad, occasioned this outbreak of hexameters"[22] – he also breaks out of Longfellow's influence through the "irregularity" of his own modern hexameters. Just as Clough's stream emerges from the pine forest into a space "where broad and ample / Spreads, to convey it, the glen," Clough's hexameters are conveyed with a broader and more ample sense of boundaries. Like the course of his stream with "slopes on both sides: / broad and fair," his line endings can be transposed by the voice to the next

line and read metrically on "both sides" of the hexameter. Here Clough extends Longfellow's hexameters in a new direction. Indeed, as Phelan argues, his most radical metrical innovation is a musical understanding of hexameter as an eight-foot line, in which the caesura and the line-end pause are counted as suppressed feet. These silent intervals are measured as "empty time" that is "theoretically and temporally equivalent to the 'full times' of the line itself, and could, therefore on occasion simply be 'filled in' without destroying the essential rhythm of the line" (180). This is the effect conveyed in the cadence of Clough's stream, "enveloped" in a meter associated with Longfellow but further amplified and broadened by Clough.

Simultaneously describing and enacting the hexameters in which the story is told, *The Bothie* therefore tells multiple allegories of its own metrical making. Subtitled "A Long-Vacation Pastoral," the poem recounts a time away from formal instruction in classical meters, yet during this interval it is continually marking forms of measurement, duration, calculation, and enumeration: times of day, days of the week, months of the calendar, numbers of people, catalogues of places, lists of names, length and width of objects, dimensions of space, all formalized into abstract quantities. The evolution of English hexameters beyond Longfellow and Clough increasingly revolves around this imperative to quantification, a search for mechanisms to measure intervals of space and time as interchangeable, vacated forms. In this respect the highly specialized hexameter debates among nineteenth-century poets and prosodists are part of a larger cultural pattern in Victorian England, a turn toward abstraction that subordinates other definitions of value to quantification and increasingly formalizes the trope of counting.

Fancy prosody

The formalization of metrical theory coincides with a general nineteenth-century tendency toward the codification of numerical modes of analysis and the production of abstract space, which Mary Poovey has discussed in detail.[23] It also corresponds more specifically to the convergence of economic and literary formalisms later in the century, as described by Regenia Gagnier. Gagnier traces a revolution in economic theory in the 1870s that leads to the abstraction of value on a quasi-mathematical model, and she further argues that this transformation of economics into a quantifying science runs parallel to a shift in aesthetics, where the quality of aesthetic experience is quantified through increasingly subtle discriminations of taste. In Gagnier's argument, Walter Pater exemplifies the convergence of "economic" and "aesthetic" man. He begins his "Preface" to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) with a demand for quantification – "discriminating between what is more or less" – and concludes his book with another impulse to quantify, in his famous dictum to "get as many pulsations as possible into the given time."[24] I would add that this should also be understood as a metrical impulse. Although Pater measures out his own cadences in prose, he appears to be rearticulating ideas about meter that he learned at Oxford during the 1860s: the years of his classical training and no doubt his initiation into heated debates about the New Prosody. That decade was a significant turning point for Victorian metrical theory, when meter was being theorized as a principle of spacing that is mentally perceived or internally "felt" as an abstract form, rather than heard.

An early and influential example of this abstraction of meter is Patmore's "Essay on English Metrical Law." First published in 1857, it circulated in different versions for several decades and contributed to the emergence of the New Prosody in Victorian England, both in theory and in practice.[25] Patmore defines English meter as "the function of marking, *by whatever means*, certain isochronous intervals." He adds that "*the fact of that division shall be made manifest* by an 'ictus' or 'beat,' actual or mental, which, like a post in a chain railing, shall mark the end of one space and the commencement of another" (15). The conflation of temporal and spatial measurement allows Patmore to understand meter as the demarcation of space *between* dividing marks, which can be either "actual" or "mental," and he stresses that this division into equal spaces can be marked "*by whatever means*." But he goes on to emphasize that meter is best understood as an imaginary mark: "*it has no material and external existence at all*, but has its place in the mind, which craves measure in everything, and, wherever the idea of measure is uncontradicted, delights in marking it with an imaginary 'beat.'" (15). The perception of such mental spaces is independent of actual pronunciation; it is an "idea of measure" that can be abstractly schematized and quantified, because "the mind . . . craves measure in everything."

