

## Prosodic Aspects of German Hexameter Verse

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**Abstract** Within the context of prosodic feature analysis, this essay discusses some German manifestations of hexameter verse from the late eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century. Samples of hexameters by seven German poets—Johann Heinrich Voss, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich von Schiller, Eduard Mörike, Friedrich Hebbel, Thomas Mann, and Bertolt Brecht—are compared on both the metrical and the prosodic level of analysis. The metrical pattern for the German hexameter line allows for sixteen distinct line-types based solely on the distribution of syllables in nonprominent positions of the meter, and the data show that most poets favored certain line-types and tended to avoid others. Voss, Goethe, Schiller, and Hebbel, for example, favored line-types that begin with the configuration *xoxox* (where *x* and *o* represent syllables in prominent and nonprominent positions, respectively), while Brecht preferred lines that are dactylic throughout, and Mann displayed no clear preference for any particular line-type. The data for the metrical configurations also reveal a strong similarity between the hexameters favored by Goethe and Hebbel, despite the fact that Hebbel's were written about sixty years after Goethe's. On the prosodic level, there are striking differences between the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets and the twentieth-century poets (i.e., Mann and Brecht). For example, compound words containing contiguous stressed syllables, which occur only rarely in hexameter verse by Goethe, Schiller, and Hebbel, were consistently used in the same metrical relation by other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets; Mann was inconsistent in his use of this word-type; and Brecht almost always placed it precisely in a metrical relation which the earlier poets invariably avoided. Among other things, Brecht's prosodic style is marked by the

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extremely high overall frequency of this word-type, including multiple occurrences in single lines. In terms of both feature assignment and rules, Brecht's hexameters indicate a development toward a new prosodic system substantially different from that of his predecessors.

German hexameter verse has enjoyed a long and varied tradition since it was recommended to German poets in the eighteenth century by Gottsched in his *Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst*. It was used by Klopstock in his long religious epic *Der Messias* (the first three cantos of which were published in 1748); by Voss in his translations of Homer's *Odyssey* (1781) and *Iliad* (1793) and in his domestic idyll *Luisé* (1795); and by Goethe in *Hermann und Dorothea* (1797). The hexameter line was also used in the classical districts of Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, and others. German poets continued to write hexameter verse in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—particularly in domestic idylls, such as Mörike's *Tafel vom Bodensee* (Idyll of Lake Constance [1846]), Heibel's *Mutter und Kind* (Mother and child [1859]), and Mann's *Gesang vom Kindchen* (Song of the infant [1919]). In the mid-twentieth century, Brecht used this verse form in his unfinished poem *Das Manifest* (1945).

The German hexameter was originally derived from the classical hexameter line used by Greek and Roman poets, most notably in epic verse such as Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. As Frank Banta (1990) observes, both Greek and Latin meter originally depended on *syllable length*, but pitch accent was also present in classical Greek, and probably stress accent in classical Latin. By about the third century A.D., syllable length in Latin gradually gave way to stress accent as the dominant factor. For about two centuries thereafter, both syllable length and stress accent were used in verse meters and prose cadences; eventually, however, only the latter remained (*ibid.*: 3). Elsewhere, I have discussed attempts by the late eighteenth-century German poet Johann Heinrich Voss to recreate in German the rhythmic and rhetorical *effect* of classical hexameter verse (see Chisholm 1995). Here, I shall discuss only German manifestations of the hexameter line, disregarding its Latin and Greek antecedents, in order to identify some of the salient characteristics which distinguish the *metrical and prosodic styles* of selected German poets writing hexameter verse from the late eighteenth through the mid-twentieth century.

### Metrical Configurations

The metrical pattern for the German hexameter line may be schematized as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	(1)
	{	o	}	x	{	o	}	x	{	o	}	
	x	{	o	}	x	{	o	}	x	{	o	}

Each line contains six metrically prominent, monosyllabic positions (labeled x) alternating with six metrically nonprominent positions (labeled o), the first four of which (2, 4, 6, 8) may be either monosyllabic or disyllabic. In the hexameters of most poets, the fifth nonprominent position (10) must be disyllabic, and the sixth nonprominent position (12) is always monosyllabic.<sup>1</sup> The prescribed syllabic configuration at the end of the German hexameter line (xooxo) is equivalent to the *cursus planus* (plain course), a cadence based on stress that, in Latin, was used not only at the end of the hexameter line, but also, along with other types of *cursus*, as a rhetorical device in *prose* in order to render the end of a sentence or clause more dramatic or persuasive (see Banta 1990: 3ff.).

The metrical pattern of the German classical hexameter line allows for considerable flexibility and variety; in fact, even with the prescribed *cursus planus* configuration at the end of each line, there are sixteen possible line-types based solely on the distribution of syllables in metrically nonprominent positions. The metrical patterns of these line-types are as follows:

Number of Syllables in Positions 2, 4, 6, 8	Metrical Pattern
1. 1 1 1 1 1 (2 1)	xo xo xo xo xo (xoo xo)
2. 1 1 1 1 2	xo xo xo xo xoo
3. 1 1 2 1	xo xo xoo xo
4. 1 1 2 2	xo xo xoo xoo
5. 1 2 1 1	xo xoo xo xo
6. 1 2 1 2	xo xoo xo xoo
7. 1 2 2 1	xo xoo xoo xo
8. 1 2 2 2	xo xoo xoo xoo
9. 2 1 1 1	xoo xo xo xo
10. 2 1 1 2	xoo xo xo xoo
11. 2 1 2 1	xoo xo xoo xo
12. 2 1 2 2	xoo xo xoo xoo
13. 2 2 1 1	xoo xoo xo xo
14. 2 2 1 2	xoo xoo xo xoo
15. 2 2 2 1	xoo xoo xoo xo
16. 2 2 2 2	xoo xoo xoo xoo

This flexibility allows for a high degree of stylistic variety in hexameter verse and, in contrast to strict iambic and trochaic meter, enables poets to incorporate many (though not all) German prose configurations into hexameter lines. Hence this meter is suitable not only for elevated or lofty subject matter (as in Klopstock's *Messias* or in Voss's translations

1. Position 10 is occasionally monosyllabic in the hexameters of some poets.

**Table 1** Hexameter Line-Types in the Verse of Voss, Goethe, Schiller, Mörike, Hebbel, Mann, and Brecht

Line-type	Voss		Goethe				Schiller		Mörike		Hebbel		Mann		Brecht	
	<i>Homers Odyssee</i>		<i>Römische Elegien</i>		<i>Hermann und Dorothea</i>		<i>Elegien</i>		<i>Idylle vom Bodensee</i>		<i>Mutter und Kind</i>		<i>Gesang vom Kindchen</i>		<i>Das Manifest</i>	
1111 (21)	3	1.5%	2	0.8%	1	0.5%	0	—	1	0.5%	12	6.0%	3	1.5%	3	1.5%
1112	6	3.0%	6	2.4%	1	0.5%	0	—	0	—	12	6.0%	8	4.0%	0	—
1121	6	3.0%	20	8.2%	8	4.0%	8	4.0%	5	2.5%	6	3.0%	19	9.5%	0	—
1122	3	1.5%	2	0.8%	8	4.0%	6	3.0%	3	1.5%	6	3.0%	10	5.0%	0	—
1211	17	8.5%	48	19.6%	36	18.0%	22	11.0%	11	5.5%	27	13.5%	13	6.5%	0	—
1212	28	14.0%	38	15.5%	28	14.0%	18	9.0%	14	7.0%	26	13.0%	17	8.5%	6	3.0%
1221	23	11.5%	39	15.9%	27	13.5%	32	16.0%	21	10.5%	23	11.5%	12	6.0%	3	1.5%
1222	21	10.5%	18	7.3%	19	9.5%	27	13.5%	20	10.0%	24	12.0%	13	6.5%	11	5.5%
2111	8	4.0%	2	0.8%	3	1.5%	8	4.0%	5	2.5%	8	4.0%	3	1.5%	2	1.0%
2112	8	4.0%	3	1.2%	3	1.5%	2	1.0%	6	3.0%	6	3.0%	10	5.0%	4	2.0%
2121	11	5.5%	8	3.3%	5	2.5%	16	8.0%	17	8.5%	7	3.5%	17	8.5%	6	3.0%
2122	10	5.0%	2	0.8%	8	4.0%	6	3.0%	13	6.5%	5	2.5%	11	5.5%	10	5.0%
2211	10	5.0%	23	9.4%	17	8.5%	13	6.5%	15	7.5%	9	4.5%	20	10.0%	3	1.5%
2212	15	7.5%	13	5.3%	15	7.5%	12	6.0%	23	11.5%	11	5.5%	10	5.0%	14	7.0%
2221	22	11.0%	17	6.9%	13	6.5%	20	10.0%	29	14.5%	11	5.5%	17	8.5%	19	9.5%
2222	9	4.5%	4	1.6%	8	4.0%	10	5.0%	17	8.5%	7	3.5%	17	8.5%	119	59.5%
TOTAL:	200	100.0%	245	100.0%	200	100.0%	200	100.0%	200	100.0%	200	100.0%	200	100.0%	200	100.0%

of Homer), but also for the more informal, relaxed narrative style of middle-class domestic idylls (e.g., Voss's *Luise* or Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*).

Before comparing poets and poetic styles on the basis of certain *types* of syllables and sequences which occur in given relations to the meter, it may be instructive to investigate how each poet utilizes the sixteen line-types allowed by the metrical pattern itself and to determine whether individual poets (or groups of poets writing during different literary periods) select particular metrical line-types in preference to others. From this data we can also determine whether or not particular poets have "ideal" line-types on the basis of the frequency and distribution of monosyllabic and disyllabic realizations of the nonprominent metrical positions in their hexameter verse.

For the first stage of this study, I selected seven German writers—three from the late eighteenth century (Voss, Goethe, and Schiller), two from the mid-nineteenth century (Mörike and Hebbel), and two from the twentieth century (Mann and Brecht). The inclusion of Mann enables us to compare the hexameter verse of a great *prose* stylist who wrote relatively little verse with that of poets who were prolific versifiers. My corpus consists of the first 200 lines of Voss's translation, *Homers Odyssee* (Voss 1953 [1781]), Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea* (Goethe 1970 [1797]), Mörike's *Idylle vom Bodensee* (Mörike 1964 [1846]), Hebbel's *Mutter und Kind* (Hebbel 1965 [1859]), Mann's *Gesang vom Kindchen* (Mann 1966 [1919]), and Brecht's *Das Manifest* (Brecht 1993 [1945]). I have also included samples of hexameter lines from classical distichs: the 245 hexameter lines in Goethe's *Römische Elegien* (Goethe 1970 [1788/1790]) and the first 200 hexameter lines from Schiller's *Elegien* (Schiller 1992 [1795/1799]).<sup>2</sup> The absolute and relative frequency of each of the sixteen line-types in each sample is displayed in Table 1.

This table reveals that there was a clear tendency on the part of all these poets except Hebbel to *avoid* writing hexameter lines in which the first four nonprominent positions (2, 4, 6, 8) are all monosyllabic. The following examples are of this line-type:

x ° x ° x ° x ° x ° x °  
Dessen Tochter hält den ängstlich harrenden Dulder  
(Voss, *Odyssee*, 55) (2)

Runden, braunen Tisch, er stand auf mächtigen Füßen  
(Goethe, *Hermann und Dorothea*, 170)

Ehfrau noch hierher am dritten Tag nach der Hochzeit  
(Mörike, *Idylle vom Bodensee*, 33)

2. Schiller's *Elegien* include "Der Spaziergang" (The Stroll), "Der Tanz" (The Dance), "Der Genius," "Nänie" (Nenia), "Shakespears Schatten" (Shakespeare's Shadow), and "Das Glück" (Happiness).

