

/FRED NEWTON SCOTT AND PROSE RHYTHM/

by

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## Fred Newton Scott and Prose Rhythm

The domestic cow . . . varies its utterance to meet the varying needs of the social situation. The voice of the cow has four tones, or lows. Three of these are communications, namely, the alarmed or distressed low of her affection when her calf is taken away, the call of hunger, and the frenzied bawl to her kin on smelling blood--the cry of the clan. But the fourth tone is different. It is 'a long sonorous volley, expressive of a kind of unrest, a vague longing.'

While the passage above may seem more appropriate for a study of animal psychology or bovine communication, it is part of Scott's argument for determining the fundamental difference between prose and poetry, an argument which would provide the basis for his theory of prose scansion. On a more general level, the passage illustrates Scott's comprehensive view of rhetoric and his willingness to venture beyond the traditional boundaries of rhetoric.

Scott's comprehensive view of rhetoric is evident in his study of style, the third canon of rhetoric (although he does not draw further on cows for support). One contribution he



made to the study of style, as it was taught in the universities, was his exploration of prose rhythm. His definition of poetry and prose, his scansion of prose, and his dispute with Otto Jespersen regarding the accentual patterns of isolable rhythm groups, all illustrate Scott's boldness to view prose rhythm from an original angle, with support from such related disciplines as experimental psychology, linguistics, and sociology. But Scott did not break from the past. He displayed a continual concern for what is fundamental in the language and in the nature of human beings. For these reasons, Albert R. Kitzhaber, comparing Fred Newton Scott to A. S. Hill, Barrett Wendell, and John Genung, all influential figures in the teaching of rhetoric and composition in the second half of the nineteenth century, wrote that "Scott alone could be called an original thinker" (113).

Scott was born in Terre Haute, Indiana on August 20, 1860. He was educated at home until the Indiana Normal School (now Indiana State University) opened, and then, at age ten, he attended the college's training school. Sometime in 1878 or 1879, he moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, apparently to become secretary to Dr. J. H. Kellogg of the Battle Creek Sanatorium. In 1880, after earning a Battle Creek diploma, he began his studies at the University of Michigan. He completed his B.A. in 1884, his M.A. in 1888, and his Ph. D. in 1889. In 1890, he was promoted to assistant professor; in 1896, to junior (associate) professor; in 1901, to professor. In 1903, he became the

first head of Michigan's newly-formed Department of Rhetoric.  
(Stewart, Traditions of Inquiry 27)

Scott held other leadership positions. He was president of the Pedagogical Section of the Modern Language Association from 1896-1903, and tried, in this office, to generate discussion about the "nature and efficacy of rhetoric in the college curriculum" (Stewart, Traditions of Inquiry 28). He served as the Modern Language Association's president in 1907, and as the first president of the National Council of Teachers of English from 1911-1913. In 1913-1914, he was president of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. And, in 1917, he became president of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism. Furthermore, he belonged to local, national, and international literary clubs and societies and was in demand across the country as a speaker, primarily for teachers' groups. (Stewart, Traditions of Inquiry 28)

Scott was gifted as a teacher, also. He used the Socratic method, allowing students to make their own discoveries and conclusions. One former student remembers this: "He made us possess ourselves of more than judgments; he made us acquire criteria . . . ." (Kitzhaber 119). Ray Stannard Baker, author of the first significant biography of Woodrow Wilson, found Scott "to have an extraordinary gift of setting men to thinking" (Stewart 29). Statistical evidence shows Scott's success at the graduate level. From 1904-1930, twenty-three doctorates and 140 master's degrees in rhetoric

were awarded by the Department of Rhetoric. In that period, the Department of English awarded only twenty-five doctorates. (Kitzhaber 119)

Scott's textbooks are the least innovative of his work; however, they are distinctive because they insist that writing be done in a social context. (Donald C. Stewart shows this in detail in Traditions of Inquiry, pp. 26-49.) Scott's articles about pedagogy voiced his concern for the importance of a passionate commitment for the effective teaching of English and for the relevance of the instruction of English. These concerns were closely linked with his skepticism about entrance examinations, such as were offered at Harvard. These "feudal" institutions (as Scott labelled them) screened applicants on the basis of their spelling, punctuation, and usage, and encouraged secondary school instructors to teach toward these ends, turning "education in this subject upside down." Scott, by contrast, believed that "the main purpose of training in composition [was] free speech, direct and sincere communion with our fellows, that swift and untrammelled exchange of opinion, feeling, and experience . . . ." (Scott "What the West Wants in Preparatory English" 19).

Stewart divides Scott's contributions to rhetorical theory into three main categories. One of his contributions was his "attempt to ground composition theory and practice in the rhetorical tradition from which it had become separated" and to decide what parts of that tradition were relevant to the current world (Traditions of Inquiry 40). This concern for

knowledge of the past is evident in "The Teacher and his Training" (his section of The Teaching of English). One of the "special qualifications" that an English teacher must possess is scholarship in the history and theory of rhetoric. In this way, the teacher can be "delivered from the tyranny of the text-book" and can "enrich and enliven the subject" (316).

Scott was attracted to Plato's ideas, particularly the principle of organic unity found in the Phaedrus. A piece of discourse should be constructed like a living body. Also, he was convinced that rhetoric must not be an amoral art of persuasion, having success as its whole purpose. James Berlin senses that Scott read Plato from an Emersonian perspective. For Scott, rhetoric was at the center of a democratic society and the responsibility of the total individual. Language was not a demand of a particular class: such exclusiveness was a "rhetoric of success," not of truth. (Berlin 80-81)

Scott also attempted to enrich rhetorical theory with insights from related disciplines such as psychology and linguistics. In 1895, for example, one of his top graduate students, Gertrude Buck, wrote "Figures of Speech," an M. A. thesis which attempted to provide a psychological basis for the human tendency to employ figurative language. In "English Composition as a Mode of Behavior" (1922), Scott explored behavioral psychology, examining the tension between the natural language habits of a child and those "lifeless

rituals" which often pleased the teacher.

As a linguist, Scott was, like Otto Jespersen, a descriptivist. Scott's position is conveyed in "The Teacher and his Training." He stressed that before teachers teach grammar, they should study the development of the English language and the general principles of comparative philology (or the "science" of language). He wrote: "the comparative study of language will free the student from a superstitious reverence for grammatical rules, and give him<sup>1</sup> an insight into the true nature of usage and idiom" (316-317). The teacher should not regard grammar as a study of "abstract rules and formulas"; rather, he should understand that grammar underlies the "expressive and communicative activities of the English-speaking race" (317).

Scott's third contribution to rhetorical theory, as with the preceding one, is especially noteworthy in terms of his attitude toward style and prose rhythm. This contribution involved his inquiry into the use of language and his interest in enlarging the nature and scope of such inquiries. For example, in "The Genesis of Speech," his presidential address to the Modern Language Association in 1907, Scott looked to language historians and physiologists.

James Berlin notes that Scott's theories operated within an Emersonian tradition, particularly within the structure of William James and John Dewey's conceptions of American Pragmatism.<sup>2</sup> For Scott, language was not part of a system where sign and thought are inextricably linked, but part of a social system where the interplay of one observer

(the writer or speaker), another observer (the audience), and the language form the reality. (Berlin 77-78) This is a different approach to rhetoric than Adams Sherman Hill, Barrett Wendell, and John Genung took. These influential rhetoricians saw rhetoric as a matter of adapting the message to the audience, an audience which possessed a set of faculties. Each faculty, as Berlin phrases it, was seen as "a button to be pushed when appropriate to the effect intended" (83). Scott saw rhetoric not as a machine but as a plant. Meaning grows as the perceiver brings past experiences to a particular situation. The meaning is not predictable since it is a combination of writer, issue, and audience. The truth is contextual, growing out of the rhetorical act. It is not imposed from without. (Berlin 83-84)

To fully comprehend the degree of Scott's originality, one must review nineteenth century rhetoric in general and the rhetorical positions of his three most influential contemporaries. Although Americans in the nineteenth century embraced the rhetorics of Hugh Blair, George Campbell, and Richard Whately, and the Scottish Common Sense Realism (which, unlike Aristotelian philosophy, holds that reality is discovered through the faculties and senses), John Quincy Adams taught in the classical tradition. Adams, the first Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory and Harvard, from 1806-1809, quoted Cicero, Aristotle, and Quintillian, and agreed with Quintillian that rhetoric was "the science of

speaking well." (Grammar involved speaking correctly.) (Ried 59-61) Joseph McKean, the second Boylston Professor (1809-1818), also taught in this tradition, but included Campbell's theories. However, the third and fourth Boylston professors, Edward Tyrrel Channing and Francis "Stubby" Child, departed from the original rules of the Chair, caring little for classical rhetoric or oratory or listening to declamations of students or grading written compositions. (Stewart "Some Facts Worth Knowing about the Origins of Freshman Composition" 2) (The original rules of the Chair were based largely on the classical canons of invention, disposition, elocution, memory, and delivery, and allowed for both written and oral exercises in English [Ried 24-25].)

