

# HAMLET TO HAMILTON

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## Season One, Episode Six *Whose Line (Ending) Is It Anyway?*

**EMILY.** This is *Hamlet to Hamilton: Exploring Verse Drama*. I'm your host, Emily C. A. Snyder. You're listening to Season 1, Episode 6: The Tool Boudoir, part two: "Whose Line (Ending) is it Anyway?"

[music]

**HAMLET 1.** To be...

**HAMLET 2.** To be...

**HAMLET 1.** ... or not to be?

**HAMLET 3.** To be or not to be?

**HAMLET 1.** That is the question.

**HAMLET 3.** ... or not?

**EMILY.** Hello, friends. Today, we continue our exploration of the tool boudoir – rather than the toolbox, the tool boudoir. Last time, we talked about meter and scansion, although perhaps not as you might think of them, since too often when we study scansion in English, we presume that everything is repeated. So if you haven't caught up yet, go back and listen to that episode. If you prefer to jump in here, you are welcome to, but a reminder that Season 1 is meant to be scaffolded, and so you are invited at any time to go back to the beginning and catch up. Alternately, you can go to [hamlettohamilton.com](http://hamlettohamilton.com) and check out the [glossary](#) link to pick up any terms that you might have missed from previous episodes.

Today, we're continuing looking at essentially what are the tools that we use when we write verse drama? And today, working on line endings – or really we could say line beginnings, or really we could say line breaks – we also have to talk about how to perform, because in verse drama, that line break is one of the most valuable things that you can give to your actors, because, as we know, verse drama is meant to be enacted. It's part of what sets it apart from poetry. And similarly, because it's verse drama, it's what sets this form apart from musicals, from operas, or from prosaic drama. Verse drama works in a specific way, and it's really all about the line endings, baby. (laughs) So, without further ado, let's get into looking at line breaks.

[music]

To begin our discussion of line breaks, I'd like to actually begin with a story of a time that I epically failed. Right after I graduated from college, I had the opportunity through a variety of different circumstances to actually study in London and Stratford-upon-Avon with two RSC actors as our guides. There's a lot of stories that come out of this time. I'll leave them, perhaps, for another time. Some of it is already in the Bar(d) Talk between Colin and I, the first one, so take a listen to that if you want more. But the important thing is that in the mornings, we would have a lesson on how to perform Shakespeare.

Now, the very first day of class, before we had even gotten there, we'd all been sent pieces of Shakespeare that we were supposed to come to London already memorized. I'd received Rosalind. I was very excited. I was extremely nervous. Again, if you listen to that first Bar(d) Talk, you'll know that I was very shy and was sort of afraid to go to the bar, but dagnabbit, I could memorize. (laughs) And so I did my work. I came in. I was memorized. I was very nervous that they were going to take my role away from me, because in reading Rosalind from *As You Like It*, I'd fallen in love with Rosalind from *As You Like It*, and I'm sitting there on the first day of class looking at these other college students who clearly are prettier than I am and probably better suited to do this than I am and probably way more talented than I am, and expecting at any minute that they're going to call my name and take my part away from me or something. And lo and behold, in fact, they call my name first. Now, this is an odd thing because my last name is Snyder, so people in roll call tend to call me towards the end of things. But they called my name first, and it kind of went like this. They said, (English accent) "All right, uh, Emily? Is there an Emily here?" And I raised my hand. "Oh, excellent. All right." And they pass around this new piece of text, also from *As You Like It* and in verse. In this case, if you want to look at it, you could argue that it's either actually in prose – it reads more like verse, and I would suggest that it's in sprung beat. (laughs) I'll link to it below, but...

So they handed out this text that none of us have worked on, that wasn't memorized, that I wasn't prepared for, and they're calling my name, and they're saying, "Right, so we've decided to add an extra scene, and Emily, Emily, is that all right?" "Yes." "Right, you've got the first line. Off you go." And I got nervous. But I said to myself, "Self, this is what you do with a cold reading. All you have to do is say the words in order. That's it. Say the words in order and don't cry, and you have succeeded at successfully doing a cold reading. That is all that is required of you." So I said my line, which happened to be a Phoebe line, and it is:

Good shepherd, tell this youth what 'tis to love.

I said it. I was rather proud. I hoped they didn't want anything more from me for a little bit, or weren't going to surprise me with anything more. But instead of moving on to the person who had the line after me, Vivien, Vivien Heilbron – we had two professors, Vivien Heilbron and Bernard Lloyd – Vivien looked at me and

she went, “All right, all right, darling. That’s fine. Thank you. Thank you so much for that. But do you think you could put a capital L on ‘love,’ darling? Do you think you could do that? Put a capital L on ‘love?’ Could you do that?” I was like, “Uh, sure?”

Good shepherd, tell this youth what ‘tis to Love.

“Oh, uh, all right, darling. Um, no, no, no, not quite. Could you, um, could you... Could you lean into the word ‘love,’ darling? *Lean* into ‘love.’ Just *lean* into the word ‘love.’” “All right.”

Good shepherd, tell this youth what ‘tis to *Looove*.

“No. No, darling. Uh, could you lift your voice? Perhaps just lift, lift your voice on ‘love.’ Could you lift your voice up?”

Good shepherd, tell this youth what ‘tis to *Looo<sup>oooo</sup>ve?*

“No, no, no, no, no, darling. Um...” And at which point, Bernard would wave his hand and go, “Whatever, whatever.” Which was his way of saying we’re going to stop torturing this person. We’ll move on to torture the next person. And indeed, they did. Essentially, what they were trying to get across to me, which I did not pick up at the time, was the importance of, in this case, the line ending.

Now, both Bernard and Vivien had been students of a fellow named John Barton, and some of you might already feel quite clever for knowing who John Barton is. Some of you might be shrugging your shoulders and going, “So who’s this Jack Barton dude?” But he is important, and I am reaching over to my handy-dandy bookshelf to pull out his book *Playing Shakespeare: An Actor’s Guide*, which we will link to, and which, if you purchase through our link on our website, hamlettohamilton.com, we get a few pence. Thank you very much. Alternately, you can sign up to become a patron, [patreon.com/hamlettohamilton](https://www.patreon.com/hamlettohamilton). But John Barton essentially is, I would suggest, one of the more prominent scholars in studying verse drama, in this case specializing in Shakespeare, over-specializing perhaps. Listen to the “Heresy!” episode. But in specializing in Shakespeare and asking not just what does Shakespeare do, but starting to look at some of the tools of the tool boudoir. What does this do for a line of verse, and how does it encourage the actor to act, and how does that affect the audience? Basically treating, in this case Shakespeare, but we might say verse drama, treating it not as literature but as drama, something that is to be studied in three phases: in the generative, in the interpretive, and in the receptive.

So who was this John Barton dude? Well, John Barton is a fellow who lived in the previous century, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and perhaps most notably, he joined The Royal Shakespeare Company, the RSC, in 1960 at the invitation of the founder, Peter Hall. His job was to improve the quality of verse speaking among the actors

of the company. In 1982, with 21 RSC members, he recorded these nine sessions that dealt with different parts of verse and how to enact it. Those are called *Playing Shakespeare*. Then those nine episodes, which are sometimes on YouTube, sometimes off – we will link to a playlist of them and hope that it sticks around – but what you can also do is you can buy the transcript of it, which also is called *Playing Shakespeare: An Actor's Guide*, by John Barton. I think it's better to see the videos, because the whole point is he's looking at how to enact verse. But barring that, very, very worth it to purchase the transcript, *Playing Shakespeare: An Actor's Guide*, as a book.

Now, what my teachers were trying to get across to me was essentially the Barton method, which means that you're meant to energize the end of a line of verse rather than drop the energy of the end of the line of verse. Put a big pin in that. We're going to be coming back to that. That's where they were trying to get me to, in my mind, put a capital letter on it or to lean or to literally raise the pitch of my voice. They didn't quite have the language of what we're actually trying to get you to do is to energize, they would say, the end of the line of verse. Now, this idea was picked up, then, by people who came to our side of the pond, who worked on our side of the pond but were from that side of the pond. Basically I'm talking about Kristin Linklater.