Drimmen taucht ein Kopf empor. Die Klarste der Scheiben  
(Hebbel, *Mutter und Kind*, 39)

Ganz besonders: Ausdruck meines eigensten Lebens  
(Mann, *Gesang vom Kindchen*, 116)

Und die Bourgeoisie im Stal erkämpfte den Vorrang.  
(Brecht, *Das Manifest*, 71)

In both the *Römische Elegien* and *Hermann und Dorothea*, Goethe shows a strong preference for the line-type 121121, in which the metrical pattern of the first half is repeated in the second half, as in these examples:

$\overset{x}{S} \overset{\circ}{a} \overset{\circ}{g} \overset{\circ}{e} \overset{x}{t}$ ,  $\overset{\circ}{m} \overset{\circ}{i} \overset{\circ}{r}$ ,  $\overset{\circ}{a} \overset{\circ}{n}$ ,  $\overset{\circ}{o}$   $\overset{x}{s} \overset{\circ}{p} \overset{\circ}{r} \overset{\circ}{e} \overset{\circ}{c} \overset{\circ}{h}$ ,  $\overset{\circ}{i} \overset{x}{h} \overset{\circ}{o} \overset{x}{h} \overset{\circ}{e} \overset{\circ}{n}$   $\overset{x}{P} \overset{\circ}{a} \overset{\circ}{l} \overset{x}{a} \overset{\circ}{e} \overset{\circ}{s} \overset{\circ}{t}$ !  
(*Römische Elegien*, 1: 1) (3)

Ehret, wen ihr auch wollt! Nun bin ich endlich geborgen!  
(*Römische Elegien*, 2: 1)

Deucht mir, blieben zurück von allen unsern Bewohnern.  
(*Hermann und Dorothea*, 3)

Voss, Goethe, Schiller, and Hebbel show a definite preference for lines that begin with the metrical configuration *xoxox* . . . (12 . . .), in which the line seems to begin slowly and deliberately before flowing on at a more rapid pace, as in these examples:

1211: Als es gestern geschah, und schlafen weiter in Frieden  
(Hebbel, *Mutter und Kind*, 15) (4)

1212: Allda saß er, des Mahls sich freuend. Die übrigen Götter  
(Voss, *Odyssee*, 26)

1221: Wiederholet, politisch und zwecklos, jegliche Meinung  
(Goethe, *Römische Elegien*, 2: 7)

1222: Frei empfängt mich die Wiese mit weithin verbreitern Teppich.  
(Schiller, "Der Spaziergang," 13)

Mörrike, on the other hand, clearly preferred lines in which the first nonprominent position is *disyllabic*, as in the following line:

$\overset{x}{A} \overset{\circ}{b} \overset{\circ}{e} \overset{\circ}{r}$   $\overset{\circ}{n} \overset{\circ}{o} \overset{\circ}{c} \overset{x}{h}$   $\overset{\circ}{f} \overset{\circ}{r} \overset{\circ}{e} \overset{\circ}{u} \overset{\circ}{d}$   $\overset{\circ}{s} \overset{\circ}{i} \overset{\circ}{c} \overset{\circ}{h}$   $\overset{\circ}{d} \overset{\circ}{a} \overset{\circ}{s}$   $\overset{\circ}{T} \overset{\circ}{u} \overset{\circ}{r} \overset{\circ}{m} \overset{\circ}{c} \overset{\circ}{h} \overset{\circ}{e} \overset{\circ}{n}$   $\overset{\circ}{i} \overset{\circ}{n}$   $\overset{\circ}{s} \overset{\circ}{c} \overset{\circ}{h} \overset{\circ}{l} \overset{\circ}{a} \overset{\circ}{n} \overset{\circ}{k} \overset{\circ}{e} \overset{\circ}{r}$   $\overset{\circ}{H} \overset{\circ}{ö} \overset{\circ}{h} \overset{\circ}{e}$   $\overset{\circ}{d} \overset{\circ}{e} \overset{\circ}{n}$   $\overset{\circ}{w} \overset{\circ}{e} \overset{\circ}{i} \overset{\circ}{t} \overset{\circ}{e} \overset{\circ}{n}$ .  
(*Idylle vom Bodensee*, 9) (5)

Comparison of the hexameters in Hebbel's *Mutter und Kind* with those of his predecessors reveals a very conservative, traditional metrical style. Whereas Mörrike increases the frequency of dactyls at the beginning of his hexameter lines, Hebbel reverts to those metrical line-types which predominate in the samples by Voss and Goethe.

At the opposite end of the spectrum are Brecht's hexameter lines. As

we can see in Table 1, he *entirely* avoided the line-type which Goethe and Hebbel used most frequently. Instead, over 59 percent (!) of his lines are purely dactylic (type 222221). Brecht tended to ride roughshod over his hexameter lines, turning them into galloping dactyls, as illustrated by the opening six lines of *Das Manifest*:

Kriege zerrümmern die Welt und im Trümmerfeld geht ein  
Gespenst um. (6)

Nicht geboren im Krieg, auch im Frieden gesichtet, seit lange.

Schrecklich den Herrschenden, aber den Kindern der Vorstädte freundlich

Lugend in ärmlicher Küche kopfschüttelnd in halbleere Speisen

Abpassend dann die Erschöpften am Gatter der Gruben und Werften.

Freunde besuchend im Kerker, passierend dort ohne Passierschein.

In contrast to the metrical variety of Goethe's hexameter verse, the overwhelming repetition of the dactyls in *Das Manifest* tends to create a somewhat monotonous effect (which is, however, partially offset by the semantic, thematic, and prosodic features of the text).<sup>3</sup> Thus Voss, Goethe, Schiller, Mörrike, Hebbel, and Brecht all show clear preferences in their choice of metrical line-types. In the hexameters of Mann, on the other hand, there appears to be no clear preference, tendency, or dominant pattern. There is no single line-type or group of line-types whose frequency clearly sets it apart from the others.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to other German poets, Mann does not appear to have successfully internalized the hexameter line or to have developed his own "hexameter style." In a July 1920 letter to Carl Maria Weber, he stated that, with the exception of its introductory section, his hexameter poem was "unsuccessful" (Mann 1962: 176). Although he was apparently referring to the semantic or conceptual component of *Gesang vom Kindchen*, it appears that his self-criticism applies to the metrical treatment of the text as well.

