


Sentimentalism and Thomas Gray



Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard




Sentimentalism

- In the first half of the 18th century, Pope was the leader of English poetry and the heroic couplet the fashion of poetry. By the middle of the century, however, sentimentalism gradually made its appearance. Sentimentalism came into being as the result of a bitter discontent among the enlightened people with social reality.
 - The representatives of sentimentalism continued to **struggle against feudalism, but they sensed at the same time the contradictions in the process of capitalist development.** Dissatisfied with reason, which classicists appealed to, sentimentalists appealed to **sentiment**, "to the human heart." Sentimentalism turned to the countryside for its material, and so is in striking contrast to classicism, which had confined itself to the clubs and drawing-rooms, and to the social and political life of London.
- 




Sentimentalist Fiction

- Sentimentalist fiction was engraved on psychoanalysis of human mind.
 - Sentimentalism also finds its voice in English fiction (Richardson; Goldsmith; Sterne).
 - The representative writers are: Samuel Richardson, the author of *Pamela*; Laurence Sterne, the author of *Tristram Shandy* and Oliver Goldsmith, the author of *The Vicar of Wakefield*.
- 



Sentimentalism in English Poetry

- The appearance and development of sentimentalist poetry marks the midway in the transition from classicism to its opposite, Romanticism, in English poetry.
 - **Thomas Gray** was the most widely read sentimentalist poet, whose *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* established his reputation as the spokesman of Graveyard School.
- 

Thomas Gray (1716-1771)



English poet, forerunner of the Romantic movement.

Biographical Introduction



- Thomas Gray :son of a London exchange broker, born in Cornhill, London on 26 December, 1716.
- He was first educated at Eton, where he befriended Horace Walpole, author of the famous Gothic novel *The Old Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Richard West whose early death in 1742 caused him years of deep grief.
- In 1734 he went to Cambridge University and left it in 1738 without taking a degree.
- From 1739 to 1741 he toured the European continent with Horace Walpole. After 1742 Gray returned to Cambridge, where he remained for the rest of his life except for short intervals.


- He was appointed professor of history and modern languages in 1768. He was by nature a quiet man who avoided social activities and publicity as much as possible—he declined the Poet Laureateship in 1757, and led the uneventful life of a scholar all his life.
- In 1771, he was buried at Stoke Poges in Bucks, a village with which his well-known "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is traditionally identified.
- *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, the poem once and for all established his fame as the leader of the sentimental poetry of the day, especially "the Graveyard School." His poems, as a whole, are mostly devoted to a sentimental lamentation or meditation on life, past and present.








Graveyard School

- It is a poet school, derived from English sentimentalism, which began in the middle of 18th century. It obtains its name from the poet Thomas Gray's work "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard". The poets of this school always uses death, tomb as their material. Their works are full of melancholy and sadness. It more reflects the negative side of sentimentalism.
- 



Major works

- His other poems include:
 - *Ode on the Spring* (1742)
 - *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* (1747)
 - *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat* (1748)
 - Hymn to Adversity (1742)
 - Two translations from old Norse挪威人:
 - *The Descent of Odin* (1761)
 - *The Fatal Sister's* (1761)
- 

Thomas Gray's features and themes

- Thomas Gray is the representative figure of sentimentalists. With a classical precision and polish, the poet shows a keen interest in the English countryside and a sincere feeling of the life of common people. Nature is his greatest concern. Each natural object, either directly or by contrast, reflects the mood of man.



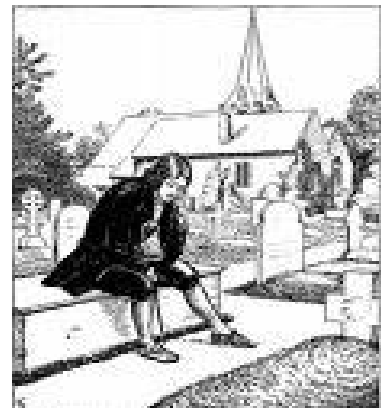
Elegy

- Elegy— A poem of mourning, usually over the death of an individual. It may also be a lament over the passing of life and beauty or a meditation on the nature of death. An elegy is a type of lyric poem, usually formed in language and structure, and solemn or even melancholy in tone.
- 挽歌(elegy又称挽诗\哀诗),源于希腊词“elegeia”和拉丁词“elegia”,是一种由一个扬抑抑格六音步诗行和一个扬抑抑格五音步诗行,即“挽歌体对句”组成的诗歌格律.在古典文学作品,以这种格律写成的诗歌涉及爱情、死亡和战争等各种主题,它也可用作墓志铭和纪念性诗文。到了16世纪早期,挽歌的意义发生了变化,它被用来专门哀悼死者。16世纪末,挽歌又被广泛地用于不同的主题,如多恩20首《挽歌》的内容为爱情诗。17世纪,弥尔顿的《利西达斯》采用了田园诗的形式,使挽歌不再局限于悼念死者,而是演变成对死亡和整个世界的哀怨。18世纪后期又出现了一种以哀歌为名的诗,抒发作者对社会、生与死、善与恶、科学与宗教等诸多的矛盾的困惑。挽歌一般没有特殊的形式要求,它适用于变化无常的诗歌感伤情调,既表达个人的悲伤,又表达对宇宙万物的普遍关注。

Analysis of *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*



- It is regarded as Gray's best and most representative work. The poem is the outcome of about eight years' careful composition and polish. It is more or less connected with the melancholy event of the death of Richard West, Gray's intimate friend. In this poem, Gray reflects in death, the sorrows of life, and the mysteries of human life with a touch of his personal melancholy.






- Form

- iambic pentameter quatrains rhymed abab

In form, it has the ordered, balanced phrasing and rational sentiments of Neoclassical poetry;
in tone and mood, it tends toward the emotionalism and individualism of the Romantic poets.


