

Literary Terms Related to Poetry (Section-2)

[BA 1st Year, Paper-II]

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- 11. Free Verse or *Vers Libre***: A type of poetry that differs from traditional verse form that it is 'free' of the regular beat of metre and in its use of natural speech rhythm, lack of rhyme, use of irregular line length and fragmentary syntax. This verse form was particularly prevalent in the 19th and 20th centuries with the French Symbolist poets and the Modernist poets of Britain and America. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* began the Modern Free Verse movement. Other practitioners of the free verse were T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and D.H. Lawrence.
- 12. Elegy**: A poem of sorrow or mourning for the dead, also a reflective poem in a solemn or sorrowful mood. An elegy is written in lyrical form and in an elaborately formal tone. In Greek and Latin verse elegy referred to poems written in elegiac meter, but since John Milton's *Lycidas* it has achieved its modern significance. Some world famous elegies other than *Lycidas* are P.B. Shelley's *Adonais* (on Keats), Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (on Henry Hallam) and Walt Whitman's *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed* (on Abraham Lincoln).
- 13. Lyrics**: In ancient Greece, lyric was a poem sung with the accomplishment of a lyre. Now lyric is usually a short personal poem expressing the personal mood, feeling or meditation of a single speaker. The lyric as a broad term includes the elegy, ode,

ballad and sonnet. However, its distinguishing features are emotion, subjectivity, melodiousness, description and meditation.

14. Mock-epic/Mock-Heroic epic: A literary work in prose or verse that comically or satirically imitates the form and style of the epic while treating a trivial subject. A mock epic includes all the conventions of the epic, but the subject matter is far from being grand. Thus, Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* treats the theft of a lock of hair in an epical manner while Swift's *Battle of the Books*, a prose satire, treats a battle between the Ancients and the Moderns in an epically grand manner.

15. Ode: Literally Greek word 'Ode' means a song and more particularly of a lengthy lyric poem, serious in subject, dignified in style and complicated in form, addressing someone or something. There are three types of odes in English-a. Pindaric, b. Cowleyan and c. Horatian. Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* is an example of Horatian ode addressing nightingale, where each stanza follows the same metrical pattern. Such odes are more personal, reflective and sustained.

16. Ballad: A poem meant for singing, quite impersonal in manner, narrative in material, probably connected in its origins with the communal dance, but submitted to a process of oral tradition among people who are free from literary influences and homogenous in character. The popular ballad, though still a vital force in English literature, belongs essentially to a period of oral transmission, before literary productions took written or printed form. *The Ballad of Chevy Chase* is an English popular ballad.

17. Objective Correlative: A term coined by American painter Washington Allston and made famous by T.S. Eliot in his essay *Hamlet and His Problems* where he maintained that the "only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an

‘objective correlative’”. He defined it as ‘a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events, which shall be the formula of that particular emotion’. According to Eliot, the ‘sleep-walking’ of Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* is a perfect echo of her state of mind. In the same vein, he asserted Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* as an artistic failure because protagonist Hamlet’s emotions do not match the actions of the play. The term is symptomatic of an Imagist Eliot’s preference for precise and exact images evoking particular emotions.

18. Run-on-Line/Enjambment: Verse in which the thought of one line runs into the next line with no punctuation or grammatical break. It is the opposite of the ‘end-stopped’ line. The lines in *Tintern Abbey* of William Wordsworth are run-on-lines.

“Five years have passed; five summers, with the length

Of five long winters!”

19. Sonnet: A lyric poem of 14 iambic pentameter lines. The sonnet originated in the 13th century Italy and was brought to England by Thomas Wyatt. The two most important types of sonnet are the Petrarchan Sonnet (also the Italian Sonnet) and Shakespearean Sonnet (also English Sonnet). The Petrarchan Sonnet has two parts—an octave, rhyming abba abba and sestet rhyming cdc cdc or cde cde. The Shakespearean sonnet has three quatrains and a final couplet rhyming abab cdcd efef gg. An important variant of the Shakespearean Sonnet is the Spenserian Sonnet rhyming abab bcba cdcd ee, also called the ‘linked sonnet’.

20. Volta: The Italian term for the ‘turn’ in the argument or mood of the sonnet. In Petrarchan Sonnet the ‘Volta’ occurs on the 9th line, in the Miltonic sonnet (a variant of the Petrarchan) it occurs on the 10th line and in Shakespearean sonnet it occurs on

the 13th line. Thus, after evoking the ravaging pictures of 'Time', Shakespeare takes a turn on the 13th line in *Sonnet No. 65*.

“Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?

O, none, unless this miracle have might,

That in black ink my love may still shine bright.”

21. Crown: A linked sequence of sonnets in which the last line of each poem in the sequence is repeated as the first line of the next, until the final line of the final poem becomes the opening line of the first. John Donne in the introductory sequence of 'Holi Sonnets' uses the crown.

22. Curtain Sonnet: The name given by Hopkins to a curtailed form of the sonnet he invented. The curtailed sonnet has 10 lines with an additional final half-line. Hopkins' *Peace* and *Pied Beauty* are examples.

23. Sprung Rhythm: A term coined by Hopkins to characterise his experiment with metre. It measures only the accented syllables in a line, regardless of the numbers of unaccented syllables and permits the juxtaposition of stressed syllables in a foot more frequently than normal English metre. In the following food, the accented syllables are packed tightly together: /Je'-su, he'art's light/. In the following lines from *Pied Beauty* the sprung rhythm is used.

“Glo'-ry be to / God for / da'ppled things-”