THE HEROIC COUPLET IN THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE

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THE HEROIC COUPLET IN THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE.

Introduction.

That no scholar has as yet analysed thoroughly the matter of Shakespeare's use of the heroic couplet, increases the difficulty of approaching the subject, and, at the same time, provides a sufficient reason for this essay.

If Addison had the critical discernment to appreciate blank verse as a dramatic medium, he failed, nevertheless, to understand that behind the apparent sporadic use of the heroic couplet lay a deliberate and subtle technique of Elizabethan dramatic composition. His failure to comprehend this led him to make the following objection.

"I am therefore very much offended when I see a play in rhyme; which is as absurd in English, as a tragedy in hexametres would have been in Greek or Latin. The solecism is, I think, still greater in those plays that have some scenes in rhyme and some in blank verse, which are to be looked upon as two separate languages; or where we see some particular similes dignified with rhyme at the same time that everything about them lies in blank verse. I would not however debar the poet from concluding his tragedy, or, if he pleases, every act of it, with two or three couplets, which may have the same effect as an air in the Italian opera after a long recitativo, and give the actor a graceful exit." (1)

Here Addison would admit the couplet for one purpose only. It is implied that other uses of this form are blemishes

in a play. Thus he would condemn Shakespeare's Romeo and
Juliet or Middleton's Blurt, Master Constable as plays flawed
by this fault. Both have many scenes largely in rhymed couplets.

Although Addison does not tell us whether or not he
considers the offending authors had any deliberate intention
in this custom (he must have been aware that it was a common
practice in the Elizabethan dramatists) it is plain that
later critics failed to attach any importance to the phenomenon.
The rhymed couplet seems to be generally regarded as a variant.

Dr. Collins, in his introduction to Alphonsus, remarks
on Greene's versification:

"All Greene seems to have caught from Marlowe
in the way of metrical variation is the occasional
introduction of rhyming couplets." (1)

This comment, like many others, makes no hint that
any deeper importance is attached to couplet usage in Eliza­
bethan plays.

Saintsbury, in his monumental work on English prosody,
makes bare mention of the fact that in Shakespeare the rhymed
couplet occurs in varying frequency, and dismisses them with
the observation that--

"they are almost entirely either as has been
said, make-shifts, or else dictated by the well known
cue purpose - the desire to wind up a scene, or part
of a scene, with a ring beat agreeable to the
audience and convenient to the actors." (2)

p. 74.
3.

As we shall find, the implications behind the word *almost*, comprise the really significant aspects of the whole problem. It is clear at least that Saintsbury does not attach any great importance to the couplet in the plays of Shakespeare.

Abbot has a short but significant note on the use of couplets to isolate 'asides' which are not otherwise apparent to the audience. (1) This comment is of value and does suggest that there was definite purpose behind some such couplets.

Turning to the student editions of Shakespeare, we find a somewhat clearer statement on rhyme in Shakespeare, in a note by Dr. Edith Rickert on the use of the couplet in *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, and it is worth reproducing in full.

The commonest form of rhymed verse used is the rhymed heroic, composed, like blank verse, of decasyllabic iambic lines, but with the last accented syllables rhyming. This is scattered about in single couplets and longer passages amongst the blank verse, and it is not always possible in this play, as it usually is with the far rarer rhymed verse of later plays, to assign a definite reason for its use in any given place. But it appears to be used:

1. In single couplets to finish off a scene or speech, or section of a speech, in blank verse. Rhyme was used by Shakespeare for this purpose to the end of his career. Probably it pleased the actors who liked the effective curtain, and it may even have served to call attention to the cues.

2. In markedly lyrical or emotional passages. Thus in Act 1, Sc. 2, the entry of Helen at 180,

4.

coincides with a change from blank verse to rhyme, and so with the more passionate love scenes throughout.

(3) In epigrammatic or pointedly humorous passages, e.g. in Puck's witty description of Titania's plight (III.ii.6-40). In II.1.268. Puck caps a line of the interlude with a mocking rhyme. So Titania caps herself in III.1.206.

The above notes are based entirely on the work of J. Heuser, whose thesis is the only examination of the couplet problem. A great many of Heuser's statements will be reconsidered in the following pages, and since a few of these statements are in marked disagreement with the conclusions to be made here, some of these latter we shall note by way of anticipating the arguments of the essay.

In his introductory remarks Heuser expresses the thought that rhyme is the mark of lyrical poetry in general and observes, furthermore, that under emotional stress or lyrical impulse prose often falls into the rhythm of blank verse. From this he deduces that blank verse should tend likewise to fall into heroic rhyme, under stress of emotion. This general statement is not properly qualified, but it has been proposed as a convenient way of explaining the presence of a great many couplets. Hence, in Heuser's grouping together of couplets according to usage, we may observe, for example,

2. J. Heuser, Der Coupletreim in Shakespeares Dramen. (Shakespeare Jahrbuch, Vol. XXVIII. p. 177; XXIX-XXX. p. 235.)
a great many couplets in the rhymed scenes in Act 1 of Romeo and Juliet, explained as lyrical.

Speaking of Rosalind, Romeo says--

"She'll not be hit
With Cupid's arrow; she hath Dian's wit;
And in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,
From love's weak childish bow she lives unharmed." (1)

Language of this type is common with the Romeo of the early part of the play, and Heuser fails to observe here, the relation of the subject to the couplet form. It is not that the movement of these lines is outstandingly lyrical, I feel, but that the language, the subject matter, and the behaviour of the person who speaks, are conventional. In Shakespeare's design, the early Romeo is a literary convention; his first meeting with Juliet is a conventional meeting. It is in such scenes as this between courtly lovers that rhyme predominates. And this fact is of great importance in understanding the couplet usage. Yet Heuser makes no note of it. To explain these lines as lyrical is to ignore the whole significance of couplet usage. Furthermore, to call the rhymed scene between Romeo and Juliet at meeting, emotional, is to fail to understand the passage. If we are to consider seriously that rhyme is a mark of strong emotion we should at least expect Juliet's opening speech in Act III, scene ii, to show rhyme. But this is not the case either here or anywhere else in Shakespeare where the love passion is involved. In Antony and

1. I.ii.214-17
Cleopatra, for instance, rhyme is not so used, nor in Othello. Nor does any other great passionate scene use the heroic couplet.

Further doubt is cast on the whole idea that the couplet was ever so used by Shakespeare by a statement of Dryden. Although he was a champion of rhymed drama, he finally discarded it as an unsuitable medium for tragedy on the grounds that—

"Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound, and nature flies him like enchanted ground." (1)

No one would be likely to dispute the truth of this. Moreover, it strikes at the very root of the problem of the heroic couplet. Consequently we must first determine what the couplet is best suited for in the drama.

We have suggested, then, so far, the inadequacy of the existing view of the couplet problem and intimated that, generally speaking, the true nature of the couplet has not been realised in its relation to the drama of Shakespeare.

In Chapter I will be found a different approach to the question, since a proper understanding of the nature of the heroic couplet relative to blank verse is necessarily the starting point. The ensuing chapters are discussions of couplet usage under categories. Since the whole treatment is quite at variance with the traditional views herein mentioned, it has been deemed advisable to treat Shakespeare's use of

1. Prologue to Aureng-Zebe (1675)
the heroic couplet as part of the general practice of his time. Therefore, in this essay we have discussed the most important dramatists of the period from 1587 to 1616.
Chapter I

The Nature of the Heroic Couplet.

We shall show that the heroic couplet was not merely a casual and sporadic variant in dramas as it has been suggested, but that its use was more or less regular in all Shakespeare's contemporaries, and governed by what we may term recognisable conventions. These conventions were not dictated by any particular literary influence, but arose from the peculiar nature of the couplet itself, as compared with the freer medium, blank verse. It is the natural differentiation of these two forms that must be considered.

In the first place, when, so to speak, rhyme is applied to the blank verse "couplet", the effect is to make these lines immediately more conspicuous to the ear. The resultant "punctuating" effect is isolative, and makes for finality and emphasis, since it stands out in the blank verse in which it occurs. Furthermore, it is restrictive and formal, whereas blank verse is the nearest verse approximation to natural speech. Hence we may make two fundamental statements: 1. The couplet is best suited for artificial speech, for formal and reserved utterance, and language that is conventional. 2. By its balance, syntactical completeness, and the finality of its end rhyme, it is also suitable for rhetorical effect. The recognition of these facts leads us
to examine the problem primarily from the point of view of subject matter rather than author. Hence we shall set out to show that the use of the heroic couplet in drama was determined according to the subject matter of the dramatist. Just what significance this will have on the whole problem of Shakespeare's use of the heroic couplet is the real issue of the essay.

For clarity and convenience, the bulk of the material has been compressed into two annotated appendices. Appendix A contains a complete list of the rhymes in the plays of Shakespeare classified according to the chapter headings of this essay. Appendix B offers examples from plays outside Shakespeare, thus supporting the reliability of the classification. In the Shakespeare Appendix, a few couplets will be found to occur under more than one category, since it is not always possible to determine to what category a couplet strictly belongs. In the various chapters I have tried to deal with the usage generally rather than confine the discussion to Shakespeare.
Chapter II

The Heroic Couplet in Conventional Love Scenes.

Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh:
Speak but one rime and I am satisfied;
Cry but 'Ay mé!' Couple but "love" and "dove'';
Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word.
- Mercutio, Romeo and Juliet, II.11.8-11.

In the above caption Mercutio, of course, is citing a formula for the conventional lover's behaviour, and it supplies a suitable introduction to the subject. Conventional love is a familiar enough literary mode, which owes its origin to the "amour courtois" tradition handed down from the medieval romance. The conduct of courtly love came to have an idiom and an artifice peculiar to itself. As a literary tradition it was far from extinct in the Elizabethan period. Jack Wilton's satire of Lord Henry Howard's conduct towards his lady is perhaps an exaggeration. Nevertheless, it was poking fun at a fashion of the day.

Where conventional love finds its way upon the stage, it is to be expected that it would be recognisable by its speech; and that speech would be in imitation of the literary language used in the conventional matter of the popular romance. The medium for this light artificial Dresden-like prettiness of speech in the blank verse drama, as we shall

1. Nashe, Thos., The Unfortunate Traveller.
learn, was the heroic couplet. This form had shown itself well suited to love poetry, as seen in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* and his translations from Ovid. Shakespeare adopted the alternating variant (ababcc) for this type of love poem, and in the drama we find this stanza sometimes used in the same way as the couplet. In Shakespeare this further attempt to match the artificial scene with an artificial form finds its ultimate development in the not infrequent use of the sonnet form in lover's dialogues. Since these two last verse forms are used for the same reason as the couplet, they have been considered as part of the evidence of the convention.

Wherever the characters of the Elizabethan stage appear in courtly guise, we find the conventional speech artifice of literary fashion. John Lyly was the great exponent of "Euphuism", but by no means an innovator. Pettie's *Petite Palace of Pleasures* contains all the artifice of *Euphues*. We may deduce from the popularity of these books with their "precious" style, that the fashion was quite in vogue. The elaborate etiquette of Elizabeth's court was a living example of a convention not far removed from the literary artifice which sought to please this court.

It is not surprising that we should find traces of "Euphuism" wherever the subject of the drama gives opportunity

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1. see Appendix A, page 85.
for courtly love scenes. The University Wits wrote such scenes, and their influence on the young Shakespeare would account for his presentation of the love convention. That the occurrences of the courtly love phenomenon are to be accompanied, more often than not, by traces of Euphuism we should expect, but that the heroic couplet was used as the conventional medium for such passages, has not, as yet, been recognised by any critic of Shakespeare.

The most obvious point at which to begin our discussion of the "courtly love" couplet is the scene involving both the protagonists of a love scene of this type. Conveniently for our examination, the first significant play, The Spanish Tragedy,¹ Senecan bloodfest though it is, offers an excellent illustration of the type of scene we are discussing. Here the Elizabethan courtier and his mistress, under the dramatic guise of Spanish names and costumes, are engaged in a love scene. "Pretty" and clever, it stands out for what it is, artificial and conventional, and quite according to rule.

Horatio. The more thou sitst within these leavy bowers, The more will Flora decke it with her flowers.

Bel-imperia. I, but if Flora spie Horatio heere, Her iealous eye vail thinke I sit too neere.

Horatio. Harke, Madame, how the birds record by night,  
For joy that Bel-imperia sits in sight.

Bel-imperia. No, Cupid counterfeits the Nightingale,  
To frame sweet musick to Horatio's tale.

Horatio. If Cupid sing then Venus is not farre;  
I, thou art Venus, or some fairer starre.  

This dialogue runs on for 26 lines. The whole atmosphere is  
conventional, but the actual diction alone is sufficient to  
place it in the "conventional love" category. The use of the  
word Flora is reminiscent of Euphues, and the reference to  
Venus and Cupid fit well the description given by Mercutio  
in the caption. The over conscious use of alliteration, the  
internal rhyme in the second couplet, are more marks which  
show the nature of the scene and its literary tradition.  

Almost identical with this example, is the love scene  
between Alvida and the King of Cilicia in Robert Greene's Play.  

Cilicia. Madam, your song is passing passionate.

Alvida. And wilt thou not then pitie my estate?

Cilicia. Aske love of them who pitie may impart.

Alvida. I aske of thee, sweet; thou hast stole my hart.

Cilicia. Your love is fixéd on a greater king.

Alvida. Tut, womans love, it is a fickle thing.  
I love my Rasni for my dignitie,  
I love Gilician King for his sweete eye.  
I love my Rasni since he rules the world,  
But more I love this kingly little world.  
(Embraces him)

Here again is the conscious, artificial balanced syntax, laced with alliteration. Greene is perhaps our best dramatic exponent of this type of love scene. In James IV he offers more than one example of it. Two interesting models of his technique are worth mentioning here. In the following excerpt he shows how a lady rejects an importunate lover, making her retreat from his advance in cleverly matched couplets.

King of Scots. But, Ida, you are faire, and bewtie shines,
And seemeth best, where pomp her pride refines.

Ida. If bewtie, (as I know there's none in me,)
Were sworne my love, and I his life should be,
The farther from the court I were removed,
The more, I thinke, of heaven I were beloved. etc. 1

This smooth rejection of a suit continues in unruffled couplet form throughout 211-250. But if Ida is clever at the negative side of the game, she is just as polished at the more positive play of courtly love. In a later scene she plays the game with Hustace, a more pleasing lover, and once again the blank verse of the players falls into the heroic couplet when, as it were, the signal is given. 2 It must be borne in mind that these rhymed passages occur in the midst of blank verse. As soon as the little game begins, the style of the language becomes conscious, and the couplet is consistently

2. J. C. Collins, the editor, here makes an error in the line numbering. His numbering would be 211-251.
used until some incident occurs to interrupt it. Then the artifice is broken down, and speech returns to conversational blank verse.

This same convention in courtly love scenes occurs in Shakespeare with very deliberate design. When Romeo and Juliet meet for the first time under conventionally romantic circumstances they both play the same conventional game.¹

Romeo. If I profane with my unworthiest hand This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this: My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

Juliet. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much, Which mannerly devotion shows in this; For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch, And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

Romeo. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too? Juliet. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use, in prayer
Romeo. O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do; (etc.)

This dialogue was never meant to convey passion. Nor indeed is it lyrical as Heuser suggests.² On the contrary it is a deliberate piece of artifice, fitting to the courtly lovers. A few lines further on ³Juliet herself informs us the nature of the whole conduct:

"..........You kiss by the book."

In other words she is telling Romeo that he kisses as the romantic lover of the fashionable literature of the day should

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¹ Romeo and Juliet. I.v.95-105.
² Der Coupletreim in Shakespeare's Dramen. p. 75.
³ I.v.114.
kiss. In our modern idiom, (if an absurdity be allowed to emphasize a point which has been entirely overlooked so far by other critics) it is as much as if she should say, "you kiss just as they do in the movies."

Referring to another aspect of the dialogue quoted above, we note that its conceits are the high-water mark of Euphuistic artifice.

Olivia falls into the heroic couplet when she makes her confession of love to Viola, whom she believes to be a man. Yet this is a much later play than Romeo and Juliet, if we are to accept the chronological order given by most modern editors of Shakespeare. Obviously, there is no problem about Olivia's use of the couplet. No Elizabethan dramatist would have made her utter such a declaration in any other form. It is couched in the conventional courtly idiom.