- Detailed study of the poem

(diction, sound effects, imagery, figures of speech)








Group Work



- Try to divide the poem into several parts and paraphrase each stanza in your own words.
 - Identify the figures of speech in each stanza.
 - Analyze the images in each stanza
 - What contributes to the gloomy and melancholy tone
- 







Introduction

- "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard", a poem of 128 lines in 32 iambic pentametric quatrains.
 - The poem has always enjoyed wide acclaim as the best work to come out of the 18th century and has been even viewed by some as the best English poems. It started the tradition of graveyard poetry in English and American literature. The general mode is melancholy and meditative. The poem can be roughly subdivided into seven broad sections.
- 

- 
- **Section one** (Stanza 1-3) sets the scene for the poet's visit to the churchyard. It is enveloped in gloom and grief, which is archetypal of graveyard poet's fascination with night, graves, and death. The tone is echoed by the last part of the poem. (Line 93-116)
 - **Section two** (Stanza 4-7) tells about the people entombed there and recalls their life experiences. When the "rude forefathers of the hamlet" lived, they got up early at the twittering of swallows, or a rooster's wake-up call or a hunter's horn, enjoyed family bliss with wife and kids in the evening, or were happily busy with farm work in the fields, but now that they lie in their "narrow cells," their "useful toil" and "homely joys" happen no more. The tone is one of melancholy and regret for the dead.
- 

- 
- **Section three** (Stanza 8-11) warns the rich and powerful not to despise the poor since all are equal in face of death and the grave levels off all distinction. All nobility, power, and wealth "await alike" the inevitable end and "The paths of glory lead but to the grave." Nothing could ever bring anything back to life.
 - **Section four** (Stanza 12-18) expresses, on the one hand, the poet's regret that their life had not been congenial适合的 to the growth and full play of the poor farmers' native gifts and talents and, on the other, his feeling of "a blessing in disguise" for them in the sense that, because they did not take up positions of power and get the opportunity to do evil, they did not commit any crimes to humankind nor have to pay the obsequious social climber against one's integrity.
 - **Section five** (Stanza 19-23) asserts the notion that, even though they lived a less eventful life, there is no reason to forget these farmers.
- 

- 
- **Section six** (Stanza 24-29) portrays the scenario(电影、戏剧等的)剧情说明; 脚本that the poet envisions would happen after his own death. A villager would say of him: he got up early to go uphill to the lawn and lay there meditating under the tree until noon. He would wander in the wood, smiling at one moment, muttering to himself at the next, sad and pale, like one "in hopeless love." Then for a couple of days he did not show up, and on the third day he was buried in the churchyard. This is where the graveyard school of poetry exhibits its salient 显著的, 重要的, 主要的thematic feature: the indulgence in meditation on and obsession with death and solitude.
- 

- 
- **Section seven** (Stanza 30-32), "The Epigraph", that picks up where the last section leaves off, is engraved on the poet's own tombstone. There he calls himself a youth (Gray was 28 when he first began writing the poem), learned and melancholy, with a generous, loving soul, and equally loved by Heaven. As he shows sympathy for the poor, he gains the friendship of man and God. He asks the passers-by not to get to know any more about his merits and weaknesses as he waits in his grave for God's judgment. The poem touches the readers to the quick with its notable sadness.
- 

Stanza 1



- The *curfew* tolls the knell of parting day,
- The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
- The *plowman* homeward plods his *weary way,*
- And leaves the world to darkness and to me.



晚钟响起来一阵阵给白昼报丧，
牛群在草原上迂回，吼声起落，
耕地人累了，回家走，脚步踉跄，
把整个世界留给了黄昏与我。




CCTVcom

Notes on Stanza 1

- Curfew: bell to announce the coming of night / ringing bell in the evening that reminded people in English towns of Gray's time to put out fires and go to bed.
- Knell: mournful sound.
- Parting day: day's end; dying day; twilight; dusk.
- Tolls the knell of parting day: announces the end of a day.
- Lowling herd: mooing herd of oxen
- O'er: contraction for over.
- Lea: meadow, pasture
- The plowman plods his way wearily
- Death images:
 - Knell/ lowling herd/ weary plowman/ darkness
- What is the tone of the first stanza? How does the poet make it?
- Long vowels and diphthongs (function); personification



Poem summary for Stanza 1

- In the first stanza, the speaker observes the signs of a country day drawing to a close: a curfew bell ringing, a herd of cattle moving across the pasture, and a farm laborer returning home. The speaker is then left alone to contemplate the isolated rural scene. The first line of the poem sets a distinctly somber tone: the curfew bell does not simply ring; it “knells” — a term usually applied to bells rung at a death or funeral. From the start, then, Gray reminds us of human mortality.
- 

Stanza 2


- Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
- And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
- Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
- And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:



苍茫的景色逐渐从眼前消退，
一片肃穆的寂静盖遍了尘寰，
只听见嗡嗡的甲虫转圈子纷飞，
昏沉的铃声催眠着远处的羊栏。



Notes on Stanza 2

- *Line 5:* The landscape becomes less and less visible.
 - *Save:* except.
 - *Wheels:* verb meaning *flies in circles*.
 - *Droning:* humming; buzzing; monotonous/boring sound.
 - *Wheels droning flight*: flies in circles while making a droning sound
 - *Drowsy tinklings:* sounds of the bell hung under the neck of the cattle which have a drowsy effect on the listeners.
 - *lull the distant folds:* cause sheep to sleep or rest in a sheltered corner of a field where they are surrounded by a fence or wall for protection.
 - *Tone and sound effect*
 - (evening, stillness contrast with droning flight, drowsy tinklings)
- 

Poem summary for Stanza 2

- The second stanza sustains the somber tone of the first: the speaker is not mournful, but pensive (沉思的), as he describes the peaceful landscape that surrounds him. Even the air is characterized as having a "solemn stillness."



