

THE SMOOTH TRANSITION FROM SENTIMENTAL TO PRE-ROMANTICISM  
POETRY THROUGH THE ELEGY OF THOMAS CHATTERTON AND  
PARTICULARLY TO THE "GRAVEYARD" LYRICS.



الانتقال من الشعر العاطفي إلى الشعر ما قبل الرومانسي من خلال مرثية توماس تشاترتون  
وخاصة كلمات أغنية "المقبرة".

م.م سجاد عبد الكريم نعيم

الجامعة التقنية الوسطى / معهد الإدارة التقني - بغداد

البريد الإلكتروني Email : [Sajjad\\_a@mtu.edu.iq](mailto:Sajjad_a@mtu.edu.iq)

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M.M. Sajjad Abdul Karim Naeem

Middle Technical University/ Technical Institute for Administration –  
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المستخلص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى التعرف على الاتجاهات الأدبية الانتقالية للعاطفية وما قبل  
الرومانسية في الشعر الإنجليزي في منتصف القرن الثامن عشر. ويسلط الضوء على السمات  
المميزة لكل اتجاه ويوضح الانتقال السلس بينهما ودورهما المهم في تشكيل حركة رومانسية  
جديدة في الأدب.

من خلال تحليل مقارنة للنصوص، ستحدد الدراسة السمات المميزة للعاطفية الموجودة  
في أعمال مدرسة "المقبرة". كما ستزعم أن مريثة تشاترتون، المكتوبة على غرار كلمات "المقبرة"،  
تختلف بشكل كبير عن الأعمال الأخرى ضمن هذه المدرسة من حيث حكتها ومقاييسها

وأسلوبها. تستند المراثية على مبادئ جمالية جديدة، تمثل انتقالاً من الشعر العاطفي إلى ما قبل الرومانسية وتضع الأساس لاتجاه أدبي جديد.

### Abstract

This paper seeks to uncover the transformative literary trends of sentimentalism and pre-romanticism that emerged in mid-18th-century English poetry. By delving into these significant movements, we can better appreciate their impact on the evolution of poetic expression during this pivotal period. It highlights the characteristic features of each trend, demonstrates the smooth transition between them, and explains their significant role in shaping a new romantic movement in literature.

Through a comparative analysis of the texts, the study will identify the distinct features of sentimentalism present in the works of the "graveyard" school. It will also argue that Chatterton's elegy, written in the style of "graveyard" lyrics, significantly differs from other works within this school regarding its plot, metrics, and style. The elegy is founded on new aesthetic principles, marking a transition from sentimental poetry to pre-romanticism and laying the groundwork for a new literary direction.

### Introduction

Social and cultural conditions of life in England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century are marked by qualitative and, at the same time, contradictory changes in a person's worldview and attitude toward himself and the world around him. At the beginning of the century, England was a powerful, rapidly developing state in all spheres during the reign of Queen Anne and George I, had already experienced the Industrial Revolution and embarked on the path of new social and class relations. To maintain public order and political and economic stability, as well as for the intensive development of science and technical progress, which contributed to the further prosperity and strengthening of the state on the world stage, strict adherence to norms and rules and laws and standards was required. In cultural terms, this was also reflected. The 18th century is known as the Age of Enlightenment; the main principles were the revival of classical antique standards and canons of beauty, the formation of refined taste, and an analytical and critical approach to art. This time has a positive connotation of stability and faith in the unlimited possibilities of man, the power of common sense, and the desire to achieve a universal and perfect model. However, already closer to the middle of the century, optimism and faith in the correctness and inviolability of established principles began to fade. Moreover, stability and confidence in the future are replaced by disappointment and chaos in





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all spheres of life in English society. Socio-political and economic discord naturally finds its reflection in culture and art, primarily in literature, as the area most sensitive and acutely reacting to various external factors and transformations. As Friedrich Meinecke notes: “The 18<sup>th</sup> century is one of the greatest examples of the apparent absolute victory of a new spiritual force for a certain time when already from the beginning of its victorious march this spiritual force is accompanied by a counteracting tendency, which later replaces it” (Meinecke, 2004). Traditionally, the emergence of romanticism with its denial of all rules, striving for individualism and subjectivism, freedom and going beyond the canon, the revival of national culture, and the rejection of imitation of ancient models is considered a reaction to the enlightenment ideas of rationalism and classicism.

