Ling 103
Variation in metrical practice and metrical theory

**SMP Stress Maximum Principle**

**Original SMP** (Halle & Keyser 1966)
A *stress maximum* is a stressed syllable flanked by syllables with *less* stress within the same phrase.

**Revised SMP** (Halle & Keyser 1971)
A *stress maximum* is a *fully-stressed* syllable flanked by *unstressed* syllables within the same phrase.

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**Some issues that arise for the SMP.**

A. **Adjacent stresses should have unconstrained distribution.**

On the SMP, whenever there are two stressed syllables in a row, there can't be a metrical violation, since neither will constitute a stress maximum.

In general, this appears to be true.

1a. # Ṽ # ā pattern

# = boundary between words,  
| = boundary between phrases  
/ = boundary between feet   // = change of speaker  
ˈ = stressed,  
ˑ = unstressed

This sort of sequence occurs abundantly. Examples from *Faerie Queene* by **Edmund Spenser** (1552-1599), a contemporary of Shakespeare:

And when / she list / poúr oút / her lar/ger sprite    FQ
Returned / to state/ly pa/lace of / Dáme Príde  FQ
So down / he fell, / as an / húge róck/y clift  FQ
Ne let / ván féars / procure / your need/less smart  FQ

1b. ā # Ṽ # pattern

This sort of sequence also occurs abundantly.

And ov/er all / a bláck / stóle she / did throw,  FQ
That as / a sówórd’s / poínt through / his heart / did pierce.  FQ
And saw / the réd / cróss which / the knight / did bear  FQ
Rest is / their feast, / and ál / thíngs at / their will;  FQ
But some of the expected patterns are rare or absent

2a. ſ # ñ ſ pattern  
   Example from Spenser (hexameter line):
   
   As might / become / a squire / so gréat / pérons / to meet.  
   FQ 1.5.49.9

No examples known in Shakespeare.

2b. s ñ # ſ pattern

Sometimes these lines may have had Rhythm Rule Retraction.

   Not Cae/sar’s valour / hath ó’er/thrown Án/tony             Ant. 4.15.19
   The éx/treme dán/gers and / the drops / of blood          Cor. 4.5.70
   With the / consent / of sú/preme Jóve, / inform            Cor. 5.3.79

But in other cases, it’s doubtful that there was retraction:

   With plu/mèd helm / thy slay/er be/gís thréats          Lear 4.2.63
   Commend / me to / my wife. / I’ll re/túrn cónsul;        Cor. 3.2.160
   Should from / yond cloud / speak di/víne thíngs         Cor. 4.5.107
   At this hour reigning there. // I’ll belíeve bóth          Temp. 3.3.29-30
   To set / the ex/áct wéalth / of all / our states        4H1 4.8.47
   Might cor/rúpt mínds / procure / knaves as / corrupt    H8 5.1.132

B. Phrase-peripheral positions should permit anything.

Note that sometimes the phrase boundary in question is not marked by punctuation.

Polysyllabic words:

   Under / black stole / [híd/ing / her bai/ted hook],    FQ
   And his / faint steeds / [wá/tered / in o/cean deep,    FQ
   And the / high hills / [Títan / discov/èrd            FQ
   And rush/èd forth / [húrling / her hi/deous tail]     FQ

Monosyllabic words:

   The faul/ty souls / from thence / [bróught to / his heaven/ly bower   FQ
   That plucked / from us / [ái/ll hope / of due / relief      FQ
But phrase-final position doesn’t appear to have this privilege

\[ \text{s w | s} \]

pattern

No real examples known in Spenser or Shakespeare. Hypothetical examples:

A little lowly hermitage it was,
*In a / dále.| It / was by / a for/est’s side,
*Quite far / from the / fólk,| that / did of/ten pass
*In tra/vel com/ing by / thére:| a / bit wide
There was an holy chapel edifide. (modified from Spenser)

C. There are a few instances in which a stress maximum in a monosyllabic word appears in W

\[ \text{s w s} \]

pattern

Than are / dréamt of / in your / philo/sophy Ham. 1.5.116

They may / véx us / with shot / or with / assault 1H6 1.4.13

To address some of these shortcomings, Kiparsky 1977 proposed a different Correspondence Rule. A simplified version of it is:

MWC  Monosyllabic Word Constraint (Kiparsky 1977)

Simple MWC

A stressed syllable must appear in S position unless:

a. it is in a monosyllabic word
b. it follows a phrase- or line- boundary

This is effectively the Correspondence Rule that we have been using in class up to this point.
Some issues that arise for the Simple MWC

1. Are the stresses of monosyllabic words really irrelevant?

Although examples like

    Than are / dréamt of / in your / philo/sophy Ham. 1.5.116

do occur, they are extremely rare — so rare that the SMP seemed like a reasonable hypothesis at first.

2. Are the subparts of compound words like bed-chamber or love-lacking single words? Or is the whole compound treated as a single word?

If an important difference is to be drawn between monosyllabic and polysyllabic words, then what happens to monosyllabic words that are inside of polysyllabic words, as in compounds?