In Table 2, the total as well as the *average* number of syllables in each of the nonprominent positions of the meter is given for each poet. For example, "2,000" in position 10 indicates that *all* lines have two syllables in that position, while "1,500" in a given position indicates that that position is monosyllabic in exactly half the lines and disyllabic in the other half. As in Table 1, the results displayed in Table 2 highlight the metrical similarity between the hexameters of Goethe and Hebbel. Both poets favored the 121121 line-type, and a monosyllabic actualization of

3. The composer Hans Eisler referred to the lines in *Das Manifest* as "jazzy" hexameters (*vejzazle Hexameter* [Brecht 1993: 400]).

4. With the possible exception of a slight tendency toward a disyllabic actualization of position 4.

**Table 2** Average Number of Syllables in Nonprominent Positions (2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12) in German Hexameter Verse

Poet	Metrical Position						Total
	2	4	6	8	10	12	
Voss	294 <sup>a</sup>	345	306	300	398	200	1843
( <i>Homers Odyssee</i> )	1.470 <sup>b</sup>	1.725	1.530	1.500	1.990	1.000	1.536
Goethe	317	443	354	325	490	245	2174
( <i>Römische Elegien</i> )	1.294	1.808	1.445	1.327	2.000	1.000	1.479
Goethe	272	363	296	290	400	200	1821
( <i>Hermann und Dorothea</i> )	1.360	1.815	1.480	1.450	2.000	1.000	1.518
Schiller	287	354	334	281	400	200	1856
( <i>Elegien</i> )	1.435	1.770	1.670	1.405	2.000	1.000	1.547
Mörrike	325	350	325	296	400	200	1896
( <i>Lyllie vom Bodensee</i> )	1.625	1.750	1.625	1.480	2.000	1.000	1.580
Hebbel	264	337	290	297	400	200	1788
( <i>Mutter und Kind</i> )	1.320	1.685	1.450	1.485	2.000	1.000	1.490
Mann	304	320	313	296	394	200	1827
( <i>Gesang vom Kindchen</i> )	1.520	1.600	1.565	1.480	1.970	1.000	1.523
Brecht	377	375	368	364	397	202	2083
( <i>Das Manifest</i> )	1.885	1.875	1.840	1.820	1.985	1.010	1.736

<sup>a</sup>Total number of syllables per metrical position.

<sup>b</sup>Average number of syllables per metrical position.

position 2 occurs far more frequently in their hexameters than in those of Voss, Schiller, Mörrike, Mann, or Brecht. The figures for Brecht (an average that approaches two syllables in all positions except 12) confirm that his hexameters are strongly dactylic. The samples of all poets reveal a strong tendency toward a disyllabic actualization of position 4 (although this tendency is much less pronounced in Mann's hexameters). Furthermore, the samples by Goethe and Hebbel show a strong tendency to use the cursus planus (xxxxo) in positions 3–6 as well as 9–12, thereby dividing the line into two, metrically equivalent hemistichs:

	<i>First Half</i>						<i>Second Half</i>					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	x	o	x	oo	x	o	x	o	x	oo	x	o

### Prosodic Configurations

Thus far, discussion has focused on the *metrical* structure of the German hexameter line. Our analysis can now be extended to the *prosodic*

level of verse structure, that is, to the interaction between the abstract metrical pattern and its linguistic actualization. Here, stress, morphological structure, and word and phrase boundaries play a significant role in each poet's selection or rejection of particular sequences of prosodic features in relation to the metrical pattern. Although the following discussion is not intended to be exhaustive, it will cover several stylistic characteristics which reflect rather striking differences among the poets and periods considered here.

The framework for this analysis is a modified version of a theory of prosody originally proposed by Karl Magnusson and Frank Ryder for English verse (Magnusson and Ryder 1970, 1971). Since then, their theory has been discussed, extended, and applied to various English and German verse forms (recently, in Chisholm 1995); it will therefore be only briefly summarized here.

Systems of versification in Germanic languages are based on sets of prosodically distinctive features which either reinforce or disrupt the metrical pattern, depending on their relation to it. The prosodic feature stress, for example, reinforces the prominent positions of the meter and disrupts its nonprominent positions. Fundamental to verse structure are the prosodic characteristics not only of single syllables, but, more significantly, of *sequences* of syllables, and in Germanic languages verse regularizes a tendency toward a sequential alternation of prominent and nonprominent entities. This principle of alternation states that if a prosodic feature of the language occurs in a disruptive relation to the meter (e.g., a stressed syllable in a *nonprominent* metrical position), then that same feature must also occur in the immediately following position, where it reinforces the meter (e.g., a stressed syllable in a *prominent* position). This principle is formalized as follows:

$$[F] \rightarrow [F_1] / [F_1] \text{ ————} \quad (7)$$

Each set of brackets represents a metrical position, and *F* represents any feature or cluster of features occurring in that position. The subscript 1 indicates that the disruptive feature and the immediately following reinforcing feature are identical. The feature or cluster of features to the right of the slash (/) always disrupts the meter and must therefore be followed (in the position represented by the horizontal line) by at least one reinforcing feature. Any feature or feature-cluster to the left of the arrow also disrupts the meter. The arrow indicates that the syllable to its left must contain *at least* the feature or cluster of features to its immediate right, where the feature always reinforces the meter. The slash means "in the environment." Thus the rule formalized in (7) stipulates that any feature occurring in a disruptive relation to the meter must occur in the very next metrical position as well.

Like other verse forms, German hexameter verse can be described in terms of prosodically distinctive features. The prosodic features described below were identified on the basis of the frequency and distribution of sequences of syllable types in various metrical relations (*ox, xo, oo, oxo, xox, xoo*, etc.) in a corpus of German verse from the classical/Romantic tradition of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>5</sup>

1. STRESS ( $\pm$ ST):

- a. All monosyllabic nouns, adjectives, and main verbs (e.g., *Haus, rot, geht*).
- b. All monosyllabic separable prefixes (e.g., *weg-, ab-, aus-*).
- c. All demonstrative pronouns (e.g., *die, der, den*).
- d. In polysyllabic words, all syllables which bear stress relative to their immediate morphological environment (e.g., *Saaienspiel, Handwerk, Handwerker, verweisen, abreisen, unter, bevor*).

