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**THOMAS GRAY – AN ACCOMPLISHED  
HUMANIST POET**

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# Thomas Gray – An Accomplished Humanist Poet

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**Abstract – Thomas Gray in his Poetry zeroes in at humanism. There are certain characteristics of humanism which are abundantly found in poetry of Thomas Gray. Some of them are found in his odasmelancholy, morality, humanity, humility, sympathy, rapport, pity and pathos, are some salient features which are found throughout his poetical work. All these things constitute humanism. The humanistic ideas are so dashed with the moralizing notes or didacticism that the combined effect is attractive to a very high degree. The gist of Gray's is to satirize the artidicial society that cannot resist the charm of gold and gaiety.**

**Gray's Poetry is packed with many a human value which gray presents before us to be imbibed. He thinks that childhood is free from all sorts of mistakes which are committed by the grownups. Childhood is the only state of life that remains free from selfishness, jealousy, ambition, partiality, pride, temptation, abhor, and many other social evils.**

**Gray lies worried about those people who become victims of problems and miseries and no one helps or solves their problems. After childhood everyone becomes so busy that he does not even think of help and co-operation or commiseration. It is nothing else but inhumanity if a man does not solve problems of others, and reduce the sufferings and pains of the people.**

**Solving of problems and reducing suffering and pains of the people with help of reason is more important than religious beliefs. This typer of attitude of Gray reveals humanism in his poetry**

**Key-Words :- Humanism, Simplicity, Honesty, Flow of Emotions.**

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Thomas gray a leading eighteenth century poet is the most accomplished craftsman of the transition Period. His refusal of laureateship shows him a man with manhood. He wrote literature merely because of his pang of humanism. Gray became an omnivorous reader only because of his inquisitiveness of imparting something special t society.

Humanism lays stress on the facts that the basic nature of human being is harmonious and good. In other words humanism signifies a process of demeanour adopted by a man that is based on human happiness, human service, human help human interest, and human charity including other human values. It prefers human beings to gods and goddesses. It is Gray whom i have every inch judged and concluded that his human values vested or inhered in his poetical work have permeated the entire society, and will have been dispersed everywhere in the world.

It is easy to gauge his mood and mind regarding democratic values and human interest. He has poured out his poignant image to such accent that one can easily understand the humanism of Thomas Gray throughout his poetical work. Gray has completely been an egalitarian, and has not only dreamt of an egalitarian society but also materialized it.

After making a serious study of his poems, it may easily and certainly be said that Gray's poetical work is a record of moods of conflict between poverty and aristocracy, a war between sorrow and joy, honour and insult, adversity and prosperity, good and evil and opportunity and misfortune.

The reason of his being a passionate lover of mankind or suffering-shares is that he believes that everyone is equal and should have the same right and opportunities. No one should deprive of rights and opportunities to which one is entitled. Such a

pang of egalitarianism makes him more worried or anxious about the miseries of the rude forefathers of the hamlet. Why does he ask for egalitarianism? Where for does he becomes a swain or a farmer who regularly visits a farm? For what is he overwhelmed by sympathies and empathies with the obscure villagers?

All these questions in connection with Gray's Elegy give only one answer that is a pang of humanism which runs through melancholic notes and pathetic attempts. He asks for egalitarianism because it is an element of a set of humanism if he becomes a swain in Elegy, it is because he has empathy with poor farmers of the hamlet. If he is overwhelmed by fellow-feelings, it is only because he wants the readers to know the importance of humanism.

The most striking feature of Gray's elegy is egalitarianism that is most relevant and fundamental in every branch of part humanism. It is Gray who writes the immortal or eternal line-**The boast of heraldry, The pomp of power.** such virtues and thoughts dispersed at various places largely focus of humanism such as sympathy, empathy, civility, humbleness, melancholy, sermons didacticism and moralizing notes but none of them seem to be insignificant. All are the essential parts of humanism. In summing up it may be stated that Gray is not a teacher or a prophet nor an artist but humanist.

