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Social Classes

Jonson's poem written in the 17th century about Penshurst, initially the countryside had fewer buildings and not occupied, but later more buildings and construction activities took place. The large houses indicated great wealth and provided the country people with a city lifestyle full of stunning beauty and admiration from the other people (Coiro, 3). As a result of this development, the countryside owned by rich people represented the ruling class. Jonson describes the people living in the country houses as the power class. Because people who lived in those houses must possess supremacy or where creating an attempt to own it. The people who lived here worked for the property owner, who was also the sovereign of the community. The poem comprises the narrative of the country houses and the surrounding activities, which include pastoralism and cultivation, highly praised. The essay discusses the different social classes in country houses in Penshurst.

Penshurst was a great place, and the country house poem was written to praise the home. Having lived in an area for a long time, one develops an affection for the place after enduring a lot and overcoming challenges while in that place. Naturally, people celebrate the places they have lived in despite how ordinary and local they are (Coiro, 18). In the middle of praise of modesty, fair, and traditional culture of the Penshurst, they were resulting in development, which brought a lot of technology in the country houses. The people growth started from the gentry class to the middle classes and finally to the working classes. Johnson identified a social problem that emerged as a result of the anew wealthy class.

The excellent house class, the class, had everything in the community, even the natural resources. Johnson uses hyperbole to describe the connection between the environment and the great houses. On the surrounding the wood named after the Sidney family, the image serves, the riverbanks full of rabbits, rivers, and ponds full of fish and meadows who worked on the farms and delivered food for the cattle's. Everything arranged in descending order, and this called for an expensive celebration. The meaning of this natural order helps us understand that: just as the livestock's sacrifice their lives to serve the Penshurst, the law required some sacrifices and pain from some people to fulfill the interest of the great house. Additionally, the great houses enforced some limit upon others' ambitions making sure that they give up and will never rise to their standards.

The governing class, Johnson uses a metaphor to describe the ruling class. The social order included the servants and peasants and was regarded to have a place in the order. However, they had their appropriate homes and could not be involved in the matters of policy-making or governing in the community. Their position was in the farms and to serve the ruling class to the end. They are highly disrespected and cannot even complain about their rights. Their roles were clearly defined, and therefore they were involved in creating a fair order image for the Penshurst.

The tradition class, Johnson, brings out the capability of the community to continue with time. He expresses his concerns by illustrating the society which works so hard to pass on its character to the next generation .children taught how to pray, how to practice the Christian religion and material relationship with the moral concept of the life of men. The teaching was meant to bring the whole household together and build a fruitful generation. Johnson uses irony to explain the real situation of these teachings. The culture manners or lessons as a whole were for the people of the higher class and meant for separating them from the other courses. The learning was also a method applied to allow the passage of leadership from one family generation to the other. It not entirely based on traditions. It was a method of ensuring that those born and raised in wealthy families continue to be prosperous while those born in low-income families, marry in low-income families, and continues to work for wealthy families. Besides, the teachings were done to teach the lower level on how to serve them more upper class and maintain boundaries.

The dominant class constitutes the people in power. Johnson describes their love for politics and economy, which led to fights and killing in the struggle for power. Over the years, the community has fought to overpower, which is related to wealth and respect. The rulers did not help the less privileged in the city, but instead, they made themselves richer. They pretend to care for the oppressed, but the irony is that they are taking advantage of associating with them so that they can gain more political sympathy. The increase publication will give them more public attention, which will help promote their political position in society — resulting in a better and higher power position in the county house.

Gender class was one of the social course, according to Johnson. Men were viewed to be superior to women and would hold the highest position in the community. Women regarded as weak, and they stayed at home to serve the men's. They were not allowed to take any part in decision making in the community, and they did not hold any political position. Women's actions highly monitored and forbidden from interacting with the high class. For instance, the waiters should not desire the ruling class from the Sidney household with greed because the two are from different social levels and will never be together. Also, the great housewife Lady Sidney had to ensure that meals were set on time for the king to take when he arrives from hunting, and she had to have her linen, plate, and all things not in a room but dressed like she is expecting a guest.

 Educated class, Johnson was concerned with the problem of education. Penshurst constituted of people who were greedy in gaining wealth and therefore connected by this one reason. He distinguishes between teaching the culture and having information about customs. On the 102 lines page 30, there is no regularity produced, and he relates this to Penshurst. He says that the bullocks and calves ensure that they feed just like Penshurst since it has accommodated numerous ordered and governing generations (Coiro, 33). The educated class criticized the establishment of ethical and communal orders of the seventeen-century traditions that prevented the community from adopting the immoral characters from the developing world. The considered the old as unskilled and describe them as enemies of order traditions. The people from the higher class received quality education but not for the use of the community but personal gains.

In conclusion, the social classes contained in the poem are subtle. The types involve hidden discrimination between the haves and the have not. Johnson has not criticized social classes directly because that's the rule of the poet. Therefore irony, metaphor, and hyperbole are his most valuable tools. From the poem, we learn that nature responds to the will and needs of human beings, and the delivery attained quickly. The scenario represents a contradiction to what we know about day to day activities, which is abnormal. The poem was written to compliment the county houses, but we perceive a strong sense of criticism.

Work Cited

Coiro, Ann Baynes. "Writing in service: sexual politics and class position in the poetry of Aemilia Lanyer and Ben Jonson." Criticism 35.3 (1993): 357-376.