

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Death as something common in our life becomes more valuable when it is talked in a certain point of view. Generally, *death* has been learned, for the one who believes, to consider it as a gate that delivers human from the life to a New World, the world that lies beyond human thought. Though it cannot be denied that if someone enters this world of the unknown they usually dare not interpret it as more than just a cycle of life. Yet their curiosity always bring a consequence in a way of searching for answers in the direction of finding the meaning of life itself.

Life for some people has got to be an obsession that may lead to an exploitation of the rights they have. They might think that life is assumed as a chance of doing everything they can before they finally – admitted or not - will meet their own destiny in facing death, and that means the end of their chance and the rights to do everything as well. Though they have the rights to do everything, it does not mean they have no responsibility about what they have done. And the feeling of having responsible about what they do will conduct their behavior towards everything in their life which influences also

in the way of viewing other aspects or sides of the world. Appreciation then will spring, not just for one's own sake but also for others.

Spirit appears in life to give a strong impulse to learn more about the life itself and bring about the consciousness of doing the things in the world. The spirit may appear in the form of the history or the experiences that have been done before, the energy that burns, for one who is capable to learn much from it, will guide to a better life without forgetting to appreciate the things lied behind. While life goes on, time will decide for each person partially to become worthy. Death, which emerges then, will be faced as a symbol of correction in the face of history to give the survivals a knowledge of consciousness.

The life of the humble people usually has been forgotten because it seems they do not-so much in changing or coloring the face of the history of a Country. Thus their 'death' are much different with the 'death' of the people who are concerned directly with the wider practical world such as government officials, politicians, artists, wealthy people, and many other kinds of status which are classified as noble class. The humbles live their life in a more common and simple way. They find them selves in a community that shares the feeling in genial relationship with others even with nature surrounding. They live, they work, they share, they breed, and they dream, even when their Country is in a confrontation with other Countries they fight, too, without tension. The energy they have seems enclosed by the status and the hard life they struggle. When talking about a nation actually it talks more about the

figures who are living in every corner of the country, the people who have built the country with no monument rising to remember in their tomb.

People are used to live in a memorable world. Many praises have been given to people of the noble class. They may find so many tributes granted for the noble. Monuments are built to memorize the honorable action or to give credit to what they had done. Yet nature and the humble people are not less appreciated – though not in the same way, they have their own characteristic of the role they had in the living world. They have given extensively so many influences to the world around, because of the closeness of the relationship between them. Their roles in common life use to be considered less than the noble whereas their death is like loosing a potential energy in real nation life.

┌ An artist with the art itself comes across with the essence of their thought to give their best interpretation or understanding or just an expression of something that he likes or wonders. The subject of thinking can be such a matter of contemplation for the life and things in the world around him that usually has the strongest impulse in the art's creation process. Thus time, place, and condition around mostly seem involving in the shaping of the art; and the closeness between the work and the things around, reality in particular, seems to affect the result as the work becomes worthwhile. It seems to be find through the medium of works of art, in this case literary works, that many works of literature talk or rather give thought, picture, or interpretation about death as well as the life itself. It is known that art particularly is a reflection of the things – in real or abstractly – which exists or

lives in the poet's mind, and then expressed in a certain form of art; in this case poetry and an elegy in particular.

Poetry as one of the forms of literature has given many works of this *theme* or idea through some poets who composed other fine poems to honor friends who had died, like: John Milton's *Lycidas* (1637), Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Adonais* (1821), Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis* (1867), Thomas Gray's *Sonnet on the Death of Richard West* (1742), and many more. Usually, the words theme and meaning convey a general sense of ideas, or the specific sense of a major or central idea. The theme of a work is the key at once to its total meaning or message and to its plan or structure, thus in their poem the reader may find the idea about death celebrated in a certain point of views. In a way of expression they might write in forms of sonnets, elegies, odes, ballads, and etc.

Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* is one of the best known poems, which talks about death in particular point of view. An elegy which stands closely to a melancholy or mournfully contemplative, especially if it laments a death; though before Gray's famous "Elegy," the word often denoted a personal poem written in pairs of lines, on whatever theme. Through this poem Gray tries to give a wide thought and picture about the death of the humble people in a sense of contemplation in the scene of a church's graveyard to make a vivid picture about what the reader actually face in the poem.

Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard is a poem that talks about a contemplation of the death and everything around it. The setting of the poem takes place in a country church's cemetery. The imagery used in the poem helps a lot in giving the reader senses of mourning and contemplating toward the poem. Thus the scene of the death is well captured by the reader but without arousing a sense of horror. The "Elegy" appears to be public reflections on death, the sorrows of life, and the mysteries of human destiny.

The "Elegy" is a statement of conflict – between the values of education and cultivation and those of rural simplicity. The lyric poignance that Gray achieved here derives from the universality of this irreconcilable struggle. The poem's concluding "Epitaph" suggests the possibility of combining the values of both realms. (Americana Corp. 1977: 213).

B. Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the study above, it is interesting to analyze *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* as a tribute to the life of the humble, particularly the buried forefathers of the village. The *deaths*, the subject which is brought out from a deep contemplation toward human perspective of life, highlight the human behavior during his life and what are left after his death. The problem to be analyzed in this study are formulated into the following questions:

- How are the imagery and the tone built to emphasize the theme?
- How does the speaker reflect his heart and mind toward the *deaths*?
- For whom is the poem presented to and why?

C. Objective of the Study

The main focus of the analysis here is the tribute to the 'death' of the humble people through the analysis of the theme of Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* and his background life. The imagery and the tone which become the most significant aspects to reveal the essence of the poem are used to catch the theme implied. Since the death as the subject of the theme has a quite wide perspective, it is very important to know what kind of death and who are really suggested here by the *deaths* brought by the speaker through the poem. The speaker and the existence of the poet as well hold the role in performing the appreciation toward the humble.

D. Significance of the Study

Through this analysis of the theme, hopefully, the readers may get the intuitive knowledge on the subject of death in a particular perspective which got from the "Elegy". Thus what they will get here is more useful in any other life insight to learn and realize of something that stands so close to every individual private life, mainly to face the coming of the Death. Generally, also it is hoped to give the readers a wider knowledge in a literary field by studying the existing theme of death; and its appreciation through literary works, especially in the form of poetry.

E. Scope and Limitation

In this study, the analysis will concentrate partly in the theme and mainly to celebrate the humble in the "Elegy". In the way of reaching the theme, it is not possible to gain the theme without studying the elements of the poem especially here the imagery, the figurative language, the tone used, and also through the speaker of the poem for they have the most significant parts in building the theme. It is aimed to give a bridge between the elements of the poem with the theme implied. The life of the poet is also included to get closer to the work of art that so many relationships occur between the background of the poet and the poem for primary concern with the expressiveness of the poet through his work.

F. Theoretical Background

The study of this thesis firstly is concentrating on the analysis of the theme that is suggested in the "Elegy". The main idea that will be achieved here is not merely to find the theme of it, but mainly to give direction about the perspective of the poet through his work. Therefore, the expressive theory is applied here since the poem becomes an expression of the poet toward something dwelling in his heart and mind.

The expressive theory is employed to reveal the relation between the poet and his expression in the form of poetry, which is able to give more insight on understanding, catching, and especially analyzing the theme of this work, and then to reveal the poem as a whole thought of idea. Yet it is not

possible that the literary work as a piece of artwork and has its own soul to build the concrete thought inside is merely observed from the extrinsic aspect without touching the surface and the shape of the art itself. Thus the intrinsic elements of the poem, particularly in the context of intrinsic approach and thematic approach, will be used to reveal some elements of the verses to conduct in finding the theme of the "Elegy". It is appropriate then to support the analysis by using biographical approach to get closer to the work of the poet by studying the life of the poet, as well, that so many things occurred in the poem have connection to the things in the poet's world.

G. Method of the Study

To analyze the problems, it is needed to do the research in the library that is a process in finding informations, which are important to help directing the analysis. The informations are collected from various books, encyclopaedias, articles, and any kind of materials related to the subject matter of this thesis, especially Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard*.

The analysis of this poem essentially is by using structural method. Through this method the verse will be analyzed toward some elements which construct the poem. Paraphrasing the poem is used also to give more understanding in the process of analyzing the theme of the poem. In addition, the method of reading the "Elegy" employs interpretative analysis which is applied from the intrinsic analysis and the background of the poet.

H. Definition of Key Terms

There are several terms, which appear often in this analysis, and they are:

Tribute : the poet's feeling of appreciation toward the humble's life and death.

"Elegy" : refers to the poem: *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard*.

Deaths : refers to the forefathers of the villager who were buried in the country churchyard.

Humble people : common and simple people who have a lower status than the noble class, have no title and sometimes connoted as low economically people.

CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK