

Ideologies of Comparative Literature Keats's Intertwined World of Music and Art

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Abstract: Poetry is nature's gift bestowed only on a selected few. Poets are the 'Divine Deliverers'. The relationship between the poet and his poem is sacred. The love between these two is mutual. The love that the poet bore is condensed into poem. But the reflection of love from the other side takes a much sweeter path. The reader of the poem serves the turn here. We know that the love of children fancies us more than the love one gets from their own spouse. So is the reader to the poet than his own poem. The love gets fulfilled with the arrival of the children. Similarly the mission of the poet is met only if the reader enjoys the delivered one.

I. Introduction

Language is a tool for communication. Finer language or to be even more specific fine tuned language can have its communication reach all. It is not the power of communication but of the communion. A poem is seen as a mirror. Some readers will be curious to have a glance at their own vision rather than that of an alien. They are ready to be lead into a mirage, knowing very well, that it cannot appease them for long. This mechanical world is full of people craving for some sort of relief. For Wordsworth, Nature takes multi dimensional care, being his guide, mentor, nurse, companion, etc. He is expected to be like the omnipotent God, providing the wants of the reader. This great reputation sails even with much more greater responsibility. Since he is conferred with great regard, even a minor lapse will turn him into a demon. That is why a world renowned novelist sometime fails to make his mark in poetry. The poet lives through his poem. The world till date believes, with the spirit of the poet by their side, they can heal the past wounds; enjoy the present delight and illuminate the uncertain future. This formula of getting solution must work forever, serving and saving any thirsty generation that seeks his asylum.

In one way or other everybody is linked with every other in the world. There will be no problem so far as this link remains as such. Whenever it gets tightened or loosened, the receptive ends will have to face the music. Being hailed as the Saviour of human race from all its miseries, the poet is expected to give vent to their suppressing emotions. The hapless patient, who is not in a condition to sketch his self, will find his mouth piece in the doctor. Likewise, a poet can work out miracles with his powerful wand called poetry.

One such miraculous divine deliverer is Keats. Two of his odes namely *Ode on a Grecian Urn* and *Ode to a Nightingale*, are taken into consideration, to prove that the world of arts exhibited in Urn and the world of Music exhibited in Nightingale are much well linked. His poems though are personal reflections, never failed to serve its said aim of delight, console, support or soothe. One of his remarkable poems is *Ode to a Nightingale* – an elegiac ode. Keats is the haven for many of us, but he used to harbour in the laps of Nature. "Our sweetest songs are those that tell / of the saddest thought", says Tagore. This ode can be quoted as an example to prove the truth conceived by these words. In this ode, he addresses the bird as 'immortal bird'. He compares the world of ecstasy it lives with the pain stricken world of us – mortals. The life the bird lives is blended with nature, and so it delivers notes in 'full – throated ease. This life we lead is loaded with misery and pain, as we fret and groan every minute at its uncertainty. So he wants to escape into the world of Nightingale, which allows it to have an ever blissful life of notes. We are like caged birds having wings glued with agony. So Keats wants to plug himself in, into the envious world of Nightingale. He believes that his heavy soul will get evaporated if he opens up himself as the bird does.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

These words of the poet express his hatred and fear for the volatile life we are living in this world. The birds twitter and cherish at each other's company. In contrary even when people gather they have much to regret and fret over. For this fleeing the poet is not gifted with soft and gentle wings. He is but blessed with something special called as 'wings of poesy'. The poet has not said, "I will fly with thee". He says, "I will fly to thee".

From this utterance, the poet's substandard consideration of his own self to that of the bird, is made every evident. He considers the bird as the Master from whom, he has to learn the art of living. The poet also says,

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,

Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

He is 'going beyond senses', which actually means, being unconscious. But here Keats means it the other way. Leaving behind the already dead senses in the realm of pain (earth), he enters the world of Nightingale, with his soul. Keats, though is unwilling to come out of this world of fantasy, knows well that imagination cannot be sustained long. This alien world of comfort – a rarity in earthly life, is yearned all through the poem.