The study of rhetoric in the classical sense continued to degenerate under Charles Eliot. Eliot was not a Boylston Professor, but the president of Harvard from 1869-1909, a time of great educational reform. Eliot can be credited for his concern for language. According to Samuel Eliot Morison, Eliot expressed in his articles, reports, and even in his inaugural address that "if one subject of collegiate study should be emphasized over another, it was English Literature and the writing of the mother tongue" (350). And this is what followed. After Harvard adopted the German conception of a university--offering electives and adding several more classes--rhetoric remained as one of the few required courses. And the "writing of the mother tongue" was emphasized. By 1873, orthoepy (the study of pronunciation), action, and expression were dropped from the curriculum

(Kitzhaber 56). The entrance examinations required at Harvard, which set a national precedent, also emphasized the written word, specifically in terms of correctness. In 1872-1873, "correct spelling, punctuation, and expression" were required. Correctness of paragraph division was added in 1878. Candidates were "required to correct specimens of bad English" in 1882. (Kitzhaber 53-57)

Adams Sherman Hill was responsible for encouraging, if not augmenting, a concern for superficial correctness. Eliot appointed Hill as assistant to Child in 1872. In 1876, Hill became the fifth Boylston Professor of Rhetoric. Two years later, Hill published The Principles of Rhetoric and Their Application, a text based on the doctrine of Blair, Campbell and Whately, and delivering dogmatic pronouncements on grammar and usage. This "high priest of correctness" (Grandgrent 76) established "English A" in 1885, the first required freshman composition course. According to Stewart, the course was characterized by "narrow conceptions of usage and a neurotic concern for superficial details of style and correctness" ("Some Facts Worth Knowing" 4). "English A" was regarded as a model course in rhetoric and was imitated throughout the United States (Kitzhaber 100-101). The Harvard Reports, published in 1892, 1895, and 1897, also made correctness a national concern (Kitzhaber 76).

In addition to being isolated from the classical tradition, rhetoric had been narrowed in other ways, too. Kitzhaber notes that before 1880, American rhetoricians



usually indicated the place of rhetoric in relation to other disciplines, yet still showed how it preserved its own identity and function. After this time, however, when the elective system gained more popularity and course offerings expanded, the traditional relations among academic subjects began to break down. Less attention was given to determining the exact place that rhetoric occupied among related disciplines. By the 1890's, relations to other subjects were ignored. Writing was seen only as an academic subject, involving written school work. (Kitzhaber 131-135)

Furthermore, rhetoric was often isolated from its communicative and social functions. In the prefaces to their texts, The Principles of Rhetoric and Their Application and English Composition (1891), Hill and Barrett Wendell (also a teacher of rhetoric at Harvard) expressed concern for communication. However, in the textbooks themselves, this concern is not evident. In fact, when Wendell addressed style, he wrote that a clear style is that which is adapted to the "understanding of the average man . . . the permanent type of those simplest and broadest traits of thought and emotion alike, which make the brotherhood of the human race" (196, 198). His audience was fictive. Kitzhaber praises John Genung of Amherst for stating a concern for an adaptation of audience. However, writes Kitzhaber, his "desire to erect a systematic theoretical structure of doctrine kept him fairly remote from a realistic appreciation of language as a social instrument" (232).

James Berlin attributes the narrowing conception of

rhetoric to the scientific and technological world view, and sees Hill, Wendell, and Genung as leaders of a scientistic approach. These rhetoricians, he believes, accepted the faculty psychology of the eighteenth century rhetoricians, specifically the mechanical features of Blair, Campbell, and Whately's theories, and made these features the whole concern of the writing teacher. (Berlin 62-63) As a result, Berlin believes, rhetoric tended to embrace that writing which appealed to the understanding and reason. (Persuasion was often left to oratory; imagination and emotion were often left to literature [63].) The four forms of discourse became writing formulas, simply divisions allowing students to manage content in order to appeal to a particular faculty of the audience. Essentially, this occurred in a social vacuum.

Invention, in the classical sense, was not included as a part of rhetoric. When invention was included, as it was in John Genung's works, it involved the four forms of discourse. Since content, the matter of discourse, was left outside of rhetoric, and one of the four forms could be easily imposed onto that content, rhetoric was limited to style. And excepting Scott and only a few others, style was seen in mechanistic terms. Since sign and thing were arbitrarily connected, it was the task of the writer to select the sign--the language--that best corresponded to the observed phenomenon. Teaching this selection was the task of the textbook and/or the teacher. Most often, these stylistic matters were reduced to sets of abstract principles,

organized by usage, grammar, and the principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis. Superficial correctness was most important.

This approach to style is particularly visible in the works of Hill, Wendell, and Genung. Hill, for example, wrote that rhetoric undertakes not to furnish a writer with something to say, "but it does undertake to tell him how best to say that with which he has provided himself" (Principles iii). Style is concerned with conveying meaning appropriately and with perspicuity, using the "principles to which a good writer or reader must conform" (Principles iii). He continued: "to not know proper use of one's language is a positive demerit." Therefore, "correctness (or Purity) is . . . the first requisite of discourse, whether spoken or written" (Principles 1).

In addition to grammatical purity, Hill preached the importance of usage. He relied on George Campbell for divisions of usage (reputable, present, and national) and echoed Campbell again in the thirty pages where he raved against barbarisms, solecisms, and improprieties. This concern for proper usage may have been closely linked with his support for the entrance examinations at Harvard. Children of lower status, wishing to enter the gates, had to prove their "worthiness" by speaking the correct dialect (Berlin 72). According to Hill, reputable use was fixed by the "world of intelligent people, those of best repute as to expression, manner of communication, and thought" (Principles 6).

Hill continued to write within the eighteenth-century framework as he donated much space in his text to the choice of words, their number, and their arrangement--those elements needed so that "communication by language can be rendered efficient to its purpose" (Principles 63). Drawing heavily on Richard Whately, he insisted that the choice of words be determined by Clearness (Perspicuity), Force (Energy), and Elegance (Beauty).

Hill's theories showed faint glimmers of original thinking. In the chapter "Fundamental Principles," Hill disagreed with Herbert Spencer's principle of economy because of his (Hill's) concern for the audience. Hill believed that "a reader's mental power is not a constant quantity." A writer can increase this power by stimulating mental action (Principles 164). Also, Hill wrote that a composition must be a living body. This seems to contrast starkly with the dogmatic rules presented in the preceding pages of his text. This idea is more readily understood, however, when one discovers where Hill believed this life exists: life comes from the natural qualities of the writer and his acquired resources (matter or language)--"resources which it is not the province of rhetoric to supply" (166). Rhetoric remains lifeless.

Barrett Wendell, who taught English at Harvard from 1880-1917, published the Lowell Lectures he presented in 1890 in English Composition (1891). Wendell knew no term "more precise than Style to express the whole subject under

consideration" (English Composition 3).<sup>3</sup> Wendell did not limit his definition of style to good usage, but defined it as "the expression of thought or emotion in written words" (4). Wendell recognized that good use is at the basis of all style (18); however, unlike Hill, he did not believe that style is a system of erratic rules and details. He admitted that a teacher or a technical critic of style must be concerned with the correction of detail. But for one to master the subject, one must not become absorbed in the detail. Rather, one must recognize "a very simple body of general rules under which details readily group themselves" (2).

Wendell prided himself on finding these principles, these general rules. English Composition included chapters on the Elements of Style (words, sentences, paragraphs, the composition) and the Qualities of Style (Clearness, Force, and Elegance). In each chapter, he discussed the importance of Unity - Mass - Coherence. Wendell may have been original in suggesting that style is "the result of a constant though generally unconscious struggle between good use and the Principles of Composition" (39). He may have been original in his simplification of the rules. But, although he thought he was offering a new treatment of the subject, he remained well within the tradition.

His definition of style was similar to Hugh Blair's, and the categories of usage (reputable, national, present) which he attributed to Hill, were essentially from Campbell. Also, although he did succeed in moving away from the "erratic

details" of rules, he still gave them attention. In his Preface to English Composition, in the "Note to the Teacher," he showed how sentences, paragraphs, and the whole composition could be examined for solecisms, barbarisms, and improprieties. Also, Wendell's approach to composing a "piece of style" was mechanical. Wendell removed writing from its social context and reduced it to the "constructions of beginnings, endings, filling in of plans, and the narrowing and simplifying of material" (18). Students were encouraged to explore only the surface of the subject matter (24). Also, Wendell's "Unity-Coherence-Mass" were static abstractions used to describe writing, further presenting a mechanical conception of rhetoric (Berlin 69).

John Franklin Genung, who taught at Amherst, is known for such influential textbooks as The Practical Elements of Rhetoric (1886), A Handbook of Literary Analysis (1888), and The Working Principles of Rhetoric (1900)--the latter, a "restudied, reproportioned treatise" based on Practical Elements of Rhetoric. Genung divided both of his rhetorics into two sections: Style and Invention. Genung defined style as the "manner of expressing thought in language; and more particularly, of giving it such skillful expression as invests the idea with fitting dignity and distinction" (Practical Elements 13). His definition in The Working Principles of Rhetoric was more concise: "Style is a manner of choosing and arranging words so as to produce determinate and intended effects in language" (16).

Genung seems to have had a broader conception of style than Hill or Wendell, at least in the theoretical sense. Both of his rhetorics stated that style consists of three considerations. First, there must be a just relation between style and thought. "Ideally, the style is the thought" (Working Principles 19). The writer should not aim to achieve style, but rather to satisfy the demands of the subject (19). Second, style must be considered with the reader in mind. For example, the ruling standard of choice for prose diction should be utility (Working Principles 109). Also, the style must represent the writer. In both textbooks he quoted Buffon, that "style is the man." In Practical Elements, he wrote that a part of the writer's personality is communicated. In Working Principles, he also included that a writer's "manner of expression moves in its individual lines of thought, begets its individual vocabulary and mould of sentence, and is in fact the uncommunicable element of style" (19).

Genung's textbooks, however, were traditional. Since Genung believed that the personal qualities of style could not be taught, it was "within the province of the textbook" to teach the impersonal features, the grammatical and logical principles of expression. Thus, style, as included in both texts, embraces the "various rhetorical principles that are developed from grammar: how to use words and figures, and how to build them together so as to impart to the whole a desired power and quality. The sphere of the work of style is the construction of sentences and paragraphs." He

admitted that these are mechanical features, but are "elements that can least be spared" (Practical Elements 7).

Genung, like Hill and Wendell, drew on the theories of the eighteenth-century rhetoricians. Genung wrote that style must have Clearness, Force, and Beauty. He also looked to Campbell for divisions of usage, although his divisions were slightly modified; he used these categories: Accurate Use, Intelligible Use, Present Use, and Scholarly Use. Diction was also crucial. (He spent 167 pages in Working Principles discussing this subject.) The universal standard of diction, he wrote, is Purity (44). Also, somewhat undermined is the trust in Buffon, that "style is the man" and "style is the thought." That person and thought must first be of a certain type. For example, Genung wrote that the "culture necessary to the perfect adjustment of style to thought is the culture of taste." This "may be native, the goodly heritage of ancestry and refined surrounding," but it can be imparted "by one's companionship with cultivated people and with the best literature" (Working Principles 21).

Fred Newton Scott defined style in much broader terms than Hill, Wendell, or Genung. Style, to him, was not the complement of invention, but rather, the "summing up" of those concrete elements of good literature with which the Higher Rhetoric is concerned (Principles of Style 8-9).

And what is Higher Rhetoric? In the Prefatory Essay to The Principles of Style (1890) (the published pamphlet which contains the contents from the notebook which Scott prepared



for "Principles of Style," the course he taught at Michigan), he presented his definition. Rhetoric, he wrote, in its broadest terms, is "the principles and practice of literary effect" (1). It may be studied in three ways. First, the student may try to gain practical instruction in writing essays, memorizing abstract and arbitrary rules and hints from text-books. The second way is to study rhetoric as a science. This level is reached when the student suspects, after accepting various corollaries and unrelated principles, that a greater principle(s) exists from which all is derived. (1-3)

After this, when a "knife-edge boundary" is passed, beyond where a "carefully-worded definition will nicely set about each individual department of knowledge," the region of the vague is reached (3-4). Scott feigned horror. Past this boundary, rhetorical instruction "wanders distracted in the melancholy and dim land of aesthetics" or steps into "the adjoining territory of literature" (4). He continued: "'Step over this line,' says the rhetoric-maker, scratching in the accumulated dust of ages, 'and you get into the region of the vague. Rhetoric cannot account for the finer effects of literature. There is an indescribable bloom, a charm' and so on." (4)

Scott did not believe in "indescribable" effects, nor did he accept that there is a "region of the vague." First, where could one draw a line between vague and definite? For example, to an average student, everything about the language of a piece of prose may seem vague. But soon, wrote Scott,

the student can discover a charm--the substitution of a particular for a generalization. Ultimately, the clearing up of the vagueness ends not "because the truly Indescribable blocks the way, but because the last page of the Rhetoric has been recited and the review has begun." (5) The acquisition of clearer knowledge has no reason to stop at this point, (except, he mused, for the fact that "a text-book must end somewhere and have at least a semblance of completeness and finality or it will be unfavorably reviewed by the journals" [5]). Scott named the rhetoric commonly taught at the secondary and university level Lower Rhetoric. And, "all further incursions into the vague and all further strivings to describe blooms and charms" he named Higher Rhetoric. (5)<sup>4</sup>

The student will not notice that he or she has passed a definite line between Lower and Higher Rhetoric, but the student will "feel a growing sense of otherness" as he or she learns to employ Imagination and Feeling. At this point, the student needs to attach new meanings to old words and phrases. The meaning cannot be found in the dictionary; the student must "feel the thing itself" (6). The student must read and read, absorbing good and bad (and ideally admiring the good).

Thus, one of the aims of Higher Rhetoric is to cultivate a sense of values in literature. However, this is part of a much larger aim--the return to concreteness. At this point in Higher Rhetoric, feeling has been emancipated. It has grown out from the memorized abstract rules. Now "the new

sap of feeling and imagination that collects with the study of Higher Rhetoric should flow back into the hard abstractness of the Lower to give them richness and ease" (7). Thus, the paragraphing, the management of the rhythm of prose, even the spelling, punctuation, and capitalization will come more naturally to the student.

At this point, principles of the Lower Rhetoric will be seen in an entirely different way since the student will realize the importance of personality to the study of Higher Rhetoric: whatever is not part of the student's personality is just a "pasteboard box to hold abstractions" (7). Cultivation of taste means holding sincerely to what satisfies the personality achieved at that point. So, when a student obeys the Laws of Composition, it means that the laws are a part of his or her own personality. In reference to those compositions which are masterpieces of style, Scott wrote: "what can or ought we to mean but that they are the perfect expressions of personalities worth expressing" (8)<sup>5</sup>

The object of Higher Rhetoric is to develop "the rational and sensitive personality," whether the student is trying to produce good literature, to appreciate that literature produced by others, or to learn the laws and principles of good writing (8). Thus, as style is studied in this way, three lines will converge: "the cultivation of senses for literary values by wide reading, the study of Rhetoric as a science, and the union of feeling and knowledge through practice" (8). Elaborating on the third point, Scott stressed that practice does not include composition alone,

but also, "the equally indispensable discipline of criticism" (8).<sup>6</sup>

Scott saw rhetoric as being closely related to literary criticism. In fact, for him, the two interpenetrated. In this respect, he stood alone, writes Kitzhaber (153). One may suspect that Genung, in Handbook of Literary Analysis, had already accomplished what Scott was doing. After all, Scott even suggested in his Prefatory Essay to Principles of Style that Genung's Handbook of Literary Analysis might be used to supply specimens of style in order to verify principles (10). But Scott did not push Genung's method: "Genung's Handbook contains valuable methods of instruction, but as in all other things, the instructor must here hew out his own method" (10).

Genung and Scott differed on some underlying principles. Genung introduced his selections in his Handbook, explaining that the extracts were to be analyzed "in style and structure, for the purpose of forming, from actual examples, some intelligent conception of what the making of good literature involves" (Preface v). Genung (as Kitzhaber notes) did incorporate literature into the rhetoric course, but he did so for constructive purposes only. Genung's motive was practical--to show how writing could be done. Students were supposed to improve as writers. Yes, Scott acknowledged that one type of student who studies style might be interested in producing good literature. But, Scott did not see this goal as the only purpose of including

literature in the rhetoric class.

Genung also stressed in his Prefatory Essay that students studying the style of good writers must "interpret" that style by referring the vague impressions to definite principles in order to look for a scientific explanation. Then, as the good literature was described, the analysis would be well-grounded by the students in deep and universal principles, rather than resting on individual standards. Genung wanted students to discover "prosaic principles." Scott also recognized the study of rhetoric as a science, but he did not restrict it to that. He, unlike Genung, regarded the feelings of the student as crucial to the study of Higher Rhetoric. Scott believed that principles, the "laws" of composition, must become part of the writer, a part of the personality.

While Scott was more original than Genung, by suggesting the inclusion of Imagination, he was not completely alone in attempting to describe the "blooms and charms" of the language. In Practical Elements, Genung believed that the rhythm of prose was an incommunicable element of rhetoric; but in Working Principles, published ten years after The Principles of Style, he attempted to describe prose rhythms. The rhythm of prose, he explained, is the "natural melodious flow of eloquent or well-ordered speech" (210). The writer concerned with producing this rhythm must realize that in prose, rhythmic potencies "are in full sway" (211). However, the "freedom requires that it [the rhythm] be maintained against anything, metre or diction, that suggests an invasion

of poetry" (211) The writer may not allow the prose to sing-song. The writer may not invert or abbreviate words, and may not include "meaningless or watered phrases for the sake of helping out the balance of sound" (213). As Genung described prose rhythm by discussing the phrase, the clause, the sentence, the pause, and the cadence, he continually stressed the importance of veering away from poetic elements (213-220).