Kristin Linklater is a Scottish vocal coach who worked with great significance at Shakespeare & Company up in the Berkshires in Massachusetts, The United States. She created both *Freeing the Natural Voice*, as well as *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice*. If you've done acting lessons, especially at a conservatory, you might be very familiar with her work, in terms of where you place vowels, how bright, how soft, where they live in your body. Alas, she passed away from us earlier this year in June 2020. I would like to take, though, a moment to read a little bit from *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice*, wherein she has this to say about line endings. This is chapter 8, *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice*.

When you look at a page of a Shakespeare play you see that some lines run on until the margin stops them or until a paragraph ends; these lines are called prose. Other lines on the page are stopped, not on the margin, but because the iambic pentameter determines the length of the line...

Put a pin in that, friends. We're coming back to that. Skipping down a bit:

There is, therefore, a vital discovery to be made about the place where the line ends in Shakespeare's verse. It is not arbitrary. It goes beyond the expression of poetic craft. The choice of the final words in the pentameter line is intentional and the actor who pays attention to how the line ends taps into a rich seam of acting information.

I owe a great deal to John Barton of the Royal Shakespeare Company for my understanding of how line-endings work and even more to his student Tina

Packer, now Artistic Director of Shakespeare & Company, for her years of practical work on the text in the classroom and on the stage which rooted this understanding in the acting process and proved its application in performance.

I'm actually going to skip to the very introduction, because she does thank one more person who we're going to speak about in a second, and that person is, as she said:

[Thanks] to John Hadden for inspiration on breath and line-beginnings...

So put a pin in that as well. Line beginnings.

Going back to chapter 8, she says:

There is much controversy about the treatment of line-endings. I will offer my opinion on the subject, but you must practice, and apply whatever makes you a better actor. Do not abdicate your authority to "experts." Be open to experiment...

I'm going to read that again.

I will offer my opinion on the subject, but you must practice, and apply whatever makes you a better actor. Do not abdicate your authority to "experts." Be open to experiment...

She goes on to talk about a few of different people's views of line endings. For example, there is one fellow, Sir Tyrone Guthrie, who is famous for having said, "You must be able to say 12 lines of Shakespearean verse on one breath," versus our friend John Barton, who says, "You must breathe at the end of every line." Then, of course, many of you have probably heard of something called enjambment, which is essentially just shove it all together and treat it as if it's prose, as if it's in paragraph form.

To speak of John Hadden and what he says, I'm going to quote from a Facebook post that he graciously offered us. This is on the Shakespeare Forum group page, and big shout out to [The Shakespeare Forum](#), which is a group here in New York City that does amazing work, both for students as well as for adults. But John Hadden writes:

As several of you have said, we breathe before we speak. Barton is terrific, but if we breathe at the end of the line, it's a little like getting gas after the trip but not before. Watch people in life and you will see that when they are on a roll, their breaths are the inspirations, literally (spiro=I breathe)...

So the question becomes, whaaaaat are we supposed to do about line breaks anyway?

One of the questions we haven't quite asked is, what is a line break, anyway? Why, as we asked way back in the early episodes, do we even break a line? Why do we put stuff in verse? Why don't we just use good old sentence formatting? What does that break give us?

To answer that... Well, first of all, if you haven't listened to the episode "Schwumpf, There It Is," take a listen to that or go to the glossary on hamlettohamilton.com, because what we need to talk about now is something that I'm going to call uvriel.

To give you a story about the development of uvriel and what that is, and what uvriel is and how it relates to schwumpf and how it relates to verse and how it relates to line endings, let me tell you about what happened after I left England. We got through the performances. Actually, it was great. It was great fun and, again, a very big story for another day. And fortunately, the bit of Rosalind that I was doing wasn't in verse, so I didn't have to worry about putting a capital L on things. But as I left, I kept pondering what were they trying to get across to me? What were they trying to do? Now, I happen to be a kinesthetic learner. That means I learn by doing. I'm also kinesthetic and intrapersonal, which is to say that I learn not only by doing, but also by interacting with other people, so theatre works great for me, and quarantine is hell. (laughs)

But when I came back from studying, I pretty much fell into teaching and directing for educational through semiprofessional theatre in my hometown in Massachusetts, and so I had the opportunity to work with students and to sort of develop and try to experiment and try to understand by doing what they had been trying to teach me. One of the things that I came up with was, okay, I think, I *think* what my teachers were trying to get across to me, what Kristin Linklater is talking about, what John Hadden is talking about, what John Barton is trying to get at, is that there's an energy that we're trying to bridge, essentially, between the end of one line and the beginning of another line of verse. And you can kind of get that mechanically if you just raise your pitch on the end of a line of verse, on the most important word on the end of the line of verse. So instead of saying,

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

And kind of like, blah, you go



But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

and there's sort of built-in energy. We can't possibly be at the end of the show because I raised my voice, so this cannot be the end of the line. As I'm doing

that, though, I guess you're very much in danger of Seinfelding. But I felt that there should be more to that, so I developed this game wherein – it's a variation on a theatre acting game that I'm sure many of you have done, basically where you take some sort of soft object – I have a stuffed chicken that is named Duck that I got from the cast of *Our Town* that I tend to use for this. Perfect for throwing around the room. Basically, you want something you can throw around the room that will not hurt anybody. (laughs) So we use my chicken named Duck. What you do is you have people stand far away from each other, and on the very last bit of the line, you have them just throw Duck or whatever it may be to the person who's going to have the next line. And what happens is by the motion of throwing this stuffed animal across the room, their voice naturally follows and they don't lose energy. They literally are throwing something, literally get the experience in their body of throwing the energy to the next person.

Then, of course, you do variations on a theme, and so you have them think about their character and it becomes don't just throw the stuffed animal across the room, but what are you trying to express? This goes back to fwah. What are you, essentially, trying to fwah with your body, with your voice, with your whole instrument, with your words, with your intentions, with your emotions, all of it? What are you attempting to fwah to the other person? What energy are you trying to send out by the time you get to the end of the line?

Now, the other thing this does, especially if you start getting into a pretty good pace – and people will talk about riding the verse – but basically what it means is you're throwing the energy. But the thing is, if you throw the energy, that energy also needs to be caught, right? Many of you will have done the game where you pretend to have an energy ball in your hands, and you take a second. Maybe you make it really small, pretend the size of a marble, and then you throw it on over to someone, and they have to catch it as if it's the size of a marble, but then they might make it really big and heavy like a bowling ball, and they sort of roll that imaginary ball of energy to the next person. You have to catch that and then you change it. That is actually exactly what happens on verse drama. Each line of verse takes the energy that it just received, whether it was from another person or from yourself, if you have more than one line of verse. You catch that energy at the beginning of the line. Through the use of schwumpf, you then transform that energy at least once if the whole line of verse is a schwumpf. You've heard me talk about hemischwumpfs. You can imagine dischwumpfs, semischwumpfs. We might actually talk about those today. By the end of a schwumpf, you've alternated it. Perhaps you throw it to yourself again, switch it again. Maybe perhaps you throw it to yourself again, switch it again. And then you throw it off. You fwah it out with a different energy, and that energy we're going to call uvriel.

Now, just for those of you who are of an etymological bent, where a lot of the words that I've been creating – again, go back to the "Schwumpf" episode – but where a lot of the words I'm creating are meant to be more felt than anything else. Uvriel does have a kind of interesting etymology, where I was considering

what schwumpf was, which is, again, taking a bunch of ideas, verbalizing them, and then putting them together, and I was noticing that there was essentially space in between, this energy that I've always felt that I've never really paid attention to. The line of verse that came to me was actually from T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men." This is a poem of his from 1925. I'm reading from *The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950*. This is Canto V. A canto is kind of like a chapter, but for poetry. It goes like this. I'm going to do just the main poem, because it's kind of written in two voices, but:

Between the idea  
And the reality  
Between the motion  
And the act  
Falls the Shadow

Between the conception  
And the creation  
Between the emotion  
And the response  
Falls the shadow

Between the desire  
And the spasm  
Between the potency  
And the existence  
Between the essence  
And the descent  
Falls the Shadow

I loved that.