2. PRESTRESS ( $\pm$ PS):

- a. Within orthographic words, all unstressed syllables preceding a stressed syllable (e.g., *geliebt, Universität, Verantwortung, Fabrik*).
  - b. Within orthographic words, any stressed syllable immediately preceding another stressed syllable (e.g., *weggehen, Verantwortung, Fabrikarbeiter*).
  - c. All monosyllabic articles and possessive pronouns (excluding demonstrative pronouns) immediately preceding a noun or adjective (e.g., *die Stadt, die alte, ein Buch, ein neues, mein Haus, ihr Freund, ein bestimmter, Das Gefühl, die Geschichte, die vergessene, die Universität, die Vereinbarung, die Fabrikarbeiterin*).
3. LEXICAL ( $\pm$ LX):
- a. All stressed syllables in nouns, adjectives, and main verbs (e.g., *Baum, Bäume, Apfelbaum, Ausgang, aussehen, gehen*).
  - b. In compound words, all unstressed syllables which can function independently as nouns, adjectives, or verbs (e.g., *Ausgang, Hebrich, weggeht, Flugzeug, Freiheit*).<sup>6</sup>
4. WORD ONSET ( $\pm$ WO): the first syllable of an orthographic word (e.g., *reich, lieblich, gesehen, Universität*).

The features STRESS, LEXICAL, and WORD ONSET reinforce the meter in *x*-positions and disrupt it in *o*-positions. The feature PRESTRESS reinforces

5. This corpus comprises over 50,000 lines of verse in both strictly alternating and classical meters by Klopstock, Goethe, and Hölderlin.

6. On the basis of their positional distribution in the lyric corpus, a limited number of derivational suffixes (e.g., *-heit, -haft, -schaft*, and *-tunft*) are also assigned the prosodic feature +LEXICAL (see Chisholm 1973, for further discussion).

the meter in *o*-positions and disrupts it in *x*-positions. (In *disyllabic o*-positions, WORD ONSET and PRESTRESS disrupt the meter in the first location and reinforce it in the second location.) Any line of verse can be characterized in terms of these features, as in the following examples from Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea* (4: 29), in (8a), and Mörike's *Idylle vom Bodensee* (327), in (8b):

1            3            5            7            9            11  
 x   o   x   o   o   x   o   x   o   x   o   o   x   o  
 Und es hingen herein Gutedel und Muskateller

ST: -   -   -   -   -   +   +   +   -   -   -   -   -   +  
 PS: -   -   -   -   -   +   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -  
 LX: -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -  
 WO: +   +   +   -   -   +   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -

x   o   o   o   x   o   o   x   o   o   o   o   o   x   o  
 Lang für den Winter am Sonntag gern; eine maserne Peife

ST: +   -   -   -   +   -   -   +   -   -   +   -   -   +   -  
 PS: -   -   -   -   +   -   -   +   -   -   -   -   -   -   -  
 LX: +   -   -   -   +   -   -   +   -   -   -   -   -   +   -  
 WO: +   +   +   +   +   -   -   +   -   -   +   -   -   +   -

Rules of *prosody* account for the presence of one or more prosodic features in a disruptive relation to the underlying metrical pattern. In (8a), for example, the stressed syllable *Gut-* occurs in an *o*-position, where it disrupts the meter. This disruption can be accounted for by a rule which places constraints on the actualization of the immediately following *x*-position:

$$[F] \rightarrow [+st] / \text{ }_o.[+st] \text{ ———} \quad (9)$$

This rule states that any occurrence of +stress in an *o*-position (indicated by the subscript *o* to the left of the bracket) must be followed by +stress in the immediately following *x*-position (where it reinforces, or *affirms*, the meter). This condition is satisfied by the second syllable of *Gutedel*. Similarly, the -stress syllable *und* in *x*-positions 1 and 9 must be followed by a syllable containing that same feature (*es* and *Mus-* in this line):

$$[F] \rightarrow [-st] / \text{ }_x[-st] \text{ ———} \quad (10)$$

Rules can also be formulated to specify which syllable types may occur in disyllabic *o*-positions in hexameter verse. The following restrictive rule, for example, excludes the STRESS feature from the second syllable of disyllabic *o*-positions:

$$[F] \rightarrow -st / [F \text{ ———}] \quad (11)$$

"[F]" and "[F]" define the first and second locations, respectively, of the expanded *o*-position. Thus the rule states that after *any* feature or feature-cluster in the first location, the second location must contain the feature -stress. This rule would exclude such sequences as *Mitternacht, gelebt, and genug* from *o*-positions.

On the basis of these features, it is possible to write prosodic rules which characterize the verse of a given poet, period, or tradition. As an example, we can write rules based on the conservative hexameter style in Hebbel's *Mutter und Kind* (2,075 lines) and then apply those rules to the hexameter verse of other German poets. In *Mutter und Kind*, stressed syllables rarely occur in *o*-positions, but when they do, they are always followed by a stressed syllable, as in lines 1459, 1035, and 370:

$\overset{x}{\text{U}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{d}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{s}}\overset{x}{\text{p}}\overset{x}{\text{l}}\overset{x}{\text{o}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{l}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{c}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{s}}\overset{x}{\text{?}}\overset{x}{\text{D}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{H}}\overset{x}{\text{a}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{m}}\overset{x}{\text{a}}\overset{x}{\text{c}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{b}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{V}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{s}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}$   
 $\overset{x}{\text{B}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{a}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{d}}\overset{x}{\text{,}}\overset{x}{\text{V}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{s}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{b}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{u}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{d}}\overset{x}{\text{K}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{g}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{u}}\overset{x}{\text{c}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{w}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{d}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{V}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{o}}\overset{x}{\text{f}}\overset{x}{\text{f}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{b}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{f}}\overset{x}{\text{f}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}$   
 $\overset{x}{\text{U}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{d}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{J}}\overset{x}{\text{a}}\overset{x}{\text{s}}\overset{x}{\text{m}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{v}}\overset{x}{\text{o}}\overset{x}{\text{m}}\overset{x}{\text{A}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{o}}\overset{x}{\text{s}}\overset{x}{\text{d}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{M}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{a}}\overset{x}{\text{c}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{v}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{k}}\overset{x}{\text{u}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{d}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{g}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}$  (12)

Similarly, unstressed syllables in *x*-positions are always followed by unstressed syllables in the following *o*-positions, as in positions 1 and 2 in line 370 above (*Und der* . . .). In *disyllabic* (or "expanded") *o*-positions, a stressed syllable occasionally occurs in the second location (e.g., *-nachs* in line 370), but never in the first. Thus the following set of rules accounts for the occasional mild disruptions of the meter in *Mutter und Kind*:

Rule 1.  $[F] \rightarrow [+st] / \circ.[+st] \text{ ———}$ . (13)

Rule 2.  $[F] \rightarrow [-st] / \overset{x}{\text{.}}[-st] \text{ ———}$ .