However, Romanticism as a movement in art did not take shape immediately. The transition from one global system to another could not happen overnight and was a complex and contradictory process. In this situation, S. V. Turaev’s assertion that “Romanticism is simply unthinkable based on naked denial and destruction of ideals sounds fair. Romanticism exalts its ideal in contrast to the ideals of its predecessors. Romanticism does not at all inherit the pessimism, disbelief in human capabilities that are characteristic of Cazotte or Walpole” (Turaevp, 1993, p. 77). Already in the middle of the 18th century, the concept of “sentimental” became prevalent in literature, which arose in contrast to the excessive rationalism of the Enlightenment. The idea speaks for itself: sensitivity, sensory perception of the surrounding reality, virtue, and the intimate world of experiences of the human soul. This is visible in Richardson's novel Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded, Goldsmith's The Vicar of Wakefield, and Mackenzie's Man of Feeling.

Later, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the smooth transition from the Enlightenment to Romanticism was scientifically defined by the French scientist Paul Van Tieghem. He determines the presence of transitional phenomena in this historical period and introduces the concept of “pre-Romanticism.” In his work “Pre-Romanticism, a Study of European Literary History,” he notes that: “Among the causes which determined the profound change of European literature, and particularly of poetry, from the classical age to Romanticism, we must undoubtedly give a large place to certain new influences which constitute important elements of pre-Romanticism.” (Tieghem, 1975, p. 19). It, therefore, becomes clear that the mid-18th century in English literature represents a complex transitional period, which, despite the still dominant position of the Enlightenment, is marked by the presence of various literary



movements that anticipate the emergence of Romanticism, bear its features and enter into close interaction with each other.

However, the question of the independence of these literary movements has long remained open in both domestic and foreign literary studies. Scholars either consider pre-romanticism and sentimentalism as manifestations of early romanticism, thus denying the existence of a smooth transition from one global era to another, or they identify both phenomena, as K. Krejci, D. Smith, T.V. Zelenko, N.A. Solovieva does in their studies (she considers sentimentalism as part of the "pre-romantic stage in literature" (Solovieva, 2005, p. 54). However, she separates these concepts), for example, in the introduction to her monograph "History of Foreign Literatures. Pre-romanticism". Solovieva gives the following characterization of pre-romanticism: "The mood that unites all the writers of the pre-romantic period is disappointment and melancholy, an apology for feelings, poeticization of peaceful nature, old times, a passion for folklore, an uncompromising denial of enlightenment rationalism" (p. 7). However, this statement should be clarified somewhat regarding melancholy and the poeticization of peaceful nature. These features were more characteristic of sentimentalism, while pre-romanticism itself is characterized by more dynamic and dramatic moods, not to mention the poeticization of peaceful nature, which is very difficult to call such. For example, this is how pre-romanticists perceive nature in the study of Lukov: "The attitude to nature, its artistic and aesthetic functions in the poetry of sentimentalism and pre-romanticism have deep, fundamental differences. In Chatterton's ballad, nature appears as an independent force. Moreover, the poet emphasizes its elemental origin" (Lukov, 2006, p. 209).

Tyutyunik rightly asserts: "Sentimentalism is not included by researchers in pre-romanticism, since in its social roots and ideological sound, it (sentimentalism - I.T.) was closely connected with the Enlightenment. Sentimentalist writers did not break with the Enlightenment: the shift in emphasis from the cult of Reason to the cult of Feeling did not change the belief in the ability of man to change the surrounding reality for the better" (Tyutyunik, 2018). As for pre-romanticism, by undermining the foundations of enlightenment ideology and denying any rationalistic principle both in form and content, it also denies the possibility of a harmonious existence of man in the world around him. It no longer seemed possible to comprehend the surrounding reality either with the help of reason or sensory perception, and the mood caused by this crisis of consciousness was reflected in pre-romanticism. "The pre-romantic concept of the world and man is, as it were, an





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extrapolation of the deep social discord noted by the pre-romanticists onto the general picture of existence” (Lukov, 2006, p. 25), which was most clearly manifested in the passion for Gothic and the emergence of an entirely new literary genre, the “black novel.” In our study, we will try to use examples of specific works of English sentimental “graveyard” lyrics and Thomas Chatterton’s “Elegy Written on Stanton Drew” to confirm the validity of the above characteristics of both literary movements and to prove that Chatterton’s poetry is a significant link in the transition from sentimentalism to pre-romanticism and, thus, demonstrates a rejection of the ideas of the Enlightenment, becoming a cornerstone on the path to the formation of the romantic trend in art.