Between the idea  
And the reality  
Between the motion  
And the act  
Falls the Shadow

That's exactly what we do with drama and with verse drama. Between the writing of the idea and the reality of it being enacted, between the motion that the actor makes and the act as it's received by the audience falls this shadow, falls this white space that constrains the verse, and so you don't even notice it's there. It's the envelope in which it lives, and in the same way that you don't look at space, you don't look at time, you just exist in it. What is the word for "water" for a fish? Taking so long to realize that gravity is a thing. It's a shadow.

So I started thinking, then, okay, maybe I needed to use the word “umber” or something like that for shadow. Then I was like, maybe I call it an “Eliot” after Eliot. Then somehow, between all that, I thought, “No. No it still needs to be a word that will newly exist,” and I came up with uvriel, sort of a version of umber, umbriel, Eliot. Uvriel. Between the idea and the reality, between the motion and the act, lies the uvriel. Between the words of one verse and the words of the next is the uvriel. Between all the things that you can schwumpf together, all those stars and constellations and feelings and emotions and thoughts and the concept of last Tuesday, and then getting to the idea of apple pie and the color pink and a certain feel in the wind when it’s not quite hot... Between those two things fall the uvriel. To get from one thing to another requires uvriel, energy. A way of getting from

To be, or not to be, that is the question,  
Whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep...

and so on. To get from one idea to another requires uvriel. And the energy is not always forward or always stopped.

When John Barton has you breathe at the end of the line, which we’ve been doing up to this point – and I’ve been teasing that there are other ways to treat a line break, essentially to treat uvriel. When John Barton tries to have you breathe at the end of the line, he’s trying to make sure that you don’t lose the uvriel, that you’re throwing the energy. When my teachers asked me to put a capital L on the end or to lean on it or to raise my pitch, they were trying to get me to tap into this uvriel. When Kristin Linklater talks about Guthrie and how he said you need to say 12 lines at once, he’s trying to generate uvriel. When John Hadden is saying that, essentially, you need to breathe before the next line, he’s talking about uvriel. When Kristin Linklater is saying you need to find your own way through, she is talking about uvriel, this energy, this way of getting from here to there, from this star system to that star system and to bring the audience with you on that experience. That is the nature of uvriel, and that is the purpose of a line break. And the weird thing is, there’s kind of only two forms of line breaks. You’d think with all that, there’d be a lot more.

There’s two forms to kind of write line breaks. There are four reasons to have a line break, and there’s an innumerable number of ways that you might perform a line break. We’re going to take a look at those after this message.

[music]

Oh, hello. (sound of books shuffling) Sorry, I was just reshelving my T. S. Eliot and my John Barton and my Kristin Linklater. Just so many books here.

If you wanted to help out *Hamlet to Hamilton* and perhaps you want to get yourself a very fancy Christmas present or Hanukkah present or Kwanza present or Solstice present or, gosh darn it, it's a pandemic and I need a present, we have links to all the books that we're talking about on [hamlettohamilton.com](http://hamlettohamilton.com). Check out the [Amazon](#) page and if you follow that link and purchase with that link, we will get a few pennies. You can get yourself a well-deserved gift and then you can also help out your favorite podcast, which we thank you for very much.

Welcome back. We're going to talk about the different types of line breaks and the different ways to enact them, and hopefully through our discussion of line breaks, we'll also be talking about why line breaks are so essential to the acting of verse drama. Some people say that you don't really need to study scansion, line breaks, any of these technique type things if you're going to act Shakespeare, let's say, or Moliere, or Ben Jonson or T. S. Eliot, but the truth is that just like with opera and with how you need to know, for example, where your passaggio hits or, if you're doing ballet, you do need to know how to safely go on pointe or how to do a jeté. It may be that you then develop your own style from that, but you do need to learn the technique of it. The fortunate and wonderful thing is that this is a technique that you can learn and learn fairly easily and fairly quickly, and it's something that people who are auditioning – that is, the people who are holding the auditions – are keeping an ear out for this sort of nuance. In the same way that whenever I hear anyone sing, I'm hyper aware of where their tongue placement is in relation to their soft palate. This is important technical know-how. It is also completely learnable.

Let's get into it. There are two types of line breaks. There's end stopped, which just means that there is some sort of ending or halting or pausing punctuation, typically, at the end of the line. Or if there isn't a comma, period, semicolon, question mark, exclamation point, things like that, something that naturally pauses you at the end of the line, the line itself regardless stops at the end of the grammatical thought. Some examples that we've used before on this podcast, which you're probably familiar with, include:

To be or not to be, that is the question.

That is the end of that thought. It is a very neat phrase. It all fits on one line.

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

ends with a question mark. It's all very neat. It's all on one line of verse. The thought stops and the verse line also stops. That's what an end-stopped line is.

The opposite of this, obviously, in the second form of line breaks, is an open-ended line. I personally love an open-ended line. An open-ended line doesn't merely not have punctuation at the end. It may have emotive punctuation at the end. There may be ellipses, which are those three dots. There may be a hyphen

or an em dash. There may be emotive formatting, emotive punctuation, which we'll be talking about in a different tool boudoir. But the idea is that where the line stops would not be a typical place to stop it in regards to the rules of grammar, in regards to the rules of English.

I think my absolute favorite open-ended line from Shakespeare is actually in *The Winter's Tale*. Let's take a quick look at that, because I know it was a revelation to me when I discovered it, and I hope that it's a revelation to you. Now, we've talked already about John Barton, and again, in 1982, he did this series of classes, workshops that he recorded with what we might call The Twelve British Actors, so Sir Ian McKellan, Dame Judi Dench, Sir Patrick Stewart, gosh, Ben Kingsley, David Suchet, just a ton of folk that you would recognize. They were working through in each episode – which, again, we will link to on YouTube, provided it hasn't been taken down – they were working through the text of Shakespeare, in this case, and trying to sort out how the text worked practically. Now, something that they were very keen on at The Royal Shakespeare Center, and especially in that time period of performing Shakespeare – and again, I'm saying Shakespeare. I wish it had been performing verse drama, but the focus was entirely Shakespeare. Go back to “Heresies” and listen to that episode for more. But the thing that they were focused on was how do you get away from sounding, I don't know, sounding like you live in doublet and hose? Sort of the (Shakespeare voice) “To be or not to be, that is the question” In fact, if you listen to recordings from the late 1800s, that was the way that Shakespeare was performed – that verse drama, but that Shakespeare was performed. It's really weird.

I remember listening to this one recording in a theatre history class, and it almost sounded like they were keening, like they were mourning something. They were wailing. You could barely understand the words because it was so (wailing) “OoOoOo what a rooogue and peasant slaaaave am liii.” It was like this spoken opera, and it was so unnatural, so very, very odd, so not what we do today. And who knows? Maybe that style will become popular again. And if you want to see a funny episode, look for the Derek Jacobi episode of *Frasier*, where he plays an over-the-top Shakespearean actor who, in fact, it turns out that is his mode of acting, and the Crane boys do not know it, and wackiness ensues when they decide to put him on the stage. Excellent episode of *Frasier*.

Anyway, from the '60s to the '80s in Britain, there was this almost acting reformation where they were looking at the text and saying, “How can we do this in a naturalistic way?” Since they were competing, really, with the rise of not just prosaic theatre, which had risen to prominence in the 1700s with Bonny Prince Charles in The Restoration, but with the even sparser sort of how do we deal with Beckett? How do we go up against all these plays that are full of subtext? How do we deal with the Pinter pause when we are performing (wails) “But soooofft, what liiight through yonder window breeeeaks?” How do we find a naturalistic or honest way of approaching verse drama? That's what John Barton was kind of

attempting to discover. Prior to his work, I just want to take a moment to actually read from the memoirs of Ben Kingsley. This is from a book, *Modern Hamlets and their Soliloquies* by Mary Z. Maher. Maher? I'm not quite sure how to say her name. We'll link it, of course, on the Amazon page. In Chapter 4, Ben Kingsley talks about his 1975 production of *Hamlet*, which they did at the RSC, at the Royal Shakespeare Company's touring group. He talks about – again, so 1975, just about seven years before he works with John Barton in that seminal TV series, although I'm sure he was working with him beforehand.

