

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ANALYSIS

#### A. Paraphrases of the Poem

##### *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard*

[Stanza 1] The curfew has given a sign of the end of a day, and the farmer and his team slowly are driving exhaustedly home, while I'm alone then accompanied with the world (nature) darkening the day. [Stanza 2] The landscape which glimmered at the day, now looks fading while the atmosphere is felt quiet, and the sound of the beetle that flies free sings the earth lullaby. [Stanza 3] At the distant tower mantled with ivy plants, an owl sounds like complains lamentably to the moon revolves for being considered disturbing its kingdom (nest) which is reigned for such a long time. [Stanza 4] In the yew-tree's shadow beneath the elms, there are many moldering heaps that breathe, each of them are the rustic Forefathers of the hamlet that were buried there. [Stanza 5] The fresh breeze of the morning, the sound of the swallows twittering from the shed, the crow of the cock, or the loud sound of the horn blown by the hunter in their way home from hunting, all of those sounds will never wake them from their sleep. [Stanza 6] For each of them, there will be no more warm of the burning hearth or the busy of his wife plying to do the house work, and he also will never feel again his children

welcoming or climbing his knees to get their father's kisses in his return to home from the hard work. [Stanza 7] In the harvest time they would taste the crops they had been worked out, though they had to work hard to make furrows for the field in the hardness of the soil; and how happy they were at the time they drove their team to the field while the woods seemed, put some respect the hard works they made. [Stanza 8] Do not let Ambition mocking their hard working, their modest happiness, and the destiny that seems obscure for them, that even, the Grandeur seems never to care about the Poor's short and simple faith. [Stanza 9] The show of the noble heraldry and the power of the authority they had, and all the beauty and wealth they ever had are alike the inevitable time that waits to lead but to the grave (death). [Stanza 10] Even the people who are always being proud tend to charge the fault to it (death), if then the memory written over their tomb is no trophies raised to remember and where the pealing anthem sings the note of praise through the long-drawn aisle and the fretted vault of the church. [Stanza 11] Can the urn with the story carved in it or the alive-like bust make them back to live again? Can the voice, which is always being proud (Honor), wake up the silent dust of the deaths, or Flattery sound persuade the dull cold ear of Death to make them back? [Stanza 12] Perhaps in this graveyard is laid some people whose hearts were once filled with the holy fire (spirit), and hands, which might have controlling the rod of the empire, or lived to celebrate the country with their art skills. [Stanza 13] But Knowledge for them is too much spoiled by never used it right, the poverty seemed repressing their noble spirit

(rage), and had frozen the genial current of the soul. [Stanza 14] There are many gems, whose lights are able to ray the dark deep caves of the ocean, and there are many flowers born blushing unseen, and wasted their beauty through the nothingness (desert air). [Stanza 15] There were some village-Hampdens bravely try to oppose the little tyrants of their fields, also some unknown Milton there may rest, some Cromwell who could not be blamed for the struggle of their country. [Stanza 16] The applause of the listening senates who are only to give command, while so many threats of pain and ruin caused by them spreading through all the generous land, and they only concern with the citizen destiny from the nation's policy. [Stanza 17] Fate has been limited not only their virtues but also their crimes and prevented a slaughter toward a succession to the throne, to shut the gate of mercy on mankind. [Stanza 18] They hide the pain of the struggle for the truth to erase the shame, while they heap the Luxury and Pride through other people's genial spirit or hard works. [Stanza 19] The life of those noble people is far from the crowded of the humble strife, in the other hand the humble's simple dreams never go amiss from their quiet way of life while they keep doing their daily life. [Stanza 20] That even those bones (laid there) have been much reliable to protect their existence from the insult than the fragile monuments, which still stands with its imperfect rhymes and shapeless image curved, for then attracts a sigh of pity from anyone who passes by. [Stanza 21] Not so-well educated poet has wrote their name and year with memorabilia and elegy written, and some holy words quoted from the Bible to give lesson the rustic moralist about dead.

[Stanza 22] Actually who, except the dumb that becomes a prey, and for whom this person will ever want to die instead of the warm of the wonderful day or even to cast the longing for the past? [Stanza 23] The dying soul will rely his death on some loving people, and the closing eyes only need some pure tears; and even from the tomb the Nature seems to cry for his death; and in our ashes their familiar spirit will live. [Stanza 24] For you, *the speaker*, and others who think also about the humble death, their artless tale relates to those lines. If there are any chance to make a deep thought, your fate will make a change through the life. [Stanza 25] Occasionally, some older-shepherds once told that often they saw him at the very beginning of the day, went with his hasty steps in the morning to go to work under the sun at the upland lawn. [Stanza 26] There below the beech tree wreathed with its old roots so high, he would spend his day and watch the little river babbles by. [Stanza 27] Far in the wood with his disdain smile, he would mutter his dream that seemed hard to be true and now faint, like one without hope or become crazy because losing his love. [Stanza 28] One morning I felt missing him in the hill he used to be, along the heath and his favorite tree, and other people who came at the rill, or the lawn and the wood would not replace his presence. [Stanza 29] The next thing then the funeral march, slow through the church-way path, we saw him buried, or, in the contrary, he was born to another world; come closer and read (for you are able to read) the epitaph carved in his stone there near the hawthorn tree.