**The sentimentalism**

Main part. The work of the sentimentalists was the first reaction to the crisis of enlightenment philosophy and aesthetics. They were the first to move away from the pomposity and artificiality of salon literature. The philosophy of rationalism gradually begins to acquire an exaggerated form, giving rise to

cold calculation, rigidity, and sometimes even cruelty of morals, indifference, artificiality, and dryness of spiritual life and creativity. In search of fresh ideas, they moved the scene of action in their works from the city to the village, to the bosom of nature, making the main character an ordinary peasant to whom the concepts of morality and ethics are not alien and sometimes even more inherent, in contrast to the corrupted upper class. The sentimentalists placed their hopes on feelings and sensitivity, believing that this would help to influence corrupt morals and soften cruelty in relationships between people. Representatives of this movement - J. Thompson, O. Goldsmith, S. Richardson, E. Young, T. Gray - begin to be more interested in the intimate world of the commoner, the state of his soul; they are not indifferent to his concerns and experiences; revealing a world much more accurate and profound than the rational moralistic and callous one that was inherent in the heroes of A. Pope, J. Dryden, D. Defoe, J. Swift.

"Nature, sentimental friendship and love of kindred souls, simple joys of family life, pictures of patriarchal existence, untouched by the decay of bourgeois civilization - these are the main themes of English sentimental poetry" (Zhirmunsky, 2017, p. 125). "English sentimental poetry combines an interest in the life and work of the people and conservative idealization of patriarchal life" (Artamonovp, 2011, p. 19).

**The development of Gothic literature and "graveyard" poetry.**

“In general terms, Gothic literature employs dark and picturesque scenery, startling and melodramatic narrative devices, and an atmosphere



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of exoticism, mystery, fear, and dread. Often, a Gothic novel or story will revolve around a large, ancient house that conceals a terrible secret or serves as the refuge of an incredibly frightening and threatening character.

Despite the relatively common use of this bleak motif, Gothic writers have also used supernatural elements, touches of romance, well-known historical characters, and travel and adventure narratives to entertain their readers. The type is a subgenre of Romantic literature—Romantic the period, not romance novels with breathless lovers with wind-swept hair on their paperback covers—and much fiction today stems from it.” (Kennedy, 2024).

The beauty of the rural landscape and the harmony of man and nature are celebrated. Already in the 1720s, together with Thomas Parnell's short poem "Night Piece on Death" (1722), one of the significant and large-scale branches of sentimental literature was born, so-called "graveyard" school or "night" poetry". 1742 Edward Young continued the tradition in his poem "Night Thoughts." In 1751, Thomas Gray published his famous "Elegy Written in the Country Churchyard," which became one of the most popular works in English and world literature. The "Hoard of Wild Beasts" lyrics are often and rightly credited with directly influencing the development of Gothic literature, mainly because the authors choose secluded rural cemeteries as the setting for their elegiac poems. Their indispensable attributes are graves ("grave" / "tomb" / "charnel house"), mold- and moss-covered stone tombstones ("moldering heap"), the mournful cry of a lonely owl ("the moping owl does to the moon complain"), evergreen yew and twisted ivy ("yew tree" / "ivy-mantled tower").

All these decorations and the very name of the poetic movement already suggest something mysterious, gloomy, and eerie. Nevertheless, the Gothic motif in the poems is present only in an embryonic state, without fulfilling its direct purpose - to create an atmosphere of horror and fatality. The mood inherent in the works of "graveyard" lyrics can be melancholic, philosophical, and judicious. Their close connection with enlightenment rationalism is also manifested. The graveyard becomes a place of solitude for the authors, where they can reflect on the problematic earthly life, the frailty of existence, death, and spiritual immortality. Modest stone tombstones lead the author to the idea of the injustice of class inequality, the hard lot of the commoner in the struggle for existence. Let us analyze an excerpt from T. Parnell's elegy:

**“By the blue taper's trembling light,  
No more I waste the wakeful night,**





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**Intent with endless view to pore  
The schoolmen and the sages o'er:  
Their books from wisdom widely stray,  
Or, at best, point in the most extended way.  
I will seek a readier path and go.**

**Where wisdom's surely taught below". (Parnell, 2024).**

Already in the poem's first lines, we see that, in the author's understanding, the crisis of educational ideas has already arrived. True worldly wisdom cannot be found on the pages of books and scientific works; it can be comprehended only by directly coming into contact with all aspects of real life, including death. After all, it is reflections on the finiteness of the earthly path that makes us think about how to go through this path and what to fill it with so that, in the end, it would not be scary, to sum up. The atmosphere of the night graveyard does not frighten the lyrical hero. Still, it introduces him to a particular state of melancholy and thoughtfulness, which helps him tune in to philosophical reflections:

**“That steeple guides thy doubtful sight  
Among the livid gleams of night.  
There pass, with a melancholy state,  
By all the solemn heaps of fate,  
And think, as softly-sad you tread  
Above the venerable dead,  
Time was like thee their life possessed,**

**Moreover, time shall be, that thou shalt rest.” (Parnell, 2024).**

Thomas Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" is constructed on a similar principle. The author paints a calm picture of a graveyard, where, under the shade of age-old elms and shady yews, numerous half-ruined tombstones are visible, where the ancestors of simple villagers rest peacefully:

**“Beneath those rugged elms, that yew tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a moldering heap,  
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,**

**The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep” (Gray, 2025).**

The sight of these miserable, half-ruined tombstones makes the hero think about the hard lot of a little man in a world where injustice and class inequality reign, where hard work and poverty live side by side with luxury and idleness, where simplicity and sincere sense of joy from everyday things, which essentially make up life, cause contempt among those whose values are ambition, wealth and noble birth:

**“Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,  
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broken;**



**How jocund they were in driving their team afield!  
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!**

**Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;  
Nor Grandeur hears with a disdainful smile**

The short and simple annals of people with low incomes.” (Gray, 2025).  
The graveyard becomes the symbolic place where the social and philosophical problems that trouble the lyrical heroes of Gray and Parnell are resolved. Death brings the imbalance of life into balance. The beggar, the rich man of noble birth, the famous and the completely unknown, the simple peasant, and the vain ambitious man - all in the end here, in the graveyard, will occupy equal positions:

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

**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?”** (Gray, 2025).

Moreover, death is depicted as a qualitative transition to a new life, from the material world to the spiritual world, where any material embodiment of the essence of man, all material goods and honors, to which many strive so much, become useless, lose all meaning:

**“Arms, angels, epitaphs and bones,  
These (all the poor remains of the state)  
Adorn the rich or praise the great;  
Who, while on earth in the fame they live,  
Are senseless of the fame they give.”** (Parnell, 2024).

Another important problem that the lyrical hero of Gray's elegy reflects on is the injustice of class inequality. The author is confident that people of poor origin have no worse abilities and are no less gifted than representatives of the nobility, who had the opportunity to prove themselves and realize their abilities:

**“Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some hearts were once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.”** (Gray, 2025).





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Gray is sure that the sincerity of feelings and beauty of soul, which are characteristic of a simple man living far from the corrupt world of civilization, and which he compares with the purest precious stone ("Full many a gem of purest ray serene") (Gray, 2025), could bear no less significant fruits if they were not under the yoke of terrible poverty and the struggle for existence, like beautiful flowers that have lost their fragrance in the harsh desert:

"a flower is born to blush unseen

Furthermore, it wastes its sweetness on the desert air". (Gray, 2025).

Particular attention should be paid to landscape sketches in the elegies. Since the sentimentalists were the first to rush to the bosom of nature in search of new images and emotions, their works already show qualitative changes in the perception of the surrounding world, descriptions of nature, and their connection with man. The landscape did not play a unique role in literature during the Enlightenment. If landscape does appear in a work, it plays only a background-neutral role. In the Enlightenment ideology, man is the crown of creation and the master of nature. It cannot influence him, does not guide his actions, and does not determine his feelings and emotions. In sentimental "graveyard" lyrics, nature does not yet play the leading role. Still, it is already beginning to occupy significant positions in the work, significantly enriching it and creating a specific mood. "Night Poems about Death" and T. Gray's elegy are still not rich in nature descriptions. We encounter them only in the opening stanzas of the works:

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

**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;" (Gray, 2025).

Before us is a picture of idyllic rural life: herds peacefully grazing in the meadows, a ploughman leisurely walking home after a hard day's work, a landscape gradually disappearing into the evening haze, and the air filled with a ringing silence. Nature is quietly preparing for sleep. The author thus creates an atmosphere of monotony and pleasant melancholy when one can relax and, in the evening silence, indulge in reflections on life and the eternal.



### The landscape of a night graveyard

In "Night Poems about Death," the author immerses the reader in a picturesque and serene landscape of a night graveyard, where his hero comes on a sleepless night to philosophize about the frailty of earthly existence and the afterlife:

**"How deep yon azure dyes the sky,  
Where orbs of gold unnumbered lie,  
While through their ranks in Silver pride  
The nether crescent seems to glide.  
The slumbering breeze forgets to breathe,  
The lake is smooth and precise beneath,  
Where once again, the spangled show  
Descends to meet our eyes below.  
The grounds, which on the right aspire,  
In dimness from the view retire:  
The left presents a place of graves,  
Whose wall the silent water laves."** (Parnell, 2024).