As we may believe from the note quoted in the Introduction, Dr. Rickert had difficulty in accounting for many of the couplets in A Midsummer Nights Dream. The same difficulty confronted Heuser who relied on two words to dispose of the rhymed couplets used almost consistently by the two pairs of lovers. These words were lyrical, and emotional.

1. Twelfth Night. III.ii.1-10.

2. E. K. Chambers in his William Shakespeare (Vol. 1) gives the following dates: Twelfth Night 1600-1. [p. 405] and Romeo and Juliet 1595 [p. 346].
When we refuse his explanation, it must be pointed out that Hermia, Demetrius, Lysander and Helena, are typical lovers of the courtly convention. Hence they speak in the courtly language of verse, that is, the heroic couplet. We could even obtain the hint from Addison who asserted that the two forms, blank verse and rhyme were to be regarded as "two separate languages".  

Failure to realise this fact has led Heuser to make the statement regarding Love's Labour's Lost, for which there is absolutely no evidence in substantiation.

Such a statement serves only to emphasize how greatly misunderstood is Shakespeare's use of the rhymed couplet. Love's Labour's Lost is a comedy of courtly wit and courtly love entirely. For this reason by far the greatest number of verses are in rhyme, since the couplet is predetermined by the choice of the subject matter. The fact that Shakespeare turned away from the court, and went to the larger world for his material, is an entirely different matter. The whole point is, that, wherever the courtly situation comes up, the couplet is the medium. These situations are not always clearly recognisable and often an apparently casual couplet is difficult

1. see Introduction, p. 1.
2. Der Coupletreim in Shakespeares Dramen, p. 31.
to identify on this ground. There are many uses of the couplet determined by courtly love which we have yet to discuss.

One of these uses is found in the conventional discussion on love; sometimes the lover is alone and speaks in soliloquy, sometimes the lover confides in a friend. Thus Balthazar has confided in Lorenzo and gives a good example of the typical discussion about love.

*Lorenzo.* In time the flint is pearst with softest shower, And she in time will face from her disdaine, And rue the sufferance of your frendly paine.

*Balthazar.* No, she is wilder and more hard withal, Then beast, or bird, or tree, or stoney wall. But wherefore blot I Bel-imperias name? It is my fault, not she that merits blame. My feature is not to content her sight, My words are rude, and worke her no delight. The lines I send her are but harsh and ill, Such as doe drop from Pan and Marsias quill.¹

This discussion of the lover's mistress extends thus for 31 lines until the entrance of Pedringano, who supplies the interruption. Discussions of this kind are part of the courtly love convention. Again, as elsewhere, the foregoing excerpt shows the balanced syntax, classical allusion, unnatural natural history, and similar accompaniments of Euphuistic artifice. In the same idiom Ida and her mother hold a formal discussion of love and marriage.² Lady Capulet describes Paris to Juliet in the same conventional mode.³ Romeo and

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¹ The Spanish Tragedy. II.i.7-16.
² James IV. II.i.678-705.
³ Romeo and Juliet. I.iii.83-94.
Benvolio, discuss Rosalind. 1.

Romeo. O! she is rich in beauty; only poor
That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.

Benvolio. Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste?

Romeo. She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste;
For beauty, starved with her severity,
Cuts beauty off from all posterity. (etc.)

As certain as the discussion is artificial, so too is the
object of the discussion. Rosalind never appears in the play.
She is the typical unyielding beauty, about whose chastity
many a debate is held. It is interesting to note how every
reaction of the Romeo of the first scenes is conventional and
artificial. When he first catches sight of Juliet he exclaims—

O! she doth teach the torches to burn bright.
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear; 2.

achieving in three lines two examples of double alliteration
and a "preciously" conceived conceit. Cressida3. makes her
pronouncement on love in couplets in a soliloquy. The lovesick
Orlando4. pinning up his verses to his mistress on the trees
in the forest of Arden exclaims—

"Hang there, my verse in witness of my love!"

—calling upon his mistress' name and conjuring Diana to
witness and patronise his passion.

1. Romeo and Juliet. I.i.221-6.
4. As You Like It. III.i.1-10 A.R.
The incident of the exchange of rings in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is part of this convention.

Proteus. Why, then we'll make exchange; here take you this.

Julia. And seal the bargain with a holy kiss.

Again, Heuser missed the true significance of this couplet when he said it was an instance of rhyme used for a lyrical passage. The true reason, here as elsewhere, is that the incident is a conventional incident - the exchange of such vows and tokens being part of the courtly love tradition. An incident such as this must be regarded as a carry-over from the conventional treatment, just as much as we must recognise in Juliet's reference to Romeo -

0, for a falconers voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!

the significance of tassel-gentle. These few examples should be enough to make clear the premise of the whole argument that the couplet was used to mark passages and scenes in the courtly love convention. The form sets them apart from the blank verse and prose of the rest of the play. There are many traces of this convention, everywhere marked by the heroic couplet in the romantic comedies of Shakespeare and his fellow dramatists.

1. II.ii.6-7.
2. Der Coupletreim in Shakespeares Dramen, p. 10.
3. The alternate rhyme and sonnet form are exceptional.
4. see Appendices A and B.
But a final observation may profitably be made before we pass on to the next consideration. We have one play, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* which offers peculiarly strong proof in support of the foregoing theory. This play of Beaumont and Fletcher definitely establishes one thing: the popularity of the heroic romance. In this clever burlesque, the outworn fiction of chivalry is cleverly ridiculed. Two of the main elements of burlesque are the unfortunate Humphrey, who represents the courtly lover, and Ralpho, who essays the role of a knight. Humphrey makes awkward heroics out of everything he says, and Ralpho tries unsuccessfully to talk in the same form, to the general amusement of the audience. These two are the only people in the play who speak in couplets and the dramatists' intention is plainly to be seen in this respect, as it is in the total effect of the play.

To avoid misunderstanding, we must bear in mind that the courtly love phenomenon is limited by its nature to certain kinds of plays, and hence is dependent on the author's choice of subject matter. Marlowe's great plays, for instance, show no example of the couplet so used. But this fact does not discredit the convention; it merely records the fact that courtly love has no place in Marlowe's drama. Generally, we observe that this couplet convention occurs mainly in the lighter court comedies, and does not enter into the comedy of humours or the realistic drama. Where the courtly convention does not account for the couplet, we shall show in the ensuing chapters that other conventions regulated the use of this form.
Chapter III

The Couplet as a Medium of Artifice and Formality.

Armado is a most illustrious wight,  
A man of fire-new words, fashions own knight.  

Love's Labour’s Lost. I.i.176-7.

The heading of this chapter is neither very self-explanatory nor all inclusive of the types of usage we shall discuss herein. But it is the best generalisation that can be applied to the various instances that necessarily belong together in our classification. The terms under which we shall now consider couplet usage are as follows:—wit, repartee, politeness, formality, reserve and dignity. All these uses have been already anticipated in statement 1. The conclusions reached are based primarily on the consideration of the circumstances of the couplet’s occurrence, whilst the actual language itself has in most cases borne out the deductions made from the circumstances. It hardly need be pointed out that a couplet is a far more pointed means of expressing a sharp witty thought, than is the blank verse line. In Shakespeare, the most conspicuous use of the couplet for this purpose is seen in King John. Of this play we make one general observation: the couplet is not the Bastard’s natural idiom, for whenever he is in action, off guard, alone, or with his mother, he makes no use of rhyme. On the other hand, when

1. see Chapter I. page 8.
2. Instances referred to are listed together in Appendix A under King John. p. 88.
he is consciously trying to be witty, he speaks in couplets. Thus he covers the disadvantage of his illegitimacy by playing on the theme in rhyme. Hence, his use of the couplet may be considered under the heading of artifice. Rhyme is the natural way for any lines to gain prominence in the midst of a blank verse passage or scene.

A different type of wit, is the pointed rejoinder of Bassanio to Antonio:

Ant. This Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.
Bass. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

The one thing in common that such a remark has with the thrusts of the Bastard, is that the remark of Antonio's friend is a conscious play of the intellect; and "wit" among the Elizabethans implied this meaning. Here again we must observe that the couplet is an indication of the conscious intellect at work, not as Dr. Rickert's note suggests, the emotional impulse."

The smart last word, in comedy, is yet another instance of the "wit" couplet. Julia, anxious to be rid of the impertinently apt remarks of Lucetta, is "bested" by the girl's wit--

Lucetta. To plead for love deserves more fee than hate.
Julia. Will ye be gone?
Lucetta. That you may ruminate. Exit.

1. Merchant of Venice. I.iii.179-80.
2. Two Gentlemen of Verona. I.ii.46-7.
# see Introduction. p. 3.
Benedick outdoes Claudio, by catching up the latter's instrument of wit, and thrusting it back upon him--

Claudio. I think he thinks upon the savage bull.
Tush! fear not, man, we'll tip thy horns with gold,
And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,
As once Europa did at lusty Jove,
When he would play the noble beast in love.

Benedick. Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low:
And some such strange bull leap'd your father's cow,
And got a calf in the same noble feat,
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat. 1.

It is notable that the triumphant remark is put in rhyme to emphasize the victory over the blank verse of Claudio.

Baptista shows a ready wit in his reply to Gremio--

Gremio. Was ever match clapp'd up so suddenly?
Baptista. Faith, gentlemen, now I play a merchant's part,
And venture madly on a desperate mart. 2.

Suffolk in Henry VI. Part 2 makes a neat rejoinder to Cardinal Beaufort--

Car. Duke Humphrey has done a miracle to-day.
Suffolk. True; made the lame to leap and fly away. 3.

The answer that Guiderius makes to Cloten can hardly be termed witty, but the conscious design of the rejoinder may admit it as comparable to those couplets already referred to.

Cloten. ...............What slave art thou?
Guid. More slavish did I ne'er than answering
A "slave" without a knock. 4.

2. The Taming of the Shrew. II.i.319-21.
3. II.i.159-60.
Since it is primarily an understanding of the use of the couplet that we are endeavouring to arrive at, we may properly recognise the kinship of all such uses of the couplet. They are pointed remarks, sometimes humourous, occasionally sarcastic, and not infrequently exercises of a ready wit, the virtue of the courtier and man of fashion. For all such lines, rhyme has an undeniable effectiveness, and the frequency of these occurrences in Shakespeare is by no means a unique thing in Elizabethan drama.¹

No less deliberate on the part of the speaker (let us say) is the use of the couplet for the formal, polite, and courtly language, which conforms to conventional behaviour. Unlike the artificiality of "courtly love", where characters conform to a literary formula, instances of formality, politeness and courtesy here exemplified, arise naturally, as in real life, just as we ourselves use certain formalities at appropriate times. Thus, on an occasion which demands some ceremony, the Duke turns from the personal terms of blank verse, and in rhyme, makes the gracious and polite invitation to Jaques and the company--

Meantime, forget this new-fall'n dignity,
And fall into our rustic revelry.
Play, music! and you, brides and bridegrooms all
With measure heap'd in joy, to the measure fall.²

¹. Cf. Examples under Artifice and Formality in Appendix B. page 113.
². As You Like It. V.iv.183-6.
Just the correct remark of the gentleman to his host occurs in *Pericles* and here again rhyme is the medium which emphasizes the polish—

**Marshal** (to knight) Sir, yonder is your place.

*Pericles.* Some other is more fit.

**First Knight.** Contend not, sir; for we are gentlemen
That neither in our hearts nor outward eyes
Envy the great nor do the low despise.

*Pericles.* You are right courteous knights.

Joan La Pucelle, in courteous manner, explains her refusal to Charles' offer of marriage in couplets for the same reason—

I must not yield to any rites of love,
For my profession's sacred from above;
When I have chased all thy foes from hence,
Then will I think upon a recompense. 1.

It is a situation, here again, that demands formality and dignity; for this the couplet is the natural medium.

**Hubert,** in respectful tones, answers his **King**—

**King John.** By heaven, Hubert, I am almost asham'd
To say what good respect I have of thee.

**Hubert.** I am much bounden to your majesty.2.

From this point of view, a great many scattered couplets can be better understood. Often the failure to recognise their intent, lies in the fact that they coincide with the end of a speech. But of this phenomenon we shall have more to say in a later chapter.3.

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2. King John. III.iii.27-29.

3. see Chapter VI.
If much of what follows involves hairsplitting distinctions, it is because the significance of couplet usage in these respects has not been before noted. But we cannot overstress the deliberate design of Shakespeare in his use of this verse form.

We shall next consider another phase of what may be considered formal use. We shall extend the term "formality" to include any situation which demands "deliberate" use of language. Now the couplet may appear to emphasize this formality for dramatic reasons, and in fact it is so employed with striking effect in a situation in *King Lear*. The opening scene of Act I. has moments of great passion, the mad anger of the old king breaks in violence amid the freedom of the blank verse. The pleading interceptions of Kent, and others, too, are impulsive and emotional. But when the irrevocable decision of Lear to banish Kent, has been made, Kent turns with the studied control of a courtier and bids a formal farewell to the king and his daughters, in even couplets which mark the control and emphasize the restraint of his words. The gentle France, who has come to the side of Cordelia, utters a courtly and dignified speech, contrasting with the lack of control in the surroundings. Lear retorts in rhyme, climbing back on the dignity from which his passion had but lately shaken him—

1. I.i.183-87.
2. I.i.257-264.
3. or we may interpret this as a satirical imitation on the part of Lear.
Thou hast her, France; let her be thine, for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of hers again, therefore be gone.
Without our grace, our love, our benison.

Such a speech has the effect of a formal pronouncement. It must not be regarded as a passionate utterance. It is true, of course, that Lear has recently given way to passion, but then, observe, in blank verse. Here his speech may be bitter, but it is uttered in dignity, under the restriction of the heroic couplet.

To such a degree does a similar use of the couplet occur in Richard II that the play stands out in many cases as a problem play in this respect. Heuser considers rhyme in this drama as indicating the predominantly lyrical nature of the verse. But his statement lacks the conviction of a substantiated theory, primarily because of failure to recognise the existence of a convention. Better understanding of the couplet usage in this play can be achieved, if it be compared with the passage mentioned above in King Lear. Richard loses control of himself, and is chided by Carlisle and Aumerle

Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
With solemn reverence; throw away respect,
Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,
For you have but mistook me all this while:
I live with bread like you, feel want,
Taste grief, need friends: subjected thus,
How can you say I am a king?

My lord, wise men ne'er sit and wail their woes,
But presently prevent the ways they wail.

1. I.i.265-268.
2. Richard II. III.ii.144-77.
To fear the foe, since fear oppresseth strength,
Gives in your weakness strength unto your foe,
And so your follies fight against yourself.
Fear and be slain; no worse can come to fight;
And fight and die is death destroying death;
Where fearing dying pays death servile breath.

Aumerle. My father hath a power; inquire of him
And learn to make a body of a limb.

Richard. Thou chidst me well. Proud Bolingbroke,
I come
To change blows with thee for our day of doom.
This ague-fit of fear is over blown;
An easy task it is, to win our own

It is significant that Richard admits in the last speech, which is in rhyme, that he has now recovered his control, whereas in his abandon, he spoke in blank verse. Listening to counsel, he becomes reasonable, and Shakespeare uses the couplet, with its reserved and controlled effect, to show the change in the man's speech. The whole point of the argument here is that of the interpretation of the lines, and fortunately, in this instance, the actual words of the speaker will support no other interpretation.

Robert Greene's play exemplifies well a phase of the couplet usage worth quoting. The artificial situation involving hidden identity demands deliberate and calculated language in the scene which finds Nano and Dorothea (disguised as a man), in the presence of Lady Anderson, whose interest in the ex-queen calls for some careful tact on the part of the first two.1

Lady A. Why sit you sad, good sir? be not dismaide.

Nano. Ile lay my life, this man would be a maide.

Dorothea. (aside) Faine would I shewe my selfe, and change my tire.

Lady A. Where on divine you, sir?

Nano. Uppon desire.

Madam, marke but my skill, ile lay my life, My maister here, will proove a married wife.

Dorothea (aside to Nano) Wilt thou betray me, Nano?

In Middleton¹ may be noted a similar use of the couplet, this time to mark a formal address under formal circumstances.

Viola. With pardon of your grace, myself to you all, At your own weapons, thus do answer all. For paying away my heart, that was my own; Fight not to win that, in good troth, 'tis gone. etc.

Other instances of what is here termed formal usage in Shakespeare have diverse effects, but are none the less classifiable in this category. The act of the knighting of the Bastard is such an example in King John.²

King John. Kneel thou down Philip, but arise more great; Arise Sir Richard, and Plantagenet.