Stanza 3




- Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
- The moping owl does to the moon complain
- Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
- Molest her ancient solitary reign.



只听见常春藤枝裹的塔顶底下
一只阴郁的鸱枭向月亮诉苦，
怪人家无端走近它秘密的住家，
搅扰它这个悠久而僻静的领土。



Notes

- Save: except
 - yonder: distant, remote
 - Ivy-mantled tower: the clock tower of the church whose outside walls are overgrown with ivy.
 - The moping owl: the owl that gives harsh, unpleasant sounds, thus making people sad.
 - Molest: disturb and interrupt
 - The quiet countryside was broken by others.
 - The speaker shifts his view from the natural descriptions to the graveyard.
- 

Poem summary for Stanza 3

- The sound of an owl hooting intrudes upon the evening quiet. We are told that the owl "complains"; in this context, the word does not mean "to whine" or "grumble," but "to express sorrow." The owl's call, then, is suggestive of grief.
- Note that at no point in these three opening stanzas does Gray directly refer to death or a funeral; rather, he indirectly creates a funereal atmosphere by describing just a few mournful sounds.





Section one

- (Stanza1-3) sets the scene for the poet's visit to the churchyard. It is enveloped in gloom and grief, which is archetypal of graveyard poet's fascination with night, graves, and death. The tone is echoed by the last part of the poem. (Line 93-116)



Stanza 4

- Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
- Where heaves the turf in many a moldering heap,
- Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
- The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.



峥嵘的榆树底下，扁柏的荫里，
草皮鼓起了许多零落的荒堆，
各自在洞窟里永远放下了身体，
小村里粗鄙的父老在那里安睡。

Notes

- rugged: large and rough
- heave: rise and fall
- turf: disordered grass
- moldering: decaying
- cell: grave
- rude forefathers: illiterate ancestors
- hamlet: a village
- sleep: death
- This stanza begins to introduce the graves of the poor people. (turf heaves, narrow cell, rude forefathers)



Poem summary for Stanza 4

- It is in the fourth stanza that the speaker directly draws our attention to the graves in the country churchyard. We are presented with two potentially conflicting images of death.



Stanza 5



- The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
- The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
- The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
- No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.




香气四溢的晨风轻松的呼召，
燕子从茅草棚子里吐出的呢喃，
公鸡的尖喇叭，使山鸣谷应的猎号
再不能唤醒他们在地下的长眠。





Notes

- *Breezy call of incense-breathing Morn*: wind carrying the pleasant smells of morning, including dewy grass and flowers. Notice that *Morn* is a personification. (It calls and breathes.)
 - *Shrill clarion*: piercing cock-a-doodle-doo.
 - *Echoing horn*: hunter's horn.
 - Beautiful scenery in the countryside in the past.
 - Tactile触觉的 image, the visual image and auditory image (the breezy call of, swallow twittering, cock's shrill clarion, etc)
 - *No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed*. (back to the theme, bed-grave, death-sleep)
- 

Poem summary for Stanza 5

- If the “forefathers” are sleeping, however, the speaker reminds us that they will never again rise from their “beds” to hear the pleasurable sounds of country life that the living do. The term “lowly beds” describes not only the unpretentious 谦逊的 graves in which the forefathers are buried, but the humble conditions that they endured when they were alive.



Stanza 6



- For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
- Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
- No children run to lisp their sire's return,
- Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.



他们，熊熊的炉火不再会燃烧，
忙碌的管家妇不再会赶她的夜活；
孩子们不再会“牙牙”的报父亲来到，
再为一个亲吻爬到他膝上去争夺。

Stanza 7

- Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
- Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
- How jocund did they drive their team afield!
- How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!



往常是：他们一开镰就所向披靡，
顽梗的泥板让他们犁出了垄沟；
他们多么欢欣的赶牲口下地！

他们一猛砍，树木就一棵棵低头！

Notes on Stanza 6 & 7




- ply her evening care: do her evening work.
- lisp: greet
- sire: father or male ancestor (old use)
- Oft: often
- Sickle: harvesting tool with a handle. Field hands swing it from right to left to cut down plant growth.
- furrow: channel or groove沟 made by a plow for planting seeds.
- glebe: earth
- Has broke: has broken
- Jocund: merry
- afield: to the field
- Sturdy: strong and firm






Stanza 6 and 7 (recall the past days)

- Family happiness (家庭之乐)/ Their hard-working scenes in their living life
 - The blazing hearth (炉火) shall not burn any longer, the housewife shall not be busy with the evening housework; children will not greet father's return, and climb their knees to share the kiss.
 - The farming scenes in their lifetime
 - This stanza obviously strengthened the tone of melancholy.
- 




Poem summary for Stanza 6 & 7

- The meaning of all lines appears to be clear. The speaker then moves on to consider some of the other pleasures the dead will no longer enjoy: the happiness of home, wife, and children.
 - The dead will also no longer be able to enjoy the pleasures of work, of plowing the fields each day. This stanza points to the way in which the "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" contains elements of both Augustan and Romantic poetry. Poetry that describes agriculture — as this one does — is called georgic.
 - Georgic verse(田园诗) was extremely popular in the eighteenth century. Note, however, that Gray closely identifies the farmers with the land that they work. This association of man and nature is suggestive of a romantic attitude. The georgic elements of the stanza almost demand that we characterize it as typical of the eighteenth century, but its tone looks forward to the Romantic period.
- 



Section two

- (Stanza 4-7) tells about the people entombed there and recalls their life experiences. When the "rude forefathers of the hamlet "lived, they got up early at the twittering of swallows, or a rooster's wake-up call or a hunter's horn, enjoyed family bliss with wife and kids in the evening, or were happily busy with farm work in the fields, but now that they lie in their "narrow cells," their "useful toil " and "homely joys" happen no more. The tone is one of melancholy and regret for the dead.
- 

Stanza 8


- Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
- Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
- Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
- The short and simple annals of the Poor.