The New Prosody combines this philosophical idea of meter with a desire for ever more complex measures, a "craving" that coincides with the insatiable desires produced by fin-de-siècle formal aesthetics. Thus Saintsbury comments on "the *polymetric* character of the century" (III, 317), as he surveys the ongoing multiplication of meters in several generations of poets who follow Patmore in developing their own, increasingly intricate, variations on prosody. Patmore's essay was avidly read and discussed among the Pre-Raphaelites, and critics have noted his later influence on the

metrical experiments of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Thomas Hardy, and Yeats.[26] Even the tour-de-force of meters in Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* (1866) can be read as a virtuosic elaboration of Patmore's principles. Although Patmore maintains that "the language should always seem to *feel*, though not to *suffer* from the bonds of verse" (8), Swinburne's poems are made to both feel *and* suffer those bonds as the articulation of an exquisitely painful desire. The rhythmic beating of the body in "Anactoria" and the pangs of pain in "Dolores" – to name just two poems from this notorious volume – anticipate the economizing aestheticism of Pater by getting in as many pulsations as possible in the given time. Indeed, throughout *Poems and Ballads* Swinburne seems to take pleasure in inventing infinitely varied ways to perform his subjection to English metrical law. "The variety and the individuality of the construction of these measures becomes almost bewildering, though every one of them responds, with utmost accuracy, to the laws," Saintsbury writes in awe of Swinburne (III, 342).

In Saintsbury's survey of the New Prosody, Christina Rossetti emerges as another important figure. "Pages would not suffice for a full analysis of her infinite variety," Saintsbury concludes, in a treatment of her poetry that follows immediately after his discussion of Swinburne. He ranks her alongside Swinburne in metrical virtuosity: "On the whole, late nineteenth-century prosody has hardly, on the formal side, a more characteristic and more gifted exponent than Christina Rossetti" (III, 358–59). If Swinburne's metrical virtuosity anticipates the convergence of economic and aesthetic man, then Rossetti's manipulation of meter marks the convergence of economic and aesthetic woman as well. Her wide metrical range is evident in "Goblin Market" (1862) – "the more the metre is studied, the more audacious may the composition seem," Saintsbury notes (III, 354) – as it produces various discriminations of value that correspond thematically to the logic of the marketplace. In this way her poem meditates on the production of insatiable desires, not only in its content but also through its very form. The wide range of lyrics in Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market and Other Poems* can thus be understood – like Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*, published not long after Patmore's essay first began to circulate – as a poet's response to current ideas about prosody. From this decade onward we see the emergence of "fancy prosodies," invoked by Saintsbury to describe the metrical complications of poems in which "*various* scansions of the same line and piece present themselves" (III, 475).

In "Winter: My Secret," for example, Rossetti playfully responds to new ways of telling meter by refusing to "tell" a secret:

I tell my secret? No indeed, not I:
Perhaps some day, who knows?
But not today: it froze, and blows, and snows,
And you're too curious: fie!
You want to hear it? well:
Only, my secret's mine, and I won't tell. (*CR* 1–6)

Throughout the poem, the existence of the secret remains ambiguous and its content uncertain. Indeed, in the manuscript version of the poem, an empty space serves as a placeholder for the very word "secret": "Only my < > mine . . ." Even while the poem holds forth on the secret, it therefore withholds it as well:

Or, after all, perhaps there's none:
Suppose there is no secret after all,
But only just my fun. (7–9)

Here again a word is missing from the manuscript: "Or after all perhaps < > none." Perhaps there is no "there" there. Perhaps Rossetti is playing with the idea of an empty space, asking us to fill in the blank by imaginary measures, by measuring the mental spaces of an abstract metrical form which (as Patmore asserts) "*has no material and external existence at all*, but has its place in the mind."

Perhaps, then, the puzzle of Rossetti's poem can be solved metrically by counting the number of accents per line. At first the poem seems to lack a clear pattern, since the accents vary in lines that expand from four to five accents, or contract from four to three, as in the following enumeration of months:

Spring's an expansive time: yet I don't trust
March with its peck of dust,
Nor April with its rainbow-crowned brief showers,
Nor even May, whose flowers
One frost may wither thro' the sunless hours. (23–27)

The variable number of accents is reminiscent of *The Shepherd's Calendar* of Edmund Spenser, who also measures out each month in different meters. In fact, the metrical pattern that emerges in Rossetti's poem is associated with the month of February, written by Spenser in an ambiguous meter that prompted debates among nineteenth-century prosodists: a loosely constructed four-beat line, sometimes verging on iambic pentameter. Guest, for example, singles out the February eclogue of Spenser as an example of "tumbling verses" which "generally have four accents . . . but they sometimes take three or five accents, and the rhythm shifts, accordingly, to the triple or to the common measure" (535). Rossetti replays this ambiguity

throughout her own poem, where two metrical norms are juxtaposed from one line to the next, and even superimposed within lines that can be scanned simultaneously as pentameter or tetrameter. "Nor April with its rainbow-crowned brief showers" allows for various scansions (depending on how briefly we scan "brief"). It thus exemplifies what Saintsbury calls "fancy prosody." If this metrical tale sounds too fanciful to be true, then it is nevertheless prompted by the final lines of the poem, where the reader is invited to speculate: "Perhaps my secret I may say, / Or you may guess." The secret, it would seem, is that the month of February has been speaking all along. What "I may say" and "you may guess" may not be spoken, but can be told in the meter. In other words, what speaks here is neither a person nor a voice but a temporal unit, an "I" measured by the calendar and spatialized in a series of metrical marks.