King Richard reserves a couplet for the formal declaration of banishment upon Bolingbroke--

Six frozen winters spent, Return with welcome home from banishment.³

Gloucester's speech is in the tone of reserved and dignified resignation--

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1. Blurt, Master Constable. V.iii.104-121.
2. I.i.161-2.
Gloucester. My staff! here noble Henry, is my staff;  
As willingly do I the same resign  
As e'er my father Henry made it mine;  
And even as willingly at thy feet I leave it  
As others would ambitiously receive it.  
Farewell, good King! When I am dead and gone,  
May honourable peace attend thy throne. (exit) 1.

There are so many different aspects of this couplet usage  
and the occasions are so diverse, as we have already noted,  
that it is often quite impossible to say of certain couplets,  
that they belong to this, or that classification. Several  
instances of couplets listed in Appendix A under the general  
heading of this chapter will be found to reveal prophecies.  
Heuser recognises the fact that such utterances are found in  
rhyme.². Because these prophecies are in the nature of a  
formal utterance they have been included under this category.  
They may be regarded equally well, however, as instances of  
speeches which require isolation and nothing more. Thus we  
include such couplets with the reservation that there are  
doubtless arguments which would include them elsewhere.

Ben Jonson puts an entire scene, between two poets,  
Horace and Trebatius into heroic couplets.³. But the effect,  
although of comic design, may be compared with formal uses  
already described. For the two characters are set apart, and  
their stiff conversation is very different from the rest of  
the play. Middleton does the same thing when he makes the

3. The Poetaster, III.v.
Old Courtier speak in couplets. In both cases the formality of the couplet enhances the comic effect.

To conclude, we must observe that the foregoing pages have of necessity been largely confined to Shakespeare. Parallel examples of the usage instanced are not hard to find outside Shakespeare. Generally, however, the tendency to use heroics to imply formality, convention, or some comparable artificial restraint, is found in many places in the plays of Shakespeare's contemporaries. Hence to avoid over-elaboration the comparable instances in Chapman, Marlowe, Greene, Kyd, etc., have been confined to Appendix B for reference.

1. Blurt, Master Constable. IV.i.1-23.
Chapter IV

Couplets Used for Purposes of Isolation.

That the structure and end rhyme of the heroic couplet naturally make for conspicuousness, we have already noted. In blank verse, rhyme will have the corresponding effect to the ear that italics have to the eye. In nine of Shakespeare's plays, a special use of the couplet is observably governed by the need, as it were, to italicize.

In *The Tempest*¹ the masque of Ceres is a scene which calls for such isolation. Heuser, while suggesting several reasons for the couplet rhyme here, missed the answer which is most obvious and, as comparative study shows, the most satisfactory. The two reasons advanced in *Der Coupletreim in Shakespeares Dramen*² are: 1. that the use of rhyme is general for supernatural beings in Shakespeare. (He suggests the tetrametre would be more regular); 2. that the lyrical nature of the verse demands rhyme.

But there are other reasons to be considered. In the first place, the court masques are nearly always in rhyme, so that this particular masque scene only follows what was the usual mode of the masque. A comparable example of the mask within a play is found in Beaumont and Fletcher.³ But a second

1. IV.i.60-104; 128-137.
2. see Sec. 1.
3. *The Maids Tragedy*. I.ii.137-
observation is more significant. It so happens that in eight other plays of Shakespeare, the couplet is used to mark a scene apart from the rest of the play. Similar examples can be found among other plays of his day. But first we must discuss specific examples of this usage in Shakespeare.

To begin with the most obviously comparable examples in Shakespeare, we may say that the "Pyramus and Thisbe" incident in The Midsummer Night's Dream,¹ is a play within the play. It is a court entertainment for the benefit of the persons within the play proper. This is true also of the Masque in The Tempest. Both the masque and the play are "shows" within the play. The play staged within Hamlet² for the king, is a court presentation. In all three cases there is need for isolating these shows from the lines of the play proper. It is true of course that an explanation may be made regarding Pyramus and Thisbe in that it is a burlesque of romantic drama; the masque in The Tempest may be said to be rhymed because it is a masque. But despite these facts we have an example of a comparable nature in Chapman's Gentleman Usher, where a show is given within the play.³

The principle of isolation involved in the above uses of the couplet should be extended, for purposes of symmetry in the general discussion, to other instances in the plays of

1. V.i. from 𐀃 172.
2. III.ii.167-92; 194-235; 237-240; 270-75.
Shakespeare. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the outstanding example of couplet usage occurs in the scene dealing with the masking incident.\(^1\). Here again it may be argued that the characters are disguised as fairies, and therefore speak in rhyme; or that the incident bears kinship to the masque. Quite obviously the formal rhyme adds to the humour. Yet it may be said that, as these characters acted a part within a play (or a game within the play), the use of rhymed couplets follows the same custom as the above examples.

In *Cymbeline* it is certainly desirable to isolate the speech of Jupiter from that of the characters in the play proper. This seems quite a sufficient reason to account for the occurrence of rhyme at this point.\(^2\). Similarly the brief utterance of Diana in *Pericles*\(^3\) must be in a differentiated verse form. In this same play Gower's varied rhymed verses require a mention. In the earlier scenes, Gower's speech is confined to tetrametres, which need not concern us here. But in Acts IV and V\(^4\) he speaks in pentameter, rhyming alternately in the first instance of Act V, and in heroic couplets elsewhere.\(^4\). Gower (possibly the first appearance of the

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1. V.v. 43-76; 77-9; 80-93; 94-96; 97-8.
3. V.i.244-7 A.R. 248-9.
narrator# in a drama) is a speaker whose lines must stand apart from those of the play itself, just as "Time" in The Winter's Tale¹ must be isolated.

In addition to the instances already given, Appendix A will be found to include the speeches of the Faeries in The Midsummer Night's Dream. When we include those couplets in this category of the general classification, we may seem to be a long way from the first examples which included the play within the play. But there is still a reason for regarding this example as best included here. It is arguable that rhyme is an appropriate ornament to the fairies' speech; but unlike the witches in Macbeth, who use the rhyming tetrametre for their weird incantations, these fairies have to speak in a fairly normal manner in order to mix with the human society about them. Yet a mark of differentiation is necessary. For this reason they speak in the same measure as the blank verse line, but with rhyme added, that is, their speech is in heroic couplets.

Under this category of rhymes certain nondramatic couplets have been included for want of a better denomination. The rhymed epilogue and prologue is a common enough occurrence in Elizabethan drama. Marlowe, Greene, Marston and Jonson so frequently use the heroic couplet for this purpose that we need not give examples here. Strictly speaking, these instances

¹. IV.i.1-32.

# Gower's function in the play is not strictly comparable with the traditional Chorus in this writer's opinion.
are formal addresses to the audience and might properly be recognised under the heading of the previous chapter. The epilogue and prologue, however, have this in common with the couplets of the play within a play, in that they are addressed to an audience and need to be distinct from the actual course of the drama itself. Really, such instances are best left out of the general discussion since they are actually outside the drama.

Couplets Used for Purposes of Isolation (2).

The observation made by Abbot is sound. Moreover, Heuser firmly establishes the fact that frequently an aside or part of an aside occurs in heroic couplets, in the plays of Shakespeare. There is little that can be said further in the case of Shakespeare. There is, however, outside Shakespeare, further proof that it was a measure sometimes resorted to by dramatists of the period, wherever it was necessary to isolate the asides for purposes of distinguishing them from the lines of the other players.

Thus in The Jew of Malta Barabas utters two lines to himself and the audience, while the rest of his speech is to the characters on stage--

Barabas. Where wast thou born?
Ithamore. In Thrace; brought up in Arabia.
Barabas. So much the better, thou art for my turn,
     An hundred crowns, I'll have him; there's the coin.
1 Officer. Then mark him, sir, and take him hence.

1. A Shakespearian Grammar. sec. 515.
2. Marlowe, The Jew of Malta. II.iii.130-140.
Barabas. I, mark him, you were best, for this is he
That by my help shall do much villainy. (aside)
My lord, farewell: Come, sirrah you are mine.
As for the diamond, it shall be yours;
I pray you, sir, be no stranger at my house,
All that I have shall be at your command.

In a scene between the king and his Ateukin in James IV\(^1\), the
couplet is used in an aside in a similar manner.

King of Scots. Now am I free from sight of common eie,
Where to myselfe I may disclose the griefe
That hath too great a part in mine affects.

Ateukin. (aside) And now is my time by wiles and
words to rise,
Greater than those, that thinks themselves more
wise.

King of Scots. And first, fond king etc......

Although texts do not indicate an aside, the insincere
relations of Balthazar, Lorenzo and Hieronimo suggests that a
line spoken by Hieronimo was not meant for the ears of Balthazar
and Lorenzo.

Hieronimo. Why then ile fit you; say no more.
When I was yong, I gave my minde
And pilde myselfe to fruitles Poetrie;
Which though it profite the professor naught,
Yet is it passing pleasing to the world.

Lorenzo. And how for that?

Hieronimo. Marrie, my good Lord, thus:
(And yet me thinks you are too quicke with us) (aside #
When in Toledo there I studied
It was my chance to write a Tragedie,
See heere, my Lords.-

Such an occurrence as this has an exact parallel in Shakespeare's
Richard III, (though there is no notice of it in the text),

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2. The Spanish Tragedy. IV.i.69-78.
If we accept Abbot's opinion\footnote{\textit{A Shakespearian Grammar.} Sec. 515.} that Queen Margaret is "evidently intended" to utter IV.iv.25 as an aside:

\begin{quote}
Queen Elizabeth. When didst thou sleep, when such a deed was done?

Queen Margaret. When holy Harry died, and my sweet son. (aside)
\end{quote}

Seianus' utterance at the end of Act I may be regarded as an aside, isolated as it is—

\begin{quote}
He that, with such wrong mov'd, can beare it through.
With patience, and an even mind, knowes how
To turne it backe. Wrath, cover'd, carryes fate:
Revenge is lost, if I professe my hate.
What was my practice late, I'le now pursue
As my fell iustice. This hath stil'd it new.\footnote{Jonson, \textit{Seianus.} I. 576-581.}
\end{quote}

There are a few rhymed asides in Shakespeare, one or two of which may serve to make clear the case, which is already established by Heuser. Iago's aside to Roderigo is marked by rhyme.

\begin{quote}
How now Roderigo! 3.

I pray you, after the lieutenant; go.
\end{quote}

Macbeth reveals his thoughts to the audience in a rhymed aside:

\begin{quote}
The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'er leap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires!
Let not light see my black and deep desires;
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.\footnote{Macbeth. I.iv.46-53.}
\end{quote}

In Hamlet the Queen makes a similar confession, although no other character is upon the stage at the time.

\begin{footnotes}
1. \textit{A Shakespearian Grammar.} Sec. 515.
3. \textit{Othello.} II.iii.142-3.
\end{footnotes}
To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss;
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt. 1

Whether the following couplet occurs by chance in Prospero's aside cannot be ascertained:

"It goes on, I see,
As my soul prompts it. Spirit, fine spirit!
I'll free thee
Within two days for this."

But it is fairly safe to regard it as purely accidental.

Sometimes an aside is found rhymed where other reasons support the use of the couplet. For example, in Othello. V. i. 128-9. The aside is at the scene end, a place where rhyme is customary (see Chapter VI). Portia's aside requires closer examination.

How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green ey'd jealousy
O love! be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
In measure rain thy joy; scant this excess;
I feel too much thy blessing; make it less, 2.

This contains a prayer to love and is really within the realms of the romantic love convention discussed in Chapter II.

Although we may conclude that rhyme serves another purpose in the last quotations given, and that some rhymed asides may be considered from other points of view, it does seem likely that the occasional and subtle use of the couplet such as the instance in Richard III already quoted and such another instance as the following are deliberate marks of the

1. Hamlet. IV.v. 17-20. (This is also of a sententious nature).
2. The Merchant of Venice. III. i.i. 108-11.
aside.

Simonides. He's but a country gentleman;
He has done no more than other knights have done;
He has broken a staff or so; so let it pass.

Thaisa. To me he seems like diamond to glass.\(^1\)

It seems unlikely that Thaisa should give herself away in regard to her feelings toward the gentleman in question, since her revelation in the previous aside,

By Juno, that is queen of marriage,
All viands that I eat do seem unsavoury,
Wishing him my meat.\(^2\)

suggests an interest too personal for common hearing. Pisanio's rhymed remark we find indicated as an aside.

I'll write my lord she's dead. 0 Imogen! 3.
Safe mayst thou wander, safe return again!

Yet his preceding and unrhymed words are also marked aside. This would hardly substantiate the "rhymed aside" contention, unless

Or this, or perish
She's far enough; and what he learns by this
May prove his travel, not her danger\(^4\).

is regarded as a couplet, and his is not a permissible rhyme. The former speech of Pisanio may be regarded as an

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1. Pericles. II.iii.33-6.
instance of the commonly rhymed "optative" expressions to be discussed in Chapter V.

We may safely conclude this much, however, that asides are often found in couplet form. Sometimes they contain aphorism, are at the end of a scene, or happen to be an example of another convention, such as courtly love. Yet so frequently is the aside found to contain heroic couplets that we may conveniently record this fact among the general findings of our examination.

1. see Portia's aside quoted on page 40.
Chapter V

Couplet Usage for Rhetorical Effect.

In the foregoing chapters of the essay we have considered the couplet under the following general points: 1. as a medium of artificial speech, dictated either by a convention, as in the case of courtly love, or by the artificial nature of the characters or the dramatic situation; 2. as a means of isolating certain passages of a play apart from the main current of the speech. We have remarked in the Introduction, that in addition to the above points, the couplet may be recognised as suitable for rhetorical speech.¹

An examination of the plays of Kyd, Marlowe, Greene, and Marston, in particular, reveals a design behind certain couplet usages, which has hitherto not been commented upon. For a great many instances of what have been believed previously to be merely casual and sporadic couplets in the Elizabethan drama, when more closely examined and compared, prove to be employed in accordance with an intentional design to serve what may be termed a rhetorical purpose. This is most plainly evident in plays which embody a great deal of Senecan rhetoric.

Though hardly a typical Elizabethan play, Kyd's *Cornelia* provides us with the most regular instances of this usage, and proves useful as an illustration of what we are to

¹. see Statement 2, Chapter I, page 8.
discuss. For in all of its markedly Senecan aspects, that is, 
its long rhetorical speeches, sententious moralizing, and 
stichomythia, the couplet is a significant part of the writer's 
technique. It is in the long speeches however that we are 
most likely to miss the significance of the couplet.

Within these speeches, occurring generally from eight 
to fifteen lines apart, are more than eighty separate couplets. 
All are closed couplets, and consistently coincide with the 
blank verse paragraph or period. If the eye fails to observe 
the significance, the ear cannot miss noticing that these 
instances are not merely coincidences, but an intrinsic part 
of the structure of the speeches. The first twenty-five lines 
of the play are typical.

Cicero. Vouchsafe Immortals, and (above the rest)
Great Jupiter, our Cities sole Protector,
That if (provok'd against us by our evils)
You needs wil plague us with your ceasles wroth,
At least to chuse those forth that are in fault,
And save the rest in these tempestious broiles:
Els let the mischiefe that should them befall
Be pour'd on me, that one may die for all.
Oft hath such sacrifice appeas'd your ires,
And oft yee have your heavie hands with-held
From this poore people, when (with one mans losse)
Your pittie hath preserv'd the rest untucht:
But we, disloiall to our owne defence,
Faint-harted do these liberties enthrall,
Which to preserve (unto our after good)
Our fathers hazarded their derest blood.
Yet Brutus, Manlius, hardie Scevola,
And stout Camillus, are returned fro Stix,
Desiring armes to ayde our Capitoll.
Yea, come they are, and fiery as before,
Under a Tyrant see our bastard harts
Lye idely sighing, while our shamefull soules
Endure a million of base controls. 1.

Since such couplets occur consistently throughout a whole play, it seems reasonable to suppose that the writer was conscious of the effect he produced. Moreover, the fact that this play is a translation from a formal French model of a Senecan play, supports the theory that the couplet, as here used, was employed according to rule, and not by caprice. It will be clear also, from what follows, that Kyd had a clear notion of what he was doing, since he was not alone in this practice. The fact that the drama of the period was not confined to rhetoric of this type, however, will explain why nowhere else can we find such a perfect example of this usage. But in as much as rhetoric was one of the elements of Elizabethan dramatic speech, the couplet occurs often enough to establish its use as a "rhymed period" or "pause".

