

A 'FRAIL MEMORIAL' OF AN 'ARTLESS TALE' BY AN 'UNLETTER'D MUSE' FOR THE 'UNHONOUR'D DEAD': A READING OF GRAY'S "ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD"

Jayanta Banerjee (M.Phil.)

Ph.D Scholar,

Department of English

West Bengal State University, Barasat

West Bengal

&

Guest Lecturer

Sri Ramkrishna Sarada Vidya Mahapitha Hooghly

West Bengal, India

Abstract

In this paper, I want to read *Elegy Written in the Country Church-Yard* (1751) as a help guide for the students who are in the beginning phase of their course of English literature. As we see, this elegy of Gray, usually, is included in the Under Graduate syllabi of Universities. Grays' *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* has a special reservation for students of English literature for more than one important reasons. Primarily, beginning from the Anglo-Saxon Age, it is one the most sorted elegies in the whole English literature. Secondly, Gray's *Elegy* is given as a sample specimen to acquaint the students with the Age of Transition, an age that succeeds the Age of Neo-Classicism and precedes the great Age of Romanticism. And again, this *Elegy* of Gray, is read as an elegy for the people, of the people and by the people because this elegy blurs the generic convention of the term 'elegy' which had previously been a tool to commemorate the 'hall of fame'. In addition, this 'Elegy' has controversies regarding its date of composition and occasion as well. Even Gray's 'Elegy' has been the locus of the New Critics like Cleanth Brooks who discussed the structural elements of it beautifully. So, in this paper, I have tried to read Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* under all the aforesaid rubrics giving special focus on its quality to celebrate the standpoint of the 'rude forefather'.

Key words: Elegy, Transitional Poem, Nature, Democratic Sentiment, Transience of life, Immortality, Common Man, Subalternity, Historiography.

General Introduction to Elegy:

Greco-Roman in origin, transplanted into modern European terminology, an elegy was used to refer to any poem composed in elegiac distich (a couplet alternating dactylic hexameter and pentameter). At that time elegy was a type of metre not a type of form. Different subjects like death, love, war – were dealt with in elegies. This was also employed for epitaphs. From the English Renaissance period, 'elegy' or 'elegie' has typically been used to a type of reflective

poem that registers a lamentation of the elegist over the loss of someone or something. The English people liberated ‘elegy’ from being a type of metre and gave it a status of a type of poem, a genre. There are few overlapping inexplicit cousin terms of elegy, like – complaint, dirge, lament, monody and threnody which only made the elegy a type of poetry more specific and definite as a genre. As for its accepted definitions, the strictest one came from S.T. Coleridge who deparicularized the definition by disconnecting elegy from its occasion of any particular death. He said, ‘elegy is the form of poetry natural to the reflective mind.’ There are literary masters who opine, loosely, that an elegy is a brief lyric of mourning, a direct utterance of personal bereavement and sorrow and its basis is absolute sincerity of emotion and expression. From the so-called Anglo-Saxon Period to the modern times, we find as the most essential quality of an elegy is its mournfulness. The Greek word *elegos* means song of mourning. Most often in a philosophical and speculative way. An elegy is then a lamentation through introspection and reflection. Nature mostly plays a vital role. Sometime as background, sometime as foreground, nature is shown to show either sympathy (empathy) to the general drama of loss and pain of the elegist. In the Anglo-Saxon era, the two great poems – *The Seafare* and *The Wanderer* with the powerful description of nature showed the resigned melancholy of the Old English people. Later, we see a spasmodic outpouring of sublime sorrow throughout the centuries. Thomas Gray’s *Elegy*, alongwith Milton’s *Lycidas* (1637) mourning the death of Edward King, Shelley’s *Adonais* (1821) on John Keats, Tennyson’s ‘*In Memorium*’ (1833-50) on the death of Arthur Henry Hallam and Arnold’s *Thyrsis* (1867) on Arthur Hugh Clough – are few of the all times’ famous elegies in English literature. All of the five elegies save Gray’s one are commemorations over their (famous) friends. It is in the elegy of Gray, we come across death of a common man as the central issue. Usually the elegist praises the virtues of his friend and often focuses on the evanescent nature of our glorious deed on earth and on how fate plays an uncertain role in an uncertain world. Elegies end, usually finding solace in divine calculation of human action and resigning to the divine justice, however bitter the justice may initially seem to embrace. Then, the elegist always makes a common profit with the readers by unburdening a personal loss through the psychological process of re-creation.

PUBLICATION, OCCASION AND EDITION:

Readers of Gray’s *Elegy* always confront with few controversies integral to the editions and emendations of the text. It still haunts the literary persons that what and why had the poem been revised and corrected so many times. To be very specific, there begins a search of records by the critics and scholars to settle the exact date of composition as well as regarding the original version of the *Elegy*. If we consider few of Gray’s events in his life, comments, letters to his friends (vice-versa), these would not be totally a waste of time and absurdity of method. As is said, Gray had a recluse sort of personality and he was melancholy’s favourite child. Gray lost his father in 1741. Richard West died in 1742. The most accepted views regarding the occasion of the poem is the death of West in 1742. But, Gray’s editor cum friend Mason mentioned in his *Memories* that, “I am inclined to believe that the ‘Elegy’ was begun, if not concluded at this time.” Taking his opinion something factual, we can say that, Gray might have been started *Elegy* during his annual stay at Stoke Poges. Then, in 1746, Gray wrote an interesting letter to a friend Wharton. Where he wrote, “The Muse, I doubt, is gone, and has left me in far worse company; if she returns, you will hear of her.” Which means, what he started, if he started at all, writing in 1742 was not completed even in the autumn of 1746. Gray’s most reliable friend Walpole wrote, “The Churchyard was posterior to West’s death at least three or four years.” This

statement, again, confirms the assumption that the project began around 1746 at Stoke Poges but Gray was rather tentative in his course of writing. Another death, the death of his aunt Mary Antrobus in November 1749 intensified the grief even more so that the poet could complete his elegy and ultimately parceled it to Walpole with a letter on June 12, 1750. In that very letter, Gray wrote to Walpole that, "I have been here a few days... Having put an end to a thing whose beginning you saw long ago, I immediately send it to you." Then Gray's *Elegy* was not a mere poem, rather it was a poem-project written during a period of time i.e. 1746-1750.

Before Robert Dodsley printed the *Elegy* for publication, Walpole circulated the manuscript to several of his friends to testify the acceptability of the long poem. Apart from their friends, it was highly appreciated and impressed a wide class of readers. Its immediate success and "all copies sold out" condition forced Dodsley to reprint five successive editions in the first year of its publication. And the more reprints got available the more changes we see in the words, lines and stanzas in the original version. In addition, Gray had 'the misfortune of having for an editor William Mason who conceived it his duty to publish, not what Gray wrote, but what he thought Gray ought to have written.' (Sampson: 434). Thus, a great piece of literature had to undergo, from its very inception, so many phases of fluxes. The result is that, it lost its inherent structural and thematic beauty and the fixity which it had at the hand of its creator.

Interestingly, such a long poem which took almost four years to complete may generally lead the readers to head-scratching over the genuineness of the original version of text and the true occasion behind it. Thematically, Gray's *Elegy* is an occasional verse. And usually, Richard West's death in 1742 is claimed to be the seedbed of this celebrated elegy. But, between 1741 and 1750, as I have stated earlier, Gray's life had been the unhappy witness of three successive deaths. The deaths of his father, of his friend and of his aunt. So, without factual record, it would be signally unwise to say that West's death is the only occasion and the Youth referred to in the poem is West. Since there is critic like Joseph Foladore who strongly opposes the idea of identifying the Youth with West (Joseph was even against identifying the Youth with Gray himself). Foladore supports himself by saying that, "Attempts to make either West of Gray the subject of the *Elegy* invariably pauperize the poem and reflect profoundly on the author's artistic intelligence." (1968.112-113). Actually, it seems to me that Gray was always keen to write something which would suite to his mind in subject matter and temperament. As is generally said, Gray tried to finish a poem, the begging of which Walpole saw much earlier. And a scrutiny over the gradual increment of the autobiographical elements of Gray from three in the first edition to nine in the later versions of the *Elegy* obviously deflated the singularity of the *Elegy's* occasion.