But Kingsley, to quote from this a little bit at length

Kingsley talked about what happened in the rehearsal room, the beginning search for style and the honing of technical details. The cast worked very democratically, with open observation and discussion:

Kingsley says:

We were wondering what style to use, linguistically, whether we should break the text down into spoken idiom and do the lines with more colloquial grunts. To give you a terrible example, not that we would have ever one this outside of a rehearsal tactic, but we were being lulled into the area of “To be or not to be, I mean, you know, that’s the question. You know what I mean, whether or not it is, like, sort of nobler in the mind...” There were the beginnings of that sort of thing from some of the more minor players in rehearsal who because they were in modern dress and so close to the audience didn’t feel that the artifice of the language would be appropriate. But then, of course, the artifice disappeared and the *art* of the language became more prominent. And you realized that you could play with it much more easily than you could with any modern colloquial stuff. Polonius was doing it from the first week in rehearsal. The oldest actor in the company was word-perfect before any other actors and speaking at twice the rate and getting laughs from his fellow actors, the younger actors, in rehearsal! They’d look at one another and say, “Hey, what’s going on?...He’s brilliant. I like this, what’s he doing?” They were slightly jealous. And then all that calmed down and we all listened to him and all discussed the acting style and I said, “Well, he’s got it. Andre’s got it.” Bob Peck agreed, “He’s the only one who’s doing it, whatever he’s doing.”

And then they go on to praise Shakespeare. But I would suggest that what he was doing was good technique, which brings us back to John Barton.

Seven years later, he’s working with Sir Patrick Stewart on *The Winter’s Tale*, and we’re looking at Act I scene 2, Leontes, who is the king. This is in the episode “Using the Verse,” which is Episode 2. What’s interesting is that... I’m looking at the *Playing Shakespeare* book, which is a transcript of those sessions. The question becomes, and to quote,

**JOHN BARTON.** Should you run on the line or not? That means should you enjamb the line. To enjamb a line is to treat the line of verse as if there's no line ending and just to keep going on as if it were in paragraph form. We'll take a look at what enjambment sounds like in a second. Barton is saying:

**JOHN BARTON.** Should you run on the line or not? Ask yourself that question and simply decide which feels better. Shakespeare gives you a choice.

I would suggest, a little bit more truly, open-ended lines give you a choice, give you a considerable number of choices. To return to the Barton:

If it's better for you to run the line on, run it on. But if the verse actually helps you to phrase the line then that's the right answer. Personally I think that if you lift the word...

And to go back to my teachers, where they're trying to go (English accent), "Lift the word, darling. Just put a capital L on it. Can you *lean* into it? Can you go up with your voice?"

... if you lift the word at the end of the of the first line, it is quiet easy to take a small pause after it, perhaps a naturalistic pause for breath...

And then we shift into *The Winter's Tale*, which we'll be looking at Leontes, Act I scene 2. What you need to know is that Leontes believes that he is being cuckolded, that his wife is cuckolding him, and the person that she's having an affair with is his best friend. So this is a speech where he's going slightly mad. Keep that in the back pocket.

Here are the lines. I will take a pause, which is the John Barton method. I will take a pause at the end of each verse line the way that we've done it before, and I'll also read it fairly neutrally just so that you can hear the words. Leontes, in this case read by Patrick Stewart. Not attempting to sound like Patrick Stewart:

Gone already!  
Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er head and ears a fork'd one!  
Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I  
Play too, but so disgraced a part, whose issue  
Will hiss me to my grave.

And then Patrick Stewart stops himself, and again, if you can see the episode, highly recommend it. We will link to it. And Stewart says:

**PATRICK STEWART.** Now, John, there's one line there which runs on: "Thy mother plays and I/Play too..." What about that? Surely it's natural to run on there.

And again, you hear them constantly asking, "How can we do this naturally? How can we do this naturally?" Barton replies:

**BARTON.** Well, is it? You have to ask that question and then decide.

Stewart says:

**STEWART.** It's possible to pause at the end of the verse-line and for it to sound natural and like spontaneous everyday speech. But if you pause here, it begins to sound slightly unnatural: "Thy mother plays and I...(pause)...Play too." And yet to stress it in that way might tell us something about Leontes.

Barton encourages him, basically, to see what happens if you allow there to be a pause, if you allow there to be a break in how you breathe, basically to not enjamb. What do you discover?

Let's take a look and hear what it sounds like if it's enjambéd and read as paragraph form. That is, I'm only going to respect the punctuation, or what happens if I enact it with technique and honor the line breaks. The first time through, this is going to be paragraph form, honoring only punctuation. I would suggest going back and listening to the very first episode for more details on this. And just to give each version its due, as I'm going to be doing paragraph form now with enjambments, I'm going to act it, not read it neutrally. Here we go.

Gone already! Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er head and ears a fork'd one! Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I play too, but so disgraced a part, whose issue will hiss me to my grave. Contempt and clamour will be my knell. Go, play, boy, play. There have been, or I am much deceived, cuckolds ere now; and many a man there is, even at this present, now while I speak this, holds his wife by the arm, that little thinks she has been sluiced in's absence and his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by Sir Smile, his neighbour. Nay, there's comfort in't.

Okay, and we'll stop there. That was paragraph form. Before I comment on it, let's go straight into verse form, and once again, so you can hear the difference, I am going to enact it. This time I'm going to use verse technique, which we'll be talking about immediately after this, and see if you can hear the difference. In

both these sections, I highly recommend read long with us. (pleasant narrator voice) Please read along in the text with us. At the sound of the ding, turn the page.

All right, so this is verse form, where I'm not going to drop or run over or enjamb. I'm not going to enjamb the line breaks. Instead, I'm going to honor the line breaks. Let's see what happens.

Gone already!

Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er head and ears a fork'd one!  
Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I  
Play too, but so disgraced a part, whose issue  
Will hiss me to my grave. Contempt and clamour  
Will be my knell. Go, play, boy, play. There have been,  
Or I am much deceived, cuckolds ere now;  
And many a man there is, even at this present,  
Now while I speak this, holds his wife by the arm,  
That little thinks she has been sluiced in's absence  
And his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by  
Sir Smile, his neighbour. Nay, there's comfort in't.

Okay, so some things you may have heard is especially on that

Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I  
Play too,

suddenly there's something that happens between the "I" and the "Play too."  
There's something that happens, in this case, on the breath. Same thing, there's something that happens in that

And his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by

line break,

Sir Smile, his neighbour.

What happens is uvriel. What happens is the energy between lines. When I don't play the uvriel, when I enjamb, when I run over the uvriel, when I say, "There's no uvriel here, I'm going to treat this like a paragraph," I miss out on... Well, for example in this last time, in doing

And his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by

and taking that pause to just picture Sir Smile for a second before I come in and say "Sir Smile, his neighbor." There was something really powerful in that, whereas

... and his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by Sir Smile, his neighbour.

feels a lot more connected. It doesn't feel like I'm going nuts. Whereas, for example, doing the line

Will hiss me to my grave. Contempt and clamour

is the line, and there's a caesura in the middle. A caesura is a significant pause. There's an end stop. In this case, there's a period. There's the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next, but if I run them together, if my brain is still going, even to a new topic but on the same line, I get something from that. I started to feel like I was gasping for air. I started to feel angry because of where the line breaks were purposely put.

This is one of the last plays that Shakespeare ever wrote, so he knew what he was doing. He had worked with actors. He had worked with Burbage, who would have been playing Leontes. He did not do this by mistake. He did not do this just because he was counting to ten. He was giving a gift.

