

THE ELEGY

The term Elegy covered war song, love poems, political verses, and lamentations for the dead in ancient Greece. In fact Elegy covered a wide range of subjects, both grave and gay (joyful). The form or structure was more important than the subject matter. It was written in the Elegiac measure. An Elegiac measure is a couplet composed of a dactylic hexameter followed by dactylic pentameter.

In modern times a subject matter of Elegy became important than the structure. The theme of an elegy must be mournful or sadly reflective. It is a lamentation for the dead, unsuccessful love, the fall of a famous or a tribute to something loved and lost. The English Elegy does not use the ancient Elegiac measure.

The best example of a formal elegy is Gray's 'Elegy written in a Country Churchyard' and Oliver Goldsmith 'The Deserted Village'.

Features of an Elegy:

- 1) It is a poem of lament, mourning the death of a person, or the end of an era or way of life.
- 2) The poet has the freedom to write in any form that he chooses.
- 3) The tone adopted by the poet is dignified and solemn.
- 4) The Elegy is suitable for serious reflections on heavy topics such as life and death. Some poets use this form to express their digress on other subjects. In 'Lycidas'

Milton has talked about the degradation of poetry and religion.

5) Although the Elegy is a poem of grief, it changes by the end to resignation, peace or even joy, as the poet comes to terms with his loss.

The Idyll

The Idyll derives its name from a Greek word meaning ‘a Little form’ or ‘a little picture’. The poet presents a picture in a few words or series of pictures composing a longer poem. The pictorial effect is achieved by graphic description as colour is used in a painting.

The Idyll gives a vivid visual description of an idealized or serene environment. It often creates an impression of beauty, simplicity and harmony in nature and presents rural life in an idealized manner. The Pastorals of Theocritus and Virgil may be considered Idylls. Other examples include Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s ‘The Village Blacksmith’ (1840), Alfred Tennyson’s ‘English Idylls and Other Poems’(1874) and Robert Browning’s ‘Dramatic Idylls’(1879).

Lines Written in March:

**The cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter.
The lake doth glitter.**