THE EPITAPH: [Stanza 30] In this spot-ground here he rests, he who never taste Fame and Fortune and whose melancholy humble birth never had something special. [Stanza 31] He has a very sincere and generosity heart that God will give him an immense recompense for it, he has given all his life to serve along the *Death (Misery)* and now he gets more from Heaven. [Stanza 32] No need now to talk about his merits or his frailties that he has peace now in the lap of his Maker.

## **B. Analysis of the Poem**

The analysis of the poem intrinsically will be divided into four parts according to some elements of the poem, which are considered as the most significant aspects that build the theme.

### **B.1. Imagery**

The imagery used here has a significant role to emerge the reader consciousness toward object in real or abstractly and then intuitively performs or stimulates senses or appearances in controlling the feeling to build the atmosphere the poet tries to inform in the poem. The imagery applies also to the settings occur in the "Elegy" in which the poet has given soul to live the world inside the poem with images and particular senses in bringing the vividness of the real world into his poetry.

Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* is opened with stanzas containing a picture well depicted as the end of a day in a



countryside and the light of a day replaced by the dark falls covering the landscape and the speaker as well.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day, 1  
 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea  
 The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,  
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

The sense which becomes a concurrence to the close of one side of life that then continued to another side to face on the ultimate destiny that like it or not it becomes a part of the life itself. Other part will substitute the previous part just like death takes over the life side. It has given a suggestion about the speaker's mood of contemplation and that is the one thing the poet proposes to deliver the reader to the world of the speaker wants to feel about. The air of *solemn stillness* (line: 6) then also emerges from the description of the attitude of the nature around. The world then becomes eminent to pertain the unity of the poem tries to imply, the world of contemplation.

The churchyard as the main place where the speaker holds his mind in meditating the perspective about death, appears to dignify the atmosphere of the melancholy nuance in the poem (line: 9-14). Yet it is not merely to strengthen the mood but also it magnifies the originality of which the main source of all appear in the "Elegy"; it is here all started. The poet, accordingly who had given the picture of the real place as the country churchyard of Stoke Poges, intentionally wants the reader feels the deepening sense through the scene of the exact place where the matter of all begin. More alike it is rather said that when one thinks about death then no other place suit than the



noble class – in the other hand – always puts it as one of their essential concerns of their life. Their potentially energy that never unfold is shown as something beautifully great but unfortunately wasted through the hands of time; as if there is no chance for them to make because their fate has put them to a place where nothing can reach; it is impressed in the poem through the imagery of the following stanza:

53

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

They may have been full of rich promise that was ultimately stunted by poverty or ignorance. The poverty appears as one of the clothes worn by the humble. It represses their knowledge and their noble spirit in making more progress for their life, and for wider society especially, the nation in particular.

49

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

The stanza reflects the speaker's hearty thought and feeling concerning the fate of the humble for the potent power that seems useless by the fact they so poor to have the energy to dedicate what they actually feel able.

The "Elegy" records the speaker's empathy toward the humble that he is in question to the competence of the *Proud* who is almost always in vain provoking their nobility, (line: 33-44). The memory they made to honour the



existence of their merits is asked, or rather challenged by the speaker to change their destiny that not much different with the humble for the fact they *dead* as well. The elegant tomb, the statue, and all of the elegantly-made memorials will do nothing to the person who had already dead. Nothing to be proud of when remembering that all of it only to face the hand of death and all it left are name and some words upon the grave.

For they whose nobleness were shaped in a memorial of statue and verses written in their tomb, the "Elegy" exposes that their own bones buried are much reliable in guarding their existence. The monument built is not much alike then becomes a poor thing which only invites none but pitiful sigh to see the not-so-well shaped statue and its *uncouth rhymes* written in it (line: 79-80). The speaker is expressing his compassion toward the exaggerated memorial that the soul of the *death* only needs but just a little of concern toward their death, like described through these following lines:

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,   89  
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;

The devotedly attached and peacefulness feeling of the people those are left; there will be a lesson they can learn from his death. Even the speaker is to come to a state of contemplation about death that he (*thee* in the line 93 suggests to the speaker) reminds himself and he demands likewise for the reader mindfulness in thinking about it through the "Elegy" he wrote. These next lines accounts to the imagery of feeling the speaker of the poem tries to share and to think about the matter,

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead, 93  
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;  
 If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,

and then closed with:

Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate, – 96

The stanza literally suggests that life then hopefully will bring the one who has awareness to much valuer than before, nevertheless the fate may be changing if their death will be taken as not more than just a lesson to live. By giving the life a credit to do much better instead of living in a world of haughtiness and nothing will be met but death at the end of our *path* of life, the *deaths* will feel more appreciated of their presence. Thus consequently the stanza visualise the speaker attitude by not only to remind the others but his own self as well.

