of great epics are obviously supernormal, and many of the characters and incidents are supernatural. On the other hand, the composition of this form of poetry is characterized by an essential difficulty which makes its successful execution exceedingly rare. Its form is so great that it requires a vast volume of thought, and thought of the highest kind, to endow it with dignity, and a genuine and powerful source of inspiration to endow it with life. Properly it should sum up the thought of an epoch or give expression to the aspirations of a people; and that is why in the nature of things the great epics can almost be counted upon the fingers of two hands:—the Hindu epics, the *Ramāyāna* and the *Mahābhārata*, the Iliad and Odyssey, the *De Natura* of Lucretius, the Aeneid, the *Niebelungen Lied*, the *Inferno*, and Paradise Lost. And of these, some are the work of more than one mind and perhaps of more than one generation.

Lyric poetry, as the name implies (λύρα, lyre; μέλη, song-poetry) is poetry originally intended to be accompanied by the lyre or by some other instrument of music. The term has come to signify any outburst in song which is composed under a strong impulse of emotion or inspiration. The last stanza of Shelley's lyric *To a Skylark* illustrates the complete fusion of personality and subject which characterizes such poetry.

> Higher still and higher
>   From the earth thou springest:
> Like a cloud of fire,
>   The blue deep thou wingest,
> And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.
> *   *   *   *   *   *   *
> Teach me half the gladness
>   That thy brain must know;
> Such harmonious madness
>   From my lips would flow
> The world should listen then as I am listening now.

Elegiac poetry (ἔλεγος, a mourning song) is composed under deep feeling, but in a different mood. It is reflective rather than impulsive, and as such it is marked