雄心别嘲讽他们实用的操劳，
家常的欢乐、默默无闻的命运；
豪华也不用带着轻蔑的冷笑
来听讲穷人的又短又简的生平。




Notes

- Ambition: Aptronym /Personification referring to the desire to succeed or to ambitious people seeking lofty goals.
 - Destiny obscure: the humble fate of the common people; their unheralded deeds.
 - Grandeur: Aptronym/ personification referring to people with wealth, social standing, and power.
 - Annals: historical records; story.
 - A comparison between the death of great people and common people (Ambition and Grandeur)
 - Everybody is doomed to death. Before death, all the people are equal. There is no distinction of class.
- 



Poem summary for Stanza 8

- **Questions:** Why does the poet claim like “Let not Ambition mock their useful toil”?
 - The next four stanzas caution those who are wealthy and powerful not to look down on the poor. These lines warn the reader not to slight the “obscure” “destiny” of the poor — the fact that they will never be famous or have long histories, or “annals,” written about them.
- 

Stanza 9

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour.


The paths of glory lead but to the grave.



- 门第的炫耀，有权有势的煊赫，
- 凡是美和财富所能赋予的好处，
- 前头都等待着不可避免的时刻：
- 光荣的道路无非是引导到坟墓。




Notes

- heraldry: noble birth.
 - the pomp of power: the display of one's great political power.
 - gave: attainable
 - alike: equally
 - The inevitable hour: the hour of the time to die
 - General meaning of stanza:
 - Every person-no matter how important, powerful, or wealthy-ends up the same, dead.
- 



Poem summary for Stanza 9

- The function of this stanza:
 - It serves as the reason why the poet gives a warning to Ambition and Grandeur.
 - The speaker reminds the reader that regardless of social position, beauty, or wealth, all must eventually die.
- 

Stanza 10


- Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
- If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
- Where through the long-drawn and fretted vault
- The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.



骄傲人，你也不要怪这些人不行，
“怀念”没有给这些人建立纪念堂，
没有让悠长的廊道、雕花的拱顶
洋溢着洪亮的赞美歌，进行颂扬。



Notes

- You 用作呼语,如与形容词/名词合用时,后常用ye.
 - Proud refers to Ambition, Grandeur, Power, Wealthy.
 - Impute the fault to sb: put the blame on sb.
 - Memory: Aptronym/ a personification referring to memorials, commemorations, and tributes-including statues, headstones, and epitaphs-used to preserve the memory of important or privileged people.
 - fretted :troublesome
 - vault : grave
 - Pealing anthem may refer to lofty organ music.
- 

Poem summary for Stanza 10

- The speaker also challenges the reader not to look down on the poor for having modest, simple graves. He suggests, moreover, that the elaborate memorials that adorn the graves of the "Proud" are somehow excessive.




Stanza 11

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?




栩栩的半身像，铭刻了事略的瓮碑，
难道能恢复断气，促使还魂？
“荣誉”的声音能激发沉默的死灰？
“献媚”能叫死神听软了耳根？

- 
- Storied urn: Vase adorned with pictures telling a story. Urns have sometimes been used to hold the ashes of a cremated body. Refers to Note 15 on page 257.
 - Animated: lifelike
 - *Bust*: sculpture of the head, shoulders, and chest of a human.
 - Mansion: large house
 - Fleeting breath: the short life
 - *Storied urn . . . breath?* Can the soul (fleeting breath) be called back to the body (*mansion*) by the urn or bust back? Notice that urn and bust are personifications that call.
 - *Can Honour's . . . Death?* Can honor (*Honor's voice*) attributed to the dead person cause that person (*silent dust*) to come back to life? Can flattering words (*Flattery*) about the dead person make death more "bearable"?
 - General meaning of stanza: It continues the idea begun in Lines 37-40. In other words, can any memorials—such as the trophies mentioned in Line 38, the urn and bust mentioned in Line 41, and personifications (honor and flattery) mentioned in Lines 43 and 44—bring a person back to life or make death less final or fearsome?
-




Poem summary for Stanza 11

- The speaker observes that nothing can bring the dead back to life, and that all the advantages that the wealthy had in life are useless in the face of death.
 - Neither elaborate funeral monuments nor impressive honors can restore life. Nor can flattery in some way be used to change the mind of death.
 - Note here Gray's use of Apitonym / personification in characterizing both "flattery" and "death" — as though death has a will or mind of its own.
- 



Section three

- (Stanza 8-11) warns the rich and powerful not to despise the poor since all are equal in face of death and the grave levels off all distinction. All nobility, power, and wealth “await alike” the inevitable end and “The paths of glory lead but to the grave.” Nothing could ever bring anything back to life.
- 

Stanza 12


Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.



也许这一块地方，尽管荒芜，
就埋着曾经充满过灵焰的一颗心；
一双手，本可以执掌到帝国的王笏
或者出神入化地拨响了七弦琴。



Notes

- Pregnant with celestial fire: Full of great ideas, abilities, or goals (*celestial fire*).
 - Rod of empire: scepter (权杖) held by a king or an emperor during ceremonies. One of the humble country folk in the cemetery might have become a king or an emperor if he had been given the opportunity.
 - Waked . . . lyre: Played beautiful music on a lyre, a stringed instrument. In other words, one of the people in the cemetery could have become a great musician if given the opportunity, "waking up" the notes of the lyre.
 - The speaker then reconsiders the poor people buried in the churchyard. He wonders what great deeds they might have accomplished had they been given the opportunity: one of these poor farmers, the speaker reasons, might have been a great emperor; another might have "waked the living lyre," or been a great poet or musician.
- 

Stanza 13

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.



