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## Discussion on Romantic Lyric

A lyric is short, highly musical verse that conveys powerful feelings. The poet may use rhyme, meter, or other literary devices to create a song-like quality.

Unlike *narrative poetry*, which narrates events, lyric poetry doesn't have to tell a story. A lyric poem is a private expression of emotion by a single speaker.

For example, we can mention the name of American poet Emily Dickinson who described inner feelings when she wrote her lyric poem that begins, "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain, / And Mourners to and fro."

### Key Points of Lyric Poetry

- i.) A lyric poem is a private expression of emotion by an individual speaker.
- ii) Lyric poetry is highly musical and can form poetic devices like rhyme and meter.
- iii) Some scholars classify lyric poetry in three types: Lyric of Vision, Lyric of Thought, and Lyric of Emotion. However, this classification is not widely accepted.

## Origins of Lyric Poetry

Song lyrics often begin as lyric poems. In ancient Greece, lyric poetry was, in fact, combined with music played on a U-shaped stringed instrument called a lyre. Through words and music, great lyric poets like Sappho poured out feelings of love and yearning.

Similar approaches to poetry were developed in other parts of the world. Between the fourth century B.C. and the first century A.D., Hebrew poets started to compose intimate and lyrical psalms, which were sung in ancient Jewish worship services and compiled in the Hebrew Bible.

The lyric originated in Ancient Greece as a song, normally accompanied by the lyre. It was divided into two types, choral lyric (sung by a chorus), and monody (a solo). Choral lyrics were usually performed in public at religious ceremonies, while monodies were performed at private gatherings. Their themes were

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varied, but included, love, desire, suffering, and patriotism. Sappho and Pindar are among the more well known Greek lyric poets.

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Professor M. H. Abrams of Cornell University suggests that many lyrics (especially the longer ones) from the Romantic poets follow a certain pattern in their structure. In his essay, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric" Abrams says that in each:

"[t]he speaker begins with a description of the landscape; an aspect or change of aspect in the landscape evokes a varied but integral process of memory, thought, anticipation, and feeling which remains closely intervolved with the outer scene. In the course of this meditation the lyric speaker achieves an insight, faces up to a tragic loss, comes to a moral decision, or resolves an emotional problem. Often the poem rounds upon itself to end where it began, at the outer scene, but with an altered mood and deepened understanding which is the result of the intervening meditation."

### The Romantic lyric

Perhaps because of the lyric's departure from musical accompaniment and the Romantic emphasis on individualism, the Romantic lyric is much broader in scope of subject matter, form and language. The Romantic lyric has a single speaker— often the poet— who is expressing a state of mind inspired by a person, thing, or situation. The Romantic lyric is distinguished particularly by its:

- Heightened emotional state, in which feelings are expressed passionately and subjectively
- Extensive use of natural imagery.

### **Examples**

Romantic poet William Wordsworth's *Daffodils* ("I wandered lonely as a cloud") is one of his best known lyrics. Wordsworth is meditating on the beauty of daffodils and declares that the memory of them will cheer his soul when his mood is darker. In this lyric, as in others, Wordsworth uses the language of common speech to make his point. Other famous Romantic lyrists include Coleridge, Shelley, Byron and Keats

### Romantic Lyric Poetry Features

- **Treatment of the supernatural:** The poets treat the supernatural in such a manner that it becomes convincing and introduces some sort of Gothic element into the writing.
- **Suspension of Disbelief:** This phrase describes how in the poetry of Romantic writers we are forced to believe, even what is irrational.

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