Rule 3.  $[F] \rightarrow [-st] / \text{ ——— } F]$ .

This set of rules, however, allows sequences in disyllabic *o*-positions which do *not* occur in *Mutter und Kind*, for example, *bestimmt, die Stadt, and genug* in the following lines:

\*Wenn er das nötige Geld hat, will er das Haus bestimmt kaufen  
 (construct) (14)

\*Morgen will sie mit ihren Freundinnen in die Stadt gehen  
 (construct)

Aber noch früh genug merkt' ich, sie hatten mich immer zum besten.  
 (Goethe, *Hermann und Dorothea*, 2: 213)

In these examples the first syllable in the expanded *o*-position has the prosodic feature *PRESTRESS*, while the second syllable lacks this feature. The rule which excludes this feature can be formalized as follows:

Rule 4.  $[F] \rightarrow +ps] / [+ps \text{ ———}$ . (15)

This rule, however, is *too* restrictive, as it also excludes sequences of the "Mitternacht" type from disyllabic *o*-positions. Since the second syllable of Mitternacht is not word-initial, it can be accepted with the rule modified as follows:

Rule 4a.  $[F] \rightarrow +ps] / [+ps, +wo \text{ ———}$ . (16)

This rule states that a *PRESTRESS* syllable which is also *word-initial* (e.g., *bestimmt, genug, die Stadt*) must be followed by another *PRESTRESS* syllable. The rule implies that *PRESTRESS* and *WORD ONSET* disrupt the meter in the first location of the expanded *o*-position and that *PRESTRESS* affirms the meter in the second location. To exclude the first two syllables of words like *Fabrikarbeiter* and *gewalttätig* from disyllabic *o*-positions, the rule can be strengthened by stipulating that the syllable in the second location must be *word-initial*:

Rule 4b.  $[F] \rightarrow +ps, +wo] / [+ps, +wo \text{ ———}$ . (17)

This implies that the feature *WORD ONSET* affirms the meter in the second location. While not intended to be a *complete* set of rules for Hebbel, Rules 1-3 and 4b illustrate the process of rule formulation based on the occurrence and nonoccurrence of sequences of prosodic features in the various metrical relations in *Mutter und Kind*, and they give some indication of the extremely conservative metrical style in this poem.<sup>7</sup>

In the 2,034 lines of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*, there are six violations of Rule 1, five of which are of the following type (2: 44):

$\overset{x}{\text{G}}\overset{x}{\text{u}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{M}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{s}}\overset{x}{\text{c}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{f}}\overset{x}{\text{u}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{w}}\overset{x}{\text{a}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{s}}\overset{x}{\text{p}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{c}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{n}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{m}}\overset{x}{\text{m}}\overset{x}{\text{l}}\overset{x}{\text{i}}\overset{x}{\text{s}}\overset{x}{\text{c}}\overset{x}{\text{h}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{r}}\overset{x}{\text{e}}\overset{x}{\text{t}}$   
 ST: + - (18)

To accept these lines, Rule 1 in (13) can be modified to state that, after  $\circ.[+st]$ , the following syllable, if unstressed, must at least be *word-initial*:

$[-st] \rightarrow [+wo] / \circ.[+st] \text{ ———}$ . (19)

A single line in *Hermann und Dorothea* (6: 89) deviates from this weakened version of the rule:

Selbst hinging nach Paris und bald den schrecklichen Tod fand. (20)

7. In light of Hebbel's extremely strict and conventional prosodic system, one wonders what led his editors to imply that his hexameters contain violations and variations from the hexameter tradition: "Auch wenn Hebbel das ungewohnte und anspruchsvolle Metrum nicht ohne Verstöße und Lizenzen handhabte" (Even if Hebbel handled the unfamiliar and demanding meter not without violations and poetic freedom [Hebbel 1965: 915 (my emphases)]).

The fact that the second syllable of *hingings* is +LEXICAL makes it possible to weaken the rule still further:

$$[-wo, -st] \rightarrow [+LX] / \text{ }_o[+st] \text{ ---} \quad (21)$$

This particular deviation occurs with considerable frequency in the hexameters of Voss and Mörike. In contrast to the *single line* out of the 2,034 lines in *Hermann und Dorothea* rejected by (19), 12 (or 3%) of the first 400 lines in Mörike's *Idylle vom Bodensee* are of this type, as in the following example (l. 57):

Wenn der Fischer aus neue das Netz auswirft und den Barsch fängt. (22)

Thus the various versions of Rule 1 highlight differences in the hexameter styles of Hebbel, Goethe, Voss, and Mörike.<sup>8</sup>

### "Stress Clash" in Compound Words

We have seen that a complete characterization of German poetic meter involves more than one prosodic feature and more than one rule. For the purpose of illustration, however, I shall focus here on a single feature (STRESS) in a single prosodic phenomenon (*stress clash*) which has particular consequences for German hexameter verse. In the German adaptation of the classical hexameter line, all metrically prominent positions are separated by either one or two syllables both within and between lines.<sup>9</sup> Since stressed syllables reinforce the meter in prominent positions and disrupt it in nonprominent positions, the metrical pattern favors words in which stressed syllables are separated by one or more unstressed syllables. In the German language, however, there is a sizeable group of compound words in which two or more stressed syllables are contiguous, such as *ablenzen, ausgeben, hartnäckig, erdkaltem, Seefahrer, Stammkloster, Maultiere, gewalttätig, zurückführen, verabscheuen, hinausgehen, Verwirrfälligung, Fabrikarbeiter, Facharbeiter*, and so on. When a poet chooses compound words containing contiguous stressed syllables, specific prosodic constraints (which vary from poet to poet) determine how these sequences may be aligned with the meter. Since the seven-

8. Similarly, Rule 3 in (13) excludes the frequent occurrences of nonlexical disyllables (*etne, über, oder, diese*, etc.) in Mörike's *Idylle vom Bodensee*, thus highlighting another essential prosodic difference between Mörike and Hebbel.

