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Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard": An Analytic Study

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Abstract

In the analysis of *elegy written in a country churchyard* the poem is a representation of the universal feelings and mankind. This paper aims to analyse Thomas Gray's *elegy written in a country churchyard* through different themes. The paper focuses how opportunities could have made people famous and changed their life. This paper analyses themes of nature and rural life. Mortality and death, dignity of common people, unfulfilled potential and ambition etc. This study uses a qualitative textual analysis of *elegy written in a country churchyard* by Thomas Gray. The study uses close reading and analysis to understand different themes like Ambition, Death. *Elegy written in a country churchyard* is basically a poem about how opportunities can change our life and make changes. The entire poem revolves around common people, their struggles in life and how common people never gets a chance to search what they really are. The poem presents a reality of society and making it relatable, universal and an extremely relevant work of literature. The result of the study reveals that there are social problems that always originate in the society, especially in the lower class. People don't get equal opportunities in life. The themes of mortality and sorrow connect throughout the poem. The poem raises common men, emphasizing their value and lamenting their unobserved contributions to society. In this elegy Gray mourns the death of common men who remain unknown and unrecognized and the poor don't always get the opportunity to get proper education. The aim of this study is to analyze poetry and finding the multiple meanings. The main objective is to explore the different meanings and realities of life. The poem conveys themes of death and ambition. The method used is descriptive qualitative method to explain the social and economical conditions defined in the poem. The poem is a medium to express social problems and Thomas Gray shows the life of common people.

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Introduction

Thomas Gray was an English poet, letter-writer and classical Scholar known for his poems exploring human condition, Dignity of the common man, Ambition. Gray's major poetry include *elegy written in a country churchyard*, Ode on spring, Ode on the Death of a favorite cat, The Bard. Thomas Gray's *elegy written in a country churchyard* (1751) is regarded as an elegy that reflects on death, human mortality. The poem focuses on human experience. Gray had produced poems like *elegy written in a country churchyard*, Ode on spring, the bard, ode on the Death of a favourite cat. The poem's cultural theme of universal mortality and focuses on the lives of ordinary villagers buried in a country churchyard. In the poem Gray emphasizes that all people regardless of their social

status or wealth, are equal in death and this poem highlights the unrecognized talents and unrealized potential of common people whose lives were limited by poverty and circumstances. This paper looks at the topic to explore that there is no doubt that many talented persons in this world find no opportunity for the development or display of their talents. Poetry is one of the most significant genre of literature. Poetry is divided into various forms like lyrics, ballad, ode, epic and elegy. The elegy initiated as an ancient Greek metrical form and written in reply to the death of the person or group. Elegy is a lament, a lyric of mourning or sorrow. *Elegy written in a country churchyard* a poem written by Thomas Gray. Gray describes the social problems faced by poor people.

Methodology

This paper uses a qualitative textual analysis of *elegy written in a country churchyard* by Thomas gray. Primary data is taken from the poem while secondary data includes books, journal, articles and previous research studies. The study uses close reading and analysis to understand the themes in the poem. The method used is descriptive qualitative method to explain the social and economical conditions expressed in the poem.

Result

This poem tells about the simple truths of life. In this poem the feelings and thoughts expressed are permanent and universal, Gray is the singer of the humble, poor, neglected people of the village. The poem has a simple philosophy and a calmness of emotion poet has built a perfect poem which has full of sympathy, Sincerity and simplicity. This poem tells that all men are subject to Death. Death is no respecter of high birth, power, beauty or wealth. Poet deals with rural people with their pains, emotions, occupations, problems in the poem. Thomas Gray mourns over the death of common peoples. Gray repines that the dead rural peoples may earn name and fame if they were given opportunities and explore lament expressing on the difficulty of rural peoples. The result of the study reveal that there are social problems that always originate in the society, especially in the lower class. People don't get equal opportunities in the life.

1. **The Unhonored Dead:** While Gray's poem is often read as a universal meditation on death, it contains a potent, if latent, Socio-political critique hence poet has stated a deep psychological fact.
2. **Death:** These poem reflect on a truth death comes for us all, no matter who are. Everyone will ultimately face the same fate. Death doesn't care about social status, wealth, beauty, power. As the saying goes, "the paths of glory lead but to the grave" once gone the dead are beyond the reach of any earthly tribute.
3. **Poverty:** In this poem poet delves into a poignant idea that many people live and die without ever realizing their potential leaving their talents and passions undiscovered or unexpressed. Extreme poverty creates these barriers preventing individuals from gaining knowledge or developing their good qualities. These people live and die like precious gems hidden deep in the ocean. Hence because of poverty and lack of opportunity their abilities remained unknown. Poverty is a complex social problem and poor people are always marginalized.
4. **Rural Simplicity:** The countryside represents peace, emotional fulfillment. These symbolize the lament of mankind and should not be judged with the poet's personal feeling or the people. Gray contrasts this with the pride greed. The poem tells that death is the ultimate equalizer that erases all human distinctions of wealth, power and social status.
5. **Opportunity:** Gray conveyed that poor people in no way are given the opportunity to arrange a better life. No matter how smart or good a person is he will not succeed if he does not get a opportunity just like a variety of beautiful flowers growing in the desert is also not seen. These flowers grow and wither away without anyone being able to like their beauty. Poor and common people are also similar that born, live and die without coloring life. It means the poor only live to die.

Conclusion

Elegy Written in a country churchyard is a poem about that while death is an inevitable, the true measure of person lies in their moral character and dignity, rather than their social status. The entire poem revolves around the idea that honest life in the country side is an often more virtuous than a life of "madding" ambition in the city. Gray highlights that Death snatches away everyone from this world. The poem presents a reality of society and making it relatable, universal and an extremely relevant work of literature. Gray also telling the social and psychological occurrences of the life of common people. Through the poem Elegy written in a country churchyard Gray tells the story of the lives of marginal people who always have to overlook problems. Gray highlights problems like poverty and equality of opportunity in the lives of common and marginalized people. In this poem Gray tells the problems faced by the lower class people. In this elegy, Gray presents that how poor people faces inequality in their life. Gray highlights that how all must die, it doesn't matter if one rich or poor. Gray gives a universal picture of poor people through this poem Gray gives a picture of poor people who are always dealt unfairly. They don't get the opportunity to enhance their lives. Even many of them have extraordinary talent but all the Excellency they have disappeared in time because they can never come to the surface level.

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