According to the Eton College manuscript, *Stanzas Wrote in a Country Churchyard* was the title which Gray had originally given to the poem. It was of 22 stanzas. And, it was after the suggestion of Mason that Gray thoroughly revised the poem and extended it to 32 stanzas. History has very few examples where a creative genius is led by an editor to extend a finished product. This extension severely hurts the coherence of the poem and reveals the 'discordia concord' on the part of the poet himself. Two other available manuscripts are preserved in - Pembroke College and the British Museum. Regarding the revision and expansion, D.C. Tovey commented in a most derogatory vein in his entry on "Gray" in *The Cambridge History of English Literature* (Vol.-X) that, 'how pitilessly the poet exercised every stanza which did not minister to the congruity of his masterpiece.' More autobiographical elements were forged. The names of Cato, Tully and Caesar were wiped out to accommodate romanticism (bypassing the classicism) and revolutionary visionaries, such as Milton, Cromwell were inserted. Graham

Hough commented in *The Romantic Poets* (1967) that, ‘In the *Elegy* Gray finds the complete expression of his private despairs and frustrations, yet the whole perfectly and unobtrusively place in a wider field of reference.’ The additional three stanzas of the ‘epitaph’ also invited much harsh remarks from even Gray’s admirers. W.S.Landor thinks it to be ‘a tin kettle tied to the poem’s tail.’

Gray’s Elegy: A Reading:

The generally accepted opinion of the critics and readers of Thomas Gray is that Gray’s development as a poet can be said to be a rhetorical development of English poetry from neo-classicism to romanticism via the Age of Transition. Beginning with few fragmentary Latin pieces in didactic vein, Gray came out as a confirm poet only after his father’s death in 1741. His *odes*, for which he is still given the status of one of the two best representative poets of the Eighteenth century, are the *Ode on the Spring* and the *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*. Both came in 1742. The other representative poem of the era is Oliver Goldsmith’s *The Desserted Village*. Gray’s two ‘sister odes’ – *The Progress of poesy* and *The bard* – are also kept in the same basket as the finest fruits of his poetic maneuver.

Thomas Gray grew with time. The ebb and flow, touch and go of his relationships ultimately brought out the best Gray with the passage of time. Taciturn in nature, he was a man of quality rather than quantity. We frequently hear about his friends, especially about the ‘quadruple alliance’ (Wallpole also confessed his surprise that in spite of having few women associations, Gray remained a lifelong bachelor). The other three are, two friends from Eton-Horace Walpole (son of England’s first modern Prime Minister), Richard West (grandson of Bishop Burnet) and the third is Thomas Ashton. As history records, Richard West was a scholar with occasional flickering of poetry and had a bent over melancholy. His premature death in 1742 gave Gray the shock and the heirship to the additional melancholy of his dead friend. So, Gray became a melancholy maniac and stipped himself completely in writing. In his letters to Richard West, Gray frequently wrote about his congenital melancholy. In a letter written on December 20, 1735, Gray wrote, “When you have seen one of my days, you have seen a whole year of my life; they go round and round like the blind horse in the mill, only he has the satisfaction of fancying he makes a progress and gets some ground.” And on August 22, 1737, he wrote, “Low spirits are my true and faithful companions; they get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do.” He had a very introspective self-consciousness. We come to know of this from another letter to West from Gray describing the peculiarity of his own melancholy. Gray stated that,

“ Mine, you are to know, is a white Melancholy, or rather Leucocholy for the most part; which though it seldom laughs or dances, nor even amounts to what one calls Joy or Pleasure, yet is a good easy sort of a state, and can *laisse de s’amuser*. The only fault of it is insipid, which is apt now and then to give a sort of Ennui, which makes one form certain little wishes that signify nothing.” (May 27, 1742)

Gray’s best poetic output and the most popular elegy in English Literature, *The Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* is a perfect fusion of the dignity of subject matter and the habitual elevation of his craftsmanship. This *Elegy* is unique in more ways than one. Primarily, the 18th century audiences were passing through a society which was full of city bred, fashionable and pompous *beaus* and *belles*. It is through this elegy; Gray had extended his sympathetic flavor from a famous personae in the Augustan city centre to a ‘rude forefather’ of a

small ‘hamlet’. Which is why Gray remains the preeminent precursor of Romanticism, an age tempered by democratic sentiment and remembered for rural affiliation. It is in the *Elegy* we can concur Lyle Glazier’s belief that ‘Each rude forefather of the hamlet has become a type of mankind. There is thus a double Everyman in the poem – the poet observer, who is Everyman still alive and reflecting about death, and each rude forefather, who is Everyman already dead and underground.’