Support for the belief that the occasional couplet in *Cornelia* was intended to mark a rhetorical pause is found in the sentence structure immediately following the rhymed stop. Frequently, after such couplets, the first line of the ensuing paragraph is found to begin with the words *yet*, *now*, *but*, *then*, *else*, etc. This bears out our contention; for these words are of such a nature that they indicate a change in tone, a slight shift in the course of the thought. Actual parallels of this use are found elsewhere in Kyd's plays, as well as in those of Greene, Marlowe, Marston, and Shakespeare.

1. Garnier, Robert, *Cornélie*. 
In The Spanish Tragedy, the general, describing the battle, delivers a rhetorically impressive account to the Spanish court, and ends his first paragraph of ten lines:

Both armies raising dreadful clamors to the skie,
That vallies, hills and rivers made rebound,
And heaven itselfe was frighted with the sound.¹

Emperor Cosroe replies eloquently to Meander's vow of loyal service:

Thanks, good Meander: then Cosroe reign,
And govern Persia in her former pomp!
Now send embassage to thy neighbour kings,
And let them know the Persian king is changed,
From one that knew not what a king should do,
To one that can command what 'longs thereto.
And now we will to fair Persepolis, etc. ²

Here as elsewhere, the change in thought and tone is apparent after the couplet. Almost identical with the general's narration quoted above, is an example from Marston. Carthalon tells of the defeat of the Carthaginians—

Scipio, advanced like the god of blood,
Leads up grim war, that father of foul wounds,
Whose sinewy feet are steep'd in gore, whose hideous voice
Makes turrets tremble and whole cities shake;
Before whose brows flight and disorder hurry;
With whom march burnings, murder, wrong, waste, rapes;
Behind whom a sad train is seen, woe, fears,
Tortures, lean need, famine, and helpless tears. ³

This of course is climactic. Continuing his speech Carthalon "changes tack" as it were:

Now make we equal stand in mutual view;
We judge'd the Romans Eighteen thousand foot,
Five thousand horse; etc.

² Marlowe, Tamburlaine, Part I. II.v.18-23.
The bombast of Greene's *Alphonsus* is sprinkled with this device.\(^1\) Peele, too, makes occasional use of the rhymed period.\(^2\).

Another exponent of Senecan rhetoric, George Chapman, uses the couplet with striking similarity of effect. The messenger in *Bussy D'Ambois* conveying a piece of information in the typically Senecan style, ends a "paragraph" thus:

> At last, the deadly-bitten point tugged off,  
> On fell his yet undaunted foe so fiercely,  
> That, only made more horrid with his wound,  
> Great D'Ambois shrunk and gave a little ground;

At this point there is clearly a pause for he starts afresh—

> But soon returned, redoubled in his danger, etc.\(^3\).

Shakespeare, with whom this essay is primarily concerned, does not indulge, to any great extent, in these long undramatic speeches. Yet occasionally he uses the couplet to mark a pause in a similar way. Queen Mary in a rhetorical declamation to Queen Elizabeth uses the device—

> Decline all this, and see that now thou art:  
> For happy wife, a most distressed widow;  
> For joyful mother, one that wails her name;  
> For one being su'd to, one that humbly sues;  
> For queen, a very caitiff crowned with care;  
> For one that scorn'd at me now scorned of me;  
> For one being fear'd of all, now fearing one;  
> For one commanding all, obey'd of none. \(^4\).

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1. see Appendix B. *under Greene. Rhetorical Device.*
2. see Appendix B. *under Peele. Rhetorical Device.*
The couplet marks a climax, as it does in the instance quoted from Marston. The speech continues at a different level—

Thus hath the course of justice whirl'd about,
And left thee but a very prey to time; etc.

Antiochus uses the same device in a long speech to Pericles.

Before thee stands this fair Hesperides,
With golden fruit, but dangerous to be touch'd;
For death-like dragons here affright thee hard:
Her face, like heaven, enticeth thee to view
Her countless glory, which desert must gain;
And which, without desert, because thine eye
Presumes to reach, all thy whole heap must die.
Yon sometime famous princes, like thyself,
Drawn by report, adventurous by desire, etc. 2.

The complete and sudden shift in thought indicated after the couplet in one of Antony's speeches is yet another noteworthy instance of this couplet usage.

Thus did I desire it:
What our contempts do often hurl from us
We wish it ours again; the present pleasure,
By revolution lowering, does become
The opposite of itself: she's good, being gone;
The hand could pluck her back that shov'd her on.
I must from this enchanting queen break off; 3.

Perhaps the most conclusive evidence that can be found that this was the intention behind this use of the couplet is in Marston. For in the first act of The Malcontent we find this:

Malevole. 'Tis gone; 'tis swallow'd like a mineral:
Some way 'twill work; pheut, I'll not shrink;
He's resolute who can no lower sink.

At this point after the couplet, the stage directions read:

"Bilioso re-entering, Malevole shifteth his speech."

thus supplying us with external evidence which adds considerable weight to our argument. There is, to be sure, one disadvantage in the example, in that the couplet Malevole ends on contains an aphoristic thought. It is the common practice for all such aphorisms to appear in couplet form. However, even without this example, there are enough instances of the rhymed period in Elizabethan drama to support the theory that such a device was deliberately and consistently employed.

It is important to observe the emphatic nature of the couplet, when it is used as we have exemplified it, for it is upon this aspect that significance is attached in the following considerations.

A far more prevalent use of the couplet in Shakespeare is its occurrence in rhetorical questions, exclamations, optative sentences, and curses - (and occasionally also, merely with statements which appear to be emphatic.) All these instances are so related in design that they have been included together in the Appendix A and B under the general heading of this chapter.

A typical example of the exclamatory couplet occurs twice in four consecutive lines in one play of Shakespeare.

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1. This topic is dealt with in Chapter VIII and examples are listed in the Appendices A and B.
2. see Appendices A and B. pages 93 and 115.
What, viler thing upon the earth than friends
Who can bring noblest minds to basest end!
How rarely does it meet with this time's guise,
When man was wish'd to love his enemies!

The couplet that follows has the same rhetorical form, though we make the further observation that it is optative:

Grant I may ever love, and rather woo
Those that would mischief me than those that do!

The six lines in all are plainly rhetorical, and it is further significant that the general thought expressed is of a sententious nature. This latter aspect will be treated fully in a later chapter. The "optative" couplet occurs frequently in Shakespeare, and the close parallel in structure between these examples and the following, is everywhere observable.

Let me make men know
More valour in me than my habits show.¹

says Posthumous in Cymbeline. Techilles concludes a four line wish with a couplet similarly--

Then let some God oppose his holy power
Against the wrath and tyranny of Death,
That his tear-thirsty and unquenched hate
May be upon himself reverberate!²

Rhetorical questions, like exclamatory and optative lines, are frequently found marked by rhyme. The following example from Cornelia is representative of a device that seems common in the period as a whole.³

What helpeth us the things that they did then,
Now we are hated both of Gods and men?⁴

The trick of structure which is observable here and

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1. Cymbeline. V.i.29-30.
3. see Appendices A and B,
What surety of the world, what hope, what stay,
When this was now a king, and now is clay?

is seen in so many instances throughout many of the plays of the period, that we have a sound basis for including such instances in the category of couplets which have rhetorical significance.

Thus far we have noted that the couplet occurs commonly on the following occasions:- 1. where a speech pause is indicated; 2. in exclamations; 3. in wishes or optative utterances; 4. in rhetorical questions. In all four instances, it must be agreed, the finality of the rhyme, and the syntactical completeness of the couplet, make it admirably suited to emphasize the effectiveness of the rhetoric.

The fact that the couplet can be shown to coincide frequently with such definite rhetorical devices, must be accepted as evidence that the couplet was in these cases designed for rhetorical effect. Since this is observably so, it seems sound to extend the argument to include other obvious instances of rhetorical language.

In Appendix A there are to be found several instances of rhymed lines that are most appropriately to be classed as rhetorical.

Bolingbroke. O! let no noble eye profane a tear
For me, if I be gor'd with Mowbray's spear.
As confident as is the falcon's flight
Against a bird, do I with Mowbray fight.

This passage is marked declamatory in Appendix A. At least it is observably distinct, as a species of language, from what follows in the same speech. We may say that it is its rhetorical nature that differentiates it from the next two lines of speech which are in blank verse and in quite another tone:

My loving lord, I take my leave of you;
Of you, my noble cousin, Lord Aumerle;

In the same play, a concluding part of one of Gaunt's speeches has an eloquence, a force of metaphor, that suggests that it be regarded as rhetorical, for it is certainly the speaker's eloquence that shows itself here:

Gaunt. I thank my liege, that in regard of me
He shortens four years of my son's exile;
But little vantage shall I reap thereby:
For, ere the six years that he hath to spend
Can change their moons and bring their times about,
My oil dried-lamp and time-bewasted light
Shall be extinct with age and endless night;
My inch of taper will be burnt and done,
And blindfold death not let me see my son.

It seems that rhyme in this case puts an edge to a speech that is designed to affect the king. To bear out this observation we note further that the effect of rhyme emphasises the finality of the tread of these verses immediately following the last quotation.

Richard interrupts the old man--

Why, uncle, thou hast many years to live.

1. see page 94.
And the rhyme which follows adds great weight to Gaunt's rejoinder:

"But not a minute, king, that thou canst give." ¹

And driving home his eloquent and effective speech he, figuratively speaking, has Richard with his back to the wall:

Shorten my days thou canst with sullen sorrow,
And pluck nights from me, but not lend a morrow;
Thou canst help time to furrow me with age.
But stop no wrinkle in his pilgrimage;
Thy word is current with him for my death, ²
But dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath.

Again Richard justifies himself, in blank verse, and is pushed back further by the insistent force of the old man's language. ³

It is observable, too, that these lines are sententious and it is indeed difficult to apply any rigid system to Shakespeare's couplet usage and expect it to fit always, but it is useful to have some understanding of the nature of the couplet and what effects it may be auxiliary to. Loosely we may regard the couplet in the foregoing instance as carrying weight or emphasis. And this we may designate as a rhetorical use. To illustrate further, from a passage in a very different situation, we may observe that Bassanio's protest is sharpened by the fact that it is made in the form of a couplet:

Antonio. Content, i' faith: I'll seal to such a bond
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

Bassanio. You shall not seal to such a bond for me:
I'll rather dwell in my necessity. ⁴

¹ Richard II. I.iii.234
² ibid.
³ ibid. 233-246.
⁴ The Merchant of Venice. I.iii.153-156.
The large amount of rant in *Timon of Athens* prejudices us to regard the use of rhyme, in the violent cursing of Timon, as a rhetorical effect -- the rhyme may be conceivably regarded as an aid to the effectiveness, rhetorically speaking, of this outburst:

What! All in motion? Henceforth be no feast, Where at a villain's not a welcome guest. Burn, house! sink, Athens! henceforth hated be Of Timon man and all humanity!

To summarize the discussion, we may now repeat some of our generalizations. The heroic couplet is used with a rhetorical effect in the following instances noted: 1. to mark a pause or period in a speech; 2. to mark off rhetorical questions, exclamations, and optative utterances; 3. to embellish rhetorical eloquence; 4. for purposes of emphasis; 5. for curses and similar ranting utterances.

In both Appendices A and B the examples of all types are given together, with the particular purpose of each rhetorical use indicated in brackets beside the line references.

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Chapter VI

The Final Couple.

It has long been observed that the couplet occurs
1. at the end of scenes; 2. at the point of an actor's exit
or entrance; and 3. at the end of speeches. J. Heuser in his
treatment\(^1\) does little else than group the instances of each
type of occurrence together, and he is inclined to support the
idea that in (2) the purpose was that of a cue. This same
idea is a prevalent one, and is given as such by Saintsbury.\(^2\).
But the traditional view seems inadequate for several reasons
which will now be discussed fully.

The first and least problematical of the three uses
of the final couplet requires but brief discussion. How
consistent is the use of the couplet at the end of a scene
can be ascertained from the Appendix A.\(^3\) It will be found that
in Shakespeare the device is not always used. If its occur-
rence was in accordance with design, as we have every reason
to suppose, there must be some reason for its failure to
appear at the end of every scene.

A casual glance through Shakespeare's plays will
reveal scenes with such endings as the following:

1. Der Coupletreim in Shakespeares Dramen.
2. see Introduction, page 2.
3. see page 102.
Westmoreland. The prince is here at hand: pleaseth your lordship, To meet his Grace just distance 'tween our armiess?

Mowbray. Your Grace of York, in God's name then set forward.

Archbishop. Before, and greet his Grace: my lord we come, l.

(exeunt)

In the same play another scene concludes with a prose speech:

Bardolph. The army is discharged all and gone.

Falstaff. Let them go. I'll through Gloucestershire; and There will I visit Master Robert Shallow, Esquire: I have already tempering between my fingers and my thumb, and shortly will I seal with him. Come away.

(exeunt)

If the foregoing be compared with examples of scenes with a rhymed close, a reason for the difference is recognisable.

Let us look at some rhymed scene ends:

King Henry. .................................................I long To have this young one made Christian.

As I have made ye one, lords, one remain;

So I grow stronger, you more honour gain.

The above rhymed close has something in common with the following rhymed close:

I will this night, In several hands, in at his windows throw, As if they came from several citizens, Writings all tending to the great opinion That Rome holds of his name; wherein obscurely Caesar's ambition shall be glanced at. And after this let Caesar seat him sure, For we will shake him, or worse days endure.


2. ibid., IV.iii.


Before suggesting the reason why these scenes have a rhymed close while others have not, let us return to the unrhymed ending:

Come hither, friend:
Tell me what more thou knowest.¹

This ending differs from Cassius' close² in that, while the former is static, the latter suggests the reason for leaving the stage and the actual motion. By static we mean that there is nothing in the speech, or in the circumstance that, in itself, suggests movement. On the modern stage the curtain would come down as the characters left the stage. The scene endings in the other two examples are of a different nature. There, the characters supply a reason for leaving the stage.

It is observable that in Elizabethan drama, for the most part, a scene has but two possible manners of closing. Either the characters intimate by what they say, that they must be off, so supplying a good reason for turning their backs upon the audience and leaving the stage empty, or they are left with a speech, and nowhere to go. In the latter case it is obvious that in order to provide a definite and conclusive end, the speech must terminate with emphasis. That this is the function of the conspicuous final couplet we must believe, if we are to accept these words of Quadratus in Marston's play as having any import:

Stay, take an old rhyme first, though dry and lean.³
'Tw'ill serve to close the stomach of the scene.³

1. King Lear. IV.ii.
Two samples of couplets so used in the same play offer further evidence that the couplet was felt as emphasizing a scene end. Act II closes as follows:

The devil and hell
Confound them all! That's all my prayers exact.
So ends our chat; sound music for the act.

Even in prose scene at the end of Act III, since there is no business to carry the actors off stage, the speaker concludes:

And so,
Gentle Apollo, touch thy nimble string;
Our scene is done, yet fore we cease, we sing.

Such couplets are neat devices that round off and give effectiveness to endings that are by nature static.

The explanation made with regard to static scenes ending in a rhymed close, and action scenes which naturally carry the actors off stage without the need of the rhymed close, although it holds for a majority of cases, cannot be said to be an invariable rule. Fletcher, in his general avoidance of the couplet, seldom employed it even for scene endings, while Jonson's The Staple of Newes, although a 95% verse play has only one scene ending with anything approaching a couplet.

but teach them all
The golden mean: the Prodigall how to live,
The sordid, and the covetous, how to dye:
That with sound mind; this safe frugality. 1.

Kyd follows the same practice in scene endings as Shakespeare. Chapman, too, supplies an example of each type

1. The Staple of Newes. V.vi.63-6 (end of the play).
in the first act of Bussy D'Ambois.

Bussy. Take that, sir, (strikes him,) for your aptness to dispute. (exit)\(^1\).

At this point Maffe is left with the task, as it were, of closing the scene, and his line, by rhyming with the previous one, supplies the appropriate emphasis for an ending.

These crowns are set in blood; blood be their fruit!\(^2\).

On the other hand L'Anou's final line provides a suitable "excuse" for an exit:

Come, sir, we'll lead you a dance.\(^3\).