The “Elegy” has given also an account of a person who remains unknown for the poem closed with an *epitaph* of someone who was close to the mind of the speaker, (line: 97-128). The four stanzas (line: 97-112) are the visualisation of the imagery referring to the activities or attitudes describing the unknown villager through the story told by some *hoary-headed swain* (old shepherds) or witnessed by the speaker himself. The speaker acquaints the unknown for his existence felt so close to the perception of the speaker. The portrait given in the poem depicts the relationship though not described that they were once had direct relationship, yet he seems quite impressed by the presence of the unknown in part of his life; it can be seen from the following lines:

109

One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,  
 Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;  
 Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

That relationship, which then becomes one point of view shown the speaker's concern of those humbles, seems stimulating the speaker of writing the "Elegy". As the poet of the "Elegy" the speaker has a responsible to deliver the nature of the elegy in finding the main silhouette from which derives contemplation toward the death of the humble. The unknown appears to give a perspective point of which the poet will then stretch his subject of the humbles and particularly to get down closer to earth; he tries to approach as close as he could to the matter of humble life and the death by using one of them as an example, contrasted with the noble life and death, from which then becomes the theme of the "Elegy". Meanwhile, at the end of the first part of the poem preceding the epitaph, the picture of a funeral of the unknown is emerged to give emphasising of the unknown death, (line: 113-114). Through this last stanza preceding *the epitaph*, once more the speaker inquires the others to learn about death from the epitaph of the unknown villager upon his grave, (line: 115-116).

The form of *The Epitaph* closes the "Elegy" with the sense of lamentation for which the speaker then considers that death is much closer to the mind of one who gets the thought after persisting the contemplation in reading the verses upon the epitaph. The unknown's death is nothing compared to the life itself for he is now over in the duty of searching and

filling the essences of life, and no need, too, complaining or talking about the *death* (him) but liberation of the burden of his being by the death itself. In the eternal sleep then he may rest peacefully in the lap of his Maker (line: 121-128). Gray does not leave the subject of death alone without contributing the life as the source of all in deepening the theme – though the life side is not put as a comparison to the death –, more likely it links our mind, with a sense of reminding, to the death by putting between. The life of the unknown therewith is concluded to a piece of tomb consisting some lines of words which becomes his quite short-picture of life and death, for he never knew about nobility of the social status: ‘A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown’, line 118, as a memorial for the everyone left behind in the living world for whom then the tomb is represented. The tomb is not only for him as the one who was buried there but for them also who may still live and comprehend the epitaph written.

## **B.2. Figurative Language**

Analysing the various images in a poem is probably the greatest concern of all poetic analysis since in the patterns of imagery seem to lie the darker and more secret meanings – both intentional and unintentional – which are to be discovered in a poem. Figurative language used in the “Elegy” becomes one of the basic aspects constructing the imagery holds the considerable point in which the nature of the poetry relies its essence. Thus it

directs the significant point from which the poem broadens its words formulation in producing the idea expressed by the poet.

The “Elegy” whose imagery draws deliberately the life and death of the humble brings forth the nuance of mourning through meditation in a quite general use of words. The figure of speech used in the poem relies on the using of some metaphors, similes, allusions, and a hyperbole in delivering its ideas. The rhetorical figures also increase the clearness and the depth of the meaning. The opening of the poem that rather talks about the circumstances and setting where it takes place (three first stanzas) is quite metaphorical in describing the mood of which the poet tries to intimate, the atmosphere that prelude the scene of gloom yet without arousing sense of horror. The scene is somehow compared to the speaker inner feeling, in which the mood of contemplation and mourning laid, and later will accompany the way the elegy flows.

Concerning the *deaths*, the village’s forefathers buried in the churchyard, the poet expresses their state of dead by using hyperbole to elevate the uninteruptable of their eternal-sleep being from whatever-happens around them.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,    17  
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.