3. Are stressed syllables in polysyllabic words ever in S position?

The SimpleMWC suggests that adjacent stresses in polysyllabic words could never occur, since one or the other has to be in W position:

    Commend me to my wife. I’ll retúrn cónsul Cor. 3.2.160

Kiparsky suggested that these cases are repaired by the Rhythm Rule, but as we have seen there are cases in which that is unlikely.

A more adequate MWC requires some additional complexity:

**Full MWC** (modified slightly from Kiparsky 1977)

A stressed syllable must appear in S position unless:

a. it follows a phrase- or line- boundary

b. it is in a monosyllabic word and

   i. it precedes a stronger stress within the same phrase and line
   or

   ii. it follows a stressed syllable in the same phrase and line
   or

   iii. it is followed by a stressless function word with which it forms a structural unit (i.e. an enclitic)
Revisiting the patterns above

1. # Ŵ # ň pattern    Ŵ permitted by (i), provided ň is stronger than Ŵ
   And when / she list / pour out / her larger sprite
   But we should not get
   # Ŵ # ň pattern
   Since in English the strongest stress usually is the final stressed word in a phrase, this sort of structure is limited to certain types of compound-like words:
   And we / your liege / men faith / unto / you plight   liege is in S
   *We the / liege men / our faith / unto / you plight   liege is in W

2. ň # Ŵ # pattern    Ŵ permitted by (ii)
   And saw / the red / cross which / the knight / did bear  FQ
   Be thou / the tenth / Muse, ten / times more / in worth  Son. 38
   Why should / my heart / think that / a several plot  Son. 137.9
   Grief fills / the room / up of / my absent child  Jn. 3.4.93
   And do / not drop / in for / an afterloss  Son. 90

3. ň Ŵ ň pattern    Ŵ permitted by (iii) provided following ň is enclitic
   Than are / dreams of / in your / philo/sophy

4. ň Ŵ ň pattern    Ŵ not permitted because not in a monosyllabic word
   Doesn’t occur in Shakespeare. Rare example from Spenser (FQ 1.5.49.9):
   ? As might / become / a squire / so great / persons / to meet.
5. 𝑠 𝑣̆ # ś pattern ́w not permitted because not in a monosyllabic word

But examples of this sort do occur in Shakespeare:

Commend / me to / my wife. / I’ll ret/úrn cónsul Cor. 3.2.160

This remains a problem for the MWC.

6. ź # ţ # ś pattern ́w not permitted since doesn’t fit (i-iii)

Doesn’t occur.

*In ä / dálé. It / was by / a for/est’s side,

7. ź # ţ # ţ ́w not permitted since doesn’t fit (i-iii)

*Which he / most díd / cráve ŏf / all earth/ly things
Youmans (1983) notes (effectively) that the *retúrn cónsul* cases would be allowed if in such cases we dropped the ‘monosyllable’ condition. Thus we can say:

**Full MWC** (2nd version, modified from Youmans 1983)

*A stressed syllable must appear in S position unless it:*

a. follows a *line- or phrase- boundary*

   *Méwling* / and puk/ing in / the nur/se’s arms
   Appear / in per/son here / in court. / *Silence.*

   or

b. precedes a *stronger stress* within the same phrase and line
   i.e. it is *not* the strongest stress in its phrase

   Or the / *blind Gód* / that doth / me thus / amate
   Commend / me to / my wife. / I’ll *re/túrn cónsul*

   or

c. is a *monosyllabic word* which follows a (sufficiently) stressed syllable in the same phrase and line

   Why should / my *héart* / *think* that / a se/veral plot
   Be thou / the *tènth* / *Múse*, ten / times more / in worth

   or

d. is a *monosyllabic word* which is followed by a stressless function word which ‘leans’ on it structurally

   Than are / *dréamt*+ōf / in your / philo/sophy
Some metrical style variants

1. One might ask if the monosyllabic/polysyllabic distinction is relevant to all poets.

In fact, Percy Shelley (1792-1822) used stress clashes in a way suggesting that he extended condition (c) above to polysyllabic words. In other words, occasionally Shelley will allow a stressed syllable in a polysyllabic word in a W position provided there is a preceding stress:

Forbáde / Shádow / to fall / from leaf / and stone
And wíld / róses / and i/vy ser/pentine.

Occasional examples are also found in Spenser (hexameter lines):

As might / become / a squire / so gréat / pérsors / to greet FQ 1.10.7.9
High Cae/sar, gréat / Pómpey, / and fierce / Anton/ius FQ 1.5.49.9

2. Condition (c) is subject to certain complications in many poets. Kiparsky identifies two situations, which distinguish the practice of Elizabethan poets such as Spenser and Shakespeare from later poets such as John Milton (1608-1674) and Alexander Pope (1688-1744).

