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Central theme of "Elegy written in a country Churchyard" by Thomas Gray

In 'Elegy written in a country Churchyard' Thomas Gray develops themes that emphasize the commonalities among human beings. The main themes in "Elegy written in a country Churchyard" are the universality of death, social class and value, and poetry and posterity. Gray's poem depicts death as a leveling force that brings all people, whether rich or poor to the same final fate.

The speaker calmly mulls over death while standing in a rural graveyard in the evening. Taking stock of the graves, he reflects that death comes for everyone in the end and notes that the elaborate tombs of rich wouldn't bring their occupants back from the dead. He also commemorates the common folk buried in the churchyard by imagining the lives they might have lived had they born into better circumstances and considers the benefits of anonymity. The poem ends with his own imagined epitaph. He refers to himself as a melancholy and scholarly person, with a generous, sympathetic, sincere heart, and with full confidence in Almighty God in whose bosom he will rest after death. These lines are personal with a philosophical touch.

Abedul Jabbar,
Associate Professor, Department of English,
B.P. Chalika college, Nagarbera.