The *Elegy* starts in the hovering stillness of a dying day. The melancholy-stricken elegist muses over the life and living of the poor and tries to recover their wispy traces of history from the grave of time. Nature remains as the befitting background in the opening section of the poem. Within stanzas 1 to 3, the elegist sets the tone, atmosphere and the back ground of the elegy. As Graham Hough observes, “Gray is here far less concerned with nature as an object of contemplation than with the readers- the readers whom he wishes to lull into a resigned, acquiescent, summer-evening frame of mind.” (*The Romantic Poets.14*) All of the actions filtered through the poetic consciousness are either a ‘parting day’, a ‘weary’, ‘homeward’ ploughman or a world which seals up the days’ activities. In the chiaroscuro of the falling dusk, the day light fades away, everything seems to a pause. The ‘solemn stillness’ of the ‘parting day’, the ‘droning flight’ of the beetle and the ‘drowsy tinkling’ of the ‘distant folds’ restore the poet to melancholy and reflection. True to the spirit of a Graveyard poet, Gray finds the graveyards of the Stoke Poges Church vicinity (where he himself is now buried) as the congenial locale to reflect on the transience of life. So, the poet begins to muse ‘upon the conditions of rural life, human potential, and mortality.’(Ousby.291). In stanzas 4 and 5, Gray confirms that the theme of his elegy would be for those whose ‘narrow cells’ (graves) under the ‘rugged elm trees’ are not decorated with ‘marble vault’ and no ‘storied urn’ is there to record the life and living of the rustics. From stanzas 6 to 21, Gray describes the happy bygone days of the ‘rude forefathers’ of the village as well as of the common folk of the village. Stanza 22 and 23 are deep revelations of human psychology that the poor and rich alike, all men wish to be remembered and honoured by their kith and kin. Then there comes a poet shifting, the poet speaker addresses the story of a village poet in stanzas 24 to 29. Then comes the most controversial ‘Epitaph’ which describes the unfortunate tale of an obscure youth of humble birth, yet to his ‘fame’ and ‘fortune’. Thus, Gray has tried to register a moral of living as well as of dying.

Within its 32 stanzas, the *Elegy* depicts a collage of the prospects of the simple and common man of a village, the death of a village poet (arguable Richard West or Gray himself). To quote Cleanth Brook from his *The Well Wrought Urn* (chapter:6), “ For readers who insists that great poetry can make use of ‘simple eloquence’ – a straightforward treatment of ‘poetic’ material, free from any of the glazings of rhetoric – “Elegy Writted in a Country Churchyard” must seem the classical instance.” In the same sentence, he continues that “And by the same token, the ‘Elegy’ would appear to be the most difficult poem to subsume under the theory of poetic structure maintained in this book.”(Brook.85) Infact, Brook’s reading of the *Elegy* is structural or formal. Brushing away all the ‘fallacious’ biases as well as the socio-historical teasing that makes a text vulnerable , Brook pondered on the fact that, the personifications of “Ambition”, and “Grandeur” are ‘ironies’. And the whole poem is a ‘classical instance’ to read under “Irony as a Principle of Structure”. The *Elegy* is an ironical description of the country churchyard, the graveyard for the poor villagers in contrast to the Abbey where the fortunate and the famed are buried. The elegy is tensed with effective binarisms. The life, living and funerals of the rich have been contrasted with the life, living and funerals of the poor. ‘Storied Urn’ and ‘animated bust’ of the West Minister Abbey are sharply contrasted with ‘neglected spot’ and

‘lowly bed’ of the village graves. The ‘rude forefathers of the small hamlet’ are contrasted with the ‘ambition and pride’ of people of high ancestry (‘heraldry’). Gays says, -

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

Elegy (1.13-16)

Raising a question about Brooks’ reading of Gray’s *Elegy* as a ‘Storied Urn’ that ‘None of Brooks arguments explain what exactly are the reasons for the *Elegy*’s claim to greatness’, Tutun Mukherjee in her resourceful book *The Chicago Critics (1991)* takes recourse to R.S.Crane, another New Critic. She says that, “Crane’s explanation is that what is represented in the poem as its content ‘primarily constitutes the *Elegy* as a complete and ordered serious lyric productive of a special emotional pleasure rather than simply a statement of thought’ ”. She continues that, “Crane calls the poem an imitative lyric of moral choice representing a situation in which a virtuous sensitive young man of humble birth confronts the prospect of his death while still to ‘fame and fortune unknown’ and eventually after much disturbance of his mind reconciles himself to his probable ‘fate’ ” (*The Chicago Critics.49*)

Again, it can be said that the poem elegizes the fate of the simple and common people in particular and the loss of the agrarian community life on the wake of urbanization, in general. Gray depicts a life which is rural and more settled. ‘Leadership’ of family was an accepted way of life. Gender-wise distribution of labour based on individual skill in meeting the both ends of life as well as for the betterment of their community was never questioned. It was a life when critics bothered least about gender-stereotyping that woman would look after busily the domestic duties and responsibilities (“As busy House Wife Ply her evening cares”) and men folk are the master of the outside world.