The rise of the feelings or the sensibility is conspicuously illustrated in the poetical work of Gray. The awakening of feeling takes various forms of humanitarian notes throughout Elegy. It is seen in the love human value of all kinds. When we read Gray's Elegy, faith in reason is replaced by faith in feeling and emotion. This awakens sympathy and empathy that manifest in the elegy. The welfare of mankind is the consequence.

It is the Elegy that has brought a palpable sense of relief in the society. It is hoped that his **Elegy written in a country churchyard** will continue to serve the purpose for which it is designed. The well-marked memory of human value is palpably clear in the line-**Let not Ambition much their useful toil.**

Gray's Elegy reminds us that we cannot discover new oceans of human value unless we read it. As has been said that one cannot discover new oceans unless one has the courage to lose the sight of the shore, Gray's attitude in the Elegy is a little thing but it makes an oceanic difference.

We support the view asserting that Gray is, of course, a committed and candid poet whose Elegy is a full-fledged stream of fellow feelings, natural and humanitarian notes.

Now it may be said that his Elegy enjoys higher reputation, not because of his literary art but because of a deep melancholy and broad humanity that runs throughout it. It begins as a common elegy on the fate

of mankind but ends on a personal note. In a nutshell I would like to say another specialty of the Elegy that it has such thoughts and feelings as come within the reach of all.

So far as we are concerned we also feel that this world famous poem is a fine flower in the garden of poetry. Its fragrance of humanism has permeated the entire world. Who can't love to read it? Why can't one help reading the famous line? **Full many a gem of purest ray serene.**

In **the Progress of poesy** we find a mixture of melancholy and morality which is one of the characteristics of humanism. What a nice appeal he makes to us to have a keen interest in the line:

**Man's feeble race what ills await.**

What type of poetry is necessary for society? What are the values of poetry? These two questions are not so important as to know what type of man Gray is or how he has poured out human value in **The Progress of poesy**

What are the various components of humanism? What are the sources of humanism? How can we fulfill our needs regarding humanism? The answer to three questions can easily be marked by evaluating or assessing poetry mentioned or defined by Gray in **The Progress of poesy**.

Having read **The Progress of poesy** we feel that Gray is, not a writer nor an artist, nor a man but an institution that gives inspiration to thousands and thousands of people. If some criticize or find faults with Gray and his most popular the Pindaric ode **The Progress of poesy**

It is merely because the tree laden with ripe fruits bears the strike of stones thrown by people. If he has used allusions or references of gods and goddesses, it is not because he wants to worship or eulogize them but it is only because he wants to be blessed with pious sight with which he may visualize only good things, not evils in human beings. If through them, he wants to send the message of humanity that can be found most abundantly in them.

Gray's **The Bard**, it is realized that attitude is a little thing that makes an oceanic difference. The perusal of **The Bard** makes it clear that drop of ink may make a million think. In **The Bard** Thomas Gray returns to the middle ages, and deals with a Welsh legend. It is not confined to the middle ages regarding the message of humanism. Though it has been written in the matter describing Welsh legend, yet its message of humanism is in the vogue. The fear of devastation and the hopes of redemption are almost expressed in the Pindaric Ode, **The Bard**. It is **The Bard** that proves to be most agonizing and tragic piece of literature based on human values.

It comprises some other new virtues which inspire us to know how to behave in society and how to prefer human beings to gods and goddesses. He requires honesty, civility, brethren, fidelity, subjectivity, love, rapport, sympathy, constancy, sociability, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, patience, discipline, decorum, and humanity through **The Bard**. In the beginning of this Ode Gray sees not a single virtue out of the aforesaid virtues which adores and constitutes a high humanistic society. At the end of Pindaric ode **The Bard** Gray the constancy of love and severity of moral truth that embellish society through poetry.

Not only human happiness had been emphasized by gray in the **Ode on the spring** but also animals or insect" happiness makes the readers cheerful while reading the Ode. All round cheerfulness or happiness, as the title of the Ode implies, is found abundantly. Cuckoo and nightingale begin to sign and pour out their effortless and spontaneous music. This is also the message of humanism. One time Gray is seen melancholic and another time he is seen happy. These two opposite states of position imply the same destination that is humanism. If he describes or depicts prosperity of nature and human beings, it is only because he wants to see them happy. If he muses on adversity or poverty that causes to suffer, it is merely because he wants them to get rid of social injustice.