Let's look at some of the technical things that you can do. We're going to go back to that lift, lean, capital, things like that, but let's also talk musical theatre. Some things that we have in musical theatre or in opera or in singing, in music, include I can change my pitch. That is, where my voice is. So, for example, when I speak, my natural timbre is in a fairly low register, but if I wanted to move it up (slightly higher voice) into my mask area, it's around here, and if I wanted to move it up even further (even higher voice) into my head area, it's around here. I can change where my voice is, how high or low it is. You can change your pitch. I can elongate a sound, especially if it's a vowel, and here we've got two very nice diphthongs in "I" and "by," so there's a lot of juiciness. You can elongate a sound. You can even elongate a consonant. Certain consonants you can elongate, and certainly you can elongate in certain languages better than others. You might, in a Latin language, really be able to roll an R at the end of a line in a very exciting way, for example. Or if you're Welsh, you might get a lot of that nice rolling L. So accent can play a part in that. But I can also do something short and staccato. I can accelerate or decelerate before I get to the uvriel, before I get to the line break, before I get to that moment so I can change my tempo, essentially. I can also change my volume, how soft or loud I'm speaking. What I would suggest is that, again, whenever you hit a line break, whenever you hit that uvriel, you need to change the nuanced energy.

Again, go back to that old acting exercise where you catch and receive a pretend energy ball, and then you shift it into something else, and it's always more fun the bigger the shift is, right? If you go from heavy bowling ball to light bubble, there's an exciting shift there.

Let's try mechanically that

Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I  
Play too,

and let's go through a couple of the different things that we said we could do and see how it changes the uvriel, the intention and what I receive as an actor. We are going to have this text, and I highly, highly, highly, highly suggest that you take some time and play with it. If you're an actor or if you're not an actor, take the time and play with it. See how just doing the mechanical tricks that we're – technique, really – that we're about to put into our tool boudoir and see how it affects you. See how you read it. See how you feel about it. Here we go.

Let's start with change of pitch. I could read it



Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I  
Play too,

That's interesting, and you heard I did have an elongation there too. It's difficult not to on a diphthong. Or let's try lowering the pitch.



Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I  
Play too,

That, without even trying to make any choices about who this character is, going up affected me very differently from going down. I felt like a Disney villain when I went down. (laughs) I also felt like going up, for me, it felt like I wasn't quite sure what I thought about what I was saying. Then when I went down, I knew that I was going to do bad stuff, which is interesting. I didn't know that before I tried it.

Let's try an elongation, and then let's try a staccato, short sort of (snaps) and see what happens.

Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I  
Play too,

That was interesting. That also had a deceleration on it. Let's try now a staccato.



Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I  
Play too,

Ooh, that was interesting. I got really angry at myself that time, whereas in the previous one, I'm like, "Yeah, I sleep with all the chambermaids." Do you hear

how just choosing some mechanics can alter the character? Again, this is the cool stuff that's really available to you in terms of performing a well-placed, open-ended line.

Let's try changing volume.

Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I  
Play too,

Hmm. That may be the most ponder-y of all. Let's try it now getting forte, getting loud.

Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I  
Play too,

(laughs) One of the things that you may notice, though, is that because you're forced – and this is where I do think John Barton is somewhat helpful or correct, or I found it more helpful to, in fact, take that break, to take that line break and not enjamb, not just run on a sentence, but even take a little hitch breath, because it allows you to sit in the uvriel, which I mentioned Pinter's pauses before. Harold Pinter is famous for playing with silence on the stage. Silence is actually written into verse drama text, or can be. Part of where it's written into, again, is in this white space that we don't even look at, but which is absolutely, as Linklater and Barton and Hadden, everyone is talking about, that's kind of where all the acting lives.

Now, the question becomes, can you use these techniques on end-stopped lines? Yes, absolutely you can. The important thing that you're doing, really, is you're recharging for the next line. If it's easier to think about it this way, you kind of dive into the beginning of the line and then energize the end of the line, but there's multiple ways to dive into the beginning, to energize the end. If we think, again, of that game, catch the ball, throw the ball. If you're a kinesthetic learner, try practicing a speech, and at the end of the line sort of throw the energy to yourself and then catch the energy and see how it changes things. If you're, like me, an outside-in performer, do the mechanics and see what happens if you change your pitch, and see what happens in your mind as you do the mechanic, because the thing is, in that pause, if you don't enjamb, in that uvriel, in that energy that gets you from one place to the other, whether it's end stopped or open ended, you're going to discover so much about your character. But don't linger there. Make it a short breath. It's not meant to... These plays are long enough. You don't need to add an extra hour or two to them by taking extremely long pauses. You have to earn them.

But again, can you do this with end-stopped pieces? Yeah. Let's take a look, again, at *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo's line at the beginning of the balcony scene. This is Act II scene 2. These are all end-stopped lines that I'm about to do, and

I'm going to enact them honoring the verse ending, honoring the line ending and getting my energy in that white space, in that uvriel, in that space between the lines. Here we go:

But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief,  
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:  
Be not her maid, since she is envious;  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green  
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.

It's interesting, actually, having just spent time with *The Winter's Tale*, at the end of Shakespeare's career, to come back to one of his earlier plays, where almost everything is end stopped, whether there's punctuation there or not, or whether it's just the end, again, of a grammatical phrase, such as

Her vestal livery is but sick and green

That could be a sentence. It's just that he keeps going on with

And none but fools do wear it;

What I'm feeling in both – and this goes back to the Hadden – is that there's just as much importance – and this is mostly for the playwrights – but there's just as much importance at having a strong line ending as there is in having something that's worth plunging back into.

The beginning of the line, we have “But soft,” “It is the east,” “Arise,” “Who is,” “That thou her maid,” “Be not her maid,” “None but fools.” Actually, I mean, these lines are great, in part, because almost every word that's chosen is a word that's playable. The most important thing, as always for verse drama, is that it must be playable. You must be giving gifts to your actors. Them raising their voice



But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

can only do so much. If you have a crummy line of verse, they can only do so much. Whereas you could do a lot with

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

I could feel myself flinging off this energy, and I have stuff to jump into.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

There's a lot for me to dive into, to come out of, even though these are end-stopped lines, and so sort of very neatly packaged lines.

I will say that I don't get quite the same sense of playing in uvriel as I do with the open-ended lines. The open-ended lines, all of a sudden I'm in the middle of one thought, and then there's a line break. I'm thrust into uvriel and I have to quickly nuance my mind to come back into the beginning of the next line. That's why it's so awesome there's a million ways to play

...thy mother plays, and I  
Play too,

Taking that break there is a revelation, and you don't get that quite as much with end-stopped lines, just because you've finished your thought by the end of an end-stopped line. But yes, you still want to energize. You still want to throw the energy to yourself if possible, if the line is written well.

When we come back, we're going to ask the question, so where do you place your line break? We're going to continue talking about what that does to the performance, because if you're doing a repeated meter such as a limerick, it forces you to do one sort of line break, whereas if you have sprung or free meter, you might be available or you might be capable of doing another line break. And then there are a lot of traps that you can fall into, so we'll take a look at that when we come back.

[music]

Did you know that *Hamlet to Hamilton* is a special project of Turn to Flesh Productions? What is Turn to Flesh Productions, you ask? I'm glad you asked that question. Turn to Flesh Productions is a New York theatre company, and what we're doing is we're helping playwrights to develop their new verse plays. We work on plays that have to do with Greek mythology or riffs on Shakespeare or are completely new pieces, some that are in meter and repeated meter and iambic pentameter, even, some that are in complete free verse, as well as stuff that is inspired by classical literature, classical art, but takes an entirely new spin on it. If you'd like to get involved or learn more, you can certainly go to [turntoflesh.org](http://turntoflesh.org) and check us out. We're on all social medias @turntoflesh.

We are a nonprofit company, so if you're looking for your end-of-the-year giving donation in order to get those sweet, sweet tax write-offs, check out [turntoflesh.org](http://turntoflesh.org), click that [donate](#) button, and get yourself a little something-something back at tax time.

All right, back to the show.

We're going to look at some of the benefits and some of the traps that can happen when you ask the question, where should I cut my line? Where should I put my line break, anyway? In our last episode, in the first tool boudoir, we looked at four types of meter. We looked at repeated meter, we looked at sprung meter, we looked at free meter, and we looked at what happens when you juxtapose meters.

Now, with repeated meter, just to add onto that, there's simple repeated meter, which means that both the rhythm and the beat are repeated throughout the majority of the play, significantly. The most obvious one is the majority of plays that are written in overwhelmingly iambic pentameter. It's got the repeated rhythm of an iamb, ba-DUM. It's got the repeated beat of five strong feet. It tends to repeat with some very slight variations. Maybe occasionally we'll juxtapose with some prose. Occasionally we'll do some minor juxtapositions with some trochees, things like that. But overwhelmingly, it uses simple repeated meter.