The poetic effect is created thanks to numerous metaphors and picturesque epithets: "a thick dark azure painted the sky, covered with a countless scattering of golden luminaries," and "through the myriads of these stars the cold, proud moon seems to float." Nature does not simply appear in the background in Parnell's elegy; it is already beginning to come to life, creates a particular coloring, and determines the tonality of the entire work. The slumbering breeze, the transparent surface of the lake, the grounds in dimness from the view retire, and the silent waters create an atmosphere of melancholy and tranquility. The author does not feel discomfort in this gloomy and secluded place, where the graveyard is covered by night. Moreover, even while creating ominous images of the dead rising from their graves, pale, wrapped in a shroud, slowly creeping:

**"all slow and wan and wrapped in shrouds  
They rise in visionary crowds"** (Parnell, 2024).

He explains to the reader that this is only a figment of the imagination. He calls on the reader to gain common sense, to soberly and objectively evaluate

life, and to remember that nothing and no one is eternal. Everything will one day turn to dust, so one must cherish every moment. The image of death does not evoke a feeling of fear, even though the author personifies it and pompously calls it "a King of Fears." However, the poet only ridicules those who show cowardice in its face:

**"Fools! if you less provoked your fears,  
No more my spectre-form appears."** (Parnell, 2024).





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The main reason is the poet's spiritual views. As a faithful Christian, T. Parnell glorifies the immortality of the soul. The body is perishable; it is a prison, and only by throwing off the shackles of earthly life, freeing itself from this dungeon, will the soul know true bliss. The final lines of the elegy sound incredibly optimistic, even though the measured tempo and mood of the work change. Melancholy and despondency are replaced by jubilation about the eternal and bright life:

**“As men who long in prison dwell,  
With lamps that glimmer around the cell,  
Whene'er their suffering years are run,  
Spring forth to greet the glittering sun:  
Such joy, though far transcending sense,  
Have pious souls at parting hence.  
On earth, and in the body placed,  
A few, and evil, years they waste;  
But when their chains are cast aside,  
See the glad scene unfolding wide,  
Clap the glad wing and tower away,  
And mingle with the blaze of day.” (Parnell, 2024).**

E. Young's concept, “Complaints or Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality,” is very similar to the elegies of Parnell and Gray. This is the most significant “graveyard” poetry work, written in blank verse and consisting of nine parts (nine nights). In a sense, this work is autobiographical.

Graphically, shortly before its creation, E. Jung lost several people dear to his heart: his wife, his adopted daughter, and her husband. The parts of the poem are practically indistinguishable in their theme, mood, and manner of performance. The poem has a philosophical and didactic tone, and the main questions that worry the author are still the inevitability of the end of life on earth and the transition to the heavenly world.

The following lines reveal the didactic value of the poem. The author, who is also the lyrical hero, perceives death as the greatest blessing, liberation from earthly hardships and sufferings, and calls on a person not to be a fool and not to be afraid of it, but to joyfully go there, where, surrounded by seraphim, he will find immortality and bliss at the throne of the Creator himself:

**“Yet man (fool man!) here buries all his thoughts;  
Inters celestial hopes without one sigh;  
Prisoner of earth, and pent beneath the moon,  
Here pinion all his wishes, winged by Heaven  
To fly at infinite and reach it there**



**Where seraphs gather immortality,  
On life's fair tree, fast by the throne of God.  
What golden joys ambrosial clustering glow  
In His full beam, and ripen for the,  
Where momentary ages are no more!  
Where Time, and Pain, and Chance, and Death expire!" (Young,  
2022).**

The author's activities had a direct ideological influence on the work. Jung was a pastor and a true Puritan. The poems are very reminiscent of Christian preaching and, in addition to glorifying the immortality of the soul, they call on the reader to despise earthly material goods, which only lead to moral decay, and to turn to spiritual enrichment and virtue because only in this case the soul can find liberation and immortality, and come closer to God. The work practically does not describe nature. Nevertheless, to create a particular emotional background, the author fills the work with metaphorical symbols, personifying "silence and darkness" ("silence and darkness! solemn sisters"), "death," which acts as an omnipotent entity, suppressing entire empires and capable of extinguishing even the stars:

**"Death! Great Proprietor of All! 'tis thine  
To tread out Empire and to quench the Stars.  
The Sun himself, by thy Permission, shines;  
And, one day, thou shalt pluck him from his Sphere". (Young, 2022).**

The author believes in man and his ability to overcome both fear and temptations on the way to achieving the bright goal of immortality. After all, he is God's creation - created in the image and likeness of the Almighty ("Dim miniature of greatness absolute!") and, just like the Creator himself, is multifaceted and complex, and sometimes completely incomprehensible in his greatness and diversity:

"How poor, how rich, how abject, how august, how complicated, how wonderful is man! Distinguished link in being's endless chain! Midway from nothing to the Deity! Dim miniature of greatness absolute! An heir of glory! A frail child of dust! Helpless immortal! Insect infinite! A worm! A God!" (Young, 2022).