The examples I have chosen reverse Matthew Campbell's argument about rhythm and will in Victorian poetry, in so far as these forms of metrical writing run contrary to "the performance of speech in verse" and "the dramatic representation of human agency in verse" that prove central to Campbell's readings of Victorian poetry (63). A different selection of Victorian poets (or a selection of different poems by the same poets) can serve to illustrate how the formulation of meter also has the effect of suspending the "rhythm of will," especially if this is figured as the purpose, intention, determination, or agency of a speaker. Following my brief account of Victorian meters, we can read Victorian poetry not only as the dramatic representation of voice in verse, but also as its reversal: the writing of voice, inverse. Reading poems by Tennyson, Clough, and Christina Rossetti alongside Victorian theories of meter, I have argued that the poetry and prosody of the period are mutually implicated in an ongoing effort to mediate between enunciation and enumeration, between two different ways of "telling" meter. If lyric poetry as a genre is marked by the counting and recounting of utterance, then what distinguishes Victorian poetry is both the self-conscious reinscription of the marking function and a heightened consciousness about the metrical mediation of voice. The claim to voice may seem a contradictory impulse in Victorian metrical theory, where meter is understood to be a formal mechanism as well as an organic form, simultaneously "artificial" and "natural" in graphing the rhythms of English as it is (no longer) spoken. Nevertheless this proves a productive contradiction for nineteenth-century discourses on meter, as these proliferate with increasing variety and complexity in articulating – in theory and in practice – the materiality of language.

Rather than assuming a transhistorical definition of meter, or presuming an ahistorical grammar for metrical analysis, I have placed Victorian

debates about meter within their own historical context in order to emphasize the cultural significance of formalist reading. Herbert F. Tucker has recently called for such an approach to Victorian poetry, concluding that "the theory of such a cultural neoformalism has yet to be written."[27] I would conclude that its history has already been written in Victorian metrical theory, and is yet to be read. By reading Victorian meters, we can develop a theoretical perspective on lyric voice, and a historical perspective on the analysis of form; we can understand the relevance of metrical debates to the formation of national identity and histories of the nation; we can interrogate the formal instruction of the English ear, the reconstruction of classical traditions, and the construction of a vernacular idiom in nineteenth-century England; we can trace the quantification of value, the abstraction of form, and the engendering of aesthetics; and so, in short or at length, can go on enumerating why, and how much, Victorian meters count.

NOTES

1 Edwin Guest, *A History of English Rhythms: A New Edition, Edited by Walter W. Skeat* (London: George Bell, 1882); further page references appear in parentheses. George Saintsbury, *A History of English Prosody, from the Twelfth Century to the Present Day*, second edition, 3 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1923); volume and page references appear in parentheses. For twentieth-century surveys of Victorian metrical theory, see T.S. Omond, *English Metrists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921) and the section on nineteenth-century prosody in T.V.F. Brogan, *English Versification, 1570–1980* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

2 Thus, for example, W.K. Wimsatt introduces *Versification: Major Language Types* (New York: New York University Press, 1972) with the assertion that traditional prosody has been "pre-empted by modern linguistics" (xix). For a lucid survey of metrical analysis ranging from traditional approaches ("classical" and "temporal") to linguistic approaches ("phonemic" and "generative"), see Derek Attridge, *The Rhythms of English Poetry* (Harlow: Longman, 1982). For a guide to foot scansion and glossary of terms, see Timothy Steele, *All the Fun's in How You Say a Thing: An Explanation of Meter and Versification* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999).

3 John Hollander, *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form*, second edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 19; further page reference appears in parentheses.

4 Coventry Patmore, *Essay on English Metrical Law: A Critical Edition with a Commentary*, ed. Sister Mary Roth (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1961), 15; further page references appear in parentheses.

5 Edwin A. Abbott and J.R. Seeley, "Meter," in *English Lessons for English People* (London: Selley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1871), 144.

6 William Wordsworth, 1802 '"Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), I, 146.

7 Wordsworth, "Preface of 1815," in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, III, 29–30.

8 Eric Griffths, *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 73; further page references appear in parentheses.