It emphasises the speaker attention toward the deaths that the people buried there naturally are in a sleep, even then when the fact that they will never

wake up again, yet their soul is never in the state of dead like their bodies. Their soul is always there instead of their decaying bodies and it will rise in the form of noble energy or spirit used by the next generation who are able to learn ponderly from their tombs. The poet through metaphor in the following lines expresses the appreciation to the deaths' roles or merits they made for their Country in participation as a dedication to make alive the direction and the process of governing the Country:

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45  
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
 Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
 Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre:

The villagers are also represented through metaphor connected with their potential power which are never stretched to put in use in maximum because of the condition of poverty and ignorance repressed their changing-chance destiny. For them it seems too hard to make progress of their life. A great potentiality possessed by the humble, somewhat compared by the poet as a *gem* and a *flower* is futilely never quite applied to lift their own life standard. Thus the grand and the beauty of the *gem* and the *flower* are still unknown or unused for the unexplored abilities nevertheless quite far to reach, as expressed in the fourteenth stanza:

Full many a gem of purest ray serene 53  
 The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:  
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

and merely *spoil the time and knowledge*, (line: 49-50). Yet they cannot be blamed for the destiny which seems obscure in the sense of fate has put them to a place that is hard to gain.

While in the other hand concerning the speaker's perspective toward the high status people and their lofting pride, it is depicted through simile for all their *boast of heraldry* (of the high status), *pomp of power* and their being proud of *wealth and beauty* life are *alike* nothing but time (*hour*) which *lead but to the grave*, (line: 33-36). All of the nobleness, power, and fortune, at the *inevitable* time, will meet nothingness through their death, and nothing can avoid the hands of death even the power and wealthiness they have been proud of previously in their life. For the next stanza, the existence of their tombs will beat their pride for the fact they cannot rely on it anymore like they did before, for the poet expresses their inacceptance toward the death by *imputing* this as a *fault* of their life.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault                    37  
If memory o'er the tomb no trophies raise,

The lines appear as metaphorically relating their disagreement in facing their fate for coming of the death since they never have prepared it in their life.

A simile is used by the poet also in describing the feeling of the unknown villager toward his heart. The unknown was in awareness of his fate that seemed so obscure for the dreams that hard to reach. His attitude, described in the poem taken place in the woods, toward that feeling is *like* someone who loosed his hope or someone who got mad when he loosed his love, (line: 105-108). From that stanza the poet is depicting the insecurity

feeling of the unknown, represents also the other humble people, toward his fate; the poet has put him as manifestation of the (sometimes) inacceptance feeling of those humble.

In manifesting the villagers' highly characteristics for the struggle they made in defending their integrity, the "Elegy" has put a comparison to some outstanding figures in the vehicle of allusions. The poet had written the name like Hampden, Milton, Cromwell in praising the *deaths'* competence for protecting the integrity of their village especially from *the tyrant of their fields* that tried to oppress the field which has fed their family all the time, (line: 57-60). *Humpden* as British civil war hero for the Parliamentarians in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, who fought against the unfair taxes under the reign tyrant: Charles I, the opposition, is put to glorify their merits in defending their rights. *Cromwell*, a leader of Parliamentarians army in British civil war in the 17<sup>th</sup> century who was also the executor of Charles I and ruled the British Government in one period, appears in the poem to praise the chief of the village who led the other villagers to keep struggling to protect their village integrity from the tyrants. Meanwhile, *Milton*, John, (1608-1674) was a 17<sup>th</sup> century English poet, he was also a noted historian, scholar, pamphleteer, and the secretary of Cromwell for the Parliamentarians and the Puritan Commonwealth that his qualification praises to resemble the unknown artists the village might have for also described – one of them – the tomb stone-cutter as the *unlettered Muse* in:



Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,           81  
 The place of fame and elegy supply:  
 And many a holy text around she strews

It is a metaphor of the unschooled poet – for the word *Muse* refers to a poet:

*Muse* is any of the nine sister goddesses in Greek mythology presiding over song and poetry and the arts and sciences, and sometimes it refers also to a poet himself, (Encyclopedia of Literature, 1995: 790),

the poet who never had proper education that lived inside the community for his presence was merely as a stone-cutter of the *deaths'* tombs for writing the death's name, their significance dates and years (born and dead), and some memorial words or a quotation from the bible for without knowing he also had given teaching to everyone – specifically the other villagers – who could learn from what he had done through his writing upon the tombs: 'That teach the rustic moralist to die', (line: 84).

The whole epitaph (line: 117-128) written is also to represent a symbolic appreciation the poet toward the unknown for the reader then is asked directly to pay attention to it for taking tribute of his death. He suggests metaphorically the unknown as a direct example of the subject he has explained along the first part of the "Elegy", and then put it as a reminder toward the existence of death in the humbles life and as a memorial – from the poet – to praise or to honour the 'Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere', for then not only him that gives appreciation but also God will *recompense us largely send* for him, (line: 121-122).