Scott's exploration of the "blooms and charms" of the language, specifically his interest in prose rhythm, went far deeper than the surface descriptions offered by Genung and the other rhetoricians of his time. Consistent with his broad comprehensive view of rhetoric, Scott looked to related disciplines, such as linguistics, psychology, and sociology, in order to discover what was fundamental about the prose rhythms of the English Language.

Scott's course, "The Principles of Style," demonstrated this. In The Principles of Style, under the heading of "Rhythm and Meter," Scott included a two-page listing of works which could help the student become more alert to prose rhythm possibilities at the level of Higher Rhetoric. (20-23) To become acquainted with psychology, Scott recommended James Sully's Outlines of Psychology and John Dewey's Psychology. To help students become acquainted with the musical aspects of rhythm, Scott suggested H. L. F. Helmholtz's Sensations of Tone and Gurney's The Power of Sound. To expose students to

the ways the laws of music may depend on principles of the human mind, he recommended M. Hauptmann's The Nature of Harmony and Metre. One of the more interesting readings Scott recommended was Herbert Spencer's "The Rhythm of Motion," a chapter in First Principles. Spencer discussed the rhythms of nature, from the rising and falling movement of the cornstalks swaying in the wind, to the waves of the northern aurora, to the "periodicities of the planets, satellites, and comets" (265), to the waves of constriction of the esophagus (259-281).

Scott's theories of prose and its rhythm were first presented to the PMLA audience when "The Most Fundamental Differentia of Poetry and Prose" was published in 1904 and when "The Scansion of Prose" appeared in 1905. His search for the true identification of the nature of prose and poetry in the 1904 article was triggered by the words of John Earle, who in English Prose (1890) had written the following: "The distinction between prose and poetry is one that is seated in the very nature of things, that it is not a superficial or accidental difference of form, but that it is a profound and essential distinction" (151-152). This gave Scott faith that there was a distinction to be found.

Scott believed that so much of the current differentia was shallow. For example, the claim that poetry was the organ of Imagination and prose the organ of Reason was not sufficient.<sup>7</sup> Prose could be more imaginative than poetry; Burke's prose was much more imaginative than the poetry of Pope. Also, the presence of emotion could not be named as a

distinguishing quality of poetry. Carlyle's French Revolution could pale the fire of Wordsworth's Excursion. "As long as some prose rises in these respects above some undeniable genuine poetry," wrote Scott, "these particular traits will not serve as a differentia of poetry in general from prose in general" ("Differentia" 252).<sup>8</sup>

Another popular means of distinguishing prose from poetry was by form. Poetry was written in meter; prose was not written in meter. No doubt, Scott was familiar with the words of Robert Louis Stevenson: "Prose must be rhythmical, and it may be as much as you will; but, it must not be metrical. It may be anything, but it may not be verse" ("Differentia" 376).<sup>9</sup> In his refutation of this distinction, Scott did not completely break from this consensus, which favored a distinction by form. In fact, Scott recognized that meter might be the essential fact of poetry. However, Scott believed that this distinction was not part of the fundamental differentia; meter merely was a sign. As Francis B. Gummere wrote in The Beginnings of Poetry (1901), "Nobody pretends that rhythm is the soul of poetry; it is a necessary form, a necessary condition" (252).<sup>10</sup> In other words, Scott's quest was not to simply distinguish prose from poetry with surface characteristics. He wrote:

I am not content to stop with an outward sign  
or symptom, with a touchstone which applied to  
a given piece of literature enables the critic



to say, 'This is poetry,' or 'This is prose.'  
I wish . . . to arrive at those fundamental causes, which operating on the mind of man and his mode of expression, have issued on the one hand in the form of prose, on the other in the form of poetry. Having determined these primal causes, we may then, if we choose, trace from them the divergent forms which outwardly characterize the divergent types. ("Differentia" 253-254)

In search of the primal causes of each, Scott first set forth his definition of art as the means by which an individual expresses his thought, feelings, or experiences, and communicates them. Thus, art contains a two-fold character of self-expression and communication. Scott hypothesized that in primitive society (the genesis of all artistic phenomena) the two literary types were born, spawned by the two different impulses of art. Prose, he believed, developed from situations where primitive man used his speech mainly for communication. For example, if a warrior had been cut off from his tribe and was in life-threatening danger, he would shout for help. Although he would most certainly be expressing his feelings, his main goal would be to communicate, to transmit to others a knowledge not currently possessed. Poetry, on the other hand, evolved from a state where speech was used for expression. Relaying Gummere's account of the Botocudos tribe, Scott described the tribe gathering around the campfire on festal occasions for a

dance. Throughout the dance, a monotonous song would resound to which the group would stomp their feet in beat. In this type of situation, explained Scott, there is no need for communication. "Each person knows and feels what every other person knows and feels. The sense of communication is lost in the lust of expression" ("Differentia" 256).

Psychological differences exist between the two forms also. In communication, the speaker is busy with his audience; "his satisfaction comes from response to his cry." In expression, the satisfaction results from the "relief of surcharged feelings." Thus, in man's aesthetic activities, Scott theorized, there will be a "corresponding line of demarkation." ("Differentia" 256-257) One product will be from the communicative frame of mind, the other from the expressive. Every artistic process will be at once expressive and communicative; however, the two impulses will rarely balance. From these conclusions and observations, Scott presented his own formula: "poetry is communication in language for expression's sake; prose is expression in language for communication's sake" ("Differentia" 269).<sup>11</sup>

Despite the creation of the poetry/prose differentia formula, Scott was not the first to suggest many of these ideas. John Stuart Mill, in "Thoughts on Poetry and Its Varieties" (1833), asked, "What is poetry?" and believed a fundamental distinction could be found. Mill also expressed frustration in regard to the claim that the distinguishing fundamental characteristic of poetry was simply meter. Such

a definition was "the vulgarest of all . . . that which confounds poetry with metrical composition" (Mill 343).

But the most striking similarity between the thoughts of the two writers is found in their ideas regarding the fundamental distinctions specifically between prose and poetry. Over seventy years earlier, Mill wrote:

A question will sometimes arise, whether some particular author is a poet; and those who maintain the negative commonly allow, that though not a poet, he is a highly eloquent writer . . . . Poetry and eloquence are both alike the expression or utterance of feeling. But if we may be excused the antithesis, we should say that eloquence is heard, poetry is overheard. Eloquence supposes an audience; the peculiarity appears to us to lie in the poet's utter unconsciousness of a listener. Poetry is feeling, confessing itself to itself in moments of solitude . . . . Eloquence is feeling pouring itself out to other minds, courting their sympathy, or endeavoring to influence their belief, or move them to pass on or to action. . . . All poetry is of the nature of soliloquy . . . . But when he [the poet] turns round and addresses himself to another person; when the act of utterance is not itself the end, but a means to an end-- . . . when the

expression of his emotions, or of his thoughts tinged by his emotions, is tinged also by that purpose, by that desire of making an impression upon another mind, then it ceases to be poetry, and becomes eloquence . . . . Poetry, accordingly, is the natural fruit of solitude and meditation; eloquence, of intercourse with the world. (Mill 348-349)

Scott did acknowledge an indebtedness to Mill at the close of his 1904 article. Of the statement "eloquence is heard, poetry is overheard," Scott briefly stated that it "suggested to me the idea that poetry is expressive, prose communicative" ("Differentia" 269).

While Mill's influence upon Scott seems to be much more than a suggestion, Scott did redeem himself. He claimed that his interpretation of the ideas was different than Mill's, and therefore could make the claim to originality. This statement is valid. While both arrived at the same conclusion, it was Scott who actually sought the fundamental difference in the roots of the human being's social environment (and later in modern "household" and animal situations). Also, Scott made another original contribution when he introduced the psychological basis for the difference. The "satisfaction" received, either through response or outlet, was a point Mill did not touch.

Scott contributed another original point when he discussed the rhythmical features of the communicative and

expressive modes. In the expressive form, a regular series of stresses is heard. For example, in the Botocudos' dance, the foot-stomping occurred with the monotonous beat of the music. A crying infant will show similar rhythmic features. When the child is merely expressing feeling, the cry is much different than when trying to attract the attention of the nurse. As the child "expresses," the sounds are "uttered at regular intervals with rhythmical crescendoes and diminuendoes as its pain or fear increases and diminishes" ("Differentia" 262). Scott also reached to the beasts for corroborative evidence.<sup>12</sup> The cow has its "long, sonorous volley." A bird, he observed, "communing with itself," pours out notes in a series of regular rhythms. And referring to a recent experience of his, even a kitten which has been trapped in a cellar cries in a rhythmical way, in a metrical series, when it is merely expressing itself.