There's also compound repeated meter. If you think of a limerick:

There once was a lady from Bright  
Whose speed was much faster than light.  
She set out one day  
In a relative way  
And returned on the previous night.

Again, that's ba-DA-da-da-DA-da-da-DA. It has a music to it, and the first two lines are in trimeter, the second two lines are in dimeter, and then the last line is in trimeter again, and it follows the rhyming pattern of AABBA. In fact, even more than that, it frequently begins with "There once was a..." It doesn't need to. If you look at the play *Trifles* by Tom Stoppard...

[record stopping sound]

**COLIN.** Hi, folks. Colin popping in here to clarify that we mean *Travesties* by Tom Stoppard, not to be confused with *Trifles* by Susan Glaspell. Anyway...

[sound]

**EMILY.** There's a scene where – taking great liberties with rhymes, to be quite frank – but he attempts to do about five minutes of the play of dialogue in limerick, and that would be a compound repeated meter. Compound because we're going from trimeter to dimeter to trimeter, but we keep repeating those five lines over and over again. Think of the Wakefield Master. So compound repeated meter.

If you're in a repeated meter and you're determined to stay strictly in that repeated meter, whether it's a simple repeated meter or a compound repeated

meter, it's going to kind of tell you where your line break is. If you're in iambic pentameter, you're supposed to cut after five feet of iambs, after

ba-DUM ba-DUM ba-DUM ba-DUM ba-DUM

Put a pin in that. We're going to so come back to that in a second. If I'm doing an entire play in limericks, then

da-DUH-da-da DUH-da-da DUH

Then I have a line break.

da-DUH-da-da DUH-da-da DUH

Then I have a line break. If you're cutting on the meter, it tells you where to cut, if you're not doing any sort of sprung meter. If your play is overwhelmingly in rhyme, such as if you're writing in limericks or if you're writing in rhyming couplets, then the prevailing wisdom is to cut on the end rhyme. Now, the end rhyme may or may not be the end of your sentence.

We'll give a couple different examples here. If you're in a simple repeated meter that is rhymed, you're cutting both on the meter and on the rhyme. An example is

If we shadows have offended  
Think but this and all is mended  
That you have but slumbered here  
While these visions did appear

That's in trochaic tetrameter – I almost said quatrameter. I'm not supposed to mix my Latin and my Greek, but there you go. I'm a bougie pleb. Anyhoulze, that's in trochaic. A repeated trochee is the rhythm, BAH-da, stressed-unstressed. Then it's in tetrameter, which means that there's going to be four of them.

BAH-da BAH-da BAH-da BAH-da.

Íf we shádows háve offéended

I'm cutting on the meter, but I'm also cutting on the rhyme, on the end rhyme. That's, again, very simple, very neat, and if you heard, it even makes it end stopped, frequently.

Now, you can also have cutting on the rhyme, if you so desire, such as when we were looking at Daniel Guyton's *Mother of God Visits Hell*, and I was suggesting for clarity's sake to cut on the rhyme, but he's in sprung beat. Just a reminder of how that sounds:

**MARY.** Hello? Is anybody here?

**MICHAEL.** Nay, step behind me quickly, Lady, for I smell Beezlebub is near.

**SATAN.** Well! Speak the devil's name, they say, and soon he shall appear.

You can hear that there's a repeated rhythm, in this case, an iamb:

da-DUH da-DUH da-DUH  
da-DUH da-DUH da-DUH

It's got some slight variations, which is always good, but it's largely in iambs, so it's in a repeated rhythm, but sprung beat. You can listen to the previous episode to hear a little bit more about that. Again, I would suggest cutting this on the rhyme, just for clarity. The way it's formatted at the moment, it is cut on the ten, but I think that it was probably performed cut on the rhyme.

Now let's take a look at the play *In Flight* by Jenny Lyn Bader. She cut on the rhyme, but the rhymes were not always end stopped. Whereas Daniel Guyton's rhymes are all end stopped:

**MARY.** Hello? Is anybody here?

**MICHAEL.** Nay, step behind me quickly, Lady, for I smell Beezlebub is near.

**SATAN.** Well! Speak the devil's name, they say, and soon he shall appear.

Those all end with quite final punctuation. Question mark, period, period. Jenny Lyn Bader, in the play *In Flight*, which is something that Turn to Flesh Productions put on back in 2015 – we got to do the world premiere here in New York City. Very cool play for anyone who's looking for a piece to perform. It's kind of Moliere by way of The Big Apple. She tended to do more subtle rhymes so that part of the game for the audience was listening to where the rhyme was, even if it was in the middle of what felt like a sentence.

Here we go. This is from Act I scene 1. The character is Marty, who is our protagonist. She's the editor of an in-flight magazine, and in this case, she is speaking on the phone. I'm actually going to enjamb most of the lines, but I think you're still going to hear all the rhymes. (laughs) Did not mean to rhyme that. In this case, all the rhymes are the line break. Here we go:

Art, Sssh! (*Into phone.*) Hi!  
Long time no talk. I'm looking for a guy  
Who wrote for us. The poet with the hair?  
No, not that one. The one with less despair...  
And with the 50-volume epic work.  
Right, right, he also was a coat check clerk!  
His phone was disconnected? I'm sorry  
To hear it. Yeah, a typical story.  
And that was more or less how long ago?  
If you run into him, do let him know  
I have a job for him, with real money.  
Mm...What? You hadn't heard? I thought...that's funny.  
...No, not a "poetry journal" in that...sense.  
(Embarrassed.) An...in-flight magazine. But it's...intense.

Okay, so while there isn't as much uvriel, because again about half the lines are end stopped, so I'm not sitting there looking for the next word or "but I... play too." However, what's kind of cool, listening back to it, is that by enjambling the rhyme, there's still a sense of underlining the rhyme, and it's helpful as the actor to, frankly, have the rhyme pointed out for me by putting it at the end of the line, whether I choose to enjamb it or whether I choose to do some other technique. So, for example, it could have been:

Art, Sssh! (*Into phone.*) **Hi!**  
Long time no talk. I'm looking for a **guy**  
Who wrote for us. The poet with the hair?

"Guy" is not end stopped, but it is a rhyme off of "Hi." But because in rhyming, if you're cutting on the rhyme, there's the opportunity to sort of have the audience pick up where the line ending is because the rhyme is on the end of the line. You can afford to enjamb, in a curious way. So you can cut on the rhyme, and cutting on the rhyme, in a curious way, can open up enjambment as a viable way of performing the verse while still maintaining the verse.

You also could cut a line in order to essentially force the actor into the music of your text as you hear it. This is going to become even more important when we talk about emotive formatting and when we talk about shared lines and stichomythia and when we talk about silences. So keep an ear out for the musical form of cutting a line.

For this, let's take a look at *Hamilton*. It's been a little while since we've spent some time with *Hamilton*. Let's take a look at "My Shot." Now, the way it's written in *Hamilton: The Revolution*, which is the collected lyrics, is:

And I'm not throwing away my shot  
And I'm not throwing away my shot

Hey yo, I'm just like my country  
I'm young, scrappy and hungry  
And I'm not throwing away my shot.

It's actually almost in limerick form.

And I'm nót throwing awáy my shót  
And I'm nót throwing awáy my shót  
Hey yo, I'm júst like my cóuntry  
I'm yóung, scrappy and húngry  
And I'm nót throwing awáy my shót.

But if you know how it's supposed to be rapped, you know that the way those lyrics would be written out if it's written out grammatically correctly, or in this case actually cut on the rhyme, shot, shot, country, hungry, shot, as 'twere. But it doesn't actually force you, if you were just reading it as text, to perform it with the musicality that Miranda wants from us. Because how is it supposed to go? It's not supposed to be

And I'm nót throwing awáy my shót  
And I'm nót throwing awáy my shót

It's supposed to be

And I'm not throwing away my (pause) shot  
And I'm not throwing away my (pause) shot  
Hey yo, I'm just like my country  
I'm young, scrappy and hungry  
And I'm not throwing away my (pause) shot.