### **B.3. T o n e**

Tone literally renders to the attitude and feeling of Gray toward his artwork. The tone inside the “Elegy” refers not only to attitudes but also to the quality of the poet’s style that reveals – or builds – these attitudes. The imagery and figurative language, which have been discussed above, are parts of tone that significantly communicate the compelling of the tone in the poetry.

In the melancholy of the opening stanzas of the “Elegy”, both mood and landscape mutually sustain each other. The poet, committed to obviously opposed ideals of nature and art, reconciles the two, demonstrating the beauty of the ordinary and the pathos of its passing. Especially the very first stanza appears to strengthen the form of the poetry as a lyrical poem, a piece of poetry that seems to be emotional or reflective soliloquies. The quite simple expression of the poet in pouring his reflections toward the life and death of the humble seems to help also to experience the solemnity of a meditation brought by the speaker’s of the poem revelation.

The scenes of the landscape at the twilight and the nature in preparing its night activities have given the sight of gloominess in delivering the mood to the next scene, the scene of the graveyard. The quality in the way he throws the imagery of the nature and the use of the uncomplicated rhetorical figures in expressing the contour of the landscape and the nature activities seems vividly interacting with the reader’s awareness in depicting the imaginary scene. Thus in the next stage of the poem the atmosphere which is well built

through the previous stanzas the “Elegy” looks so smooth in flowing and communicating its essences. The mood of lamentation is well reached then since the beginning of the poem from which attracting the reader’s condolence toward the *deaths*.

The sympathetic tone to the life of the *deaths* is emerged then in the next stanzas (line: 21-32) for the poet put their daily life activities in drawing the reader’s ability in sensing the joy and the love they shared among their family and their work field in depicting their vivacity. Through the imagery given, the impression of appreciation appears for the first time in the “Elegy”. The empathy toward their obscure fate brings forth a concern about the humbles -- sometimes felt like – unfair life compared to the hard struggling of life and to other side society, the noble, which has much more chance to take pleasure from the life. The way the poet implies his expression monologuely will be well captured by the reader to continue walking along the speaker contemplating and appreciating the life of the humble.

That is why then the poet, concerning with the noble, arises a sense of provocation in the next line (33-44) to challenge the *Proud* and the wealth toward their capacity and the power possessed in against the hands of death. Their wealthiness and power in their life will be nothing compared to their own destiny, for the monument the built in their tomb also gives no help escaping from the fate. Through this phrases the speaker of the poem tries to make a comparison, since the status of both sides in the society in different

state but the fate of both will be met in very parallel place, the place where only death in command.

In regarding the *deaths'* merits in the Country role, the poet has given an expression through the following stanza:

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45  
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
 Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
 Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre:

There is a sense of wonder in the appreciation that the people who laid there are the heroes or the significant figures in celebrating the *empire* (British) role and life who were unknown and never written in a glorious name. Thus for the next three stanzas their unnoticed competencies are written in a tone of pathetic since they cannot compromise with their own fate, (line: 49-60). The fate has put them in a likely *deep hole* for the hard life they have to make in struggling the life while the wall of poverty and ignorance seem to give them boundaries to make progresses toward their life. Yet Gray without annoying the obscurity of their destiny still in honour voice tries to commemorate their values through especially those three stanzas concluded as the main praise given to the humble in the "Elegy".

For the people at the government in the elite status, Gray has exposed their attitude dedicated to the Country through the inconsistency of their policy in an ironic tone, (line: 61-72). The *senates* in the Parliament have been put in the poem to criticise the nonsense of the policies given to their people

that only give nothing but sorrow, which then affected most the lower class society.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command, 61  
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,

To the *Luxury* and *Pride* they lead their policies and all the benefits got from their high position supported or supplied unconsciously by the pure energy – the words 'Muse's flame' refer to the mystical inspiration – of the citizen in the Country. Thus the ordinary people apparently becomes the victims of their falsehood crimes.

Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride 71  
 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

In the three stanzas (line: 61-72) concerning with the political community described above for each stanzas are always closed with a line in an ironic expression opposing the previous lines in the stanzas.

Thomas Gray in this poem puts its most essence through the atmosphere of contemplation accompanied by the sense of mourning between the lines number 77 until 92 or in four stanzas and closed with the tone of awareness in the next stanza, (line: 93-96). The passage talks about the death in the general term, the appearance of the lines 73 until 76 preceding the four stanzas is to give a bridge from the politicians' life to the life of general people. The poet pours his attitudes about death and life as well in metaphorical languages; he mixes many values in these lines that in the

general tone it appears as contemplation toward death stirred with the life as well.