In these contradictory lines, full of indignation and admiration at the same time, this close connection between sentimentalism and the Enlightenment is still clearly traced. Man is still an independent unit in the universe; he is the prototype of the Creator and, as a result, has free will and the power to independently manage his destiny so that even higher powers have no power over his life or death:

**"What can preserve my life? Or what destroy?"**



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**An angel's arm cannot snatch me from the grave;**

Legions of angels cannot confine me there” (Young, 2022).

Thus, sentimental "graveyard" lyrics still closely connect with Enlightenment poetry. The works are still replete with philosophical discussions about the meaning of being, exalt the image of man, and, to some extent, admire him. Their main merit is the switch in the plot toward the importance of the simple man's concealment of his natural feelings and daily concerns. Pre-romantics pursue somewhat different goals in their works.

Striking differences can already be seen in Thomas Chatterton's "Graveyard" and "Elegy Written on Stanton Drew" (1769). They are much more picturesque and dramatic than his predecessors' works. Unlike the sentimentalists of the "graveyard" school, the young poet frees his work from philosophical and didactic reasoning, fills it with himself, and concentrates the plot precisely around a personal tragedy and the associated emotions and experiences.

Although sentimental elegies are also narrated in the first person, the author's subjective presence is almost not felt. His feelings and thoughts are philosophical and didactic and concern objective universal human issues and values, which do not truly and profoundly affect his emotional state nor reveal the depth of his inner world to the reader.

What do we see in "Elegy Written on Stanton Drew"? The lyrical hero comes not even to a simple night graveyard but to an ancient burial place of the Druids to once again relive in memory a personal tragedy - the loss of a loved one:

**"Joyless I hail the solemn gloom  
Joyless, I view the pillars as vast and rude  
Where erst the fools of Superstition trod  
In smoking, blood imbrued  
And rising from the tomb –  
Mistaken homage to an unknown God  
Fancy, whither dost thou stray  
Whither dost thou wing thy way?  
Check the rising wild delight.  
Ah! What avails this awful sight?  
Maria is no more!**

Why, curst remembrance, will thou haunt my mind?” (Chatterton, 2020).

The girl's death occurs as a result of a ritual murder committed by the Druids, from which we can conclude that the author takes us to times far from modern times, dark and cruel, which is emphasized by the metaphors: "superstitious ignoramuses, stained with freshly spilled, still



smoking blood" ("fools of Superstition," "imbrued in smoking blood"), rising from the "tomb - mistaken homage to unknown God." The hero turns to his imagination, which acts as a living image; it is already furiously played out and paints before him a terrible picture ("awful sight") of that horrific day when Mary died ("Maria is no more!"). With a heavy heart, he rhetorically asks why "damned memories haunt his thoughts." ("Why, curst remembrance, will thou haunt my mind?") The poem looks quite unusual in terms of plot and time frame against the background of other works of the same genre. This indicates the formation of entirely new aesthetic principles in literature and the emergence of pre-romanticism. "The aesthetic and philosophical plan is presented through the idea of the world as alien, unknowable, and, as a rule, hostile. Evil, if it does not always triumph, then at least does not act as a function of good but as an independent force. The victory of good, in this case, is exalted, acquires a fabulous, fantastic, mythological character" (Lukov, 2006, p. 616).

#### **The Road to Pre-Romanticism**

"Pre-romanticism prefers the mystery and enigma of passions to the sensitivity of sentimentalists. The departure from modern civilization to the bosom of nature is also expressed differently. In sentimentalism, natural life is revealed in the everyday forms of modern life; in pre-romanticism, it is a movement to foreign countries or the distant past, to the Middle Ages, and it is revealed in picturesque forms, in unusual Gothic outlines" (Mikhalskaya. 2017, p. 177). We find all this in "Elegy Written on Stanton Drew."