But we need not prolong our enumeration of similar examples beyond this point, lest our efforts be as awkward as those of Humphrey, the strained qualities of whose final couplet may provide a suitable exit for our argument.

Good night, twenty good nights, and twenty more,
And twenty more good nights - that makes three score.\(^4\).

Turning to the second aspect of the final couplet, we see a function similar to that in the foregoing. But in addition to the fact that the couplet ends a speech frequently prior to an entrance or exit, we have to consider the theory that the couplet was so used as a cue to call a player on or send him off stage. In spite of the evidence Heuser\(^5\). produces in support of this idea, there are stronger reasons for mis-

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1. Chapman, Bussy D'Ambois. I.i.221.
2. ibid. I.i.222.
3. ibid. I.ii.282.
trusting the theory that have not been put forward before. For the "cue" couplet is not consistently used, nor is it frequent enough to support the idea. For example, in *Richard II*, the number of exits and entrances marked by couplets is 15. There are over 30, however, that occur without the "cue". Moreover, many of these latter 30 are the exits and entrances of lesser characters such as menials, messengers and such like "walk on" parts. If the couplet was used as a cue, these minor characters could most conveniently rely on a cue of this type. But couplets seldom mark their entrances or exits.

A further indication of how inconsistent is the use of the couplet to give such cues is supplied by the findings in two plays, one of the earliest, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and one of the latest, *The Tempest*. In the former three possible cue couplets are to be found, while there are 27 exits and entrances amidst blank verse, not marked by couplets. In the latter the figures are 2 and 33 respectively. Besides this, in the earlier play are 9 exits and entrances amid prose speech, and 11 in the later.

In addition to the exits and entrances which sometimes follow a couplet, flourishes, alarums, actions are seen to coincide with the occasional couplet. This fact has been regarded as final proof of the "cue" theory. Hence Heuser.

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1. Note that this play contains scarcely any prose and a large amount of rhyme.

cites the following as good proof of the contention.

Duke. If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken! it had a dying fall
O! it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour. Enough! no more:
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.

It should be fairly evident that rhyme here has nothing to add to the clarity of the instruction to the musicians. The couplet, here, as elsewhere, is merely a punctuating device, indicating a shift in thought, and is properly classifiable along with those in Chapter V. However, for purposes of reference, couplets which occur in conjunction with exits, entrances, flourishes, etc., have been grouped separately as Heuser has collected them. There can be little profit resulting from a lengthy discussion of the cue theory since nothing can be proved either for or against the contention. However, it seems better to say that the couplet was used, under the circumstances discussed, for purposes of a neat or emphatic break either within or at the end of a speech. So large a part of the weight of an Elizabethan play lay in its appeal to the ear that it is difficult to overstress the value of the concluding couplet as an intrinsic part of the technique of the verse. When the rhythm of the verse is frequently interrupted by pauses, in which characters move upon the stage, something is needed to clinch the end of a speech. It is likely that for this reason the couplet frequently occurred to round off speeches or parts of speeches at these points.

(3). The appearance of the couplet at the end of a speech can hardly be considered apart from the preceding. It is so comparable with the "rhymed period", elsewhere discussed, that there is little that need be added as to the reason for its use. The idea that it was used as a cue for the next speaker is here discredited on precisely the same grounds as mentioned in the foregoing argument. As a device, it is not confined to the Elizabethan plays. We find Aeschylus using a similar device in his anapaestic verse. For the "paremiac" syllable at the end of an anapaestic speech produces precisely the same effect as the couplet in the plays we are studying. In the former the extra syllable makes the last line conspicuous, and in the latter the last line of the couplet ends by repeating a syllable. In both cases the final line gains conspicuousness in sound from the final syllable, thus resulting in an emphatic close. The argument for comparing the "rhymed period" with the final couplet is further strengthened by again referring to the usage of the paremiac syllable. For the same device is used by Aeschylus to end his paragraphs or stanzas in much the same way that the Elizabethans used the couplet.

In conclusion, the nature of these three phases of couplet usage should be considered together. For it is to be

1. see Chapter V.
2. E.G. last line of speech of Prometheus.

\[ \phi \rho \sigma \upsilon \rho \alpha \nu \chi \epsilon \lambda \omicron \nu \dot{\varphi} \chi \gamma \omega \]  

Prometheus Bound.  

\[ \kappa \lambda \alpha \gamma \beta \]
observed that the couplet, here as elsewhere, is not serving a purpose outside the verse, but on the contrary is an intrinsic part of the verse form. To explain it on the grounds that it was put in the verse in place of stage directions, ingenious as it may seem, is to ignore the real significance of the couplet as an essential part of Elizabethan dramatic verse technique.
Chapter VII

Stichomythia

A rhetorical element of Senecan drama, stichomythia, early found its way in rhymed form into Elizabethan plays. From the 1571 edition of *Damon and Pithias*, J. W. Cunliffe quotes the following:

**Dionysius.** Let fame talke what she lyst, so I may lyve in safetie.
**Eubulus.** The onely meane to that, is to use mercie.
**Dion.** A milde Prince the people despiseth.
**Eub.** A cruell kynge the people hatheth.
**Dion.** Let them hate me, so they feare mee.
**Eub.** That is not the way to live in safetie.
**Dion.** My sword and power shall purchase my quietnesse.
**Eub.** That is sooner procured by mercy and gentilnesse.
**Dion.** Dionisius ought to be feared.
**Eub.** Better for him to be welbeloved.
**Dion.** Fortune maketh all things subject to my power.
**Eub.** Believe her not she is a light Goddesse, she can laugh and lowre.

This he mentions as a Senecan importation. The example is a very crude one, but it contains one feature of significance, rhyme. Strictly speaking stichomythia are exactly balanced line by line dialogue, each line being of the same metrical length.

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1. I am relying on J. W. Cunliffe's Introduction (p. xxxii) to his edition *Early English Classical Tragedies*. Oxford, 1912.

# This may occur in two line or "couplet" form.
There are, however, even in Seneca variations of this strict form. We may regard as a type of stichomythia the rapid dialogue wherein more than one speech is required to fulfill a metrical line, and a counterpointing of speech and verse takes place. Such is the nature of the following:

**Medea.**

Supplicem audivit oreo.

**Jason.**

Quid facere passim, eloquere.

**Medea.**

Pro me? vel scelus.

**Jason.**

Hinc rex, et illinc.

**Medea.**

Est et his major metus,

Medea, nos configere certemus; etc. 2.

Both types of stichomythia are to be found in a fair number of Elizabethan plays, including those of Shakespeare. Such dialogue is isolated in the blank verse drama by the use of prose or rhymed couplets, and occasionally alternate rhyme. But it is the deliberate use of rhyme for purpose of conspicuousness and effectiveness of sound, that we have here to consider. A model example can be found in *Henry VI. Part I.*

**Talbot.** Shall all thy mother's hopes lie in one tomb?

**John.** Ay, rather than I'll shame my mother's womb.

**Talbot.** Upon my blessing I command thee go.

**John.** To fight I will, but not to fly the foe.

**Talbot.** Part of thy father may be sav'd in thee.


John. No part of him but will be shame in me.
Talbot. Thou never hadst renown, nor canst not lose it.
John. Yes, your renowned name: shall flight abuse it?

It is to be noted in the above how rhyme emphasizes the completeness of statement and counter statement; the reply in each case completes the couplet.

A comparable instance of rhymed stichomythia occurs in Chapter II of this essay in the discussion of certain aspects of the love convention. As might be expected, the most consistent use of the device occurs in the case of the most formal adherence to the Senecan design. Thus it is to Cornelia that we refer for instances that most parallel the singular example in Henry VI. Part I.

Caesar. Will those conspire my death that live by mee?
Anthony. In conquered foes what credite can there be?
Caesar. Besides theyr lives, I did theyr goods restore.
Anthony. But theyr Countries good concerns them more.
Caesar. What, thinke they me to be their Countries foe?
Anthony. No, but that thou usurp'st the right they owe.
Caesar. To Rome have I submitted mighty things.
Anthony. Yet Rome endures not the Command of Kings.
Caesar. Who dares to contradict our Emporie?
Anthony. Those whom thy rule hath rob'd of liberty.

1. Henry VI. Part I. IV.v.34-41 (extends to line 47).
2. p. 12.
Caesar. I feare them not whose death is but defer’d.
Anthony. I feare my foe untill he be inter’d.
Caesar. A man may make his foe his friend, you know.
Anthony. A man may easier make his friend his foe.
Caesar. Good deeds the cruelst hart to kindnes bring.
Anthony. But resolution is a deadly thing.1.

This is an example which well illustrates the deliberateness with which Kyd uses it. Moreover, not once or twice does this occur in Cornelius but ten times,2 in regular couplet form as above, and four times2 in an alternating rhymed arrangement.

Robert Greene, perhaps for the first time, brought stichomythia into Comedy. His James IV has more than one example of regular line by line form of this device. The following is a representative specimen of his use of the regular form:

Lady Anderson. Now, sir, what cheere? come taste this broth I bring.
Dorothea. My griefe is past, I feell no further sting.
Lady Anderson. Where is your dwarfe? Why hath he left you, sir?
Dorothea. For some affaires: hee is not travel’d farre.
Lady Anderson. If so you please, come in and take your rest.
Dorothea. Fear keipes awake a discontented brest. 3.

In this case, the obtrusive artifice has been skilfully utilized to fit the restrained formality of the situation.

1. Kyd, Cornelius. IV.ii.113-128.
2. see Appendix B. under heading Rhymed Stichomythia.
Kyd of course had been possibly the first to recognise its suitability for the conventional love scene. In this and other types of artificial scenes Shakespeare has made use of the stichomythia to good advantage. This is observable in two comedies, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Comedy of Errors*. In both these plays this rhymed device shows itself well suited to courtly, witty, and fast dialogue. The question and answer nature of stichomythia is retained here:

**Julia.** What think'st thou of the rich Mercatio?

**Lucetta.** Well of his wealth; but of himself, so so.

**Julia.** What think'st thou of the gentle Proteus?

**Lucetta.** Lord, Lord! to see what folly reigns in us!

**Julia.** How now! what means this passion at his name?

**Lucetta.** Pardon, dear Madam; 'tis a passing shame—etc.2

The ponderous aphorism and moral thought of the typical Senecan rhetorical stichomythia has given place to a light comic dialogue. The same happy effect is produced again in the scene between Adriana and Luciana:

**Luc.** First he denied you had in him no right.

**Adr.** He meant he did me none; the more my spite.

**Luc.** Then swore he that he was a stranger here.

**Adr.** And true he swore, though yet forsworn he were.

**Luc.** Then pleaded I for you.

**Adr.** And what said he?

**Luc.** That love I begg'd for you he begg'd of me.

**Adr.** With what persuasion did he tempt thy love?

**Luc.** With words that in an honest suit might move.3

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1. see quotation from *The Spanish Tragedy*, page 12.
Here the stiffness of the Senecan convention has practically disappeared. It is notable, too, that the uniformity is never permitted long enough to become monotonous. Even at the fifth line above, the speeches are momentarily shortened. The scenes in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Love's Labour's Lost* contain the only other recognisable occurrences of the device, but there are traces of rhymed dialogue in Shakespeare which for lack of a better means of classification may be regarded as a kind of "degenerated stichomythia".

Exactly when the counterpointed or broken variety ceases to be stichomythia it is difficult to say. Nor indeed does it matter, since most of stichomythia that does occur is explainable on the grounds that rhyme is required in accordance with convention or formality. But since stichomythia does occur early in rhyme, as a Senecan importation, it seems to merit some discussion.

Though there are not many examples of it, the occasional occurrence, in such a careful writer as Ben Jonson, of such a form as the following, should have some significance.

Seianus. Doe policie and state forbid it?
Tibullus. No.
Seianus. The rest of poore respects then let goe by; The state is enough to make th'act iust, then guilty.
Tibullus. Long hates pursues such acts.
Seianus. Whom hatred frights, Let him not dreame on sou'rainty

1. see Chapters II and III.
Tibullus. Are rites
Of faith, love, piety to be trod down?
Forgotten? and made vaine?
Seianus. All for a crowne.¹

In the above, speech line seldom coincides with verse line, but in most cases falls short, the verse line being made up to the required metre by the words of the ensuing speaker. The rapid nature of the dialogue gives it claim to be regarded as an example of stichomythia. Moreover, the comparison of the foregoing with the excerpt from the Medea ² of Seneca will reveal a close resemblance in form. That rhymed stichomythia dialogue was deliberately written there is definite grounds for belief.

In volume II, page 269, of Bullen's edition ³ of Marston, is a passage which needs closer examination than that given by the editor. As printed in that edition it reads:

Asdrubal. Advise vile things!
Hanno. Vile?
Asdrubal. Ay!
Carthalon. Not?
Bytheas. You did all.
Asdrubal. Did you not plot?
Carthalon. Yielded not Asdrubal?
Asdrubal. But you enticed me.
Hanno. How?
Asdrubal. With hope of place.
Carthalon. He that for wealth leaves faith, is abject.
Hanno. Base.

1. Jonson, Seianus His Fall. II.i.171-7.
2. see page 65.
3. see Bibliography under Marston.
Rearrangement shows this to be verse, not prose, and, moreover, rhymed verse:

Asdrubal. Advise vile things!
Hanno. Vile?
Asdrubal. Ay!
Bythees. You did all.
Asdrubal. Did you not plot?
Carthalon. Yielded not Asdrubal?
Asdrubal. But you enticed me.
Hanno. How?
Asdrubal. With hope of peace.
Carthalon. He that for wealth leaves faith, is abject.
Hanno. Base. 1.

If it be argued that "base" and "peace" are not rhymes and that "all" and "Asdrubal" are chance rhymes, the fact that just above, Marston rhymes "choose it" and "does it" 2, and "fly" and "way" 3, will support the case. Stichomythia of this type, forced as it is, provides a little evidence that the effect was consciously tried for.

Generally speaking, however, apart from the occasional occurrence, rhymed stichomythia dialogue has little significance as far as the rhymed couplet goes. The instances already quoted or referred to are outstanding rather than customary. The scene 4, in which the one true Senecan variety occurs in Shakespeare, is an unique scene in itself, though the problems it suggests have no place in these pages.

1. Marston, Sophonisba. II.iii.100-103.
2. ibid., lines 96-7.
In conclusion, stichomythia must be recognised as an occasional reason for the use of rhyme, since it has regular use in at least one play of Kyd and sporadic occurrences of the form are found in Jonson, Greene, Marston and Shakespeare.
Chapter VIII

The Couple as a Medium of "Sentence" and Aphorism.

Of all the categories under which we have discussed couplet usage this last is the most indisputable. Examples of sententious and aphoristic couplets are everywhere so numerous in Elizabethan drama, are so often quoted and generally recognised, and have been referred to so frequently in the preceding pages, that it would seem unnecessary to prolong this final stage of our examination unduly. But at the risk of being pedantic we shall treat the subject in two divisions, dealing first with the prolonged passages of sententious and platitudinous moralizing, and then with the short proverb or aphorism.

Sententiousness, as a characteristic of Senean rhetoric, was an importation from the Latin playwright. The early classical imitations, such as Gorbuduc, and the Misfortunes of Arthur, are starched with it; but later, when the Elizabethan stage found itself, it occurred only in the occasional passage. In the regular plays of our period the individuality of these passages, with their stiffness and artificiality, came to be felt as so distinct from the ordinary speech of the play that they were written in a different verse,—the heroic couplet. The fact that this was a deliberate practice can be illustrated from the examination of one passage in Shakespeare. In Othello the Duke says, in blank verse:
Let me speak like yourself and lay a sentence,
Which as a grize or step may help these lovers
Into your favour.

thus announcing his intention of being sententious. Moreover,
the fact that his "sentences" are in heroics constitutes an
argument backed by Shakespeare, that the couplet was considered
an appropriate medium, and the ensuing lines are an illustration
of the practice.

When remedies are past, the griefs are ended
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserv'd when Fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mockery makes.
The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

In Marston's play Malvolie "reads" the unhappy Ferneze a "sermon"
in couplets.

Thy shame more than thy wounds do'grieve me far:
Thy wounds but leave upon my flesh some scar;
But fame ne'er heals, still rankles worse and worse;
Such is of uncontrolled lust the curse.
Think what it is in lawless sheets to lie;
But, O Ferneze, what in lust to die!
Then thou that shame respect'st, O, fly converse
With women's eyes and lisping wantonness!
Stick candles 'gainst a virgin wall's white back.
If they not burn, yet at least they'll black.