The passage of line: 77-80 is concerning with the ironic of the monument built to honour someone buried beneath that its exaggerated existence only invites a *sigh* as a pity expression to it. The *sigh* becomes a symbol of which people do not need a model to give a tribute to someone or something, to express their feeling of honour or to give their deepest regard. The statue and the verses written in the monument are not much than an ornament which sometimes not so good in the making. The stone cutter of the tomb who wrote the name, years, and sometimes a quotation from the Bible, in the other side is praised by the poet as an *unlettered Muse* for their presence as: 'That teach the rustic moralist to die,' line 84. He becomes a figure whose credit, in his maximum capacity as an artist, is far valuer in the main essence since he has given the others, who notice, a lesson, a lesson to regard death as well as the life itself. The next stanza is to arise awareness for the existing of death – for who actually wants to invite death? – since the beauty and the joy of life seem much more attracting, questioned by the poet.

The poet ultimately draws his awareness expressed in the lines: 93-96, that he is in reminding himself as well as the others, the reader in particular, to think further or to contemplate about death, through a metaphor stated in the poem as 'these lines their artless tale relate', (line: 94).

The tone of longing expressed by the poet connecting with the death of the unknown villager fills the stanza number 28 in which he flows out his missing feeling toward him.

One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill, 109  
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;  
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

The poet intentionally closes the poem with the sense of mourning through the death of the unknown villager and his funeral (line: 113-114) to provide a personal attention but still there is an appealing feeling in asking anyone who has concern about the life itself by looking through the death.

Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay 115  
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.

#### **B.4. The Speaker of the Poem**

Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* uses first person point of view in expressing the idea. The speaker of the poem for his appearance then utters his heart and mind through the elegy he wrote. The title itself suggests to the subjectivity of which the speaker wishes the poem he wrote is considered as the reflection of his feeling for the contemplation he made as the source from which the verses have flowed.

His presence in the poem is known, seen, or felt through some self-identity stated implicitly or explicitly on the "Elegy". In the very first stanza he declares his presence as an introduction to his appearance in his elegy; and

the way he introduces his existence through the last line of the stanza also conveys a purpose of pronouncing the essence of the elegy that this poem is derived from the contemplation he made.

And leaves the world to darkness and to me. 4

The way the poet addresses his attention in presumably talking to the *Proud* in the tenth stanza uses the word: *you*, in order to give a direct communication to the reader.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault 37

It affects the emotion of the speaker and the reader for the direct speech the poet used, as like, also, when he provokes the *Proud* in the next stanza by using question sentences, as well as in the 22<sup>nd</sup> stanza. The using of such sentences will stimulate the reader awareness and likewise to draw the poet being into reader's mind through his question and to arise the sense of conversation as well. Gray explicitly expresses his wonder toward the *death* in a phrase: 'Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid', line 45, by using the word *perhaps* he shows his speculation sense and subjectivity in facing that matter. Meanwhile, at the 24<sup>th</sup> stanza once again Gray speaks in a direct request by using the word *thee* and *thy* that he invites the reader as well as himself to think over the matter of life and death from the tomb as the symbol instead of the death. A request to comprehend death is emanated in the last stanza before *The Epitaph*,

Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay 115  
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.



His most expressive feeling which he utters directly as his own impression toward someone is written in the 28<sup>th</sup> stanza for his sense of longing for the unknown villager presence since his death. The phrases in the stanza are well denoted in contributing his mourning for the death of his dearest figure.

### C. The Theme

Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* is a poem which talks notably about the *deaths* that buried in the country churchyard. The life of the humble then appears in the poem also to give a picture of which the poet tries to make – not in confronting – comparison toward the *deaths*. The life that has given contribution to the extent meaning for someone, who lives in his awareness of death, will bring forth an improvement through one's life then.

Yet in its natural appearance the "Elegy" has put its existence in the general perspective in a point of view of the speaker of the poem. It is the general perspective, which reveals not only the death of the village's forefathers, but also the ironically life and death of (considered as) the higher class or who have regarded as the Noble people for the wealthy status and the power they have, and without exception the universal appellation of death. The both classes are well depicted by the poet, however the way the poet through the speaker of the poem, it is the life and the death of the humble that the poet rather to emphasise.