9. In the *pentameter* line of the classical distich, by contrast, no syllables intervene between the third and fourth prominent positions of the line, or between the sixth prominent position of one line and the first prominent position of the following (hexameter) line, although there is often a syntactic break, or *caesura*, between these two positions. The following example is from Goethe's *Römische Elegien* (l. 2):

Sträßen, rüdel ein Wört, Ganus, regst du dich nicht?

**Table 3** Positional Distribution of Trisyllabic Compound Words of the Type [+st, +wo], [+st, -wo], and [-st, -wo] in German Hexameter Verse

Poet	Metrical Position										Total Lines	Ratio			
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	oxo	xoo	oxo					
Voss	0	5	0	1	0	5	0	3	0	0	14	0	14	400	0.0350
Goethe	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	2034	0.0025
Schiller	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	400	0.0025
Mörike	0	8	0	5	0	4	0	7	0	0	24	0	24	400	0.0600
Hebbel	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2075	0.0010
Mann	13	3	6	5	1	6	4	3	4	7	23	28	51	919	0.0555
Brecht	19	0	15	0	17	2	14	1	24	0	3	89	92	378	0.2434

teenth century, German poets have been confronted by this problem in strictly alternating (iambic and trochaic) meters as well as in classical meters. Words with contiguous stressed syllables either have had to be excluded entirely from verse—a severe limitation given the large number of commonly used compound words of the type *ausgehen, eiskalt*, and *Seefahrer* in German—or these words have had to be accommodated in some way.

The frequency and positional distribution of trisyllabic compounds with stress clash in hexameter verse by the seven poets under consideration are displayed in Table 3.<sup>10</sup> The number under each metrical position indicates the number of times the *first syllable* of the word (e.g., *Vorstellung, dreieckig, aufblicken*) occurs in that position. The data highlight remarkable differences in the use of this prosodic word-type. In the hexameter verse of Goethe, Schiller, and Hebbel, such words occur only very rarely, ranging from 0.10 percent to 0.25 percent (i.e., roughly one to three occurrences per 1,000 lines). They occur much more frequently in Voss's *Odyssée* translation (3.5%, or about 35 occurrences per 1,000 lines) and even more so in Mörike's *Idylle vom Bodensee* (6%, or about 60/1,000 lines). By contrast, in a sample of Hebbel's essayistic prose from the same year (1859) as his *Mutter und Kind*, this word-type occurs twenty times in 140 "lines" (based on an average of 10 words per hexameter line in *Mutter und Kind*). This represents a frequency of 14.3 percent in the prose sample.<sup>11</sup>

10. The less frequently occurring inflected forms with four or more syllables (e.g., *annulige, ausgehende*) are excluded from consideration here.

11. The 20 trisyllabic compounds in *Das deutsche Theater* are *ausstellen, Inschriften, planlos, einladen, Schauspieler* (2), *Abrede, ausfallen, gleichgültig* (2), *abwenden, nachrechnen, Zustandes* (2), *Umtrieben, Machwerke, Anwendung, beitragen, Abstellung, and Auflebung*.



	Occurrences	Lines	Ratio
Prose: <i>Das deutsche Theater</i>	20	140	0.143
Verse: <i>Mutter und Kind</i>	2	2,075	0.001

One characteristic use of this prosodic word-type in the hexameter passages by Voss, Goethe, Schiller, Mörike, and Hebbel is that these compounds are *always* initiated in *monosyllabic o-positions*, as the following examples illustrate:

Das in sein Vaterland heimkehre der weise Odysseus  
(Voss, *Odyssee*, 83) (23)

Die hochherzig ein Mädchen vollbrachte, die treffliche Jungfrau  
(Goethe, *Hermann und Dorothea*, 6: 105)

Welcher mit lieblichen Farben und Gold ausmalte die Bücher  
(Mörike, *Idylle vom Bodensee*, 84)

Brand, Vielsterben und Krieg euch wider Verhoffen betreffen  
Aus der Kirche *sogleich fortschleichen* können zum Schiffe.  
(Hebbel, *Mutter und Kind*, 1035, 1729)

This corresponds to German poetic practice in iambic and trochaic verse from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. In adapting this word-type (two stressed morphemes followed by an unstressed morpheme) to iambic meters, seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century poets placed the *first* syllable (i.e., the one bearing *primary* stress) in a metrically *nonprominent* position, as in the following examples:

Als Diamante spielt und ohn' Äuflören brennt  
(Gryphius, "An die Sternen") (24)

Amnütig Tall Du immergrüner Hain!  
(Goethe, "Immenau")

There are no iambic lines like the following in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German verse:

\*Thr Lichter, die die Nacht ohn' Äuflören erhellen  
\*So amnütig geht Lili durch das Tal. (25)

In hexameter verse, on the other hand, there are further possibilities in addition to *oxo* and *xox*. This word-type can begin in the second syllable of a disyllabic *o*-position, or in an *x*-position followed by a disyllabic *o*-position:

x o o amnütig amnütig (26)

Table 4 [+stress] in Disyllabic O-Positions

	First location	Second location	Number of lines
Klopstock, <i>Messias</i> , I, II	7	32	1,617
Voss, <i>Laus</i> , I-III	2	0	1,766
Goethe, <i>Hermann und Dorothea</i>	10	23	2,034
Hölderlin, <i>Gedichte</i>	1	2	967
TOTAL	20	57	6,384

Yet eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets who did not hesitate to use words of the *Vaterland* and *angenehm* type ([+ST] [-ST] [+ST]) in the metrical relation *xoo* consistently avoided using the *amnütig* type ([+ST] [+ST] [-ST]) in that metrical relation. A partial explanation for this phenomenon could be the attempt to avoid stressed syllables in the first location of the expanded *o*-position. The figures in Table 4 (from Chisholm 1995) reflect this tendency. Most of the [+ST] syllables in the first location in these poems occur in either nonlexical disyllables (e.g., *ein*, *aber*), monosyllabic verbs (e.g., *geht*), or separated stressed prefixes (e.g., *an*, *ab*, *aus*); most of those in the second location are lexical syllables in trisyllabic compounds of the *Vaterland* type.