The same way, Wordsworth in *Solitary Reaper* was amazed by the stainless melody of the solitary reaper. At the same time he keeps moving, because he knows even the most soothing thing has to come to a halt and also the most painful thing has to be faced. Here, the solitary Reaper guides the poet with her dedicated working in the lonely field with nothing more than the pain stricken heart. Her sorrow is not holding her back; rather she is backed by her sorrow. The grief she has may affect her, but not her notes or her work. She is singing a song which is melancholic, to vent out her emotions. At the same time she is accomplishing her work, which she is prone to do. Her loneliness and the harvesting are in par with the poet's abandoned state and demanding duties.

Frost, in his *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, paints a similar picture of the relief he attained at the sight of Nature. But, at the same time, he remembers the duties which are awaiting his execution. "The nature is playing its role of displaying beauty. Following its lead, I must also play my role well", thinks Frost and moves off. The poet is also wonderstruck and mesmerised by the beauty of the Nature. But suddenly he gets his nerves back and says,

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

Keats, in his another great ode, addressed to the Grecian Urn, attempts to lock permanence in life. Finding this cannot be achieved in actuality, he achieves the same in his work of art. He creates ever playing pipes and never ending love. In the speaker's meditation, this creates an intriguing paradox for the human figures carved into the side of the urn. They are free from time, but they are simultaneously frozen in time. They do not have to confront aging and death (their love is "forever young"), but neither can they have experience (the youth can never kiss the maiden; the figures in the procession can never return to their homes). They lack life, meaning, they also lack death. So they are considered great in his views.

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'--that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Keats re-energises himself by getting one with nature. Nature is enticing everybody equally, by its never diminishing beauty. It has its own beauty forever. Whether it is tender spring or frozen winter, it fails never in its appeal. So, beauty is true. Whatever appeals forever is true, and so it deserves to be termed as 'beautiful'. Thus, the nature's bounty is an ever living truth. Others that are never pined and longed, such as misery and worry are the ugliest and are unreal or fanciful. According to Keats, fancy has no power to 'deceive well' and 'deceive long'. A deeper study throws light on Keats' principle of surrendering to the permanent and beautiful Nature and his appeal to discard the transient and mean grief.

The *Ode to a Nightingale* is a romantic poem and deals with a world of experience which is different and remote from the real ones. It presents a contrast between the real world and the world of imagination or between the world of human beings and that of the Nightingale. The theme of the poem lies in the paradox. The world of the imagination offers a release from the painful actuality, but at the same time it renders the world of actuality more painfully by contrast.

The theme of death and morality has also been dealt with the poem *Ode to a Nightingale*. The immortality of the bird or of her song only serves to highlight the mortality of human beings in this world. Another theme explores in the ode is the transience of all earthly happiness and beauty as contrast with permanence of the bird's song. The bird's song, like the Urn in the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, transcends mortality and transience, and gives permanence to the human experience of beauty and joy. The inseparability of pleasure and pain, of joy and sorrow, also forms a theme of this poem, as it does in some of Keats's other odes. Only through an awareness of sorrow and pain can one have full realisation of joy or happiness of life.

The structure of the *Ode to a Nightingale* consists of a circular pattern as is found in the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. The poem shows Keats's escape into the bird's world of permanence and fancy and also a return from that imaginative world to the world of reality. The poet has a brief excursion in the ideal world of nightingale. This excursion is momentary, and the poet has a come back to the point of the departure, i.e. solid

earth. Like the structure of several of his odes, Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* has a structure which embraces two dominant tendencies in the literature of his time, the desire to transcend the world of flux and the desire to merge with the world. Keats wants to go beyond the bounds of this transcend world to the land of nightingale, but reality proves too irresistible and he has to stage a come-back to the actual world.

II. Conclusion

Keats refers *Nightingale* as, 'Immortal bird', and *Grecian Urn* as 'foster-child of Silence and slow Time'. His mind is full of pale fears due to the deprivation of his dear ones. That's why he stresses time and again on time and immortality. Superficially reading, these poems appear to deal with two different conceptions. The ode addressed to Nightingale, seems to be filled with lamenting note. The other ode addressed to the Grecian Urn looks as if it is celebrating beauty. But a comprehensive look paid deep into these poems unveils his craving for eternal state of being, which he undoubtedly enjoys till date even in days to come. Music and art are not mere sources of delight. They serve an even better end of providing beauty and meaning to life.