

Lectures on
English Poetry.

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Lectures on Poetry. Prof. Dixon.

Greek	Aristotle	Rhetoric
Roman	Horace	Ar. Poetica
English	Sidney	Defence of Poesie
French	Boileau	
English	Pope	Essays on Criticism
"	Shelley	Defence of Poetry.

Horace thinks that the object of poetry is either to elevate or to please the reader. Coleridge defines it as an art imparting intellectual pleasure to the reader and thus he distinguishes it from science the object of which is to give intellectual truth.

But neither of those definitions are complete. It is quite true that poetry must be accompanied by a certain amount of pleasure on the part of the reader, but to think pleasure as the sole aim of poetry is a strange blunder. Shelley says that a poet is a nightingale which sits under the shadow & sing to the hearts content, with no other aim than to please itself.

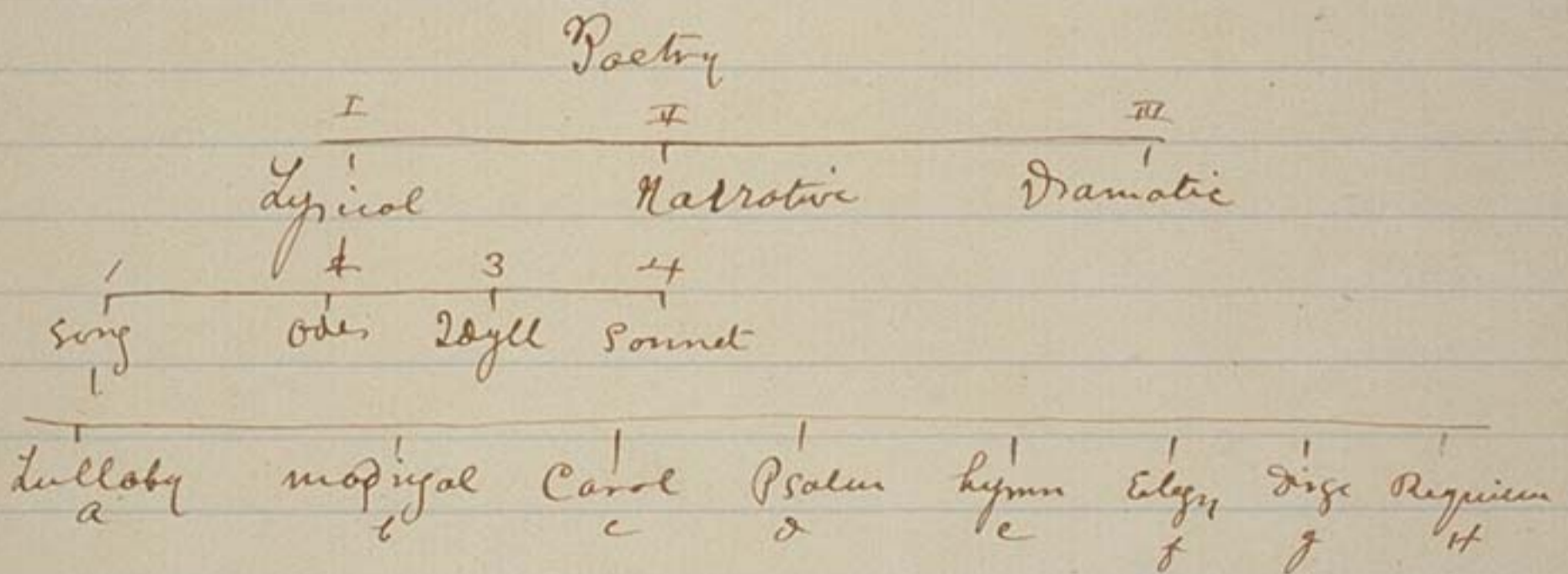
Poet, as its name implies, is a creator and not a pleasure giver. Every student of language knows that the same thought can be expressed in several ways. And poetry is the art of expressing the finest thoughts,

with the finest expression, so it is, so to speak, half thought and half expression. The fine thought is essentially requisite for a poet, yet the faculty of expression is ^{no} less important than the former. Among poets both ancient & modern, we distinguish those who are specially endowed with the faculty of expression & those whose thought is much more finer than their language. Pope, Gray, and Shelley are the best specimens of the former class while Byron, Scott, Cooper belong to the latter. The excess of Vocabulary and the ease with which they handle their thoughts, make the poets of the first school very elegant and elaborate but at the same time they are liable to become a mere rhetorician than instead of a man of impulse who gives vent to his feeling by the spontaneous effluence of rhythmical language. On the other hand, the man of impulse is too impatient to finish his poetry carefully and elaborately, and is apt to fall into the burst of passion in coarse expressions and bad periods. Nevertheless, he cannot fail to be strong, impressive, and weighty in substance.