How would you use line breaks to perhaps force someone into your musicality? There's a couple different things that we can do here. And again, we're going to be coming back to emotive formatting, emotive punctuation in another tool boudoir, because you could use a hyphen. You could use white space on the same line. But I think what you could also do is you could put in a line break.

And I'm not throwing away my  
shot  
And I'm not throwing away my  
shot

And then I don't know whether you would

Hey yo, I'm just like my country I'm young, scrappy and hungry

You might want to put that all on one line. You could still put it on two, but how would that affect someone who doesn't know your music, basically doesn't know what you're hearing in your head? You ask the question, "How would they read it?"

Something that you can do here, part of your homework, is take a look at "My Shot" and try breaking it up, essentially according to the musicality. You could also, though, go and transcribe, or listen to anyone. This is really good, especially if you listen to well-known TV personalities who have a particular way of speaking. Someone that I might suggest you listen to is Seth Meyers, from his Late Night show. I dig him very much, but he has a really interesting cadence, a really interesting way of speaking where right before a joke, he will take a break, a breath. If you were to write out his piece as verse, he has very obvious open-ended line breaks, essentially. What will be very cool is to take any video of his, transcribe a few lines, have someone else read it, and see if they actually do his cadence, if they actually perform the same music that he did when he was basically interpreting what his writers wrote for him. I mean, if you want to, you can also do this with mine, because I know that I have strange places where I will... Like right there, will suddenly stop. So you can cut on the music.

The fourth reason to cut a line is if you're cutting on the schwumpf. Now, I highly encourage you go to back and listen to Episode 3, "Schwumpf, There It Is," or to reacquaint yourself by going to [hamlettohamilton.com](http://hamlettohamilton.com) and checking out the glossary link to remind yourself of what schwumpf is. But in brief, schwumpf is the word that we're using to talk about how our minds work where we'll take experience and emotion and facts and all sorts of different things and schwumpf them together, which we will do on a line of verse. We schwumpf it together.

For example, especially when you look at end-stopped lines, you have very neat schwumpfs all on one line of verse. Such as:

To be, or not to be, that is the question

Fairly simple. What's the question? To be or not to be. To be or not to be, what are we doing with that idea? We're questioning it. Those things are schwumped together. If we continue to look at "To be or not to be" from *Hamlet*, what you will also notice is that it's full of these other type of schwumpfs, and let me list them now for you.

A schwumpf, in this case, is going to be a single, collected group of thoughts, feelings, emotions, verbs, etc., etc. It is frequently on a single line of verse.

To be, or not to be, that is the question

However, taking our cue from a couple of other things we'll be looking at a little bit later with stichomythia, which will be in a separate episode, there's also

dischwumpfs, which just means that two lines of verse together create a single schwumpf. That actually happens on the following lines of “To be or not to be.” So:

To be, or not to be, that is the question,

Schwumpf.

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

Line break.

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Line break. In fact, schwumpf break. Because we could say that

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune

is really one big schwumpf that happens to be over the course of two separate lines of verse. There is a change in uvriel, because

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

we could consider that a sort of gentle end stop or gentle open-ended line. Regardless, you want to energize “suffer” as well as dive into “the slings and arrows.” But what you’re asking is, is it nobler in the mind to suffer – slight nuance – the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, and then we come to a big nuance and we get a semischwumpf, which is essentially a line and a half that acts as a single schwumpf. So the next line and a half, which is a semischwumpf, is:

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

Line break.

And by opposing end them?

and that's halfway through the line.

If we were to look at this again:

To be, or not to be, that is the question,

All one schwumpf, one grouping together of thoughts. Then we have a dischwumpf, two lines:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Then we have a semischwumpf, which is a line and a half:

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them?

Now you notice, however, that there still is – well, Shakespeare probably wouldn't have, just because people weren't writing in free verse at that time, free meter at that time. They were writing still in very structured, repeated, and, in fact, simple, repeated measures. But he still managed to make the pentameter end on a schwumpf so that you're ending on a slight nuance.

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

and then you come into the semischwumpf:

Or...

And “or” is such a great, great turning word. You feel that uvriel.

...to take arms against a sea of troubles,

What are we going to do with that? There's a slight nuance there.

And by opposing end them?

And then there's two little hemischwumpfs to finish out the line of

And by opposing end them?

And then it's

To die: to sleep...

A hemischwumpf is a little part of a line of verse that really acts as its own. “To die” is definitely a new schwumpf. “To sleep” might be a new schwumpf. We're going to call the little bits hemischwumpfs.

What's interesting is that in between each of these schwumpfs, on every line break as well as between every schwumpf, you get uvriel. That's why most people who perform this, you'll hear them actually run together the dischwumpf, run together the semischwumpf, take extra time, it feels like, before a

hemischwumpf. And it's not just that there's a caesura in the line with the question mark, "And by opposing end them" – question mark – "To die: to sleep" – line break. But that there's actually change in uvriel. There's actually change in schwumpf. We're going from a different idea to a new idea on the same line of verse.

Next episode, I am going to be bringing in a couple actors who are willing to let me play and sort of guide them through working through some verse drama so that you'll be able to hear line endings and how line endings, line beginnings, uvriel, line breaks, etc., schwumpf, and how it's applied, how it's actable by actors. They'll be given cold readings so you'll be able to hear how the musicality, the schwumpf, all these sorts of things. We'll look at good examples. We'll look at less great examples. The less great examples will be pulled from much older literature or from my own stuff, because, again, I don't mind holding it up as an example of what a modern verse playwright, the traps they can fall into.

But let's take a look now, since this is still very much repeated meter, let's take a look at cutting on the schwumpf in a modern play. I mentioned Becca Musser before. We're going to be taking a longer look at her work in a future tool boudoir episode. But for right now, I want to give a little taste of it. This is from her take on the Cassandra myth from the Trojan War, and she's written in complete free meter, so there's no repeated rhythm. There's no repeated beats or length of time. I would suggest that reading her stuff, you get a sense of the musicality of it, though. She both cuts on the music – which is equivalent to cutting on the schwumpf – and she also uses emotive formatting, emotive punctuation. She uses white space and silence beautifully, shared lines, a bunch of stuff that we're going to be looking at in the future that are all available to us as verse dramatists, and which actually, again, just amazingly helps your actors. Because that's the whole point. Again, this all has to be actable or it's no good. There's no point to it.

This is Cassandra speaking to her lover, Aleda, and Cassandra's in the middle of a vision about how Troy is not going to do so great. Aleda, who is a priestess, is listening to her. Let me just read this. Again, I'm going to give the John Barton, good old breath at the end of each line as well as – because, again, she's using emotive formatting, emotive typography, all sorts of very cool stuff that you'll be able to see a little bit of in the transcript. I will be allowing everything that she's purposely written into this verse to affect how I perform it. I highly suggest that you take a look at this and not just read along with, but try it out yourself. See as well how it affects you. See what some of the mechanics that we've talked about in terms of what you can do with your voice – and there's a million more things you can do to perform the line ending and to dive into the line beginning to get to that uvriel. Definitely give this a try. I bet you you'll be able to ride the verse very well.

Here we go. Picking up a little bit in Cassandra's speech:

Please tell me I'm crazy...?

Please tell me my visions are nothing, please—  
Tell me this isn't real.

Everyone says they're lies and ravings...

That's it. I'm a liar. I'm crazy. I'm full of shit!  
Complete and total BULLSHIT! The wind will not blow,  
The gulls will not call, the rain will not fall, and you—  
And you will not [—]

You won't.

And that's in verse. But as you can hear, it uses subtext. It uses modern language, and yet reading it, it's so easy to read because she's written it out beautifully, musically, but she's also written it out where you can hear that there's schwumpf. The cuts are on the schwumpf. For example:

Please tell me my visions are nothing, please—

Line break.

Tell me this isn't real.

Now, if we were to do neat end-stopped lines, instead of cutting on the schwumpf, it might be

Please tell me my visions are nothing,

End of the line.

Please tell me this isn't real.

End of the line. Perfectly fine lines.