In the communicative form, the pattern differs. Often, there is an increasing intensity of cumulative beats, continuing until checked by the response of the hearer. The communicative cries of an infant (when the child seeks to attract the attention of the nurse) will be loud and pointed for a few seconds and then will stop for an instant when the child waits for a response. The bird will also sing differently when communicating. When disturbed or when talking to its young, harsh, strident cries emerge in a series of a less regular kind. Even the trapped kitten changed its cry when it heard Scott enter the cellar. The cries increased in pitch and in rapidity, intensity, and

insistence. Yet when Scott began to speak, the cries became fainter and more regular. ("Differentia" 262)

Therefore, with his ideas based on his research and observation of primitive man, animals, and modern domestic situations, Scott concluded that the difference between prose and poetry was indeed rooted in the context of the two social situations.<sup>13</sup> The expressive type of speech arises when the individual's main concern is giving vent to his own thoughts and feelings. The desire for this vent is the "natural psychological necessity that thought and feeling in simple natures must have some motor outlet" ("Differentia" 268). The chief characteristic of the expressive utterance is the presence of brief units in approximately equal length, so arranged as to constitute a regular rhythmical series. This, he concluded, is the chief formal characteristic of poetry in all languages.<sup>14</sup> The communicative utterance occurs from a necessity of a practical situation. The speech moves onward "until it accomplishes its object, which is to convey ideas or feelings to an auditor." The earliest communicative utterance had "a swaying, fluctuating movement of a seemingly irregular kind" and "displayed cumulative intensity or climax, conjoined with diminishing intensity or cadence." These are the present characteristics of prose in all languages. ("Differentia" 262)

Scott claimed originality from Mill and all in 1905 when he introduced a method of scansion to analyze the fundamental prose rhythm he had identified ("Scansion" 713).<sup>15</sup> First,

he diagrammed the expressive utterance. Recalling the primitive dance with the regular up/down beats of the dancers' feet and the gong at the completion of the round, he drew this graph:  This movement he called nuative--a nodding--to suggest the rhythm's distinct pattern. ("Scansion" 710)

Scott characterized the communicative rhythm as a "rushing, surging, gliding movement, which starting at some minimum of force, rapidity, pitch, or suspense, rises to a climax in one or all of these particulars and then falls away again" ("Scansion 712). Such a movement might look like this:

Scott called it notative. In order

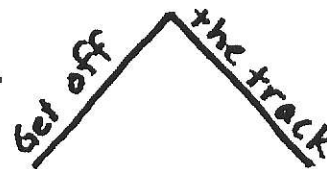
to root this abstraction in a practical



situation, he suggested that his audience imagine a friend standing on a railroad track, unaware that a train would soon roar down upon him. Scott claimed that you, the observer, would not motion your arms in time or "speak in iambic pentameter," but rather "would trace a different pattern." Not only would your arms shoot up and down, but your voice would do the same. The shout "Get off the track" would "rise in pitch in a crescendo, glide through the words 'Get off' and then would descend in the words 'the track.'"

("Scansion" 711) Thus, the diagram would look like this:

Even in a simple animal call, such as a "Cooo-o-o boss" to a cow or a "Here, Vic" to a dog, this pattern can be seen.<sup>16</sup>



In order to scan prose, therefore, a different method than that of routine scansion would need to be developed. In

verse, the division of words into feet allows the native pattern of strong and weak stresses to be displayed. In prose, however, a means to demonstrate the motative pattern where pitch dominates is required. ("Scansion" 717) Scott proposed that the motative arc be used as the unit of prose scansion, assuming that it was a proper representation of a "typical upward and downward movement of the voice that occurs in all prose speech" ("Scansion" 720). He understood that the arc would not represent the true movements of voice found in regular reading, especially since in all speech, even within every syllable, a variety of glides would be possible. But, just as routine scansion of verse reduces poetry to the simple, monotonous pattern of strong and weak stresses, "so a routine scansion of prose reduces the successive sentences of prose composition to a crude diagram of rising and falling glides" ("Scansion" 719). The minor deviations are dropped out of sight in order to chart the general trend. For example, a suspensive motative arc might look like this:

While the voice may wind and turn, the general movement is



scanned by the solid line. ("Scansion" 718)<sup>17</sup>

Scott's basis for establishing this as the scansion foot was grounded in his hypothesis that "all prose is made up of such arcs arranged in sequences, and that the tune of prose is determined by their character and inter-relation in somewhat the same way that a verse is determined by the



character and inter-relation of metrical feet" ("Scansion" 719). The character of the arcs is represented by two major types, the suspensive and the pathetic. In the suspensive, the voice begins on a "natural keynote," rises in a glide or in a series of glides to a "certain maximum." Here, the medial pause occurs. Next, the voice begins at the "altitude" where it left off (or slightly below or above), and descends in a glide or in a series of glides back to the "tonic." Accompanying the upward glide is usually a crescendo of force and an increasing rate of movement; the downward glide is marked by the decrescendo and the decreasing rate of movement. ("Scansion" 720)

The following are some of Scott's samples of the suspensive motative arc:

"When he narrated | the scene was before you."

Stevenson, Pastoral

"The intercourse of society, -- its trade, its religion, its friendships, its quarrels, | is one wide judicial investigation of character."

Emerson, Over-soul

(The | represents  
the medial pause.)

In the pathetic motative arc there is not a pause at the

peak of maximum pitch. The voice will glide up to the apex, but then, without pause, will glide down again for a "certain distance." The medial pause comes in the descending segment of the arc, occurring normally at an interval of a fourth (or a minor fourth) below the maximum. The effect of this interval is plaintive, thus the term pathetic. ("Scansion" 720) The following are examples of this form:

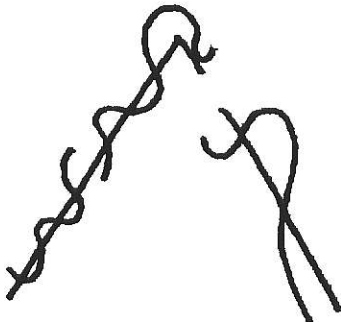
Its secret alchemy turns to potable <sup>^</sup> gold | the  
poisonous waters which flow from death through  
life.

Shelley, Defence of Poetry

His passions on the contrary were violent even  
to <sup>^</sup> slaying | against all who leaned to  
whiggish principles.

Macauley, Samuel Johnson

The latter can be scanned as such:



The segment up to the caret moves upward with steadily increasing intensity and rapidity; after "slaying," it diminishes through an interval of a fourth. Then after a

pause "of appreciable length . . . the sentence descends with diminishing speed to the close." ("Scansion" 722)

Scott was not flying off on a wild tangent when he

discussed the existence of a plaintive tone in the structure of a sentence. Although his ideas about pitch were similar to those of James Rush, a medical doctor who wrote one of the definitive treatises on delivery in the first part of the nineteenth century,<sup>18</sup> Scott reached several centuries earlier for support. In fact, Scott was hardly original in suggesting that a plaintive tone might be present as a result of a sentence's construction. According to Dionysius in De Compositione Verborum, a passage existed in a speech which had a graceful arrangement which was full of pathos. Dionysius changed the arrangement of the clauses and disposed of the pauses. Then he asked, "Do the same grace and the same pathos still remain when the clauses are arranged in this way?" And the same answered, "No one would assert it." ("Scansion" 721)

While the suspensive and the pathetic are the two primary arcs, their elements can be compounded and varied, producing all the more frequent rhythms of English prose. For example, four compounds can be formed: the suspensive arc closing with the pathetic form, the pathetic arc closing with the suspensive, the double suspensive, and the double pathetic. Furthermore, any of these compounds may have a number of variations, the rules being quite flexible. The length of the segments may be varied at pleasure, the number of phrasal sections in either segment may vary, minor pauses may occur in either segment, and the correspondence of words, phrases, and pauses may give a special character to an arc.

Scott was most interested in exploring the rhythmical

effects produced by the sequences of the basic types. He claimed that while an incredible amount of combinations exists, some sequences of arcs "occur over and over again in all writers, and which whenever they occur give to the prose a characteristic tune" ("Scansion" 724). The suspensive type followed by the pathetic, he believed, is one of the most common sequences. For example:

Trust | thyself. Every ^ heart vibrates to  
that iron string.

Emerson, Self-Reliance

Though he slay me, | yet will I trust in him;  
but I will maintain my own ^ ways before him.

Job xiii, 15

Scott classified more of the common sequences, including the long suspensive arc followed by the short pathetic, the pathetic → suspense sequence, as well as some of the more complex varieties: the suspensive → pathetic → pathetic-suspensive, the suspensive → pathetic-suspensive → pathetic, and finally, a pathetic-suspensive → pathetic-suspensive → suspensive → suspensive → suspensive → pathetic. Scott demonstrated the final pattern in a passage written by Stevenson: ("Scansion" 727-728)

There is another ^ isle | in my collection, | the memory which  
besieges me.

I put a whole ^ family | there | in one of my tales;  
And later on, threw upon its shores and condemned to several  
days of rain and shellfish, | the hero of another.  
The ink | is not yet faded;  
The sound of the sentences | is still in my mind's ear;  
And I am under a | spell to write of that island again.

Robert Louis Stevenson,

Memoirs of an Islet

Scott placed these rhythm sequences of primary arcs on a practical level, also. In order to show how the sensitivity to the arrangement could be crucial, he wrote about a prose rhythm tragedy. Referring to the author of Errors in English, Scott scolded the rhetoricians "who delight in correcting the prose of distinguished writers," those in particular who displayed "a singular obtuseness to the music of rhythm" ("Scansion" 725). The author of Errors in English operated upon a sentence of John Morley's:

On the whole it may be said that the change  
from anonymous to signed articles | has followed  
the course of most changes. It has not led to  
one-half either of the evils ^ or of the

advantages | that its advocates and its  
opponents foretold.