William Sharp (Landa. Critic) gives the following definition of poetry:—

The dynamic condition of the imagination and thought-rhythmical faculties in combination forming expression in words and in metre - the animating principle being always of necessity greater than the animated form, or the soul superior to the body. Another critic Theodore Waltz gives the following definition:-

Poetry is the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language.



I. Song

A song is a short composition in verse dealing with a single subject or incident and suited as its name implies for musical rendering.

a) Lullaby. a lullaby is a song sung by a mother or a nurse to soothe a child and send it to sleep.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!

Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty
one sleeps.

I sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon,
Father will come to his babe in the nest,

Silver galls all out of lowest

Under the silver moon:

Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty
one sleep.

Tennyson. (Princess.
Canto II, close)

b)

Madrigal. A madrigal is a song originally from Italy, but highly popular in Spain.

The great Italian poet Tasso, the author of 'Jerusalem delivered', composed the finest specimens of madrigal. The subject of a madrigal is invariably love. It was popular in Shakespeare's time, until the middle of the 17th century. Among madrigalists we count Lodge, Suckling (ob. 1642), Carew (ob. 1639), Wither (1667)

c) Carol. It originally meant a joyous song. By and by its meaning has under gone many changes until at present it is restricted to the song sung in Christmas or 'roll'

d) Hymn. This is a song of praise either sacred or solemn. We have a long series of hymn writers. Amongst them, Addison, Pope, Watts, C. Wesley, J. Wesley, Cowper

Mood, Byron, (Hebrew Melodies), J. Montgomery, Keble, Newman, Lyte, Banan' are to be noticed. It is a curious fact that America does not give us a single ^{fine} hymn, though it is known as a religious country.

e) Psalm. It was originally accompanied by the harp. The name of the Psalmist is given to nothing David who collected Psalms in Hebrew. Philip Sidney with his sister made some attempts to render the Psalms into English. Milton tried it in the later time. But by far the best English versions are Sternhold and Hopkins and Rouse, which latter is the Scotch Standard.

f) Elegy or Third Threnody. It is a song for mourning.

Milton's Lycidas

Shelley's Adonais

Templeton's in Memoriam

Arnold's Thyrsis (in memory of A. Clough)

g) Dirge. It is a song meant for a funeral

Fear no more the heat o' the sun
Nor the furious winter's rage:
Thou thy worldly task has done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wage:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee and come to dust.

No excises harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!

nothing ill come near thee!
 Quiet consumption have:
 And renowned be thy grave!
 (Cymbeline IV. 2.)

(H) Requiem This is a hymn or song for
 the repose of the dead.

(I) Bacchanalian Song. This is a song in
 praise of drinking

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Paul
 Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
 That there's woe and despair in the jolly black-jack,
 And seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
 Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
 Drink us out and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
 The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
 Says, that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so lily,
 And Appollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
 Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker,
 Till she blooms like a rose and a fig for the vicar!

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Our vicar has preaches - and why should he not?
For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church.
Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
Sweet Marjorie's sword and a fig for the vicar.
(The Lady of the Lake Cant. III.)

Burden or Refrain

Chorus

Anthology (originally a collection of flowers
now that of songs or lyrics)

II. Ode.

The word 'ode' comes from the Greek meaning song. In English, the word is applied to a somewhat dignified composition of some length, addressed to some celebrated personages or personified things. It is often composed on some great occasion. Ode belongs rather to our classical poetry than to our romantic poetry. Among our famous odes are:—

Milton's On the morning of Christ's Nativity

Dryden's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day (to music)

Greek odes are composed of three parts:

- 1) Strophe (Question),
- 2) Antistrophe (Reply),
- 3) Epode or Chorus ('summing up.')

They were sung on the stage, the musicians being divided into two parts, one of which sang the strophe, the other the antistrophe. After it, both joined in chorus. Attempts of introducing into the English stage this mode of singing have been unsuccessful, on account of several differences between both stages. Nevertheless.

The classical structure of the ode were was revived first by Gray¹⁷¹⁶⁻¹⁷⁷¹ (1750) + Collins (1721-1759)

J. Gray's } Ode to Spring
 } Hymn to Adversity +
 } Ode on a distant Prospect
 } of Eton

W. Collins's } The passions
 } Odes to Liberty and Evening

Wordsworth's } ode to Duty.