Yet the strength of the poetic tradition since the seventeenth century, together with an awareness of or "feel" for the morphological structure of these compounds, was apparently a major factor. Just as poets avoided using lexical disyllables (e.g., *gehen*, *kehren*) in expanded *o*-positions, they also avoided placing the *disyllabic component* of lexical compounds (e.g., *aus-gehen*, *heim-kehren*) in these positions, that is, in all meters these compounds were treated *as if* they still consisted of a monosyllable followed by a lexical disyllable.

The figures for the twentieth-century writers in our sample, Mann and Brecht, give an entirely different picture. One can see significant prosodic changes taking place, as well as what appears to be a development toward a new prosodic system for German hexameter verse. Mann, who was familiar with the hexameter tradition since Voss, reveals an ambivalence in his use of these compounds. Of the 51 occurrences in *Gesang vom Kindchen*, slightly less than half (23) are initiated in *o*-positions. In contrast to the hexameter verse of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets, however, who initiated this compound only in monosyllabic *o*-positions, fifteen of the occurrences in Mann's idyll begin in the second location of *disyllabic* positions, as in the following lines (5, 17):

Oder *Schiffsteller*, und wahrlich, man schätzt sein Talent nicht geringer (27)  
Dichter? Ich war es! Denn wo sich *ursprünglich* die Liebe zur Sprache!

Even more strikingly different from Mann's predecessors is the fact that 28 of the 51 occurrences of this compound begin in *x*-positions. This partial break with tradition seems to indicate that the *primary stress* of this word-type, rather than its morphological structure, was becoming the dominant prosodic factor, as in lines 181 and 322 of *Gesang vom Kindchen*:

Wann ich mit *erhaltenem* Wasser die Augen geklärt mir am Morgen  
Ganz das des hohen Alters: Der *zahnlose* Mund und der mühsam/ (28)

In addition to these 51 occurrences in *xoo* and *oxo*, there are eight occurrences which are *positionally ambiguous*, that is, depending on how the hexameter line is scanned, they are initiated *either* in an *x*-position *or* in the second location of an *o*-position, as in lines 35, 42, and 227:

Immer behalten? *Schiffsteller* biehst du und Prosaerzähler? (29)  
Innere Dinge zu scheiden, *spitzfindig*, taugt er nicht eben.

Deines *lichtblonden* Haars, das die Mühe mit samtene Bürsten.

There are also other areas in which Mann's prosodic system differs significantly from that of his predecessors. Voss and Hebbel used lexical syllables in disyllabic *o*-positions only rarely, and they avoided syllables bearing primary word stress. Goethe, Schiller, and Mörike used lexical syllables only if they did not bear primary word stress, and stressed syllables only if they were nonlexical.

+LEXICAL, -STRESS: (30a)

Und besonders den Schlafrock mit indianischen Blumen  
Dort besorg ich sogleich das Kinderzeug, alles und jedes  
Aber zu dulden die Laune des Herrn, wenn er ungerührt tadelte.  
(Goethe, *Hermann und Dorothea*, 1: 29, 2: 58, 9: 121)

+STRESS, -LEXICAL: (30b)

Lieblisch sei, wie dein Name, nun auch *deine* Stimme, Maria!  
Was nur klingt, es sei alt oder neu; der mag sie verkaufen.  
(Mörike, *Idylle vom Bodensee*, 150, 373)

None of these poets, however, used *lexical disyllables*, such as *leben*, *gelebt*, and so on, in nonprominent positions. Perhaps they sensed that such words would give the nonprominent positions too much lexical and accentual "weight" relative to the preceding and following prominent positions and would thereby destabilize the meter. In some of Mann's lines, however, this constraint no longer exists, as illustrated by lines 51, 58, and 565 of *Gesang vom Kindchen*:

—Ihr *merket's* schwerlich — schlich sie sich ein in meine Erzählung  
Das *wirke* Vatergefühl: es mach mich zum meutischen Dichter  
So noch einmal walle das Herz mir zehn *Jahre* später. (31)

In these lines, phrasal and emphatic stress appears to predominate over word stress. In general, the hexameters in *Gesang vom Kindchen* reflect vacillation between adherence to the older tradition and a hesitant, uncertain search for a new prosodic system for German hexameter verse.

#### Brecht's Hexameter Fragment *Das Manifest*

In his uncompleted 1945 poem *Das Manifest*, Brecht went much further than Mann toward changing the prosodic structure of the German hexameter line. Not only are his trisyllabic compounds almost always initiated in metrically prominent positions,<sup>12</sup> but the sheer frequency of this word-type's occurrence (approximately once in every four lines) amounts to a stylistic trait of his hexameter verse. Another characteristic of Brecht's hexameter style is the *accumulation* of two or three occurrences of this prosodic word-type in a single line, as in lines 52, 125, and 127 of *Das Manifest*:

*Leibergne* werden zu *Pfählbürgern*. Hinter den *sturnsichem* Pfählen  
*Uralle* *Schlagpäume* drücken sie ein und ihr Paßwort ist: billig  
*Alseitig* *abhängig* werden die Völker. Auch geistige Güter. (32)

Like Mann, Brecht used lexical disyllables of the *gehen* type in *o*-positions, as in lines 67, 126, and 211:

Mächtigen Industriellen, dem Chef *ganzer* Arbeiterheere (33)  
Ballen Kattun *schießen* Breschen in alle chinesischen Mauern.  
Gleichend dem Mann, der die Pest *fliehend*, diese nur minimiert und so den/

While it appears that the morphological history of trisyllabic compounds like those in (32) had left traces in the verse of eighteenth-

12. The three exceptions (*kopfschützend*, *aufwärtskend*, and *Herstellung* in lines 6, 33, and 120) are all initiated in the second location of an *o*-position.



"jazzy" hexameters are perhaps more appropriate for the twentieth century than the subtler, slower-paced hexameter lines in the poetic idylls of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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