Looking at the above characteristics or ingredients of Gray's poetry, we can evidently and confidently reassert that Gray's poetry is inundated or flooded with humanism. Gray's poetry, sometimes or somewhere gurgles with humanism and at other times or at other place flows majestically with the strong din or commotion of humanism. His name is engraved in our heart, not because of erudition but because of his humanism as reflected in his poetry.

Humanism lays stress on the fact that the basic nature of human being is harmonious and good. In other words humanism signifies a process of demeanour adopted by a man that is based on human happiness, human service, human help human interest, and human charity including other human values. It prefers human being to gods and goddesses. It is Gray whom I have every inch judged and concluded that his human values vested or inhaled in his poetical work have permeated the entire society, and will have been dispersed everywhere in the world.

It is easy to gauge his mood and mind regarding democratic values and human interest. He has poured out his poignant image to such an extent that one can easily understand the humanism of Thomas Gray though out his poetical work. Gray has completely been an egalitarian, and has not only dreamt of an egalitarian society but also materialized it. Thus we have enough ground to assess him as a great humanist of 18<sup>th</sup> century. We have made a careful

perusal of Gray's poetical work and extracted that he is every inch a well-wisher and supporter of the poor and the needy.

In spite of the slender bulk of Gray's poetry, we come to conclusion that his achievement regarding humanism, both in poems and the two sister Odes or Pindaric Odes, is of great importance. We are sure that Gray has explored the origins of humanism in the early Norse and Celtic poems. We reassert reiterate that his sympathies with the poor and the oppressed, the deprived and the down-trodden are genuine. Rapport and democratic note are emphatically expressed in his poetical work. His behaviour or nature is a great improvement for the coming generation.

After making a serious study of his poems, it may easily and certainly be said that Gray's poetical work is a record of moods of conflict between the poverty and aristocracy, a war between sorrow and joy, honour and insult, adversity and prosperity, good and evil and opportunity and misfortune.

Next we find the poet desirous of establishing humanism and egalitarianism in the society. A passionate melancholy broods over the whole poem, the Elegy. The reason of his being a passionate lover of mankind or a suffering-sharer is that he believes that everyone is equal and should have the same right and opportunities. No one should be deprived of right and opportunities to which one is entitled. Such a pand of egalitarianism makes him more worried or anxious about the miseries of the rude forefathers of the hamlet. Why does he ask for egalitarianism? Where does he become a swain or a farmer who regularly visits a farm? For what is he overwhelmed by sympathies and empathies with the obscure villager?

These entire questions in connection with Gray's Elegy give only one answer that is a real pang of humanism which runs through melancholic notes and pathetic attempts. He asks for egalitarianism because it is an element of a set of humanism if he becomes a swain in Elegy, it is because he has empathy with the poor farmers of the hamlet. if he is overwhelmed by fellow-feeling, it is only because he want the readers to know the importance of humanism.

After a careful perusal of Gray's Elegy, we are convinced that the foregoing things bear testimony to the fact that Gray has been making us aware of egalitarianism and democratic values which constitute humanism. Of all the poets of eighteenth century, Gray is the most interesting as well as dedicating poet to humanity. how many significant ad ensuring are the ideas and ideals, objectives and attempts with which the Elegy has been designed.

It is palpably clear that the things mentioned in the Elegy become inseparable elements of the seat of humanism. The most striking feature of Gray's elegy is egalitarianism that is most relevant and fundamental in every branch or part of humanism. It is Gray who writes the immortal or eternal line- The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power. Such virtues and thoughts dispersed at various places largely focus on humanism such as sympathy, empathy, civility, humbleness, melancholy, sermons didacticism and moralizing notes but none of them seem to be insignificant. All are the essential parts of humanism. In summing up it may be stated that Gray is not a teacher or prophet nor an artist but a humanist.

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