One of the most deliberate uses of the rhymed sermon-
izing speech appears in the several moral exhortations in the
mouth of Oseas in Greene's didactic play.

2. ibid., I.iii.202-9
Where whordom raines, there murther follows fast,
As falling leaves before the winter blast.
A wicked life, trained up in endless crime,
Hath no regard unto the latter time,
When Letchers shall be punisht for their lust,
When princes plagu'd because they are unjust.
Foresee in time, the warning bell doth towle;
Subdue the flesh by prayer to save the soule.
London, behold the cause of others wracke,
And see the sword of justice at thy backs.
Deferre not off, tomorrow is too late;
By night he comes perhaps to judge thy state.

This passage emphasizes the moralizing quality which stamps so many of the rhymed passages in the plays of this period. The stanzaic chorus to Acts I and II in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* is of a similar nature.

Despite the difference in tone a passage of a sententious nature in Jonson is to be included in this same category:

Yet, doubt hath law, and feares have their excuse,
Where princes states plead necessarie use;
As ours doth now: more in Seianus pride,
Then all fell Agrippina's hates beside.
Those are the dreadful enemies, we raise
With favours, and make dangerous, with praise;
The inuir'd by us may have will alike,
But 'tis the favorite hath the power, to strike;
And fiurie ever boyles more high, and strong,
Heat' with ambition, then revenge of wrong.
'Tis then a part of supreme skill, to grace
No man too much; but hold a certaine space
Betweene th' ascenders rise, and thine own flat,
Lest, when all rounds be reach'd, his aime be that. 1.

In *Cornelia* the sententious passages are found in alternate rhyme though this is not the rule. It is probable, there, that the consistent use of couplets for other artifices necessitated such a variant. Another example of the longer

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sententious passages, in Shakespeare is to be seen in Luciana’s lines:

There's nothing situate under heaven’s eye
But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky:
The beasts, the fishes, and the winged fowls,
Are their males' subjects and at their controls.
Then, more divine, the masters of all these,
Lords of the wide world, and wild wat'ry seas,
Indu'd with intellectual sense and souls,
Of more pre-eminence than fish and fowls.
Are masters to their females and their lords:
Then, let your will attend on their accords. 1.

The king in All's Well That Ends Well seeks to persuade Betram by his "sentences":

From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
The place is dignified by the doer's deed;
Where great additions swell's, and virtue none,
It is a dropsied honour. Good alone
Is good without a name: vileness is so;
The property by what it is should go,
Not by the title. 2.

To understand this phase of couplet usage we have only to consider the character of the lines, and note their departure from ordinary dramatic speech of the play. Speeches like this are undramatic and may be classed as rhetoric. The stiffness of such sententious thought relates it to the formal language discussed in Chapter III. Not only do we note that the formality and isolative nature of the couplet makes it admirably suited to these speeches, but also do we feel that there is an air of "plausibility", so to speak, attached to such rhyming platitudes.

1. The Comedy of Errors. II.i.16-25.
2. II.iii.132-138.
Far more numerous in Shakespeare and his fellows is the short aphorism, proverb, or epigrammatic "sentence" which stands, frequently isolated amidst blank verse, and at the end of speeches both prose and verse. It is safe to say that hardly any Elizabethan plays are without a fair number of these aphorisms. The proverb is worked in at the most unexpected places and is used by all degrees of characters, and in all types of plays.

We find Kyd's plays sprinkled with them. The common, much-worn subjects of folk proverb are featured.

Believe it, Bell-imperia, tis as common
To weep at parting as to be a woman. 1.

For gold and shiuek
Makes the punck wanton and the bawd to winke. 2.

In George a Greene, though there are scarcely a dozen rhyming lines in the play, we find an aphorism with some flavour of originality:

For tis more credite to men of base degree
To do great deeds than men of dignitie. 3.

Women, again, come in for their share of comment by Orlando, the outraged lover.

The heaven of love is but a pleasant helle
Where none but foolish wise imprisoned dwell. 4.

1. The First Part of Hieronimo. I.ii.59-60.
2. ibid., I.iii.31-2.
4. Greene, Orlando Furioso. II.i.570-1.
Marston uses the aphoristic couplet frequently, putting terse observations of all kinds into rhyme.

A strong conceit is rich, so most men deem;
If not to be, 'tis comfort yet to seem.  1.

He that gets blood, the life of flesh but spills,
But he that breaks heart's peace, the dear soul kills.  2.

The following quotations from Marlowe provide typical examples of the same sort.

What need the arctic people love starlight?
To whom the sun shines both by day and night.  3.

Reduce we all our lessons unto this,
To die, sweet Spenser, therefore live we all;
Spencer all live to die, and rise to fall.  4.

Farewell: I know the next news that they bring
Will be my death; and welcome shall it be;
To wretched men, death is felicity.  5.

Observe in the last, it is the final line that contains the aphorism, as in the second of the three quotations; whereas the first requires the full measure of the couplet.

Shakespeare's aphorisms are too well known to require a long list of examples, for indeed it is possibly true that the most often quoted passages of Shakespeare are of this sort.

Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break.  6.

1. Marston, The First Part of Antonio and Mellida. IV.ii.44-5.
3. Marlowe, Edward II. I.i.16-17.
4. ibid., 110-11.
5. ibid., 126-7.
Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides; 1.
Who covers faults, at last shame them derides.

Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might:
'Who ever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight?' 2.

That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man,
If with his tongue he cannot win a woman. 3.

Shakespeare's proverbs and aphorisms are sufficient to fill a book.

It need hardly be pointed out why such lines as these were expressed in rhyme. The most obvious reason is that since proverbs use rhyme as a mnemonic device, their expression in pentametre verse requires the heroic couplet. Thus the thought is made memorable, striking, and at the same time not at variance with the metre of the verse as a whole. These often quoted couplets sound very glib, and possess that air of plausibility which we have already noted. Hence the popularity of a great number of Shakespeare's couplets, and a great many that are not Shakespeare's, for example:

"No life is blest, that is not grac'd with love." 4.

To give some idea of the frequency with which these aphoristic couplets occur, since outside Shakespeare no complete analysis of rhymes is given, it is significant to observe that in one

2. As You Like It. III.v.81-2.
3. The Two Gentlemen of Verona. III.i.104-5.
play of Marston\(^1\) there are over 50 aphoristic couplets, while in Jonson's *Scipio* they number more than 30. Kyd's use of this device in *The Spanish Tragedy* is not less frequent, though Marlowe's plays reveal relatively few (his avoidance of such rhyme being part of his general policy). The number in Shakespeare appears not outstanding and we observe once again that he was following an accepted convention in his use of rhyme for this purpose.

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1. *Sophonisba*. 
Conclusion.

In the foregoing pages we have re-examined the problem of Shakespeare's use of the heroic couplet, with the purpose of correcting some prevalent views on the subject which have proved to be an inadequate statement of the case. For although it has long been recognised that the couplet was regularly employed by Shakespeare for aphoristic and sententious passages and frequently for speech and scene endings, it has been hitherto entirely disregarded that it was the practice of Elizabethan playwrights to use the heroic couplet for several other specific purposes. The findings of this examination have revealed that in the plays of Shakespeare the employment of the couplet was regulated by the following usages:

1. For passages involving aspects of the courtly love convention.
2. For situations involving courtly, mannered, witty or artificial speech.
3. For purposes of isolating asides and differentiating passages separate from the main current of the drama.
4. For such rhetorical purposes as emphasis, exclamations, curses, wishes, and rhetorical devices such as the pauses at the end of thought divisions in a speech.
5. For stichomythia.
6. For aphorism and "sentence".
7. For punctuation at the end of speeches and scenes.
These conclusions, as we have seen, are supported by similar usage in the plays of Beaumont, Fletcher, Chapman, Greene, Jonson, Kyd, Marston, Middleton, Nashe, and Peele, from each of whom a few illustrative couplets have been listed in Appendix B. Although there has been no attempt made to present a complete analysis of rhymes in their several plays, the illustrative examples have been spread over a range sufficiently wide to present a fair representation of the usage. Where only one or two instances of a particular usage are listed in a single play they serve to indicate the relative paucity of such couplets in that play.

In the case of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, due to the fact that the whole play, because of the nature of the subject of its action, comes entirely under the two headings of Courtly Love and Artifice, the task of a complete classification of rhymes has been difficult. Moreover, owing to the variety and confusion of metres (doggerel, short rhymes, and alexandrines, as well as heroics) it has been impracticable to weed out all the heroic couplets. And since this has already been done, as in the case of all Shakespeare's plays, only the consistent passages of heroics have been classified (the odd ones being disregarded) mainly in the first two categories already mentioned.

It is necessary to add that this discussion, while confining itself to the considerations of the heroic or pentametre couplet, has been extended in many instances, for purposes of illustration of a convention, to include alternate
and other rhyme patterns as well as some doubtful heroics. These last are marked "irregular" in the Appendix A. Lines which are obviously outside the pentametre model have not been included.

In conclusion, it is felt from the nature of the evidence here brought forward that the use of the heroic couplet, not only in Shakespeare, but also in his contemporaries, must deserve more serious consideration as an aspect of Elizabethan dramatic verse technique than it has hitherto received.
APPENDIX A

Examples of Shakespeare's Couplet Usage.
Examples of the Heroic Couplet in Conventional Love Scenes.

COMEDIES:

Love's Labour's Lost

IV.iii.121-188 (on love in the conventional manner)
213-285

The Comedy of Errors

II.i.88-101: 104-15
11.172-84
III.i.1-52 (A.R.): 61-70
IV.i.1-6 (A.R.): 17-22: 23-8
(A.R.)

The Two Gentlemen of Verona

II.ii.6-7: 96-105 (discussion of women)
III.i.140-9 (A.R. poem)

A Midsummer Night's Dream

I.i.171-3 (vow): 180-251
II.i.125-8 (A.R.): 39-50: 51-3:
54-65: 84-109: 110-12:
113-156
III.i.89-91: 98-102 (A.R.)=from the play within the play
(159-168: 172-81: 205-9 (A.R.)
209-10 Titania in love with Bottom)
ii.43-8: 50-81: 82-7:
122-5 (A.R.): 126-7:
128-31 (A.R.): 132-3:
137-8: 139-41: 143-58:
159-61: 162-5: 166-8:
III.401-2: 405-30: 431-4 (A.R.)
435-6: 442-5 (A.R.): 446-7
IV.i.1-4 (A.R.)

Note: A.R. = Alternate Rhyme.
Examples of the Heroic Couplet in Conventional Love Scenes.

COMEDIES (cont'd.)

All's Well That Ends Well

III.iv.4-17 (sonnet)
IV.ii.62-7
V.iii.318-19: 320-1: 322-3

TRAGEDIES

Romeo and Juliet

216-17: 221-30
II.93-6 (A.R.): 97-8: 99-104
III.83-94: 96-7: 98-9
II.ii.21-2: 67-71: 154-5 (irregular)
156-7
III.ii.140-3 (A.R.-Scene end)
V.iii.12-5 (A.R.): 16-7
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Artifice and Formality.

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<td></td>
<td>(A.R.):</td>
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<td>101-3 (A.R.): 105-7: 110-11:</td>
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<td>142-5:  146-7:  148-51 (A.R.):</td>
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<td>152-3</td>
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<td>II.i.120-1 (repartee): 178-9</td>
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<td>(polite) (rest of scene a</td>
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<td>medley of metres)</td>
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<td>IV.i.10-14: 16-23 (witty): 24-35</td>
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<td>V.i. 143-156: 205-42 (courty,</td>
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<td>witty and artificial):</td>
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<td>257-62:  267-286 (repartee):</td>
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<td>356-7:  358-65 (A.R.): 366-385:</td>
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<td><strong>The Comedy of Errors</strong></td>
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<td>IV.i. 29-32:  35-6:  50-1 (rest of</td>
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<td>rhymes in scene not regular)</td>
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<td>V.i. 67-8:  337-8 (witty)</td>
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<td>III.i. 91-2-3 (witty)</td>
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<td>II.vii. 75-6 (a farewell)</td>
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<td>ix. 52-3:  80-1 (witty)</td>
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<td>V.i. 236-7 (witty)</td>
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<td><strong>The Taming of the Shrew</strong></td>
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<td>II.i. (320-1: 324-5: 331-2: 333-4</td>
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<td>repartee)</td>
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<td>IV.i. 37-8: 55-60 (mock ceremony)</td>
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<td>v. 23-4</td>
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<td>III.i. 105-6</td>
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<td>V.iii. 24-7: 30-3 (A.R.)</td>
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<td>iv.46-7 (speech end)</td>
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<td>48-51 (repartee)</td>
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<td>IV.v. 28-9 (witty)</td>
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<td>V.x. 42-5: 48-57 (witty)</td>
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<td><strong>All's Well That Ends Well</strong></td>
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<td>II.i. 126-7 (speech end):</td>
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<td>III.vii. 44-7 (word play)</td>
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<td>IV.vii. 259-60 (A.R. - witty</td>
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<td>verse)</td>
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<td>V.vii. 330-9 (formal-polite)</td>
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<td><strong>Pericles</strong></td>
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<td>II.i.iii. 9 (polite)</td>
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<td>knight)</td>
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<td>iv.71-2 (courteous)</td>
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Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Artifice and Formality.

COMEDIES (cont'd.)

Cymbeline

IV.ii.72-3 (reply): 380-1 (courtly)
V.iii.57-8 (courtly)

HISTORIES

Henry VI. Part I

I.ii.113-6 (polite refusal of marriage)
IV.v. Featuring the ideal of chivalry in battle:
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Henry VI. Part II

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188-9: 194-5 (reserve):
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iii.33-8 (formal farewell)
45-6 (sententious)

Henry VI. Part III

II.ii.61-2 (king knights Edward)
III.ii.107-8 (witty) (aside)
109-10 (witty)
IV.iv.14-16 (witty)
vi.8-9 (polite)
vii.73-4 (formal challenge)

Richard III

I.i.55-9 (word play)
IV.i.94-7

King John

I.i.161-2 (knighting ceremony)
176-9 (word play)
III.iii.28-9 (courteous answer)
following instances of Basterd's wit:-
I.i.82-3 (speech end):
142-3: 145-7: 150-1:
152-3: 158-9: 163-6:
168-9: 174-5 (speech end)
II.ii.145-6: 504-7 (A.R.):
508-9
III.i.219-20: 337-8 (Blanche word play)

Richard II

I.i.166-173 (dignified)
174-5: 176-95 (formal accusation)
200-3 (dignified)
i.i.56-7 (courty reply to farewell)
iii.55-8 (dignified)
93-96 (formal)
97-8 (formal)
144-7 (formal)
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II.1.212-15 (sententious)
i.1.141-2 (farewell)
III.ii.186-193 (reserve)
iv.102-7
IV.1.190-9: 201-2: 322-5
V.1.91-6: 97-8: 99-100
ii.37-40
iii.79-84: (93-6: 101-10:
111-18 = pleading of Duchess):
121-8
v.114-9 (exordium on deed king)
v.11.11-12: 17-18 (thanks):
31-52 (formality)
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HISTORIES (cont'd.)

Henry IV. Part I

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Henry IV. Part II

IV.v.219-24 (formal)

TRAGEDIES

Titus Andronicus

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Romeo and Juliet

I.iii.16-37
   iii.57-8 (repartee)
   iv.44-53 (repartee)
   II.iii.31-94 (conventional dialogue)

Julius Caesar

IV.iii.130-1 (words of the poet)

King Lear

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Macbeth

V.vii.80-1 (remarks on dead Macbeth—compare Richard II.
   V.v.114-19)
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### Asides

#### COMEDIES

**The Comedy of Errors**

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215-223  
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**The Merchant of Venice**

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*see conventional love*

**Twelfth Night**

I.i.v.41-2  
(scene end)  
III.i.v.409-12: 416-21

**Measure for Measure**

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**Pericles**

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**Cymbeline**

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(aphoristic): 33-6  
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**Henry VI. Part I**

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iii.85-6

**Henry VI. Part III**

III.ii.107-8

**Richard III**

III.i.93-4  
IV.i.v.15-16: 20-1: 24-5  
*(see Abbot, A Shakespearian Grammar, Sec. 515)*

**Henry IV. Part I**

V.i.v.105-10  
*(Prince Hal solus)*

**Titus Andronicus**

I.i.261-2

**Romeo and Juliet**

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**Hamlet**

IV.v.17-20  
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Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Isolative Purposes. II.

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iv.48-53
v.v.47-52

Timon of Athens

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Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used as a Rhetorical Device.

COMEDIES

The Comedy of Errors

V. i. 87-8 (Emphatic rejoinder)
199-200 (emphatic)

The Merchant of Venice

I. iii. 155-6 (protestation)
II. vii. 61-2 (emphatic)
III. v. 83-4 (pause)
IV. i. 21-2 (pause)
ii. 8-9 (emphatic)
V. i. 144-5 (end of an oath)

The Taming of the Shrew

IV. ii. 44-5 (blessing)
V. ii. 164-5 (pause:
177-80 (emphatic)

As You Like It

II. iv. 61-2 (exclamatory)
V. iv. 154-5 (exclamatory)

Twelfth Night

I. i. 7-8 (pause)
11-12 (emphatic)
V. i. 170-5 (question)

Troilus and Cressida

IV. v. 30-1 (exclamatory)
V. i. 48-9 (pause)
i. 110-11 (emphatic)
iii. 92-3 (exhortation)
vii. 7-14 (emphasizes the triumphant ring of Achilles' words)

All's Well That Ends Well

I. iii. 166-7 (emphatic)
222-5 (emphatic and speech end)
V. iii. 71-2 (exclamatory)

Measure For Measure

III. ii. 40-1 (optative - wish)

Pericles

I. i. 12-13 (exclamatory)
32-3 (pause): 50-1 (pause):
76-7 (pause): 84-5: 117-8
ii. 61-2 (imprecation)
iv. 45-6 (pause)
III. ii. 54-5 (wish)
iii. 43-4 (pause: 97-8 (pause)
iv. 43-4 (pause)
v. 16-7 (emphatic)
57-8 (emphatic)
IV. ii. 162-3 (vow)

Cymbeline

IV. ii. 59-60 (exclamatory speech end)
228-9 (rhyme puts abrupt end to speech)
286-7 (simile)
V. i. 29-30 (optative-wish)
i. 6-7 (pause)
iii. 125-6
v. 294-5

The Winter's Tale

IV. iii. 773-4 (exclamatory)
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used as a Rhetorical Device.

HISTORIES

Henry VI. Part I

I.ii.85-6 (pause)
II.v.8-9 (simile - pause)
15-16 (shift in thought)
76-7 (emphatic): 118-9
IV.iii.30-3 (rhetorical):39-46
vii.92-3 (a threat or a prophecy)

Henry VI. Part II

III.i.243-4 (emphatic)
IV.i.77-8 (pause)

Henry VI. Part III

I.iii.5-6 (emphatic)
47-8 (emphatic)
iv.97-8 (pause)
II.i.123-4 (pause)
187-8 (optative)
v.19-20 (rhetorical question)
44-5 (rhetorical question)
vii.101-2 (shift in thought)
IV.vi.16-17 (pause)
V.i.97-8 (emphatic)
v.39-40 (emphatic)

Richard II

I.i.41-6 (denunciation)
133-4 (pause)
i.i.63-4 (emphatic):66-7:
69-70: 71-2: 73-4
(scene end)
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65-6 (pause)
67-8 (exclamatory)
221-4 (eloquence)
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(eloquence)
II.i.86-7 (emphatic): 90-1
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139-40: 210-11 (emphatic)
i.i.145-6 (emphatic)
III.i.i.71-4 (emphatic-
speech end)
209-18 (declaration)
iii.170-1 (pause)
iv.98-101 (emphatic)
IV.i.174-5: 214-221
(imprecation)
V.i.49-50: 70-3 (emphatic
speech end)
vi. (3-4: 7-10 - these
couplets emphasize
important information)

Henry IV. Part II

IV.ii.119-24 (condemnation)

Henry V

I.i.287-8 (emphatic)
295-6 (change of thought)

Henry VIII

III.i.i.263-6 (emphatic. pause)
V.i.144-5 (emphatic) - may
possibly be accident.
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used as a Rhetorical Device.

**TRAGEDIES**

**Titus Andronicus**

I.i.60-1 (imprecation)
341-2 (exclamatory)
366-7 (speech end-emphatic)
V.i.49-50:
57-8 (curse-speech end)
i.iii.147-8 (optative)

**Romeo and Juliet**

I.i.176-7 (exclamatory)
181-2 (exclamatory)
186-7 (exclamatory)
II. i. 19-20 (emphatic)
i.ii.186-7 (optative)
III. i. 125-6 (exclamatory)
144-5 (emphatic)
i.1.59-60 (exclamatory)
v.25-6 (exclamatory)
V.iii.303-4 (exclamatory)

**Julius Caesar**

I.i.53-4 (accolade)

**Hamlet**

III.iv.28-9 (emphatic)
iv.214-5 (a break in the continuity of the speech)
IV.iv.43-4 (pause)

**Macbeth**

III.ii.52-3 (end of a thought)

**Timon of Athens**

II.ii.5-6 (emphatic): 240-1
III.iv.36-7
v.96-7: 101-4 (irregular couplet)
vi.113-16 (curse)
IV.i.35-40
i.ii.31-2 (rhetorical question)
40-1 (emphatic)
iii.382-3 (pause)
iii.473-8 (exclamatory)
V.i.225-6 (exclamatory)

**Antony and Cleopatra**

I.ii.135-6 (pause - marks shift of thought)
IV.iv.36-7 (wish)
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used to Mark Exits, Entrances, etc.

**COMEDIES**

**Love's Labour's Lost**
- II.1.177-8
- IV.1.39-40
- III.44-5

**The Comedy of Errors**
- II.1.42-3: 84-5
- III.11.169-1: 169-70
- IV.11.80-1

**The Two Gentlemen of Verona**
- I.1.68-9
- II.46-7: 80-3

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**
- III.1.116-17
- II.2-3: 100-1 (irregular couplet)

**The Merchant of Venice**
- II.6.58-9
- VII.75-6
- III.11.61-2 (music)

**The Taming of the Shrew**
- II.1.317-18: 396-7
- IV.11.57-8
- V.1.147-8

**The Merry Wives of Windsor**
- I.iii.90-1

**Much Ado About Nothing**
- III.1.105-6

**As You Like It**
- II.iv.40-1-2
- V.iv.156-7

**Twelfth Night**
- III.1.75-6
- IV.16-17 (irregular couplet)

**Troilus and Cressida**
- I.1.116-7 (alarum)
- IV.iv.9-10: 107-8
- V.92-3: 274-5
- V.1.50-1
- II.109-10 (Aphoristic)
- III.89-90: 95-6
- VI.25-6
- VII.7-8
- VIII.19-20 (emphatic)
- X.30-1: 33-4

**All's Well That Ends Well**
- II.iii.189-90
- V.96-7

**Measure for Measure**
- II.1.276-7
- IV.170-1
- IV.11.64-5: 89-90
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used to Mark Exits, Entrances, etc.

**COMEDIES**

**Pericles**

I. i. 141-2: 148-9
   i. 32-3
   iv. 54-5: 83-4

II. i. 10-11
   i. 6-7
   iv. 14-15

III. ii. 85-6

**Cymbeline**

II. ii. 49-50
III. v. 64-5
IV. ii. 289-90
V. ii. 80-3

**The Tempest**

IV. i. 57-8 (music)
V. i. 83-4 (exit speaker)

**HISTORIES**

**Henry VI. Part I**

I. ii. 20-1

**Henry VI. Part II**

I. i. 213-14
II. i. 161-2
III. i. 193-4: 221-2
   i. 297-8
IV. iv. 24-5: 47-8
V. ii. 29-30: 70-1

**Henry VI. Part III**

II. v. 121-2: 123-4
   vi. 29-30
III. iii. 231-2: 254-5

**Henry VI. Part III** (cont'd.)

IV. iii. 57-8
   vi. 75-6: 8708
   vii. 38-9
V. ii. 3-4: 27-8 (aphoristic)
   v. 81-2

**Richard III**

IV. iv. 124-5: 195-6

**King John**

I. i. 42-3: 180-1
III. i. 73-4
IV. ii. 101-2
   iii. 7-8: 9-10

**Richard II**

I. i. 18-19
   iii. 206-7: 247-8
II. i. 127-8: 145-6: 223-4
   ii. 39-40: 120-1
   iii. 16-17
III. iii. 61-2
   iii. 182-3
   iv. 27-8: 96-7: 317-8
V. v. 10-13 (death of Richard)

**Henry IV. Part I**

V. iii. 28-9

**Henry IV. Part II**

III. i. 29-30

**Henry V**

II. ii. 180-1
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used to Mark Exits, Entrances, etc.

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Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Punctuating Speech Ends.

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Love's Labour's Lost

The Comedy of Errors
I.i.94-5
II.1.51-2
III.i.105-6 (aphoristic): 120-1
II.1.158-9

The Two Gentlemen of Verona
I.i.9-10
V.iv.71-2: 108-9 (see aphorism)

A Midsummer Night's Dream
III.i.147-8
IV.i.116-7: 150-1: 190-1
V.i.104-5

The Merchant of Venice
II.vii.59-60 (poor rhyme)

Much Ado About Nothing
V.iv.46-7

As You Like It
II.iii.67-8

Twelfth Night
I.ii.58-9
v.308-9: 326-7
IV.i.62-3

Troilus and Cressida
I.i.41-2 (sententious)
III;i.136-7: 385-386
II.i.95-6: 144-5: 161-2
III.i.277-8
III.ii.48-9
IV.i.73-4
iv.134-5
v.160-1
V.ii.183-4
III.35-6

All's Well That Ends Well
II.i.126-7 (end of formal speech – see formality)
III.308-9 (aphoristic)
IV.ii.36-7 (end of lover's pleading)
V.iii.69-70
318-19 (see courtly love)

Measure for Measure
IV.i.14-15

Pericles
I.i.57-8
II.46-7: 99-100: 109-10
iv.8-9 (aphoristic):
18-9: 28-31: 48-9: 95-6
II.i.81-2: 143-4
III.18-19: 46-7
v.11-12: 38-9 (sententious)
63-4: 86-7

Cymbeline
IV.i.207-8: 357-8
iv.51-2 (marks end of this speech, but an aside follows)
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Punctuating Speech Ends.

**HISTORIES**

### Henry VI. Part I
- II.1.143-4
- III.1.27-8: 126-7
- IV.iii.28-9: 37-8
- iv.8-9: 38-9
- v.16-17
- V.ii.19-20 (scene end)
- v.77-8

### Henry VI. Part II
- II.1.196-7 (formal)
- iii.43-4
- III.i.300-1: 325-6
- (irregular couplet)
- IV.x.24-5

### Henry VI. Part III
- I.iv.107-8
- II.ii.173-4
- iii.46-7
- III.iii.127-8
- IV.iv.23-4
- vi.31-2: 43-4: 97-8: 99-100

### Richard III
- IV.iv.114-5: 130-1: 209-10
- V.iii.269-70 (end of long speech)

### King John
- I.1.220-1: 257-8
- II.1.406-7
- III.i.170-1
  - ii.54-5 (same word - but not true identical rhyme)
- IV.i.83-4
  - ii. (151-2 ?)

### Richard II
- I.1.67-8: 82-3: 108-9-10:
  - 122-3: 150-1
- I.ii.54-5
- III.1.72-3: 214-5: 292-3:
  - 302-3 (aphoristic)
- II.1.15-16: 29-30: 143-4:
  - 150-1: 297-8
- II.31-2
- III.1.80-1 (end of a stanzaic speech in A.R.)
  - 102-3: 119-20: 139-40:
  - 184-5
- III.70-1: 174-5
- IV.1.148-9: 188-9
- V.1.24-5: 79-80
- III.34-5: 77-8:
  - 142-146 (scene ends on lines 145-6)
- vi.22-3

### Henry IV. Part I
- II.iii.120-1
- III.iii.225-6

### Henry IV. Part II
- I.ii.107-8
- IV.v.217-18: 238-9

### Henry V
- II. Chorus 39-42
- III. Chorus 34-5
- IV. Chorus 52-3
- V. Chorus 44-5
- V.ii.382-3
### Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Punctuating Speech Ends.

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<td>III.43-4</td>
<td>(aphoristic)</td>
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<td>III.i.100-1</td>
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<td>III.22-3</td>
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<td>IV.1.173-9</td>
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<td>Othello</td>
<td>I.iii.</td>
<td>291-2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>IV.iii.105-6</td>
<td>(aphoristic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>King Lear</td>
<td>I.i</td>
<td>276-7</td>
<td>281-2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>III.20-1</td>
<td>(aphoristic)</td>
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<td>IV.370-1</td>
<td>(aphoristic)</td>
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<td>Macbeth</td>
<td>I.iv</td>
<td>20-1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>V.1.84-5</td>
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</table>
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Punctuating Scene Ends.

**COMEDIES**

**Love's Labour's Lost**
- II. i. 255-6
- III. i. 214-5
- IV. i. 151-2
- III. i. 183-6 (A.R.)

**The Comedy of Errors**
- I. i. 157-8
- II. i. 104-5
- III. i. 122-3
- IV. i. 112-3
- III. i. 96-7

**The Two Gentlemen of Verona**
- I. i. 88-91 (A.R.)
- II. i. 19-20
- IV. i. 212-14
- VI. i. 42-3
- V. i. 11-12
- II. i. 55-6
- III. i. 14-15

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**
- V. i. 378-9
- Note the fact that in rhymed play scene end couplet ceases to be isolated.

**The Merchant of Venice**
- I. i. 185-6
- III. i. 181-2
- II. i. 45-6
- III. i. 20-1
- IV. v. 56-7
- VI. i. 75-9
- IX. i. 99-101
- III. i. 325-8 (A.R.)
- IV. v. 83-4
- V. i. 302-7

**The Taming of the Shrew**
- I. i. 280-1
- II. i. 404-5
- III. i. 91-2
- IV. iv. 108-9
- V. v. 78-9
- V. i. 156-7

**The Merry Wives of Windsor**
- IV. iv. 91-2
- V. v. 271-2

**As You Like It**
- I. i. 304-5
- III. i. 140-1
- II. iv. 100-1
- VI. i. 202-3
- III. iv. 59-60
- V. i. 138-9
- V. iv. 202-5

**Twelfth Night**
- I. i. 40-1
- II. i. 60-1
- IV. iv. 41-2 (aside)
- V. iv. 329-32
- II. i. 50-1
- II. i. 41-2
- IV. iv. 125-6
- V. i. 399-400

**Troilus and Cressida**
- I. i. 118-21
- III. i. 391-2
- II. i. 211-2
- III. i. 279-90 (aphoristic)
- IV. i. 77-8
- IV. iv. 147-8
- V. iii. 112-3
- VI. i. 30-1
- VIII. i. 21-2
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Punctuating Scene Ends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMEDIES (cont'd.)</th>
<th>HISTORIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All's Well That Ends Well</strong></td>
<td><strong>Henry VI. Part I</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I. iii. 263-4</td>
<td>I. i. 176-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. i. 21-2</td>
<td>iii. 90-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. 131-2</td>
<td>iv. 30-1</td>
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<td>iii. 10-11</td>
<td>II. iv. 132-3</td>
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<td>iv. 41-2</td>
<td>v. 128-9</td>
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<td>IV. ii. 73-6</td>
<td>III. ii. 135-6</td>
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<td>iv. 55-6</td>
<td>IV. i. 193-4</td>
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<th><strong>Measure for Measure</strong></th>
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<td>II. iv. 185-8</td>
<td>I. i. 259-60</td>
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<td>IV. i. 76-7</td>
<td>ii. 106-7</td>
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<td>iv. 36-7</td>
<td>II. i. 202-3</td>
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<td>V. i. 538-41</td>
<td>III. i. 382-3</td>
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<th><strong>Pericles</strong></th>
<th><strong>Henry VI. Part III</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>I. i. 170-1</td>
<td>II. ii. 176-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii. 123-4</td>
<td>vi.</td>
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<td>iii. 39-40</td>
<td>III. ii. 194-5</td>
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<td>iv. 107-8</td>
<td>iii. 264-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. i. 177-8</td>
<td>IV. i. 148-9</td>
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<td>iii. 115-16</td>
<td>iv. 34-5</td>
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<td>iv. 57-8</td>
<td>IV. v. 29-30</td>
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<td>v. 92-3</td>
<td>vi. 101-2</td>
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<td>III. iv. 17-18</td>
<td>vii. 84-5</td>
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<td>IV. i. 101-2</td>
<td>V. vi. 90-3</td>
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<td>iii. 50-1</td>
<td>vii. 45-6</td>
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<td>V. iii. 83-4</td>
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<th><strong>Cymbeline</strong></th>
<th><strong>Richard III</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>II. i. 71-2</td>
<td>I. i. 160-1</td>
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<td>III. ii. 82-3</td>
<td>ii. 264-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. ii. 402-3 (aphoristic)</td>
<td>iv. 282-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii. 45-6 (sententious)</td>
<td>II. iv. 108-9</td>
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<td>V. i. 32-3</td>
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<td>v. 485-6</td>
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<th><strong>The Tempest</strong></th>
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<td>II. i. 335-6</td>
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Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Punctuating Scene Ends.