The author of Errors of English believed that the second sentence was not sufficiently clear, and proposed it read differently.

It has not led to one-half either of the evils  
foretold by its opponents | or of the advantages  
foretold by its advocates.

Upsetting Scott was the fact that the original rhythm had been destroyed. The original arc was pathetic; the new one was suspensive. The "feeling" had been changed. ("Scansion" 725)<sup>19</sup>

This particular analysis and defense of the prose rhythms and melodies may have been well accepted by a frustrated writer working under a tone deaf editor or by another rare prosaist who wished to define the laws of prose. However, Scott was breaking with the current thought (in areas outside of rhetorical instruction, too) which acknowledged and accepted the evasiveness of the rhythm of prose. For example, while Stevenson himself was quite original in his works on style, as he placed "novel emphasis upon matters usually neglected or held incapable of being taught" (Cooper 364), he still was emphatic that prose was out of the reach of laws.

Each phrase of each sentence, like an air in a

recitative in music, should be so artfully compounded out of long and short, out of accented and unaccented, as to gratify the sensual ear. And of this the ear is the sole judge. It is impossible to lay down laws. Even in our accentual and rhythmic language no analysis can find the secret of the beauty of a verse; how much less, then, of those phrases, such as prose is built of, which obey not law but to be lawless and yet to please.

(Stevenson 373-374)<sup>20</sup>

This opinion, of course, did not deter Scott from pursuing his goal of discovering and charting the laws of the rhythm of prose. No matter how free or irregular fine prose might be, Scott held that the work had been produced by a literary artist. And if art existed, there was "in it also a principle of order" ("Scansion" 708). The search for these laws was not in the nature of things useless or foredoomed to failure. Even if prose were left to be completely free, Scott believed, written by the "wild sea winds or the wild sea waves," the law of rhythm could still be determined, for even natural phenomena possessed a certain periodicity.<sup>21</sup>

While it is not in the span of this paper to explore the possible influences of Scott's work through the twentieth century, it is still interesting to note the general trend of the studies of prose rhythm following those done by Scott. Whether the development was due to Scott's invitation at the

end of his 1905 work (he wrote, "Left to be explored in prose rhythm are the factors of stress, alliteration, distribution of phrasal sections, and the balance of word and phrase" ["Scansion" (728)], current research on the nature of rhythm in verse, the increasing interest in rhythm in psychological research, and/or the desire to produce stylistic formulas, I do not know; nevertheless, a wealth of work in the study of prose rhythm surfaced in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The trend, unlike Scott's scansion of the sentence's arc(s), was to travel further from the positions of Stevenson or Harrison<sup>22</sup> to a point where prose was scanned metrically.

Scott's next published contributions to the study of prose rhythm were not until December 1913 ("The Order of Words in Certain Rhythm-Groups," Modern Language Notes) and March 1918 ("The Accentual Structure of Isolable English Phrases," PMLA). The principle purpose of the 1913 article was to vehemently disagree with Otto Jespersen, author of Growth and Structure of the English Language, who wrote the following in the first edition of the work:

In combinations of a monosyllable and a disyllable by means of and, the practice is always to place the short word first, because the rhythm then becomes the regular 'aa'aa instead of 'aaa'a (' before the a denotes the strongly stressed syllable). Thus, we say "bread and butter," not "butter and bread;



further: bread and water, milk and water, cup  
and saucer . . .

In a footnote, Jespersen added this:

Compare also the titles of books such as Songs  
and Poems, Men and Women, Past and Present,  
French and English, Night and Morning. [sic]  
("The Order of Words" 237)<sup>23</sup>

Scott conceded that the second edition of Growth and  
Structure (1912) was considerably modified. The word  
"always" was dropped from the first sentence, reading, "The  
usual practice is to place the short word first . . ."  
(Jespersen 232-233).

Scott, however, was not ready to let such a statement  
remain uncontested. He strongly believed that Jespersen's  
statement did not give a true impression of English usage.  
It implied that a "bread and butter" construction occurred  
rarely and lacked idiomatic force. Therefore, typically  
searching for the fundamental nature of the language, Scott  
chose 276 phrases at random, ranging from phrases, to titles  
of books, poems, plays, and magazines, to college colors. He  
found 42% to be of the "unusual" variety. And they were on  
the average, he claimed, to be "just as good phrases, that  
is, as idiomatic and as satisfying to the sense of rhythm, as  
those in the other column" ("The Order of Words" 239). The  
following lists consist of a sprinkling of Scott's choices:

I. "bread and butter"

ball and socket  
bow and arrow  
bright and early  
Cain and Abel  
Friend and Lover  
House and Garden  
head and shoulders  
Medes and Persians  
Notes and Queries  
gray and crimson

II. "butter and bread"

Adam and Eve  
bacon and eggs  
Dayton and Troy (RR)  
orange and black  
Jekyll and Hyde  
Sisters and Wives  
needle and thread  
mother and child  
silver and gold  
tender and true

Jespersen acknowledged Scott after the publication of this article. In the fourth edition of Growth and Structure, he wrote the following:

In some instances, rhythm is obviously not the only reason for the order, but in all I think it has been at least a concurrent cause. F. N. Scott, in Modern Language Notes (1913), has collected a number of combinations in which this rhythmic rule is not observed, but in many of these the word order is obviously determined by other causes. (237-238)

The phrasing in the text--changed from "always" to "usually" in the second edition--read in the fourth edition, "the short word is in many set phrases placed first . . ." (237).

The final work that Scott published about prose rhythms was "The Accentual Structure of Isolable English Phrases." While the article itself tallied results of a close examination of a variety of phrases and titles to determine accentual patterns, I believe that the article was again

directed at Jespersen. I am especially suspicious because Scott specifically stated that he had examined phrases that were detached from their context.

To study the characteristic and prevailing accentual rhythms of English prose, Scott analyzed 2497 phrasal idioms and 4201 titles. Discarding those containing only one word, he then recognized all possible arrangements of the two, three, and four syllable groups, and divided phrases of five or more syllables by their natural pause into combinations of the shorter groups. Although Scott recognized that his area of observation was limited, he set forth some general conclusions:

- 1) The English language, in ordinary speech, consists of a four syllable phrase.
- 2) Strong endings are more common in the shorter phrases, weak endings in the longer phrases.
- 3) Beginning with two-syllable phrases, the proportion of weak to strong endings increases regularly with the number of syllables.
- 4) The prevailing accentual structure of two syllable phrases is the spondee ("fair play"); of three syllable phrases the cretic ("inch by inch"); of four syllable phrases the double iamb ("as large as life"); of five syllable phrases the

iamb + amphibrach ("as clear as daylight"); and of six syllable phrases the iamb + paeon ("the pink of perfection").

- 5) The titles of works of prose fiction show virtually the same peculiarities, except five syllable titles are more common than four syllable titles, and the more frequent pattern of the five syllable title is amphibrach + trochee, and of the six syllable title, the amphibrach + anapest.

- 6) Scott believed the prevailing rhythm of English speech, as far as it depends on the accent of phrases, is not trochaic, but rather, iambic, cretic, or choriambic.

At first glance, these findings do not appear particularly earth-shaking. Scott, in fact, mentioned that the meaning of the proportional pattern in #3 remained yet to be discovered. However, #4 seems especially crucial to the Jespersen dispute. After analyzing these patterns, Scott found that the prevailing accentual structure for four syllable phrasal idioms and titles is the double iamb ("as large as life" [286], A Tramp Abroad [350]). In phrasal idioms, the choriamb (the "butter and bread" pattern) is second (136) and the double trochee (the "bread and butter" pattern) is third (104). In titles, the double trochee is second (David Horum [181]), and the choriamb third (Barnaby

Rudge [154]). Scott stressed that in the data accumulated, the double trochee and the choriamb patterns (bread and butter, butter and bread) occur almost precisely in the same frequency when the phrasal idioms and titles are taken together.

The importance of the ranking appeared in the footnote. Scott wrote:

I may refer here, in passing, to a controversy started by a remark of Professor Jespersen's in his Growth and Structure of the English Language. The remark is to the effect that the pattern "bread and butter," a double trochee, is far more common than the pattern "butter and bread," a choriamb. The data which I have now accumulated tend to show that the choriambic pattern is somewhat less frequent in the titles, somewhat more frequent in the phrasal idioms, and almost precisely of the same frequency in the two taken together.

("Accentual Structures" 76)

"In passing," Scott provided further evidence for his argument against Jespersen. The "butter and bread" pattern--the choriambic accentual pattern--is not dependent upon context, but is a fundamental rhythm of the English language.

But, Scott's careful research did not have long-range impact. The tenth edition of Jespersen's book (1982) still

contains the footnote which claims that the word order of many of Scott's exceptions to the "bread and butter" rule are determined by cases other than rhythmic rule (Jespersen 221). And, in the March 1985 issue of College English, Paul Pickrel writes in "Identifying Cliches" that constructions such as "bread and butter," "salt and pepper," and "death and taxes" are governed by a rhythmic rule. He concludes that "we seem to prefer a trochaic pattern over the alternatives" (Pickrel 255). (See Scott's Note #6 above.)