可是“知识”从不曾对他们展开
它世代积累而琳琅满目的书
卷；
“贫寒”压制了他们高贵的襟
怀，
冻结了他们从灵府涌出的流泉。

Notes

- *Knowledge . . . unroll*: Knowledge did not reveal itself to them (*their eyes*) in books (ample page) rich with treasures of information (spoils of time).
- *Chill . . . soul*: Poverty (*penury*) repressed their ideal/enthusiasm (*rage*) and froze the flow (*current*) of ideas/initiative/creativity (*soul*).
- Summary for Stanza 13:
- The poor were never able to fulfill their political and artistic potential, however, because they were uneducated — they never received the “Knowledge” that would enable them to rule and to create. Instead, “Penury,” or poverty, “froze the genial current of their soul.” That is, poverty paralyzed their ability to draw upon their innermost passions — the very passions that could have inspired them to become great poets or politicians.

Stanza 14


Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.



世界上多少晶莹皎洁的珠宝
埋在幽暗而深不可测的海底；
世界上多少花吐艳而无人知晓，
把芳香白白地散发给荒凉的空气。



Notes

- Gem: pearl; here refers to the poor people.
 - Unfathomed: unfathomable, that can't be surveyed.
 - Summary for stanza 14:
 - In a series of analogies, Gray observes that the talents of the poor are like a "gem" hidden in the ocean or a "flower" blooming in the desert. Just as an unseen flower in the desert is a "waste," Gray suggests, the uneducated talents of the poor are also a "waste," because they remain unused and undeveloped.
- 

Stanza 15

Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.



也许有乡村汉普顿在这里埋身，
反抗过当地的小霸王，胆大，坚决；
也许有缄口的米尔顿，从没有名声；
有一位克伦威尔，并不曾害国家流血。

Poem summary for Stanza 15

- dauntless breast: fierce spirit
- Withstood: opposed without yielding
- The speaker then compares these poor, uneducated people to three of the most famous and powerful people of the previous century: John Hampden, a parliamentary leader who defended the people against the abuses of Charles I; John Milton, the great poet who wrote *Paradise Lost* and who also opposed Charles I; and Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England from 1653 to 1658. The speaker suggests that buried in this churchyard might be someone who — like Hampden, Milton, or Cromwell — had the innate ability to oppose tyranny, but never had the opportunity to exercise that ability.

Stanza 16

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

gb66.com



要博得满场的元老雷动的鼓掌，
无视威胁，全不顾存亡生死，
把富庶，丰饶遍播到四处八方，
打从全国的笑眼里读自己的历史——

Poem summary for Stanza 16

- senates to command: senators win/ obtain
- despise: look down upon
- scatter : spread plenty: prosperity/ charity
- Land: the country land read: declare
- In a nation's eye: for the people in the country to see
- This person, the speaker reasons, with the proper education and resources, might have "commanded" the government as well as any great political leader. Note, however, that Gray gives us two ways in which to consider this power. On the one hand, a great ruler can receive applause and can ignore "threats of pain and ruin." A great leader can "scatter plenty," can offer prosperity, to a grateful nation. But on the other hand, if one governs, one is, in fact, exposed to dangerous threats. And simply governing to receive "applause" suggests a shallow and self-serving motive. Moreover, "scattering plenty" implies that the wealth of a nation can be squandered by its rulers. Gray may be suggesting that having power is not as desirable as it seems.

Stanza 17

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their glowing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,



他们的命运可不许：既不许罪过
有所放纵，也不许发挥德行；
不许从杀戮中间涉登宝座
从此对人类关上仁慈的大门；

Poem summary for Stanza 17

- lot: fate
- circumscribed: limited
- alone: only
- but: but also wade through: walk through
- It abruptly reminds us that the impoverished conditions of the poor "forbade" them from becoming great rulers. Gray underscores the abrupt shock of this idea by abruptly interrupting the flow of the line with a caesura 停顿. Building on the idea of the previous stanza, the speaker notes that if poverty prevented the country laborers from acquiring the "virtues" of great and powerful people, it also prevented them from committing the "crimes" often associated with those people — and especially with those people who hold political power. In particular, it prevented them from engaging in the bloody activity associated with the British Civil War.

Stanza 18


The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.



不许掩饰天良在内心的发作，
隐瞒天真的羞愧，恬不红脸；
不许用诗神的金焰点燃了香火
锦上添花去塞满“骄”“奢”的神龛。




Poem summary for Stanza 18

- pangs: pains
 - quench: hide
 - Because these farm laborers were not in positions of power, the speaker reasons, they never had to ignore their own consciences. Nor did they sacrifice their artistic talents (the gift of the "Muse") to "Luxury" or "Pride."
- 



Section four

- (Stanza 12-18) expresses, on the one hand, the poet's regret that their life had not been congenial适合的 to the growth and full play of the poor farmers' native gifts and talents and, on the other, his feeling of "a blessing in disguise" for them in the sense that, because they did not take up positions of power and get the opportunity to do evil, they did not commit any crimes to humankind nor have to pay the obsequious social climber against one's integrity.
- 

Stanza 19

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.



在山坳口望橫
河何家田方
向(in
mountains)

By 且行且珍惜

[Misplaced?](#)

[Inappropriate](#)

[Comment it](#)


[Panoramio](#)

[Upload your photos»](#)

远离了纷纭人世的勾心斗角，
他们有清醒愿望，从不学糊涂，
顺着生活的清凉僻静的山坳，
他们坚持了不声不响的正路。



Poem summary for Stanza 19

- ignoble strife: shameful conflict/crimes
 - sober: conscious, not drunken
 - stray: go away from nobleness
 - sequestered: isolated
 - noiseless: quiet/still
 - tenor: general routine
 - The speaker continues his praise of the simple life of common people. They are "far from the madding crowd" of city and political life. "Madding" here can mean either "maddening" (that is, the source of madness or insanity) or it can mean "mad" (that is, the crowd is itself hatefully insane). In either case, the common country people were removed from this insane world; as a result, they never "strayed" into the immoral acts of the powerful. Instead, they kept steadily to their simple but meaningful lives.
- 

Stanza 20


Yet even these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.



