

Q "Blending of Romanticism and classicism in Gray's
Elegy written in country churchyard"

Gray's "Elegy written in country churchyard" shows a fine blending of romanticism and classicism. As regards the romantic elements, it has a humanitarian zeal for the poor rustics, love of nature, emotion and imagination, melancholy, lyricism, evolution etc. As regards classical elements, it has discipline, scholarship, laboured art, no mystical union with nature, no wild imagination, no turning loose of emotion. It may be called an intermingling art, a mixed and perhaps true classicism. It profits from the rise, the new sap but retains the benefit of a learned and refined culture. The rearing aridness of the classical poetry is here, by an inner progress, enriched and made more mellow. And, the insouciance and uncertainty of Romanticism are naturalized in advance by the authority of choice and taste, that still remain sovereign.

The poet is pained to note the poor rustics die unwept, unbrung, unhonoured: "The noblest of the hamlets asleep" He feels that in villages also are born geniuses. But that they fail to show their worth for want of opportunity.

"Perhaps in ~~some~~ this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Herald, that the rob of empire might have swayed
or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

x x x x x

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.

But why? Because
chill penury repressed their noble song
and froze the genial current of the soul

Such expressions anticipate Blake's love for the orphan
Wordsworth's love for humbler persons like Lucy, Michael
and the Cumberland Beggar. Gray feels the chill beauty
of the poor rustics but does not like Shelley blame
into revolutionary fire. This is also one of the features of
the blending of Romanticism and classicism. Classicism
believed in reform but not in revolution.

Then there are
some lines, phrases and words which show a regard for
romantic values, the simplicity and peacefulness of nature

"Far from the meddling 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"
But he does not go to the extent

of saying like Wordsworth:

"well pleased to recognize

In nature and language of the sense.

The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,

The guide, the guardians of my heart, and soul
of all my moral being."

Gray is not not
influenced by the German transcendentalists.

Then there is regard for
unsophisticated art of the villager

"with uncut uncut rhyme and shapeless sculpture
Impress the passing thought of a sith

x x x x x x Lead

"For thee, who mindful of the unhonoured lead
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;

In one of the finest ~~etc~~ stage
the high and the low juxtaposed with a sympathy for
the low?

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,

Their homely joys, and destiny obscure.

Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful ~~smile~~ ^{smile}
The short and simple annals of the poor,