Please téll me my vísions are nóthing,  
Please téll me this ísn't réal.

It even has a kind of musicality. But because she puts the break on the schwumpf, it forces you into

Please tell me my visions are nothing, please—  
Tell me this isn't real.

And I've got to tell you, the difference as an actor, just feeling that difference of having to recalibrate my mind from the schwumpf I was in into a new schwumpf by where she places that line break, it absolutely affects you as an actor. It's a little frustrating trying to get this across to you just speaking, or even if you're reading the transcript rather than listening. You are not going to get the sensation of what schwumpf and uvriel really are and how they can be used in a line of verse until you perform some of these great lines of verse that give you the gift of schwumpf and of uvriel.

So absolutely, take a look. Try reading it, and we will write it out, as you'll see, both ways. We'll write it out as if it were neatly end stopped, which she could have written:

Please tell me my visions are nothing,  
comma, new line

Please tell me this isn't real.

period. She could have written it that way. Read it that way. See what it does to you. And then read it the way that she wrote it and how she cut it:

Please tell me my visions are nothing,  
comma  
please—

hyphen, line break

Tell me this isn't real.

period. See how that affects you. It may seem like such a minor, small detail, but it affects the music. It affects the actor. It affects how the person who's listening receives this. It colors the whole next section, the following stanzas. It helps get me to

Everyone says they're lies and ravings...  
which helps get me to

That's it. I'm a liar.

You'll notice, then, on that next section, the following stanza – because she does use white space, so this ends up being broken up into stanzas, which essentially are paragraphs but for poetry, are paragraphs but for verse form. You've got a line that's full of four hemischwumpfs.

That's it.

period

I'm a liar.

period

I'm crazy.

period

I'm full of shit!

exclamation point.

Now, if this were a paragraph, this whole thing would just go on in one long paragraph, and you wouldn't necessarily know which sentences were connected to which other sentences. You could read it as

That's it. I'm a liar. I'm crazy. I'm full of shit! Complete and total BULLSHIT!  
The wind will not blow, The gulls will not call, the rain will not fall, and you—  
And you will not [—] You won't.

Which is fine, but that's not the music she's going for, and that's also not the schwumpf she's going for. The fact that Becca tells us... And I call her Becca because I know her. She works with Turn to Flesh Productions. Becca is an actor-combatant and an opera singer and a playwright and just loads of different things. So she puts....

She says schwumpf together these four sentences, these four hemischwumpfs. Schwumpf together

That's it. I'm a liar. I'm crazy. I'm full of shit!

Those are four separate thoughts, but she's saying the experience for Cassandra is that these four things are all schwumped together into one uber-schwumpf on the line, as it were, even though it's four separate. "That's it," which is a revelation. "I'm a liar," completely separate thought. "I'm crazy," separate thought, because being crazy and being a liar are different things. "I'm full of shit," different thought. But again, what Cassandra experiences – and this is why it's all on one line of verse – is these four things are experienced as one schwumpf. We can look at it as we're studying it and realize that it's full of four hemischwumpfs. That can be valuable to us as actors, as dramaturgs, as directors, as playwrights. But she cuts on the schwumpf.

You see it later:

The gulls will not call, the rain will not fall, and you—

And again, there's a pause there because it's the end of the schwumpf. It's the end of the thought. It's the end of the experience of seeing gulls, rain, Aleda, her lover. And that's where she has to pause, because the uvriel is different. Then we come back in with:

And you will not [—]

And there's actually a crossed out line, but you're going to have to wait for that tool boudoir when we talk about silences.

Let's review what we did today. We looked at the two types of line endings. One is end stopped, which means the end of the line is the same as the end of the thought, is the end of the grammatical sentence. It's frequently punctuated with some sort of stopping or pausing punctuation, such as a period, a semicolon, question mark, so on. Then you have open-ended lines, which are lines of verse where the sentence may actually continue onto the next line, or sometimes an open-ended line will just trail off and not finish the sentence. But it's open ended. There isn't necessarily ending punctuation. There isn't necessarily a normal grammatical stop there, but there is a purposeful line break. I really want to underline that an open-ended line that functions has a playable,actable, purposeful line break that is not typified by grammar or by punctuation.

Then we looked at the four reasons why you might use a line break. We talked about breaking because of the meter. This is especially if you're in a repeated meter of any sort that necessitates that you stop the line by the time you hit your fifth iamb, by the time you hit the end of da-DUH-da da-DUH-da da-DUH for a limerick. You're in a strict meter and therefore that dictates when you break your line. We'll be talking about this more next time when we bring in actors and we look at some of the traps that you might fall into.

You might break a line by placing it on the rhyme, especially if you have any of the majority of this verse is told in rhyming couplets, throuplets, anything where you want the audience to hear the rhyme. Rhyme can actually encourage enjambment if you're using subtle rhyme rather than end-stopped rhyme, if you're using open-ended line breaks for your rhyme rather than end-stopped rhymes. Take a listen back at that section.

You can also cut it in order to help the actor sort out the music that you hear in your head, and that's where we were suggesting that with the *Hamilton* song "My Shot," you may want to put a line break before the word "shot," so that the actor, even if they didn't have the music, even if they didn't know where your thought

was, would still get the music of how you're hearing your line of verse, how you're hearing this poetry that you're writing, so that you're not going to read

And I'm not throwing away my shot

but if you put a line break there, someone would read

And I'm not throwing away my  
shot

We talked, as well, then, about cutting on the schwumpf or cutting where there's new uvriel, where there's a new change in energy, a new... means of thinking. It sort of just happened right there. We looked at both "To be or not to be," and we looked at a new piece of text that we're going to be coming back to very soon from Becca Musser. We had all sorts of examples all the way through.

We also talked about some of the people that laid the foundation for really looking at line endings, and that includes John Barton, Kristin Linklater, John Hadden, and, on a personal note, Vivien Heilbron and Bernard Lloyd, who taught me all those many years ago, telling me, (English accent) "Just, darling, can you, can you lift your voice? Can you, darling?"

[music]

I'm going to ask you, for your homework, for your challenge, should you choose to accept it, to either take a look at your own line endings and ask whether they're playable. Ask whether they're actable or whether you just cut because you thought you had to cut. Or even if they're all beautifully end stopped, still ask is there really uvriel afterwards? Is it easy to generate energy by the end of this line? Is there something to dive back into at the beginning of the line? Double-check, essentially, your line breaks. If you're not a writer, then I suggest that you take any verse, especially the ones that we have listed here, and see how it affects you. You can also, of course, create new verse, whether you're a writer or not, and try out the different methods.

Now, as I mentioned, next time I'm going to be bringing in some actors. We're going to be looking at some text fairly cold. We're going to be applying all this technique from the tool boudoir onto this text they have not seen before. And I am, as well, going to choose some texts that are really good and have a lot of uvriel and are very easy to follow the line breaks, and I'm going to choose some texts which are just more difficult, which have some problems in the way they're written. For that, we'll either use very old text or we'll look at some of my early text and just sort of pull it apart, see what's going on, see why it needed a little bit of massaging.

As always, if you want to join in the conversation, you can become a patron on [patreon.com/hamlettohamilton](https://patreon.com/hamlettohamilton), and we have a super secret Facebook group where people have started to post the stuff that they're writing themselves, as well as there are polls for you to help select what the next episode will be. All sorts of goodies over there, but you can only get it if you become a patron at any level over at [patreon.com/hamlettohamilton](https://patreon.com/hamlettohamilton). And otherwise, of course, you can tag us on Twitter, tag us on Facebook. Let us know what you're working on. Let us know what your experience was taking some of this text. Did you feel any of that energy being generated in you? Did you try changing your voice at the end, and how did that affect you? Very interested to hear what you're doing with this work, because most of the people that we talk about on this podcast, about half of them, I should say, are dead. They can't write anything new. But the other half are people who are, like, you know, you. We can do some exciting work now that actors are going to be take and run with, and I'm really looking forward to what we explore as we go all the way from *Hamlet* to *Hamilton*. Catch you next time.

[music]

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Thank you for joining us, dear friends, for all things true, good, beautiful, and frequently in verse.