

Chaucer's Contribution to English Language and versification

Chaucer made notable contribution to the English language and versification. In 1360 English was split in four dialects. Chaucer ~~popularised~~ popularised, reshaped and reformed the East midland dialect and gave it the form of the standard tongue. He imparted to his native tongue smoothness and suppleness which it had not known since the Norman times and breathed into this dialect a high poetical life. In the sphere of versification, Chaucer made substantial contribution. He cast aside alliteration and doggerel rhyme, and employed three principle meters, the eight syllable line rhyming in couplets as in the Book of the Duchess, the ten syllable line also rhyming in couplets as The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales and the same line

arranged in seven-line stanzas as in *Troilus* and *Crisseyde*. The heroic couplet he introduced in English verse the rhyme royal he invented. He had a firm grasp on the true way of wedding the stressed and syllabic systems by accommodating metrical ictus to national accent. In his shorter poems he made, however, endless metrical experiments and showed a mastery of intricate verse forms remarkable even in an age when the French had made verse writing a matter of almost gymnastic skill.

Chaucer kept the sense of melody. From his very earliest poems his work is almost faultless and as he progressed in skill his music became constantly more varied and flexible. He was an artist in verse effects, who not only wrote with a metrical accuracy, fluency and variety

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that have rarely been surpassed, but also paid constant and delicate heed to the necessities of rhythm and tone colour.

The end.

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