可是叫这些尸骨免受到糟踏，
还是有脆弱的碑牌树立在近边，
点缀了拙劣的韵语、凌乱的刻
划，
请求过往人就便献一声婉叹。




Notes

- bones: the dead poor people
 - erected: set up, established
 - nigh: nearby
 - uncouth: rude
 - Implore: plead/beg for
 - passing tribute for a sigh: the passers will give a sign
- 



Poem summary for Stanza 20

- The speaker then reminds us that these common people are, in fact, long dead. He notes that even if they were not powerful or great, and even if they do not have an elaborate memorial of the sort mentioned in line 38, they still deserve **homage** 崇敬 or tribute. At the very least, he suggests, an onlooker should “sigh” on seeing their graves.
 - Note here the multiple meanings we can attach to the word “passing.” It can refer to the onlooker, who is simply walking or “passing by” these graves. It can mean “in passing” — that someone seeing these graves should take just a moment out of their busy lives to remember the dead. And “passing” itself is a euphemism for death. In a way, then, Gray is suggesting that there is no difference between the person “passing” by the grave and the person who has “passed” away — another reminder that all will eventually die.
- 

Stanza 21

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.



无闻的野诗神注上了姓名、年份，
另外再加上地址和一篇悼词；
她在周围撒播了一些经文，
教训乡土道德家怎样去死。

Poem summary for Stanza 21

- unlettered : the uneducated
- Muse: the person who wrote the grave.
- The unlettered Muse: the village poet without much knowledge
- She: Muse Strew: spread
- rustic moralist: the rural villagers
- to die: how to die
- Instead of "fame and elegy," the people buried here have modest tombstones, which display only their names and the dates of their birth and death. These common people were not famous, and no one has written elaborate elegies or funeral verses for them. Still, the very modesty of their tomb-stones testifies to the nobility and "holy" nature of their simple lives. As such, they provide an example not so much of how life should be lived, but how its end, death, should be approached.

Stanza 22


For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?



要知道谁甘愿舍身啞口的“遗忘”，
坦然撇下了忧喜交织的此生，
谁离开风和日暖的明媚现场
而能不依依地回头来顾盼一阵？



Poem summary for Stanza 22

- Prey: victim
 - Being: human beings
 - Nor cast: without casting
 - The speaker reasons that most people, faced with the prospect of dying and ultimately being forgotten, cling to life. Note Gray's use of paradox in line 86: "this pleasing anxious being." On the one hand, "being" or living can be "anxious," filled with worries. On the other hand, just being alive — when faced with death — is itself "pleasing" or pleasant. The speaker is suggesting that even the troubles and worries of life are enjoyable in comparison to death.
- 

Stanza 23


On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Even in our Ashes live their wonted fires.



辞世的灵魂还依傍钟情的怀抱，
临闭的眼睛需要尽哀的珠泪，
即使坟冢里也有“自然”的呼号
他们的旧火还点燃我们的新灰。



Poem summary for Stanza 23

- Breast: persons
 - The parting soul: the dead
 - Pious drops: devoted, dutiful tears
 - Their wonted fires: their spirit/ nature
 - The dead rely on the living to remember them and to mourn for them. The speaker suggests that this need is so fundamental that even from the grave the buried dead seem to ask for remembrance. In fact, as line 92 suggests, the dead actually live on in our memories.
- 



Section five

- (Stanza 19-23) asserts the notion that, even though they lived a less eventful life, there is no reason to forget these farmers.



Stanza 24

For thee, who, mindful of the unhonored dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,



至于你，我关心这些默默的陈死人，
用这些诗句讲他们质朴的故事，
假如在幽思的引导下，偶然有缘分，
一位同道来问起你的身世——

Poem summary for Stanza 24

- unhonored : not famous
- artless: simple
- If chance: If by chance
- kindred spirit: person like you
- In this stanza, the speaker addresses himself. He reasons that since he himself has been mindful of the dead, and has remembered and praised them in this poem, perhaps when he is dead someone will remember him. This person, he reasons, will necessarily be a "kindred spirit," someone who is also a lonely wanderer in the country, meditating on the nature of death. The speaker then goes on to imagine his own death: he envisions this "kindred spirit" seeing his (the speaker's) grave and wondering about his life and death.

Stanza 25



Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
“Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dew away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.”



也许会有白头的乡下人对他说，
“我们常常看见他，天还刚亮，
就用匆忙的脚步把露水碰落，
上那边高处的草地去会晤朝阳；”

Poem summary for Stanza 25

- Hoary-headed: white-headed
- Swain: rural villagers
- Oft: often
- At the peep of : at the sight of
- With hasty steps: the poet walks hastily
- Upland: grassland
- In the next five stanzas, the speaker imagines how an old farm laborer might remember him after his death. If, the speaker speculates, the "kindred Spirit" sees the speaker's grave and wonders about it, perhaps an old man might offer to describe the speaker. The old man would say that the speaker was often seen wandering about the countryside at dawn. Presumably, he was frequently out all night — as, no doubt, he has been in this very poem.

Stanza 26




"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.



“那边有一棵婆娑的山毛榉老树，
树底下隆起的老根盘错在一起，
他常常在那里懒躺过一个中午，
悉心看旁边一道涓涓的小溪。”



Poem summary for Stanza 26

- yonder: distant
 - he stretch: the poet stretch his body and lie down
 - pore upon: stare at
 - brook: stream
 - At noon, the old man continues, the speaker would frequently stretch out under an old tree at noon, and stare at a nearby brook.
- 

Stanza 27

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.