9 Matthew Campbell, *Rhythm and Will in Victorian Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 48, further page reference appears in parentheses; Dennis Taylor, *Hardy's Metres and Victorian Prosody* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

10 On this topic, see John Lucas, "Voices of Authority, Voices of Subversion: Poetry in the Late Nineteenth Century," in this volume, 280–301.

11 [Arthur Henry Hallam,] "On Some Characteristics of Modern Poetry," *Englishman's Magazine* 1 (1831), 616–28, reprinted in *The Writings of Arthur Hallam*, ed. T.H. Vail Motter (New York: MLA, 1943), 192; further page references appear in parentheses.

12 Donald S. Hair, *Tennyson's Language* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 61–62; further page reference appears in parentheses.

13 Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by His Son*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1897), II, 231; further volume and page reference appears in parentheses.

14 Herbert F. Tucker notes the iambic pentameter in *Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 40. Matthew Rowlinson meditates further on the metricality of the child's cry, as it encodes a rhythm and records a voice whose origins remain uncertain, in *Tennyson's Fixations: Psychoanalysis and the Topics of the Early Poetry* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 13.

15 "Whispers" is dated 1833, and published only partially in *A Memoir*; the entire poem is reassembled from manuscript by Ricks in *The Poems of Tennyson*, I, 609.

16 Derek Attridge, *Well-Weigh'd Syllables: Elizabethan Verse in Classical Metres* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 77–78.

17 Saintsbury excerpts the phrase "dons, undergraduates" from the verse introduction to C.B. Cayley's 1877 translation of Homer: "Dons, undergraduates, essayists, and public, I ask you, / Are these hexameters true-timed, or Klopstockish uproar?" Saintsbury's response to this rhetorical question is a staunch refusal of quantitative scansion, for to do so "is to speak a language that is not English" (III, 411–12).

18 Arthur Hugh Clough, *The Bothie*, ed. Patrick Scott (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1976), 4. Quotations are taken from the original 1848 text printed in this edition, published under the title *The Bothie of Toper-na-Fuosich: A Long-Vacation Pastoral*; line references appear in parentheses. The title of Clough's poem was subsequently changed to *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*, and portions of the text were revised for an edition of Clough's collected poetry in 1859.

19 Joseph Patrick Phelan, "Radical Metre: The English Hexameter in Clough's *Bothie of Toper-na-Fuosich*," *Review of English Studies* 50 (1999), 167. Phelan also focuses on the 1848 version of the poem in order to emphasize the radical metrical innovations made by Clough, before he revised his hexameters into a less irregular, more "orthodox," form.

20 Clough, "Two Letters of Parepidemus," in *The Poems and Prose Remains of*

Arthur Hugh Clough, ed. Blanche Clough, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1869), I, 397; this article first appeared in *Putnam's Magazine* 2 (1853), 72–74 and 138–40.

21 Longfellow, "Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie," in *The Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, ed. Samuel Longfellow, 14 vols. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1886), II, 19.

22 Clough, "To R.W. Emerson," February 10, 1849, in *The Correspondence of Arthur Hugh Clough*, ed. Frederick L. Mulhauser, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), I, 240–41.

23 On this topic, see especially chapter 2 in Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830–1864* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 25–54.

24 Regenia Gagnier, "Is Market Society the *Fin* of History?" in *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 298–99. Regenia Gagnier elaborates in more detail the example of Pater in "On the Insatiability of Human Wants: Economic and Aesthetic Man," *Victorian Studies* 36 (1993), 145–46.

25 In Omond's survey of *English Metrists*, the New Prosody is inaugurated by Patmore (171). Patmore's essay first appeared as a review of "English Metrical Critics," *North British Review* 27 (1857), 127–61, and was subsequently revised as "Prefatory Study on English Metrical Law," in *Poems*, 4 vols. (London: George Bell, 1870), I, 3–85; it was revised again as "English Metrical Law" in *Poems*, second collective edition, 2 vols. (London: George Bell, 1886), II, 217–67, and widely read in subsequent editions.

26 Dennis Taylor offers an excellent overview of Patmore's influence on the New Prosody in *Hardy's Metres and Victorian Prosody* 8–42; see also Margaret Stobie, "Patmore's Theory and Hopkins' Practice," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 19 (1949), 64–80; Matthew Campbell, *Rhythm and Will in Victorian Poetry*, 226–27.

27 Herbert F. Tucker, "Introduction," in *Critical Essays on Alfred Lord Tennyson*, ed. Tucker (New York: G.K. Hall, 1993), 8. Tucker further elaborates the claims of formalist reading in "The Fix on Form: An Open Letter," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 27 (1999), 531–35.