The most moving undercurrent of the *Elegy* is that Gray’s *Elegy* strongly pleads for the people who, mostly, after life’s fruitful toil embrace the grave silently and remain unsung. The poor villagers who are, forever, laid in their narrow cells are least remembered by the posterity. Gray appeals that the well off, in whose memories trophies are made on their tombs- equally come to the ‘bending sickle’ of Shakespeare to meet the inevitable hour. Gray says, -

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.

Elegy (1.29-32)

Because all the course of life, however fruitful or gorgeous it may seem, lead but to the grave. And once, death draws the curtain on the stage, neither ‘storied urn’, nor ‘Honour’ nor ‘Falttery’ nor any ‘animated bust’ can bring back the ‘fleeting breath.’

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

Elegy (1.41-44)

The elegist warns ‘Ambition’, ‘Grandeur’, ‘heraldry’, ‘power’, ‘Beauty’ and ‘wealth’ not to mock these poor rustics of the little hamlet. Grandeur is not to smile at the ‘short and simple annals of the poor’. Properly speaking, as said by Brook, of course, the poor do not have ‘annals’. Kingdoms have annals, and so do kings, but the peasant does not. The choice of the term is ironical, and yet the ‘short and simple’ records of the poor are their ‘annals’ – the important records for them. Almost two hundred and fifty years ago, Gray had the mind and sensibility to think of such a ‘history’ that was not the register of the powerful alone. And that history had to have included the fringe elements; the left out section of the society- was something what we now called ‘subalternity’ as well as deconstructive historiography.

Aristotle, the ideal student of the ideal teacher of an ideal republic once remarked that ‘Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime’. Gray has shown, in much contrary to the aforesaid philosopher’s dictum, that in spite of having tolerated deprivations of many kinds, the poor never revolted against the establish system nor do they take recourse to the short-cut crimes that poverty usually breeds.

As for his Classicism, Gray has the same classical concern with perfection of form as Pope had. The line ‘The Ploughman homeward plods his weary way’ is said to have caused Gray hours of trouble. How should it be written? ‘The Ploughman homeward...’ or ‘The homeward ploughman ...’ or ‘Homeward the ploughman...’ or ‘The weary ploughman...’ or ‘Weary, the ploughman...’ Gray did, infact, as said by Anthony Burgess in *English Literature* (1987) “expend great trouble on the polishing off his verse, and the Elegy’s easy flow is the result of hard work more than inspiration.” In every stanza we meet lines that have passed the test of time and became part of the English language’s reservoir, sounding almost Shakespearian in their familiarity, Spenserian in its mellifluousness. But Gray had nothing of the swiftness and fluency of the great Elizabethan. Every effect was worked for, and Gray deserves his success.

In course of pleading the case for the poor very much like a jury, Gray has elegized the theme by categorically using ‘death’, ‘chill penury’ and ‘lot’ by personifying each of them. Gray has shown ‘death’ as a great leveler for all – the have nots and the have lots, ‘chill penury’ as a repressor and the ‘lot’ (luck) as circumscriber of the poor’s progress. Readers are affirmed that had they not been poor, they even could have become either a poet (‘celestial fire’), a potent king (‘rod of empire’) or a gifted musician (‘living lyre’). By using the quantifier ‘some’ before the proper nouns- Hampden, Milton, Cromwell Gray has only extended the potentials of the poor to become famous.