“他转游到林边，有时候笑里带嘲，
念念有词，发他的奇谈怪议，
有时候垂头丧气，像无依无靠，
像忧心忡忡或者像情场失意。”

Poem summary for Stanza 27

- yon: yonder
- Muttering: uttering
- rove: wander
- drooping: lowering down his head
- Woeful wan: sad and pale
- forlorn: lonely
- crazed: crazy
- crossed: frustrated
- The old man would have observed that the speaker's moods were changeable: sometimes the speaker would wander about in the nearby woods, "smiling scornfully" and talking to himself; other times, he would appear depressed; then again, sometimes he would look as though he were in anguish. Perhaps, the old man speculates, the speaker had been "crossed in hopeless love."

Stanza 28


"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;



“有一天早上，在他惯去的山头，
灌木丛，他那棵爱树下，我不见他出
现；
第二天早上，尽管我走下溪流，
上草地，穿过树林，他还是不见。



Poem summary for Stanza 28

- missed: didn't see
 - customed: accustomed
 - Hill: the hill which he often went to
 - Heath: wild area
 - rill: the small stream
 - The speaker continues to imagine this old man remembering him after his death. The old man would have noticed one morning that the speaker was absent: he was not in any of his favorite spots. Likewise, the old man would remember, the speaker did not appear the following day.
- 

Stanza 29


"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the churchway path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn:



“第三天我们见到了送葬的行列，
唱着挽歌，抬着他向坟场走去——
请上前看那丛老荆棘底下的碑碣，
（你是识字的）请念念这些诗句”：



Poem summary for Stanza 29

- In sad array: the group of people in sad array
 - Saw his borne: in his coffin
 - For thou canst read: for thou are dead
 - Thorn: hawthorn tree
 - The third day, however, the old man and his friends would have seen the speaker's body being carried to the churchyard for burial. (The speaker, then, is imagining himself buried in the very graveyard he once used to wander by.) The old man invites this curious passerby, or "kindred Spirit," to read the speaker's epitaph. Note the reminder that the old man is uneducated: he cannot read, although the passerby can do so.
- 

Section six

- (Stanza 24-29) portrays the scenario(电影、戏剧等的)剧情说明; 脚本that the poet envisions would happen after his own death. A villager would say of him: he got up early to go uphill to the lawn and lay there meditating under the tree until noon. He would wander in the wood, smiling at one moment, muttering to himself at the next, sad and pale, like one "in hopeless love." Then for a couple of days he did not show up, and on the third day he was buried in the churchyard. This is where the graveyard school of poetry exhibits its salient 显著的, 重要的, 主要的thematic feature: the indulgence in meditation on and obsession with death and solitude.

Stanza 30

THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.*



墓 铭
这里边，高枕地膝，是一位青年，
生平从不曾受知于“富贵”和“名
声”；
“知识”可没轻视他出身的微贱，
“清愁”把他标出来认作宠幸。

Poem summary for Stanza 30

- A youth: the poet (he was 28 when he wrote the poem)
- Fortune and Fame: “富贵” 和 “名声”
- Fair Science: Knowledge
- Frowned: disapproved of/ looked down upon
- Melancholy: “清愁” / 忧郁女神
- The last three stanzas are, in fact, the speaker's epitaph; the way in which the speaker imagines his epitaph will read. Through the epitaph, the speaker asks the passerby (and the reader) not to remember him as wealthy, famous, or brilliantly educated, but as one who was “melancholic” or deeply thoughtful and sad.

Stanza 31

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.*



他生性真挚，最乐于慷慨施惠，
上苍也给了他同样慷慨的报酬：
他给了“坎坷”全部的所有，一滴
泪；
从上苍全得了所求，一位朋友。

Poem summary for Stanza 31

- Bounty: favor
- Recompense: reward
- Largely: generously
- Misery: all the people who suffer misery
- A tea: sympathy, universal love/ fraternity/humanity
- The speaker asks that we remember him for being generous and sincere. His generosity was, in fact, his willingness to mourn for the dead. Because he was so generous, the speaker reasons, heaven gave him a "friend" — someone who would, in turn, mourn for him after his death. This friend is unnamed, but we can deduce that it is any "kindred Spirit" — including the reader — who reads the speaker's epitaph and remembers him.

Stanza 32

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.*






别再想法子表彰他的功绩，
也别再把他的弱点翻出了暗窖
(他们同样在颤抖的希望中休
息)。
那就是他的天父和上帝的怀抱。

(卞之琳译)




Poem summary for Stanza 32

- No farther: No more
 - They: merits and frailties
 - Repose: lie still and comfortably
 - The speaker concludes by cautioning the reader not to praise him any further. He also asks that his "frailties," his flaws or personal weaknesses, not be considered; rather, they should be left to the care of God, with whom the speaker now resides. The poem, then, is an elegy not only for the common man, but for the speaker himself. Indeed, by the end of the poem it is evident that the speaker himself wishes to be identified not with the great and famous, but with the common people whom he has praised and with whom he will, presumably, be buried.
- 

- 
- **Section seven** (Stanza 30-32), "The Epigraph", that picks up where the last section leaves off, is engraved on the poet's own tombstone. There he calls himself a youth (Gray was 28 when he first began writing the poem), learned and melancholy, with a generous, loving soul, and equally loved by Heaven. As he shows sympathy for the poor, he gains the friendship of man and God. He asks the passers-by not to get to know any more about his merits and weaknesses as he waits in his grave for God's judgment. The poem touches the readers to the quick with its notable sadness.
- 




Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

1. The best and most representative work of Gray.
 2. It is considered the best of the eighteenth century English poetry.
 3. Gray presents in this poem his contemplation 沉思 on death, the sorrows of life, and the mysteries of human life with a touch of his personal melancholy.
 4. In this poem, the poet compares the common folk with the great ones, revealing his sympathy for the poor and the unknown, but mocking the great ones who despise the poor and bring havoc 大破坏, 浩劫 on them.
 5. The poem is a poem of art, for the poem abounds in images .
- 




The Characteristics of Thomas Gray's Poetry

- As a famous poet of "the Graveyard School", His poems carry his profound contemplation about death, the sorrows of life and the mysteries of human life with a touch of his personal melancholy.
 - As a conscientious 尽责的 artist of the first rate, Gray wrote slowly and carefully, painstakingly seeking perfection of form and phrase. His poems are characterized by **an exquisite sense of form**.
 - His style is sophisticated 精致、老练的 and allusive .
 - His poems are often marked with the unique images, rhythm, subtle moderation of style and the trait of a highly artificial diction and a distorted word order.
 - His poetry has a unique charm of its own.
- 

- 托马斯·格雷是英国18世纪后半叶的一位学者型诗人，他性情孤僻，一生隐居在剑桥大学，担任过该校近代史教授，曾谢绝桂冠诗人的称号。他一生写诗不多，只十几首，其中《墓园挽歌》名噪一时，影响深远，结构完整、在情绪上容易引起读者共鸣，不愧为新古典主义的典范之作。格雷在诗中表现了古典主义崇尚理性的精神，全诗思想明晰，结构匀称，条理清楚，步伐整齐。该诗多采用长音词来烘托弥漫其中的哀婉情绪，音韵形式和表现内容达到了完美的结合。《墓园挽歌》与一般挽歌不同，它是对流逝年华的反思，而不是对死者的追思。诗中表现出诗人对黑夜、坟墓、死亡的兴趣，体现了他对农民的同情。当然，诗人一方面又惋惜农民贫困潦倒，才能无法发挥，另一方面又认为农民无权，正好可以因此免于罪恶，这使全诗蒙上了一层消极无奈的情绪。这种情绪在当时十分普遍，竟形成了一个诗歌流派——墓园派。



《墓园挽歌》

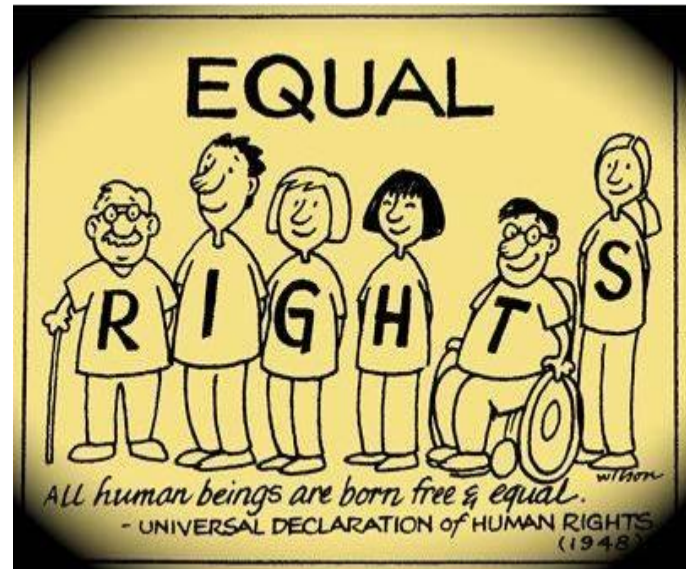
- 这首诗是格雷最优秀的代表作，创作历时八年，诗中内容与格雷的知己，理查·韦斯特的去世有关。诗中，格雷提示了生与死的愁苦与神秘，并略述了自己忧伤的心情。诗人将普通人与伟人作了比较，认为如果普通人获得良好机会也一定会成为伟人。由此，他抒发了对穷人与无名小卒的同情，并嘲讽了那些轻视穷人并给穷人带来苦难的“伟人”。
 - 诗中富于比喻，并给读者带来深深的伤感。尽管诗中人造的词汇与打乱的词序使阅读变得困难，但诗中的艺术精华——对语言自如的把握、比喻、节奏及笔调的不愠不火——使得诗歌独具魅力。这首诗被列为英国十八世纪最优秀的诗歌之一。
- 

思政启发

- 使学生认识到“人人生而平等”的思想，引导学生脚踏实地做好每件事情，成就生命中的“不平凡”。


“We hold these truths to
be self evident that all
men are created equal...”

Thomas Jefferson
Declaration of Independence






Further Reading

- Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*.
 - Walter Allen, *The English Novel*.
 - 常耀信. 《英国文学简史》, 南开大学出版社.
 - 陈嘉. 《英国文学史》 (Volume 2)
 - 李维屏. 《英国小说艺术史》
 - 刘意青. 《英国十八世纪文学史》
 - 罗选民主编. 《英美文学赏析教程(散文与诗歌)》, 清华大学出版社, 2002.
 - 张伯香主编. 《英美文学选读》, 外语教学与研究出版社, 1998.
- 



Preview for William Blake's *London*

- How do you understand "Chartered Street" and "Chartered Thames"?
 - What does the speaker see when he wanders? What is the atmosphere in London?
 - Pay attention to the repetition of the word, what role does it serve?
 - Notice the visual and auditory effects
 - What kind of figures of speech are used in Stanza 3?
 - Analyze "Chimney-sweeper's cry appalls every blackning Church".
 - Analyze "the hapless Soldier's sigh runs down Palace walls in blood".
 - What is the theme of the poem?
- 



Robert Burns' *A Red, Red Rose*

- Topics for Presentation:
 - 1. How does the narrator in the poem express his love?
 - 2. Why is this poem so touching to the readers?
- 