Through some elements analysed significantly above, the “Elegy” has derived its significant essence from which then it expands the theme that is suggested implicitly in the poem. The poem pays tribute to the generations of humble and unknown villagers buried in the church cemetery. The poet succeeds in making of a series of reflections on the general subject of death which are involving the fortune, powers, politics, and the sincerity of the people to gain the theme. Thus the theme of the “Elegy”, which is suggested and derived by the imagery vividly depicted to compose the scene of contemplation and mourning in honoured voice, supported by the slow pace and melancholy tone through the wonder of the speaker toward the fate of the villager and others as well is devoted as:

*the lives of Rich and Poor 'lead but to the grave.'*

Its universal concept of death has delivered the “Elegy” to the edge of the contemplation, which is informed in the poem. Life as the central of all the essence in the nature world becomes indifferently collapse in two parts. The two part of status occurred in the society have risen a significant gap from which then appears so many problems connecting with the rights and the treatments between the two. The rich with their highly status and predominant power has put their necessities and sometimes their obsessions in the top of their social behaviour, in the other hand the poor with their inadequacy and inferiority hardly facing the life which sometimes at the sense of unfair in treatment toward their insufficiency has been punily established them in the place as the victim of the rich. The poor often becomes the vehicle to pleasure

or to be sacrificed for the rich urgencies, and that makes the gap of their connections wider, the feedback of it to each sides has built different characteristic between them. The rich will be at the state of pride that leads them to an arrogance and egoism, meanwhile the poor because of their frailty and the unfair treatment they usually get toward their rights from the rich, have formed their agility in states of unself-confidence and oppressed their will and dream in making progress of their life, for sometimes they likely loose their hope of life.

All of the contrasts in the life of both are reconciled by the "Elegy" through the universal fact risen and as a reminder for both sides, it is the being of death that both sides, admitted or not, are always possessed by their inner consciousness. Death obviously lives among the mind of everyone in various being for then will shape the principle of one's consideration or even their conscious life by changing the way of their life. On the other hand the knowledge of death only emerges the feeling of frustration and pessimism for they face the life then without energy since he believes that all he done through his lifetime will be nothing but only for buried in the ground. Yet by the one viewing life as nothing but to meet the death will also possibly rise the contrary acts that they are in the state of hedonistic since life is worthless to spoil and then only looking for the joy of life for satisfaction.

In the very first place the "Elegy" is brought forth to remind particularly to the first reaction described above because by comprehending the essence of learning about death, hopefully, will bring the appreciation

toward the life itself. So the one who can grasp the concept of death as well as life will bring nothing but happiness and worthiness in facing the life.

Finally the expectancy of the appearance of the "Elegy" will characterise in everybody's heart and mind for the better life individually or through the society life, just like Dr. Johnson once said in giving critic toward the "Elegy" that the poem abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo, (Bush, 1952: 89).

#### ***D. A Tribute to the 'Deaths of the Humble'***

*Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* is a lyrical poem. The lyric denotes a not-too-long poem expressing the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of a single speaker, and it is written in the first person point of view. The "Elegy", whose tone is melancholy or sadly contemplative, has the subject of death on it. Thomas Gray has set the "Elegy" in its memorable field for the beauty and the obvious images, which occur in lines, and stanzas exist in the poem. The picture of the life and death stirs up in a quite classic form but the idea and the subjects brought are much fresher than the era called the 'age of reason' before since the artist at that time were in obsessed of arts with high appreciation to human reason rather than feeling. Gray as the forerunner of the Romantic movement, an era that brought back the art to its nature in expressing the genuine feeling of the artist, had been at the state of back to nature not only to the way of his expression but also in the ideas expressed for

he loved the life of the humble and the nature surrounded. He in the second stage of his writing life (the first stage he wrote Latin verse of considerable merit) illustrates the early phases in the transition from neo-classicism to romanticism, (Bush, 1952: 88).

The imageries depicted here, in the poem, come with a strong impulse to make the poem filled with the sense of contemplation and still close to the beauty of the description of the environment laid on the background setting. Gray infused the “Elegy” with his own delicate sensitivity to the beauties of the great outdoors. The people he wrote about, in this poem, were humble country folk who lived their quiet lives far from the glittering, active world of the metropolis. Not only about the death does the poem try to reveal but also everything which are connected with the essential of life without leaving the main idea.

The universal concept of death is the main point which is tried to accommodate by Gray in the “Elegy” through its theme, but the main portion given as the characteristic subject in the poem is the humble who live in the country or the villagers. All of the attention and the expressed feeling are directed to the humble for the nature of their life and characteristics in colouring the face of the world, or particularly their own world. Their simple and genial life that have been proved for its natural purposes and spirit to struggle the hard life appear in the “Elegy” in a very strong blow of enthusiasm to their value of life. The poem talks more about life but contrasted with the death conversely to emphasise the value of the life itself.