Scott presented his theories about the rhythm of prose to his students at University of Michigan in the course "Prose Rhythms." When he first introduced the course in 1903, it was the first course of its kind to be offered in the country (Stewart, "Rediscovering Fred Newton Scott" 542). After he published "Accentual Structures" in 1918, he continued to share his enthusiasm about prose rhythms and their possibilities with his students.<sup>24</sup>

Scott explained to his class that rhythm itself is "one of the obscurest of all conceptions." He defined rhythm only by saying that it consists of a series of movements of impulse in which there is some sort of a repeated pattern." He also explained that it is almost impossible for most people to listen to a succession of sounds and silences without hearing a pattern. The mind involuntarily groups the sounds in two's three's, or four's.<sup>25</sup> When a heavier "strike" is provided at regular intervals, a pattern of rhythm develops. This pleases the ear. In verse--the most obvious case being the nursery rhyme--the rhythm is fairly

easy to grasp.

But in prose, the rhythm is most difficult to grasp and define, although "no one can doubt . . . that there is a tune in all good prose." He provided his students with three examples of prose selections which are "full of grace, and melody, though are not at all the melody of verse."

Therefore, said Arthur, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again, and tell me what thou then seest.

When all is done human life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a froward child that must be played with and humored a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep; and then the care is over.

For, indeed, a change was coming upon the world, the meaning and direction of which even still is hidden from us, a change from era to era. The paths trodden by the footsteps of ages were broken up; old things were passing away, and the faith and the life of ten centuries were dissolving like a dream. Chivalry was dying; the abbey and the castle were soon together to crumble into ruins; and

all the forms, desires, beliefs, convictions of the old world were passing away, never to return. A new continent had risen up beyond the western sea. The floor of heaven, inlaid with stars, had sunk back into an infinite abyss of immeasurable space; and the firm earth to be but a small atom in the awful vastness of the universe. In the fabric of habit which they had so laboriously built for themselves, mankind were to remain no longer.

He suggested that the rhythmical effect may be due to accent, tempo, balance of phrase and parts of the sentence, alliteration, and even the "sense of swing."<sup>26</sup> In this class, he chose to examine accent, since he felt it was the most obvious element of rhythm. Also, English as a language is markedly accentual. Scott quoted Otto Jespersen, who commented that unlike the French, the Englishman or the American comes down on the accent with the force of a sledgehammer.

Scott gave his students examples of the variety of accentual patterns that can be found in single words and phrases. Characteristically, he looked outside the walls of the classroom and to the wider social context for examples. Detroit is an iamb; Jackson is a trochee; Belle Isle is a spondee. Alpena is an amphibrach; Calumet, an anapest; Pontiac, a dactyl; Cass City, a bacchic; Walloon Lake, an anti-bacchic, and Cedar Springs, a cretic. He even named



Michigan towns and cities for four syllable examples. Traverse City is a double trochee; Kalamazoo, Escanaba, Dowagiac, varieties of the paeon; Calumet Park, an ionic a minore; and Saginaw Bay, a choriamb.

He stressed that the technical names of these combinations were not critical. What he believed was important was "the fact that these accentual patterns, whether in words or phrases, have different values and attractions for the reader. Some of them occur with great frequency, some occur but rarely. Some appear to be musical or graceful, others to be solemn, pompous, or dull." Scott even suggested to his students that if the class (and he included himself in this group) could find the accentual patterns that are most acceptable to the ordinary reader, they might be able to create "attractive trade names and catch phrases" or determine why certain names or phrases are failures or successes.<sup>27</sup>

Placing the accentual patterns of the language within a social context is characteristic of Scott. But these notes do show the shift in the method Scott chose to describe prose rhythm, one of the "blooms and charms" of Higher Rhetoric. In the 1904 and 1905 articles, Scott was interested in pitch and the long prose foot. In the 1913 and 1918 articles, and these class notes which were written after 1918, his interest focused on the isolable word groups. At first, I speculated that Scott was succumbing to the "metrical" scansion of the day (popularized by Lipsky, Saintsbury, and

Elton, to name a few of these stylists), since he was choosing to examine small word groups, complete with accentual feet. However, it is important to note that Scott did not necessarily change his mind about his scansion theory. Even though he examined isolable groups, he did not propose that a line of prose should be scanned in such a way. Rather, Scott performed this close rhythmical analysis in order to discover the fundamental nature of the language. As with his earlier curiosity about the differentia of prose and poetry and the possibility of scanning by arcs, his accentual theories again display his desire to anchor his original thoughts in the fundamental essence of the language.

Scott's opening remarks to his class are especially characteristic of his comprehensive conception of style and rhetoric. He immediately introduced his students to what was occurring in disciplines related to this study of style. These were his opening lines:

My only excuse for speaking to you about prose rhythm is that it is just now attracting a great deal of attention. A number of books upon the subject have appeared of late, the psychological laboratories are all engaged in investigating it, and several recent writers have made their reputations largely by the skillful use of it.<sup>28</sup>

But Scott's innovative work with style did not gain wide acceptance.

His victory in the "bread and butter" battle was basically ignored. His method of scansion gave way to the heavy step of the short "metrical" foot. Also, his comprehensive view of rhetoric, which included a desire to describe the "blooms and charms" of the language through a concern for the social context, a consideration for current developments in related disciplines, and a desire to discover what is fundamental in the nature of language, was soon forgotten. By 1930, a year before Scott's death, the Department of English at Michigan swallowed the Department of Rhetoric. The Harvard group's narrow philosophy of rhetoric was embraced. It would be nearly half a century before the profession of English re-discovered Michigan's greatest English teacher and began to re-examine his original contributions to rhetorical theory.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Because Scott respected his women graduate students, a twentieth-century reader may be perplexed by the apparent use of sexist language. One must remember that Scott was writing in the convention of his day.

<sup>2</sup>Scott and Dewey's time at Michigan overlapped. Dewey was an instructor and an assistant professor of philosophy there from 1884-1888.

<sup>3</sup>James Berlin explains that this narrow conception of rhetoric was not atypical. Hill's second textbook did not include the forms of discourse either.

<sup>4</sup>This does not appear to be much different than Genung's distinction between the Personal and the Impersonal. The treatment, of course, is much different.

<sup>5</sup>Scott's concern for the development of the student's personality continued. Nineteen years later, in "What the West Wants in Preparatory English," Scott wrote that the teacher's job is "to help develop human personality--to draw it out, to give it freedom of expression, and, when it has thus been developed, to know it through and through and to estimate it in and for itself" ("What the West Wants" 12).

Also, I believe it is apparent how Scott viewed personality compared to the way Genung viewed it. Genung saw the venture into the personality as being outside the bounds of the textbook.

<sup>6</sup>Scott co-authored Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism (1899) with Charles Mills Gayley. The considerations and questions require, among literary knowledge, a "running application of rhetorical science and psychology" (Preface v).

In addition to this overlap, the questions that Scott and Gayley believed were important to consider in literary criticism were similar to the questions Scott raised about rhetoric. They asked about the psychological and social bases of criticism (203). When they examined style, they considered philology and the psychological function of the language (205,206). When they looked at the general nature of art, they asked these questions: "What is the origin, nature, and physical explanation of the aesthetic thrill? . . . What is the nature of the impulse that leads to the production of works of art? . . . To what extent is it social? . . . Is art the possession of the whole people?" (83, 86). These are questions that Scott will raise as he explores the nature of prose rhythm.

<sup>7</sup>It is interesting to note, that although Scott used Earle's belief in a fundamental distinction as an anchor for

his argument, the current differentia of prose and poetry which he refuted also belonged to Earle. Scott did not mention this in his article.

<sup>8</sup>Genung was another supplier of superficial criteria, although Scott did not mention this in the article. Genung defined prose as discourse that is straightforward: "it is the language of ordinary moods, ideas, sentiments, and the form that unstudied speech and discourse assume. Poetry involves a "turning"; it is a loosened, unbound discourse. (Working Principles 108)

<sup>9</sup>Scott included Stevenson's essay in his reading list in Principles of Style.

<sup>10</sup>Francis B. Gummere, The Beginnings of Poetry (New York, 1901), as quoted in Fred Newton Scott, "Differentia," PMLA 19 (1904): 253. Scott draws on this source frequently for anthropological support.

<sup>11</sup>I find it interesting that Scott's considerations for expression and communication appear in a much different context in 1908. In The Teaching of English, Scott wrote about ways that a teacher might arouse the desire in a student to write. A healthy desire, he explained,

          springs from two healthy impulses: the impulse  
          to give expression to one's thoughts and

feelings, and the impulse to communicate one's thoughts and feelings to others . . . . Being complementary, each may be stimulated by giving exercise to the other. Thus, in order to cultivate the impulse to expression, it is sufficient to reveal the need of communication. To cultivate the impulse to communication, it is sufficient to reveal the value of expression. If, for example, we wish to stir in any person a longing to express himself, we can do so most effectually by showing him that others are interested in what he will say. . . . Conversely, the impulse to communication may be set going by making the writer or speaker realize the value to others of the information he is prepared to impart.

<sup>12</sup>Scott anticipated that his animal findings might be met with "smiles and gibes." However, he asked his audience to consider the research of Darwin and Groos regarding the genesis of expressive signs, and thus, to appreciate the importance of such data.

<sup>13</sup>A full examination of Scott's methodology is beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>14</sup>Scott did not mention how free verse fits into his theory.

<sup>15</sup>Scott stated, regarding scansion, that he was "not aware that anyone hitherto has applied it seriously to prose" (713). Scott may have been unaware that other prose scansion projects were being done. In 1904, R. Marbe investigated the rhythm of German prose in Über d. Rhythmus d. Prosa; however, he scanned according to accented syllables.

<sup>16</sup>Although Scott was committed to this hypothesis, that such notation exists in the root of communicative utterance, he also recognized that the speaker's expectation of reply and the hearer's response also help to shape the rhythm. This recognition is obvious in the examples he gives in the 1904 article.

<sup>17</sup>Scott recognized that the conception of the upward/downward glide of a sentence was not a novel thought. Demetrius, DeQuincey, Saintsbury, and Stevenson included description in their work of a sentence working to a height or "knot" and then releasing. Scott was original in his handling of this conception. Whereas these writers had applied it exclusively to the periodic sentence, he used the "rise and fall," of course, as his unit of scansion.

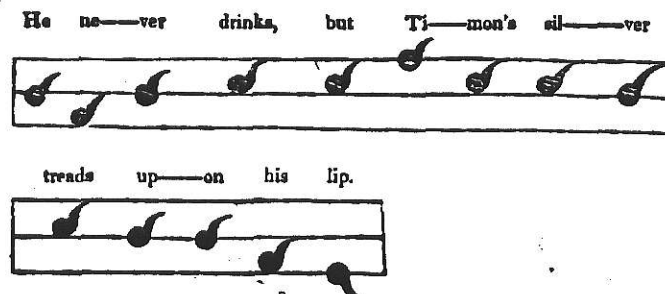
Genung also was aware of Saintsbury's thoughts about the sentence. "The true business of the literary artist is to plait or weave his meaning, involving it around itself; so that each sentence, by successive phrases, shall first come

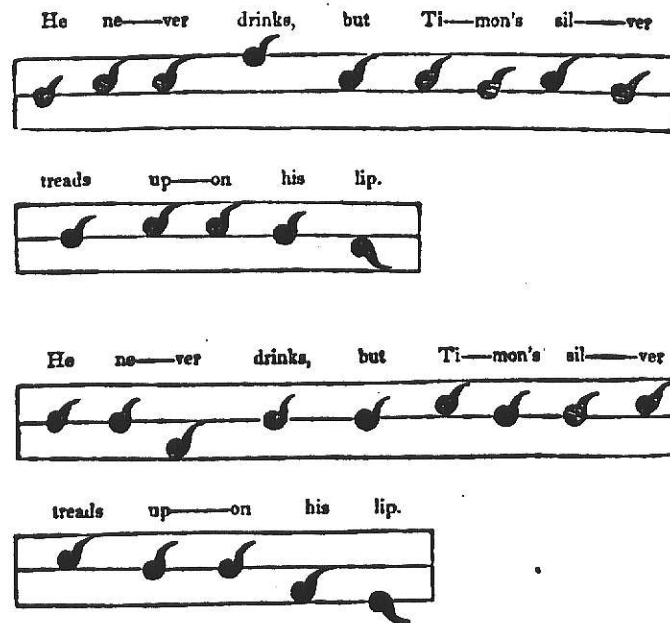


into a kind of knot, and then, after a moment of suspended meaning, solve and clear itself." (Working Principles 218)

18I can find no evidence that Scott was familiar with the work of James Rush. In The Philosophy of the Human Voice, Rush made several statements about pitch that foreshadowed Scott's ideas. Rush discussed the rising and falling melody of the spoken voice. For example, when he discussed what he called the "plain diatonic melody," he explained that it "consists of a simple rise through the concrete of a tone, varied by the occasional use of the downward tone; with a radical pitch playing in its several phrases; and a termination of the melody by the descent of the cadence" (23). Like Scott, he also used musical intervals to describe the pitch of the voice, relying on the octave, the fifth, the third, and the second.

Here is an example of the ways he charts a spoken sentence:





Even though Rush noted the variations of the speech, a rise and a fall and an arc like Scott's can be seen. (Rush 102)

Some differences exist between Scott and Rush, though. Rush did not use the minor fourth interval, as Scott did. Also, when Rush described "The Rhythmus of Speech," he wrote that the rhythm is perceived through accent, quantity, and pause. The agreeable effect of the rhythms is caused by the varied alphabetical elements, the accentual sections, and the pausal section. He did not, as Scott, mention pitch in regard to the rhythm. (Rush 367, 371)

<sup>19</sup>This example makes me think of a tone deaf copy editor I had when I wrote for my college newspaper. Often, my meaning would be expressed more concisely and directly after her adjustments, but the original tones and rhythms were lost; it was no longer my piece.

<sup>20</sup>I wonder how Stevenson reacted to the scansion of his passage.

<sup>21</sup>Scott seems to be drawing on Spencer's essay "The Rhythm of Motion." Spencer wrote about sea wind and waves (259, 262-263).

<sup>22</sup>Harrison wrote:

Whence comes the music of language? What is the magic that can charm into life the apt and inevitable word that lies hidden somewhere at hand--so near and yet so far--so willing and yet so coy--did we only know the talismen which can awaken it? This is what no teaching can give us--what skilful tuition and assiduous practice can but improve in part, and even that only for the chosen few.

<sup>23</sup>Otto Jespersen, Growth and Structure of the English Language, as quoted in Fred Newton Scott, "The Order of Word in Certain Rhythm-Groups," Modern Language Notes, 8 (1913): 237.

<sup>24</sup>The class notes I am referring to are not dated. I do know they were written after 1918 because Scott refers to his 1918 article.

<sup>25</sup>Scott did not mention Wundt, but I am quite sure that Scott was drawing on Wundt's research. Wundt concluded that "no series of impressions is possible that cannot in some way be comprehended as rhythmic" (Patterson 46).

<sup>26</sup>Scott was likely referring to the words of William Patterson. Patterson, an instructor of English at Columbia University with a strong interest in experimental psychology, published The Rhythm of Prose in 1916. In this book, Patterson presented a history of the psychological studies of rhythm and included a chapter entitled "The Sense of Swing." This feeling, he wrote, is like being on a swing, and sensing the "uncanny instant of poise" before the swing swoops down again into another arch. "Elasticity--that is, acceleration followed by compensative retarding, a tightening of speed, as it were, followed by an untightening, is the secret of a measuring scale for rhythmic experience" (Patterson 47). Scott's method of scansion, published eleven years earlier, seems to use this measuring scale.

<sup>27</sup>In the class notes that I could decipher, Scott listed pages of brand names and slogans. For example, under the heading of amphibrachs, he listed Aladdin, Corona, and Nabisco, among many others.

He listed slogans with names of products on another page headed "Adv. Engl.," likely looking for appealing accentual combinations.

For example:

2 It floats. Ivory Soap  
3 Your nose knows Tuxedo  
7 Makes the bread that makes the man. Gold Medal Flour

28 Scott did not go into detail about the current developments in psychological research regarding rhythm (which were many). Likely, he was acquainted with Bolton's mammoth article, "Rhythm," which appeared in the American Journal of Psychology in 1894. Bolton aimed "to push the lines of exact science a little farther forward into a field that borders more closely upon the field of aesthetics" than before. He attempted to reduce rhythm to a more fundamental activity of the mind. (Bolton 146)

More detail about the history of psychological research of rhythm can be found in William Patterson's The Rhythm of Prose (1916). In his concise history, he began with Brucke, Bolton, Meumann, and Wundt, and progressed through such contemporaries as Woodrow, Weld, Seashore, and Thomson. (Patterson 17-46)

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FRED NEWTON SCOTT AND PROSE RHYTHM

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

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## ABSTRACT

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, rhetoric, as it was taught in the universities, had degenerated into the study of practical rules for written composition (especially for mechanical correctness and usage). Also, the relation of other disciplines to rhetoric was largely ignored. Fred Newton Scott of Michigan, however, presented a comprehensive system of rhetorical theory, enriched by current developments in experimental psychology, linguistics, and sociology.

This paper examines one of the contributions that Scott made to the study of style, the third canon of rhetoric, specifically as it was taught in the universities. Style, according to Scott, was not simply a complement of invention, but summed up "those concrete elements of good literature with which higher rhetoric is concerned." Scott believed that the "blooms and charms" of a piece of writing are not vague but able to be described.

Scott's original contributions to the study of prose rhythm illustrate his theory of style and his comprehensive view of rhetoric. Scott's concern for discovering the fundamental difference between poetry and prose--the basis for his method of scansion--led him to explore related disciplines. Also evident in Scott's scansion of prose and in his descriptions of isolable rhythm groups are his concerns for the communicative properties of language and for what is fundamental in the English language.