Tennyson's } " on the Death of
 } Wellington (ob. 1852)

Among the Greeks, we must mention

Pindar (522 B.C.) (Pindaric Ode) +

Anacreon (540 B.C.) (Anacreontic)

(The poems of Anacreon set forth chiefly the praises of love and wine, to the enjoyment of which his life also appears to have been dedicated.)

Pindar made poetry and music the business of his life + composed choral songs for princes and states in all parts of Greece. He excelled in in all varieties of choral poetry;

hymns to gods, paeans, odes for processions, drinking songs, etc. But the only poems of his now extant are the Epinikia, or Triumphal odes, composed in celebration of victories at the great public games - (the Olympian, Pythian, Nemean, and Isthmian.)

In Rome, Horace (Horatius Flaccus 65. AD) is the most celebrated for his odes.

(His odes are models of that kind of composition, and his Epistles and satires abound with acute and vivacious observation on life and manners; while his 'ars poetica', so often quoted, presents under the form of a letter to the Pisos, but with great precision, the difficulties of poetical composition and the principles which ^{show} guide the poet in his work.

"The easy agreeable manner with which he philosophizes without appearing to do it, the salt with which he seasons his thoughts, and the delicacy and ease with which he expresses himself, afford the most agreeable entertainment. His

descriptions are still applicable and interesting, and the poet will therefore remain the favorite of those whose morality does not exclude the refinements of life.")

III Idyll.

Idyll properly means 'painting of some scene in words'. It is derived from the Greek meaning 'little image or representation'. The name was first given to pastoral poems dealing with the attractive aspect of rural life.

Among the ancients, Theocritus (the Sicilian pastoral poet) is famous as the writer of Idylls.

(He lived in the 3rd Century B.C.; he is considered the father of pastoral poetry; not that he appears to have invented it, but having adopted a form of composition which had been previously cultivated, he carried it to its highest perfection. His poems are called 'Idylls', the present simple in artificial pictures of Sicilian rural life.)

Thousson's Seasons.

Burns's, Colter's Saturday Night.

Tennyson's Idylls of the King.

Browning's Dramatic Idylls.

(Tennyson's poem is really the epic of Arthur.
He used the word 'Idylls' for the division
or canto of an epic.)

(Browning's Dramatic Idylls are short pictures,
in the form of drama.)

The Envoy or L'Envoi } in Verse
Prologue Epilogue }
Dedication

An Envoy is a few rhyming line to bid
farewell to the reader or audience.

A Prologue is the explanatory opening poem.

An Epilogue is the closing of a poem in
completion.

Dedication is a survival of feudal times.

When a poet attached himself to a great
lord or brought out his poem under his
protection, he dedicated a poem to his
patron. (Shakespeare dedicated his
poem to the Lord of Southampton.)

Browning to Landor

Narrative Poetry.

Epic Romanes Pastoral Ballad

I 'Epos' is a Greek word meaning a 'word' then it came to mean a story. Thus an Epic is a story in rhyme.

The title of epic poems generally ends in one of is, as, ad, id.

Homer { Iliad — Achille.
 { Odyssey — Odysseus or Ulysses
 { Rolliad

Voltain Henrid — Mercury IV.

Pope Dunciad (mock heroic)

Virgil Aeneid Aeneas.

The best translation extant in any language is Chapman's which appeared between 1598-1616, and was composed in iambic heptameters. The next translator was Alexander

Pope in heroic measure (decasyllabic).

But it is not close to the spirit of the original though a fine poem in its way. Towards the

^{to last}
 close of this century, W. Cowper (1791) again translated Homer in blank verse.

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------|--------|------------------|
| { 1. Chapman's | 14 syl. | Iambic | (Common Measure) |
| { 2. Pope's | 10 | " " | (Heroic) |
| { 3. Cowper's | 10 | " " | (Blank Verse) |

Their faults:

1. Undignified in places (want of dignity.)
2. Pompous, wordy, and antithetical
 (want of simplicity)
3. Dull and flat (want of energy)

In this century we have:

- Chapman's (junior)
- Earl of Derby's (Spenserian Stanza)
- William, Queen, Bryant's

(See Matthew Arnold's Translators of Homer.)

Two epics of the first class:

- { Milton's Paradise Lost.
- { Tennyson's Idyls of King

It is a curious fact that Milton was intending to write an epic upon King Arthur and he would have finished it but that he was distracted by the civil war.

