**Poetry**

**1.  THE BALLAD**

**Ballad: Its Nature and Definition**

The Ballad may be defined as a short-story in verse. The word Ballad is derived from the word *“Ballare”*which means “to dance”. Originally a ballad was a song with a strong narrative substance sung to the accompaniment of dancing. The minstrel or the bard would sing the main parts, and the dancers would sing the refrain or certain lines which were frequently repeated. Often it was in the form of a dialogue.

Thus the popular ballad had a strong dramatic element; the audience were not merely passive listeners, they danced and sang along with the bard. There was thus a strong sense of participation and, consequently, the entertainment was much greater. As the ballads generally narrated some local event, they were easily understood by the audience even when they were most allusive. Loves, battles, or heroic exploits, some supernatural incident or some local event are the chief themes of the ballads.

**2.  THE EPIC**

The Epic of Growth

*Just as a Ballad is a short story in verse, the epic is a long story in verse.*Just as there are ballads of growth and ballads of art, so also there are *Epics of growth*and *Epics of art.*The epic of growth has its origin in popular song and story. It is not the work of one man or the result of conscious artistic effort. A number of stories and legends about some popular hero may circulate in an oral form for generations. They may be given currency by wandering bards or minstrels. Later on, some poet may collect them, organise them and impart to them form and  unity. *Iliad*is one such epic. It is supposed to have been composed by the Ancient Greek poet Homer out of a number of fragmentary stories. The Anglo-Saxon *Beuwolf*is another epic of growth. The name of the poet who brought together the floating material of legend and folk-lore is not known.

**3.  THE MOCK-EPIC**

**Its Nature**

A Mock-epic is a small narrative poem in which the machinery and conventions of epic proper are employed in the treatment of trivial themes, and in this way it becomes a parody or burlesque of the epic. A mocking, ridiculous effect is created when the grandiloquent epic-style and epic-conventions are used for a theme which is essentially trivial and insignificant. The ancient Mock-epic *The Battle of the Frog and Mice,*a parody of Homer’s *Iliad,*Swift’s *Tale of a Tub*and*Battle of the Books*and Pope’s *Dunciad*and *The Rape of the Lock*are the finest examples of the Mock-epic.

**.  THE IDYLL**

*By the word “Idyll” is meant a description in prose or verse of some scene or event which is striking, picturesque, and complete in itself.*Such an idyll may stand alone, or it may form a kind of interlude in a longer composition. In our literature idyllic passages are commoner than isolated-idylls. Indeed, the actual name is best known to us by Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King,*and Browning’s *Dramatic Idylls.*

An Idyll is neither a lyric nor a narrative but partakes of the qualities of both. It derives its name from the Greek word meaning, *“a little picture”,*and so two of its essential characteristics are (a) *its brevity,*and (b) *pictorial effect.*An Idyll keeps relatively close to the ordinary world of action and experience, though it may give idealised pictures of that world. More often than not an Idyll gives us idealised, poetic pictures of the life and doings of rural folk in rural setting. It sheds a romantic poetic glow on what may otherwise be commonplace, dull, prosaic and dreary. It deals with simple like, and so its language is also simple. It is characterised by simplicity both in theme and treatment.

**5.  THE DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE**

The Dramatic Monologue is the most important kind of that sub-division of objective poetry which we have called dramatic, which is dramatic not because it is to be acted on the stage, but because it gives the thoughts and emotions not of the poet but of some imagined character. The poet’s identity is merged with that of the dramatic personage, and the poet speaks through his mouth, so to say. *Robert Browning*is the most important writer of dramatic monologues in the English language.