In pre-romantic poetry, a unique role is given to nature. The landscape becomes an integral, living element in the work, inextricably linked with the main characters, reflecting and sometimes determining their emotional state. Images of nature, which are monosyllabic and meager in sentimental "graveyard" poetry, occupy a dominant position in Chatterton and acquire an incredible poetic power in their emotionality:

**"The blessings past are misery now;  
Upon her lovely brow  
Her lovelier soul she wore.  
Soft as the evening gale**

When breathing perfumes through the rose-hedged vale,  
She was my joy, my happiness refined." (Chatterton, 2020, p. 60).

Suddenly, amidst the horror of the events described, memories of the beloved ("blessings past") arise. The bright, pure soul of the victim appears in the form of a soft evening breeze, carrying the fragrance of a thicket of blooming roses ("Soft as the evening gale, when evening





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perfumes through the rose hedge vale”), and for a moment creating an atmosphere. Happiness and peace. And then, with renewed vigor, the hero sees nightmarish scenes: “The oaks struck by lightning,” “the twilight thickets hiding the gloomy altar, where the blood-stained druid priest sings ritual songs”:

**“All hail, ye solemn horrors of this scene,  
The blasted oak, the dusky green.  
Ye dreary altars, by whose side**

**The druid-priest, in crimson dyed” (Chatterton, 2020, p. 60).**

Pre-romantics, who see evil in the world around them, often give the omnipresent force of evil a universal character and transfer its effect to society and nature. Pre-romantics also see the contradictory, sometimes antagonistic character of nature. However, as Thomson and other sentimentalists do, they do not seek to find some rationalistic or divine explanation for this. Nature attracts pre-romanticists precisely with its mystery and inexplicability (Lukov, 2006, p. 209). Such an attitude to the surrounding reality, in turn, contributed to the spread of the Gothic motif in literature. "Elegy Written on Stanton Drew" is presented in an authentic Gothic style with all the classic attributes of black literature. Chatterton's love for the Gothic found its natural reflection in his pseudo-medieval mystification "Rowley's Poems." The poet's "bloodthirstiness" truly knows no bounds. Sometimes, one gets the impression that the young poet savors the details of the violent death of his heroes. Naturally, in the age of reason and refined taste, such “barbaric” works were an aesthetic and cultural dissonance. The poet demonstrates his "bloodthirstiness" in “Elegy Written on Stanton Drew” while, as a literary genre, the work undergoes a significant transformation. From the “plaintive song,” which in the classical sense is an elegy, only the title remains in the work. The poem loses its philosophical-lyrical mood, acquiring a different, more dynamic, tragic coloring. Chatterton’s graveyard is not a place for reflection and melancholic sadness. It turns into a scene of a real infernal action:

**“The druid-priest, in crimson dyed,  
The solemn dirges were sung,  
And drove the golden knife  
Into the palpitating seat of life,**

**When, rent with horrid shouts, the distant valleys rung. (Chatterton,  
2020, p. 61).**

The reader is presented with a terrifying, barbaric picture of ritual sacrifice. To the sounds of dark ritual chants (“solemn dirges”), the priest plunges a golden dagger into the body of the trembling victim



("palpitating seat of life") so that a heart-rending cry shakes the space, echoing throughout the surrounding valleys. And then, the tension increases even more when the reader is presented with an image of a bloody victim convulsing, flaming purple streams flowing from the altar, the agony of the soul leaving the body and rushing above it in a cloud of steam:

**"The bleeding body bends,  
The glowing purple stream ascends,  
Whilst the troubled spirit near**

**Hovers in the steamy air;" (Chatterton, 2020, p. 61).**

The effect of emotional impact and tension is also achieved on the sound level by alliteration ("bleeding body bends," "stream ascends," "troubled spirit near," "death had doubly armed his dart"), as well as on the rhythmic level - in the form of anaphora's that appear throughout the work. The actions are repeated, but with greater force and tension; for example, when the terrifying ritual singing sounds again and again, horror shakes the space of distant hills and groves:

"Again, the sacred dirge they sing,

Again, the distant hill and coppice-valley ring". (Chatterton, 2020, p. 61).