The weakness of the Paradise Lost lies in the necessity of making the Devil its hero.

Spenser's Fairy Queen is an allegorical epic.

II. Romance: —

Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel 1807-1806
 Campbell's ^{Memorials} Gertrude of Wyoming
 Longfellow's { Evangeline
 { Hiawatha

Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales' is partly idyllic and partly romantic.

A Romantic Story in Verse is a composition, celebrating some chivalrous acts.

III. Pastoral poems are sometimes called bucolics, eclogues, or egloues.

The Shepherd's Calendar } Spenser

Asiaphel } elegies in the form of pastorals.
 Lycidas }

Gentle Shepherd by Allan Ramsay
 Pope

Theocritus of Sicily
 (Greece)

Virgil (Italy)

Pastoral poetry still survives in Italy; all the members of a literary club there wear pastoral

names.

IV. Ballad. Originally it is a dancing song. The name was given to the musical composition and was not printed. It is invariably vigorous but always wants smoothness. The ballads of Scotch and English borders are the finest specimens of this kind of metrical composition. The first publication of 'Relics of Ancient Poetry' by T. Percy dean of Carlisle in 1765, is an epoch in literature and marks the decay of the classical style.

Scott, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson and many others are known as ballad writers.

Next to the Scotch and English ballad, the Spanish ballads are famous. They were translated by Lockhart.

Drama.

Drama is an attempt to reproduce life in action. There are three characteristics of the drama:—

1. Dialogue
2. Action.
3. Scenery
4. Chorus (in Greek Drama)

Twelve to fifteen individuals, compose a chorus. The use of the chorus is to intersperse pieces of description, narrative or moralizing. These supplied the deficiency of dialogue and carry on the story. In some modern plays, the part of chorus, is performed by characters.

Drama come from a Greek word ($\delta\rho\alpha\mu\alpha$) meaning a performance and it was in Greece a serious performance having ^{the} full sanction of a city; whereas English plays were an amusement for the leisure hours of noblemen and their retainers. When the feudalism was just declining, a great number of lords who still kept their retainers and lived in gloomy castles, having nothing

to do with their arms, took much interest in literature and along with it in theatrical performance, to while away their leisure hours. They now began to patronize the actors and to have a company of their own. Thus the play in England had a character of an amusement so that serious people consisting of middle class merchants, manufacturers and small gentry were bore a grudge toward actors.

Tragedy and Comedy. These two kind of play were completely apart in Greece, so apart from one another that ^{comic + tragic} players were distinguished by their sooths (soeas) or buskins (costumes). As to English drama, many critics have raised their objection to this classification of drama into tragedy and comedy; for no sharp distinction can be drawn between them as far as English drama is concerned. Indeed, it is preferable to divide English plays into the romantic & the historical. When Desmit translated Othello, he gave two renderings, one tragic and the other comic. This fact shows that Shakespeare did not intend to give a ^{tragic} tragedy.

Burlesque. In comedy we must not go beyond a certain limit; but in burlesque we are quite free to enter into the domain of absurdity. It excite laughter by ludicrous treatment of some well known individuals. Farce is a short comedy meant to excite laughter by extravagant caricature.

Opera-Comique is a comic opera

Melodrama is a sensational play characterized by its exciting situations and high flown language and by its good taste or artistic.

Pantomime is imitating everything usually a burlesque of some well known nursery tale. A great sum of money is spent in scenic.

Clown

pantaloon

harlequin } dancers

Columbine }

It is usually acted in the Christmas time

Interlude is short-play coming in between.

Prologue, epilogue, monologue.

Exit, exeunt, Dramatis Personae.

or a ^{pure} comedy to the public when he wrote

"The masters of the Revels" were court officers who superintended court amusements & possessed the right of examining plays before they were acted.

"Children of the Revels" were those who played the part of a woman and sang on the stage.
(The first female actor Mrs. Hugh 1660 Dec.)

In the beginning of the 16th century, a very fantastic play called the masque was in vogue. Jonson, Fletcher, and Milton, (Comus) were the masters of this kind of play. It was "purely imaginative and allegorical play, and by no means a representation of life."

Opera or Operetta is a musical drama in which words are completely subordinated to music.

Tragedy and comedy a comedy differs from a tragedy not only in their happy close but also in their more familiar style and in the frequent absence of metre which is an indispensable feature in tragedy.

Shidani's Privals, Goldsmith's She stoops to Conquer