Here the word in ś is structurally closer to the following word than to the preceding word (not permitted by Milton & Pope) (permitted by Shakespeare & Spenser)

Here the word in ś is structurally closer to the preceding word than to the following word (permitted by all the poets)

Milton and Pope, unlike Shakespeare and Spenser, do not permit the first type, but do permit the second type. The preceding stress is "stronger" in, e.g. ròom and hèart than in dròp and tènth because the former words end their own phrases, while the latter words don’t:

[[my heárt] thínk] [the [tènth Múse]]

Try putting a tiny pause after heart and after tenth. Which sounds better?
3. **Milton**'s verse has a specific property that sets him apart from Shakespeare, Spenser and Pope.

A stressed syllable in a polysyllabic word is permitted in W position provided that the first syllable of the word is also in W position.

If each W S is a foot then this is equivalent to saying that the *left edge of the word* in question must *coincide with the left edge of a foot*.

Examples:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{x} \quad \text{x} \quad \text{x} \\
\text{x} \quad \text{x}) \quad \text{x} \quad \text{x} \quad \text{x}) \\
\end{array}
\]

Burned after them to the *bottomless* pit. \( \text{PL 6.866} \)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{x} \quad \text{x} \quad \text{x} \quad \text{x} \quad \text{x} \\
\text{x} \quad \text{x}) \quad \text{x} \quad \text{x}) \quad \text{x} \quad \text{x}) \\
\end{array}
\]

Universal reproach, far worse to bear \( \text{PL 6.34} \)

Lines of this sort were noticed as unusual by early commentators. But they are sufficiently numerous that it’s quite clear that Milton obeyed a slightly different metrical grammar than the other poets.

4. **Alexander Pope** and ‘the Augustan Age’

In the early 18th century English intellectuals were enamored with classical civilization, in particular the Roman Empire during the rule of the Emperor Augustus. For this reason, this era was characterized by a *polished classicism* in which metrical form was more rigorously controlled. Pope’s verse represents in many respects a very conservative type of iambic meter with few attempts at pushing the limits of what was acceptable.

In general, we find that although Pope allows for the stressed syllable of a polysyllabic word to appear at the beginning of a *line*, he does not allow this in the middle of the line. He does not allow extrametrical syllables in the *middle of the line*, although he does at the end of the line. (Interestingly, Shakespeare allows them in the middle of the line only in the plays, but not in the poems.)
Pope ‘Rape of the Lock’ I.121-132

And now, unveil’d, the Toilet stands display’d,
Each Silver Vase in mystic Order laid.
First, rob’d in White, the Nymph intent adores
With Head uncover’d, the Cosmetic Pow’rs.
A heav’nly Image in the Glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her Eyes she rears;
Th’inferior Priestess, at her Altar’s side,
Trembling, begins the sacred Rites of Pride.
Unnumber’d Treasures ope at once, and here
The various Off’rings of the World appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious Toil,
And decks the Goddess with the glitt’ring Spoil.
5. Tudor-era experiments with meter

Certain English poets of the 16th century such as George Gascoigne (c. 1525-1577) and George Puttenham (1529-1590) tried to formulate explicit theories of meter (not entirely successfully).

During this time of metrical experimentation two poets in particular — Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542) and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (c. 1517-1547) — are today known for a metrical style which departs significantly from the norm seen in Shakespeare and Spenser (inherited, ultimately, from Chaucer) and continued (with some variation) up to the 19th century.

A poem of Wyatt:

Luckes, my faire falcon, and your fellowes all,
How well pleasaut yt were your libertie!
Ye not forsake me that faire might ye befall.
But they that sometyme lykt my companye,
Like lyse awaye from ded bodies thei crall:
Loe, what a profe in light adversytie!
But ye my birdes I swear by all your belles,
Ye be my fryndes, and so be but few elles.

In modern English spelling:

Lucks, my fair falcon, and your fellows all,
How well pleasant it were your liberty!
Ye not forsake me that fair might ye befall
But they that sometime liked my company,
Like lice away from dead bodies they crawl:
Lo, what a proof in light adversity!
But ye my birds I swear by all your bells,
Ye be my friends, and so be but few else.
Another poem of Wyatt:

Ø The longe love, | that in my thought doeth harbar ?
And in myn hert doeth kepe his residence,
Into my face | preseth with bolde pretence,
Ø And therin campeth, | spreding his baner. ?
Ø She that me lerneth | to love and suffre, ?
And will that my trust and lustes negligence
Be rayned by reason, | shame and reverence,
Ø With his hardiness | taketh displeasur. ?
Wherewithall, | unto the hertes forrest he fleith,
Leving his entreprise with payn and cry,
And ther him hideth | and not appereth. ?
What may I do | Ø when my maister fereth ?
But in the feld | with him to lyve and dye?
For goode is the liff, | ending faithfully.
# Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration</th>
<th>Spenser</th>
<th>Shakespeare</th>
<th>Milton</th>
<th>Pope</th>
<th>Shelley</th>
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<tr>
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<td>yes</td>
<td>(yes)</td>
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* Spenser uses line final extrametrical syllables sparingly in the early books of FQ
† Shakespeare permits pre-caesura extra syllables in play dialogue, but not in poetry

Technically Milton permits the wild róses and retúrn cônsul types through the left-edge exception that permits bóttomless pit, but examples of this type are fairly rare in Milton.