Thus, throughout the text, Gray has scattered a philosophy on the art of living as well as of dying. His metaphysical dispositions leads him to become a votary of the Latin adage, *memento mori* (‘remember that you have to die’) and the Biblical monition that ‘from dust we have come and to dust we would return.’ To establish the case for the poor, Gray used theological doctrines such as beauty and vanity of earthly life is a hindrance to spiritual salvation, where as honesty and poverty are good towards immortality of the soul.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
 Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
 He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
 He gain'd from Heav'n ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

Elegy (l.125-128)

Conclusion:

One of the reasons of the poem's being loved even after almost two hundred fifty years later is that it appeals to that mood of self-pity which is always ready to rise in all of us. 'The short and simple annals of the poor' and 'Full many a flower is born to blush unseen' will bring tears to the eyes of the toughest and least poetical of men, because they feel that, given the chance, they could have risen higher in the world. They have not risen high, and here is a poet to lament it and to comfort them by saying that it does not matter: 'The paths of glory lead but to the grave.'

To conclude, we can say that, there is left almost no literary master who does not leave a comment in Gray's elegy. Few were hostile and few favourable. It only testifies that *Elegy* has always been included in the personal canon of any reader of British literature. The most popular among the opinions is the critical hostility from Johnson, who charged Gray of Whiggism and depreciated Gray's adjectival coinage of the word "honied" from its noun "honey" (both Shakespeare and Milton used it, though). Readers frequently quotes Johnson's ultimate appreciation of the *Elegy* which he 'rejoiced to concur with the common reader'. Another fact that confirms the popularity of the elegy that by the end of the 60s of the 20th century, more than 200 imitations and parodies of the *Elegy* became available in England and America. Not to mention, its translations into various other languages such as Dutch, German, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Spanish and Russian. As I have told earlier, it is the single most poem, after any piece of Shakespeare, which provide us with so many useful quotations – literary, philosophical, metaphysical and moral. As a human being, Gray had tremendous height of magnanimity and prudence. He never wanted to expose his erudite to public. He refused the laureateship in succession to Colley Cibber only to pay homage to the prestigious laureate-lineage of Shadwell, Tate, Rowe and Laurence Eusden and wanted it to be crowned more aptly by William Whitehead. Another academic assignment which Gray bypassed was the Regius Professorship of Modern History at Cambridge. Along with these, Gray had the perseverance like a student. He worked diligently in the newly opened British Museum from 1759 to 1761 on the Old English manuscripts for his intended project of writing the history of English Poetry. George Sampson ends the entry on Thomas Grey in his *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* (1995) by stating, "Gray's projected history of English poetry was never written. The loss is ours, for his sympathy with the early poets was intense. In his love for the old and his adventures into the new, he anticipates an age that was to develop both his romantic instincts and his classical restraint." (434). As for the permanence as a piece of art, David Kennedy rightly observes, 'The elegy remains the urn that is never finally completed but is perpetually being 'storied' in front of audience.' (Kennedy. *Elegy*. 2009.)

Works cited:

- Abrams, M.H. *A glossary of Literary Terms*. Singapore : Harcourt Asia PTE LTD, 2006. Print.
- An Anthology: Poems, Plays and Prose*, the University of Burdwan: University Press, 2005. Print.
- Brooks, Cleanth. *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in The Structure of Poetry*. Methuen, London: University Paperbacks, 1968. Print.
- Burgess, Anthony. *English Literature: A Survey for Students*. Hong Kong: Longman. 1987. Print.
- Cuddon, J.A. ed. *A dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. Delhi : Maya Blackwell Boaba House, 1998. Print.

- Hudson, William Henry. *An Introduction to the study of Literature*. Calcutta : Radha Publishing House, 2002. Print.
- Huogh, Graham. *The Romantic Poets*. London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd.1976. Print.
- Kennedy, David. *Elegy*. London and New York: Routledge, The New Critical Idiom.2009.Print.
- Miyashita, Chuji. “A Note on Thomas Gray’s Elegy.” *HtotsHubashi Journal of arts and sciences*,7(1): 26-33.Web.<<http://hdl.handle.net.10086/4391>>
- Mukherjee, Tutun. *The Chicago Critics: An Evaluation*.Delhi India: Academic Foundation. 1991.Print.
- Murfin Ross, Supriya M. Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*. Boston: Bedford/st. Martin’s, 2003. Print.
- Ousby, Ian.Ed. *The Wordsworth Companion to Literature in Englis*. Britain:Wordsworth Reference,1992.Print.
- Raghunathan, Harriet.Ed. *Johnson, Gray, Goldsmith Poets of the mid-eighteenth century*. Delhi:Worldview Publications,2007. Print.
- Starr, Herbert W. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Gray’s ‘Elegy’:A Collection of Critical Essays*.New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.1968.Print.