Maria's soul does not find peace and continues to rush about in agony. The tension is so great that the hero cannot bear what is happening, loses his mind, and dies. The image of death is personified; it "sharpened her dagger twice," and an evil fate overtakes both lovers. And yet the soul of the protagonist finally receives liberation from the prison of its torment and rushes to meet his beloved:

**"Soul of my dear Maria, haste,  
Whilst my languid spirit's waste;  
When from this my prison free,  
Catch my soul; it flies to thee;  
Death had doubly armed his dart,**

**In piercing thee, it pierced my heart." (Chatterton, 2020, p. 61).**

The work itself is small, consisting of seven stanzas. However, due to the unusual subject matter, abundance, and diversity of artistic and stylistic means, it turns out to be bright, dynamic, and exciting for the reader. This work's unique metrics and rhyme are also important for defining it as pre-romantic. Sentimentalists still adhere to the rules of versification. For example, "Night Poems about Death" are written in iambic tetrameter of adjacent rhyme (aabb ccdd, etc.), and each stanza is a quatrain. "Elegy Written in a Country graveyard" is also presented as quatrains from iambic pentameter of cross rhyme (abab cdcd). Such metrics and rhyme were considered ideal for the genre of elegy, as they helped to preserve a





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shade of measured Ness and monotony. Chatterton often blurs the genre, including through metric variations. This also applies to “Elegy Written on Stanton Drew.” The first stanza already shows the intricate metrics of Chatterton’s verse:

**“Joyless I hail the solemn gloom,  
Joyless, I view the pillars as vast and rude  
Where erst the fool of Superstition trod,  
In smoking, blood imbrued  
And rising from the tomb—**

**Mistaken homage to an unknown God.” (Chatterton, 2020, p. 60).**

The stanza consists of six lines of intertwined rhyme abcbac, which is extremely rare in verse. The stanza can be represented as the following diagram:

```

/-- -- / -- / -- /
/-- -- / -- / -- / -- /
-- / -- / -- -- -- //
-- / -- / -- /
-- / -- / -- /
-- / -- / -- -- //
    
```

The example shows that the stanza does not have a precise poetic meter. It combines a trochee tetrameter and a trochee pentameter. The fourth and fifth lines are presented in iambic trimeter, and the third and sixth lines completely violate the meter.

Moreover, it is worth noting that not a single stanza in the work is repeated in its structure, and each combines different poetic meters and types of rhyme from the simplest – adjacent and cross - to ring and intertwined. This broadly defined Chatterton as an innovator in poetry. Thus, a massive departure from the norms and rules in versification began among the Romantics after him.

However, he was the first to violate these rules, paving the way for forming a new direction in literature. It is not for nothing that romantics admired him; he made many significant artistic discoveries, which they took as a basis and subsequently developed and enriched.

**Conclusion**

The sentimental "graveyard" school in the person of Parnell, Jung, and Gray, despite the novelty both in the ideological and artistic plans, the desire to move away from excessive classical artificiality and rationalism, to get closer to the emotional-sensory world of man, is still quite closely connected with the enlightenment ideology. Despite the unusual enlightenment standards of the place of action of the works, the authors do not set their task to be transferred to the afterlife to frighten the





reader. The Gothic entourage of the graveyard, the sometimes-arising night visions, and the image of death, on the contrary, call on him to turn on common sense, to evaluate the finality of life's path, to think about what is important, for what he lives, what trace he will leave behind. External material goods are not simply regarded as something transient but also become the cause of callousness and cruelty in relationships between people, injustice and class inequality, and spiritual death.

The mood and thoughts of the heroes of these lyrical works bear a clearly expressed meditative, philosophical, and didactic character of reflections on the complexity and contradictions of earthly existence and the grace of immortality. These reflections become more profound and sensitive in the bosom of picturesque but peaceful and serene nature.

The authors call for re-evaluating life's values and striving for moral and spiritual improvement. Poetry also carries a positive, educational connotation of common sense in perceiving the surrounding reality, hope for man as an individual endowed with the ability not only to think and reason but also to create, feel, empathize, and have faith in his ability to be in harmony with the surrounding world, both physical and spiritual. The fact that the discoveries in literature made by Parnell, Jung, and Gray, in many ways, prepared the ground for developing pre-romanticism is indisputable. However, it is not possible to identify these literary movements. Sentimentalist melancholy develops into a deep pre-romantic depression, which is felt already in T. Chatterton's "Elegy Written on Stanton Drew."

**Firstly**, a completely different mood reigns in the pre-romantic elegy; a feeling of mental pain and hopelessness replaces the thoughtfulness and sadness of the sentimentalists. This is mainly due to the subjectivization of the narrative. Emotions and experiences about personal tragedy replace melancholic reflections on universal human suffering and adversity.

**Secondly**, the Gothic motif fulfils its direct task - to create an atmosphere of horror that cannot be rationally explained and leads to the inevitable death of the main characters.

**Thirdly**, the work has an unusual plot and spatial-temporal organization.

**Finally**, there is a lack of normativity in the metrics and rhyme of the poetic work and a blurring of the elegy genre. All of the above characteristics indicate the transition of poetry to an entirely new ideological and aesthetic level, which is the period of pre-romanticism.

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