Gray had been devoted to the environment around his life since he found the beauty of the life after going out from his father's house for the not-so-harmony family he lived in except the presence of his loving mother in his life. The society and the nature in his new environment had pulled him out from the vagueness of his previous life. The college, where he studied though he never finished it, and the travel he made with his friend to some countries in Europe, though the quarrel happened with his travel mate made him travelling alone and back to England, had changed his perspective. He came to the state of more realistic in his attitude proclaimed by his English poems. Especially after his best friend's, the precocious poet Richard West, early death, it was a severe blow to Gray, an event that affected him profoundly considering death and life itself. He was closed in that matter of death for he was the only survivor of twelve children in his family, none of his brothers and sisters still lived. He wrote a poem then to commemorate his best friend death called *Sonnet on the Death of Richard West*. Since that time Gray became more expressive in pouring his feeling through some poems that revealed his maturity, ease and felicity of expression, wistful melancholy, and the ability to phrase truisms beautifully. He wrote dedication poems in expressing his feeling and mind toward some beautiful moment he made in his life, like in *Ode on the Spring*, *Hymn to Adversity*, and *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, as well as his dedication to the humble and the cemetery where his mother was buried in Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, and where he made some visits, through *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard*.

The humble people life he has dedicated in the "Elegy" had stood closely to his life by being around him since he was travelling to Europe and the second travels he made widely through England and Scotland for showing his concern to nature and the humble as well. The "Elegy" itself depicted his alertness in the matter of death and life fuses them with the natural of the real world through the life of the humble in a village. Gray obviously put his admirable feeling through the "Elegy". He praised the forefathers of the village by putting his characteristics as the main subject of all in the poem. He considered that their being was widely important in the living of the Country by giving every fundamental life of the Country through their supplies, not only food, which was quite known produced from the fields in villages, not cities, but also the spirit to keep struggling the hard life they always tried to fight the fate that seems so obscure. Yet even they can not always succeed in making their struggle come true, still their genial spirit in surviving the rest of their life had brought their families and the next generations a generous legacy of lands and integrity of their beloved village.

Gray has emphasised the *deaths* instead of the still-living villagers in the "Elegy" of the purpose of drawing the spirit and the energy which can not be seen by our vision just like *death forefathers* for their immaterial being but has given greatly contribution to the next life, the next generation. On the other hand by employing the *death* figures in his contribution, the "Elegy" is able to achieve its originality in declaring the tribute to the life as well as the death. Life is the fact Gray wants to explore; also the essence of life that

becomes his most concern to make changing for the comprehendor of his "Elegy". The face of death is sometimes to seize the mind of the living by giving its gesture to shock the awareness of the life, but often is forgotten because it is covered by the busy daily life of the world; thus the *death* here is used as a tool to stimulate or to wake one's mind consciousness toward the essence of life through the perspective of death.

The poem suggests in the sense of reminding of the beauty of the life one has or had for making it more precious or noble for the living. The time remains is being so close to the end of the line, the line that will make nobody back to where he/she was belong. The time that no one also can predict. All survivals are going to be left is nothing but a tomb, with an epitaph to recall the long life (or the short life?) once had, wrapped in a simple line of words.

By giving a tribute to the *deaths* of the humble through *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard*, Thomas Gray, as the writer, tries to suggest the important of life that a man can be considered as someone whose life is meaningful if he left something significant to the world he previously lived. The something, which is left, is not merely a big material being for its purposes is limited in this fragile world by time and place, but in the form of nonmaterial being for its timeless and universal purposes to give lesson or knowledge as a provision in facing the life better. Nothing is to be proud of when someone has passed their reason through an understanding of the essence of life for they will get nothing but death at end of the life line. That is why the appearance of the tomb symbolised by *the epitaph* in the poem is



**the concrete evidence of the existence of death. The existence of death is not only an imaginative thing but it is there and here and everywhere; thus hopefully the readers of the epitaph and the “Elegy” especially are able to realise it and make a preparation in the life not only to face our own grave at the end of life, but significantly is the fate that will bring everybody to meet the Grand Creator.**

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

*world of death* instead of the genial and the simple life of the humble, it is both of them appear stressing each other. Thus life and death is mixed to give emphasising of the importance of both realms.

The life of the poet has been a significance to lead a way in appreciating the poem as a reflection of the poet toward the object of which the "Elegy" expresses. Gray whose life sharpened by many events related to some deaths of his beloved well-known people and the travels he made for bringing so many new sights of life, then became more expressive in uttering his heart and mind from which some hearted poems emerged. The emerging of the "Elegy" was one the evident of his consistency in the estimation of his ability to pour his expression in the medium of poem.

The forefathers of the country churchyard he celebrates through his poem is the symbol of the spirit of the ancient people which is tried by Gray to expose for the merits they had made. Their 'death', alike their 'life', is simple with no much praise and attributes to accompany their next journey to the last place they will dwell. The tombs of the unknown heroes attributed with nothing but some words written in the epitaph by unscholar poet as the stonecutter have brought nothing but a lesson to live the life in a better perspective for anyone who comprehends the legacy. The forgotten, for whom then, Gray puts his tribute to celebrate with his melancholy "Elegy".

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