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0521792940 - Language and Literary Structure: The Linguistic Analysis of Form in Verse and Narrative

Nigel Fabb

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Language and Literary Structure

How does a literary text get to have literary form, and what is the relation between literary form and linguistic form? This theoretical study of linguistic structure in literature focuses on verse and narrative from a linguistic perspective. Nigel Fabb provides a simple and realistic linguistic explanation of poetic form in English from 1500–1900, drawing on the English and American verse and oral narrative traditions, as well as contemporary criticism. In recent years literary theory has paid relatively little attention to form; this book argues that form is interesting. Fabb offers a new linguistic approach to how metre and rhythm work in poetry based on pragmatic theory, providing a pragmatic explanation of formal ambiguity and indeterminacy and their aesthetic effects. He also uses linguistics to examine the experience of poetry. *Language and Literary Structure* will be welcomed by students and researchers in linguistics, literary theory and stylistics.

NIGEL FABB is Professor of Literary Linguistics at the University of Strathclyde. He is the author of *Linguistics and Literature: Language in the Verbal Arts of the World* (1997), co-author of *Ways of Reading: Advanced Reading Skills for Students of English Literature* (2nd edn, 2000), and of four other books. He is also the author of the articles on linguistics and literature in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* and the *Blackwell Handbook of Linguistics*.

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[More information](#)

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Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page viii
<i>Note on texts used</i>	ix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	x
1. Literary form	1
2. Generated metrical form	34
3. Communicated form	57
4. The communication of metre	88
5. Lines	136
6. Line-groups in metrical verse and in narrative	178
7. Complexity	215
<i>Bibliography</i>	219
<i>Subject index</i>	227
<i>Index of poets cited</i>	229

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[More information](#)

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[More information](#)

Note on texts used

Spelling and punctuation follow that in the edition used for each text, which is often taken from an anthology. Dating of texts is intended to give an approximate sense of when the texts were written, and is usually publication date, except where publication is long after writing.

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[More information](#)

Abbreviations

A letter before a number indicates one of the following anthologies (and page number).

- F Fowler, Alastair (ed.) 1991, *The New Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse*. Oxford University Press.
- J Jones, Emrys (ed.) 1991, *The New Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse*. Oxford University Press.
- K Karlin, Daniel (ed.) 1997, *The Penguin Book of Victorian Verse*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- L Lonsdale, Roger (ed.) 1987, *The New Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*. Oxford University Press.
- S Spengemann, William C, with Roberts, Jessica F. (eds.) 1996, *Nineteenth-Century American Poetry*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- W Wright, David (ed.) 1968, *The Penguin Book of English Romantic Verse*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

In representations of rhythms and metres:

- x unstressed or weakly stressed syllable
- / stressed or strongly stressed syllable
- ˘ light syllable
- heavy syllable
- : a word boundary must fall here
- Δ a symbol which is not projected