HISTORIES (cont'd.)

Richard III (cont'd.)

III. vi. 13-14
IV. i. 103-4

Henry IV. Part II

Induction 38-9
I. i. 214-5

II. i. 109-10
III. i. 67-8

III. i. 107-8

IV. i. 144-5

v. III-4

Henry V

I. i. 307-10
II. i. 192-3

III. i. 33-4

IV. i. 128-9

v. 67-8

vii. 174-5

V. i. 28-9

ii. 62-3

iii. 131-2

v. 22-3

V. i. 130-1

V. i. 93-4

ii. 401-2

Henry VIII

I. i. 213-4 (irregular couplet)

III. i. 182-3

IV. i. 459-60

v. i. 180-1

V. i. 75-6

TRAGEDIES

Titus Andronicus

II. i. 25-6

iv. 56-7

V. i. 203-4
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Punctuating Scene Ends.

TRAGEDIES (cont'd.)

Romeo and Juliet

I. i. 243-4
i. i. 105-6
iii. i. 105-6
v. i. 147-8
II. i. i. 188-9
v. 79-80
v. i. 36-7
III. i. i. 172-3
v. 241-2
V. i. 85-6
ii. 28-9
iii. 305-8 (A.R.)

Julius Caesar

I. i. 326-7
V. v. 78-81

Hamlet

I. i. 256-7 (aphoristic)
v. 188-9
II. i. 118-9
t. 641-2
III. i. 196-7 (aphoristic)
t. 423-4
t. 77-8
IV. i. 64-5
t. 70-1
iv. 65-6
v. 217 (aphoristic)
V. i. 320-1.
t. 415-16

Othello

I. iii. 409-10
II. i. 323-4 (aphoristic)
i. i. 396-7
IV. iii. 105-6
V. i. 128-9 (aside)
t. 369-70

King Lear

II. i. 120-1
III. iii. 25-6
IV. iv. 27-8
v. i. 68-9
iii. 321-8

Macbeth

I. iii. 68-9 (irregular
couplet)
v. 72-3 (aphoristic)
II. i. 63-4
iii. 152-3 (aphoristic)
v. 40-1
III. i. 141-2
iv. 142-3 (aphoristic)
IV. iii. 238-9 (aphoristic)
V. i. 29-30
iii. 63-4
vi. 7-10
vii. 101-4

Timon of Athens

I. iii. 259-60 (irregular
couplet)
II. ii. 242-3
III. i. 66-7
t. 94-5
iii. 41-2
iv. 119-20
v. 118-9 (aphoristic)
IV. ii. 50-1
iii. 244-5
V. i. 16-17
iii. 9-10
iv. 83-4

Antony and Cleopatra

I. iii. 103-4
III. ix. 73-4 (Aphoristic)
IV. ix. 36-7 (rhetorical)
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Punctuating Scene Ends.

TRAGEDIES (cont'd.)

Antony and Cleopatra (cont'd.)

IV.xiii.90-1
V.ii.364-7

Coriolanus

IV.vii.56-7
V.v.154-5
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Stichomythia Dialogue.

**COMEDIES**

*Love's Labour's Lost*

- I.1.53-60: 94-99: 140-1
- II.1.111-13
- IV.iii.49-52: 85-100
  (witty - sententious - regular stichomythia)

*The Comedy of Errors*

- III.1.84-5 (irregular stichomythia)
  - ii.53-60
- IV.ii.7-16

*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

- I.ii.10-21: 27-32
- II.1.1-8

**HISTORIES**

*Henry VI. Part I*

- IV.v.18-21 (sententious)
  - 34-47 (regular Senecan stichomythia)

*Henry VI. Part II*

- V.1.213-16 (emphatic - scene end)

*Richard II*

- I.1.160-5
  - iii.225-6 (repartee)
- V.1.81-6: 89-90
  - iii.87-92: 97-100: 119-20:
    - 129-32: 133-36
  (mostly uneven - irregular)
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Purposes of Aphorism and "Sentence".

**COMEDIES**

*Love's Labour's Lost*
- I.i.92-3
- II.i.35-6: 52-4
  (note aphorism in with repartee of courtiers)

*The Comedy of Errors*
- II.i.16-25: 33-41
- III.ii.187-92

*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*
- III.i.90-1: 92-105 (witty)
- V.iv.108-9 (speech end): 112-15

*The Merchant of Venice*
- II.v.54-5 (irregular metre) x.81-2

*The Merry Wives of Windsor*
- IV.i.109-12
- V.iii.24-5
- v.257-8

*Much Ado About Nothing*
- IV.i.253-6 (A.R.)

*As You Like It*
- III.v.81-2

*Twelfth Night*
- II.iv.38-41
- III.iv.403-6

*Troilus and Cressida*
- I.i.41-2 (speech end)

*All's Well That Ends Well*
- I.i.235-48 on
- III.i.136-43 (A.R.) love
- II.i.132-151: 303-9
  (speech end)
- IV.i.375-9
- V.iii.61-66

*Measure for Measure*
- I.i.37-40: 306-7
- III.i.200-3
- IV.i.16-17

*Pericles*
- I.i.45-8: 79-80: 103-8:
  122-3: 132-3: 135-6:
  137-8
- II.i.78-9: 84-5: 120-1
- IV.v.5-6: 74-5
- II.i.12-13: 34-5: 56-7
  III.i.15-16: 21-2: 68-9

*Cymbeline*
- II.v.33-4
- IV.i.193-4
- V.v.107-8

**HISTORIES**

*Henry VI. Part I*
- III.i.183-4
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Purposes of Aphorism and "Sentence".

HISTORIES (cont'd.)

Henry VI. Part II

V.ii.72-3

Henry VI. Part III

IV.iii.57-8
  viii.60-1

Richard II

I.i.154-9
  ii.60-1
  iii.235-6
II.i.7-8: (9-12=A.R.):
  13-14: 152-3
  ii.24-7 (speech end)
III.iii.131-2
V.i.87-8
  ii.50-1
  v.67-8

Henry IV. Part I

IV.ii.83-4

TRAGEDIES

Romeo and Juliet

I.ii.47-50 (A.R.): 51-2
  iii.1-30 (mostly common-places conventional)

Hamlet

V.i.235-8

Othello

I.iii.202-9: 210-19
  rhymes with 160
  (witty game of Iago.)

King Lear

I.i.283-4
  III.vi.111-22
  V.iii.3-4: 5-6

Macbeth

III.iii.4-7
  IV.iii.209-10
  V.iv.18-21

Timon of Athens

I.ii.62-3 (speech end):
  144-5: 147-8: 151-2
  (speech end): 240-3
  III.iv.27-8
  v.2-3: 39-40: 89-90
  IV.iii.522-3
  V.i.46-7: 49-50

Coriolanus

IV.vii.54-5
ADDENDA

A. Non-Classified

Pericles
I.i, 113-4
iv.13-14: 78-9

The Comedy of Errors
IV.i, 63-6 (A.R.)

All's Well That Ends Well
II.i, 312-17

The Two Gentlemen of Verona
I.1.37-8

The Merchant of Venice
II.i, 4-5
III.i, 121-2

A Midsummer Night's Dream
II.1.138-9

Romeo and Juliet
III.i, 182-203

Troilus and Cressida
V.ix, 4-9

Henry V
II.1.115-16
IV. Chorus 43-4

Henry VI. Part I
I.i, 43-4: 52-5
II.1.72-3
IV.v, 18-21: 34-57
V.i, 4-5
III.115-16

Macbeth
III.v, 2-3: 35-6; Hecate

B. Unique Examples

Richard II
III.i, 168-9

Julius Caesar
IV.i, 130-1 (poet)

Cymbeline
V.i, 59-62

Timon of Athens
V.iv, 70-3 (epitaph)

Macbeth
IV.i, 69-72 1st Apparition.
79-80 2nd Apparition.
90-3 3rd Apparition.
94-101 Macbeth
V.i, 59-60 (quoted)
vii.3-4 (quoted)
12-13 (irregular
couplet)

Troilus and Cressida
III.i, 213-6 (quote)
(possibly isolative
purpose)

Hamlet
III.iv, 28-9 (listed)
APPENDIX B.

Examples of Couplet Usage
in Works of Shakespeare's Contemporaries.
Examples of the Heroic Couplet in Conventional Love Scenes.

Beaumont and Fletcher

The Knight of the Burning Pestle See the speeches of Humphrey throughout - a burlesque of the courtly lover.

Greene

A Looking Glass for London lines 1480-1501
Orlando Furioso lines 610-14 (A.R.)
James IV lines 211-250: 724-751

Kyd

The Spanish Tragedy II.1.9-34
II.4.24-49
The First Part of Hieronimo II.vi.2-5: 6-7: 10-11: 13-28
Soliman and Perseda II.1.7-8 (lover's vow)

Marlowe

The Jew of Malta IV.iv.104-113 (Ithamore's idea of Romantic Love)

Middleton

Blurt, Master Constable I.1.155-166
II.1.101-6 (woeful lover in prison)
II.1.110-115
III.1.107-14
V.11.29-30
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Artifice and Formality.

Greene

James IV

lines 886-95 (witty)
1831-60: 1864-5; 1874-5
(formality)

Jonson

Eastward Hoe

III. ii. 325-6

Volpone

IV. iv. 130-1

Seianus

V. i. 177-80 (a prayer of the Flamen)

Marston

The Tragedy of Sophonisba

II. i. 53-4 (witty)
II. i. 21-2 (courtly speech)
45-8 (courtly speech)
V. i. 31-2 (speaker in disguise—situation artificial)
iii. 35-6 (apology)

Middleton

Blurt, Master Constable

IV. i. 1-23 (old courtier)
V. iii. 104-21 (formal speech of Viola to Duke)

The Family of Love

III. ii. 48-55

Peels

The Old Wives Tale

lines 892-3 (courteous thanks)

Arraignment of Paris

a rhymed play—observe the formal speeches in heroics.
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Isolative Purposes.

1. To mark off differentiated passages

Beaumont and Fletcher

The Maid's Tragedy

Chapman

The Gentleman Usher

Jonson

The Poetaster

V.i.56-95 (Virgil recites)

2. To indicate asides

Greene

James IV

lines 272-3

Jonson

Seianus

I.i.576-81

V. 235-40 (Seianus aside)

Marston

Antonio and Mellida

I.i.77-8

The Malcontent

I.i.92-3

V.i.267-74 (aphoristic)
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used as a Rhetorical Device.

Greene

Alphonsus

297-8: 303-4: 1248-9 (pause indicating shift of thought)
110-11: 277-8: 359-60: 990-1:
994-5: 1057-8:
1061-2: 1417-8 (emphatic pauses)

Orlando Furioso

A Looking Glass for London

660-1 (exclamatory)

880-1: 1073-4: 1080-1: 1082-3:
1118-19 (emphatic)

Jonson

Catiline

I.i.144-5 (emphatic)
239-40 (emphatic)

Kyd

The Spanish Tragedy

Cornelia

I.i.9-10: 25-6: 48-9: 65-66
ii.30-31: 38-9: 75-6
iv.25-6 (pauses for emphasis)

I.i.7-8: 15-16: 22-3: 43-4:
66-7 (rhetorical pauses or periods)
77-8: 94-5: 145-6 (rhetorical questions)
II.i.3-4: 29-30: 88-9 (rhetorical questions)
17-8: 29-40: 45-6: 53-4:
57-8 (pauses) (etc.)

Marlowe

Dido

III.iv.67-8 (exclamatory)

Marston

The Malcontent

The Tragedy of Sophonisba

V.i.i.119-128 (rhetorical)

I.i.104-5 (rhetorical pause)
II.i.i.71-2 (emphatic)
III.i.i.1-13 (rhetorical bombast)
196-7 (emphatic)
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used as a Rhetorical Device.

Nashe

Summer's Last Will and Testament

{117-3: 1210-11: 1235-6 emphatic}
1249-50 (pause)
1778-9 (pause)

Peele

Device of the Pageant (Masque)

The Old Wives Tale

The Battle of Alcazar

41-2 (pause - shift in thought)
184-5: 188-9: 192-3 (pauses)
452-3 (exclamatory)
II.i.46-7 (pause)
III.iv.23-24 (exclamatory)
V.i.130-1 (emphatic)
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Stichomythic Dialogue.

Greene

A Looking Glass for London

James IV

Kyd

First Part of Hieronimo

The Spanish Tragedy

Cornelia

Jonson

Seianus

Marston

Antonio and Mellida

The Malcontent

The Tragedy of Sophonisba

1463-1501 (see courtly love)

1398-1416: 1418-35: 1444-54: 1470-96

III.iii.58-85 (broken)

II.i. line 34 to end of scene broken

III.iii.128-135: 290-303

III.ii.125-8 (A.R.): 57-66

III.iii.51-56: 89-98: 99-102 (A.R.)

114-17: 125-6: 127-134

(abababccdd)

IV.i.101-115 (A.R.): 116-121

II.i.172-205: 244-47: 270-7

(sententious)

I.1.251-6 (alternate rhyme)

II.iii.79-83

II.iii.99-104
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Purposes of "Sentence" and Aphorism.

Greene

Alphonsus
A Looking Glass for London

James IV
George a Greene
Orlando Furioso

Jonson

Every Man Out of His Humour
Catiline
Volpone
Seianus

Kyd

The First Part of Hieronimo
Soliman and Perseda
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Purposes of "Sentence" and Aphorism.

Kyd

The Spanish Tragedy

I.iii.31-2
III.xiii.7-8: 10-11

Cornelia

I.i.37-7 (A.R.): 96-107
(ababbcacdee)
126-131 (abbaacc)
II.i.124-137 (sonnet form)
III.iii.57-62 (ababba)

Marlowe

The Jew of Malta

I.ii.232-3

Edward II

I.i.67-8
II.v.68-4
IV.iv.132-3

Temburlaine Part I

I.i.67-8
II.i.67-8

Marston

Antonio and Mellida

I.i.91-2
II.i.206-7 (speech end)
IV.i.41-2: 44-5

The Malcontent

I.i.199-200: 254-5
II.i.50-1
II.i.27-8
II.i.51-56
III.i.6-12: 32-3
IV.i.136-7: 166-7
II.ii.77-8: 172-81
V.iii.88-9

The Tragedy of Sophonisba

I.i.76-7: 78-9
II.i.81-2: 202-3
I.i.37-41: 43-6: 50-1
II.i.41-8: 94-5
III.i.87-8: 111-12:
118-139 (soliloquy)
IV.i.14-15
V.ii.41-4
Examples of the Heroic Couplet Used for Purposes of "Sentence" and Aphorism.

Marston

The Dutch Courtezan

II.1.125-8; 134-5; 146-7
11.103-4; 227-30; 237-8
V.i.33-4 (Francheschina in broken English
78-9
iii.8-11: 14-15; 16-17

Nashe

Summer's Last Will and Testament

330-1; 386-7; 402-3; 460-1;
516-17; 539-40; 1489-90; 1731-2;
1803-4
Frequency of Final Couplet at the Close of Scenes.

Greene

Alphonsus 6 out of 13 scenes
A Looking Glass for London 11 out of 19 scenes

Jonson

A Tale of a Tub 9 out of 38 scenes
Every Man in His Humour 2 out of 33 scenes

Kyd

The Spanish Tragedy 16 out of 33 scenes
Soliman and Perseda 12 out of 23 scenes

Marlowe

The Jew of Malta 8 out of 22 scenes
Edward II 1 out of 24 scenes

Middleton

Blurt, Master Constable 1 out of 13 scenes
The Phoenix 5 out of 15 scenes

Peele

The Arraignment of Paris 6 out of 7 scenes
Edward I 6 out of 24 scenes
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