

A Bakhtinian Dialogical Nature of Theme in Keats's Odes as a Circular Escape from Pain to Pleasure

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Abstract

This paper, applying Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism as a theoretical starting point, attempts to study the manifestations of dialogic voice in Odes by John Keats. In essence, this study investigates the dialogic reading of '*Ode to a Nightingale*', '*Ode on a Grecian Urn*', '*Ode to Psyche*', '*To Autumn*' and '*Ode on Melancholy*', regarding thematic viewpoints. A scrutiny upon Keats's odes through dialogical viewpoints may disclose that Keats is an involved and social poet of his time. Besides, Keats as an escapist poet clings to the world of fancy and imagination to release himself from conflicts of his society. Keats' odes are dominated by expression of joy-pain reality through which he, in an intimate dialogue with readers tries to show his own social and political engagement. Examining various themes within the odes may display Keats's historical response toward a troubled society and human sufferings in general.

Keywords: Bakhtinian dialogism, Keats' Odes, pain, pleasure, theme

Introduction

It is true that John Keats as one of the major poets of Romanticism has been viewed through various perspectives and his odes are among his remarkable poems that have gone through different studies.

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This paper is devoted to the study of themes and motifs in Keats's odes in the light of Bakhtinian Dialogism. Supposing that the poet is involved in a kind of dialogue in the lines of his poetry, it can be deduced that any dialogue bears this belief that what is exchanged conveys meaning. Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to discuss the manifold meanings implied in Keats's odes considering dialogical principles and it will further, argue the social, political and cultural nature of the odes by means of these themes. Finally, it will focus on the repeated expression of *pain and pleasure* in his odes. One other important aspect is the limitation of secondary sources to find reliable data to support the hypothesis of this study. Unlike Keats's other poems, there are not adequate resources for studies on his odes through Bakhtinian perspective.

Review of Literature

Keats' poems have been studied through various points of view. Different researches have been done by applying different theories. Wolfson (2001) has studied Keats' odes through Marxist point of view. Jefferys (1998) also tried to analyze Keats' poems in the light of Marxist view point. Sutherland (1977) applied Naturalistic views to study Keats's odes. Psychoanalytical perspectives have also been used to investigate the related odes. Ryan (1998) and Sharp (1979) attempted to study Keats' poems through psychoanalytical channels. Among plenty of studies and researches that have been conducted on his odes and the communicative voice of his odes through using the theories of Naturalism, Marxism, Psychoanalytical studies as aforementioned, this thesis is limited to the study of Keats' odes and his existent expression of pleasure and pain in the light of Bakhtinian thought.

In revising literature, Hashemi and Kazemian (2014) discuss that dialogism is also implicated in the history of modern thinking about thinking. Bakhtin starts to accept Kant's reasoning that an unbridgeable gap exists between world and mind. In Holquist's view (2002), the unknown identity of mind and world are the conceptual rocks on which dialogism is founded and the sources of all the other levels which Bakhtin sees shaping the world and our place in it.

In his view, Bakhtinian Dialogism is:

a version of relativity, so it can come to this result that one body's motion has meaning only in relation to another body; or has meaning only in dialogue with another body. Dialogism argues that all meaning is relative in the sense that it comes about only as a result of the relation between two bodies occupying simultaneous but different space (p. 20).

As Holquist (2002) believes this relation happens where: "bodies may be thought of as ranging from the immediacy of our physical bodies, to political bodies and to bodies of ideas in general (ideologies)" (p. 21). **Law of placement** in Dialogism, as he then maintains, says that everything is discerned from a **unique position in existence**; result is that the meaning of whatever is perceived is formed by the place where it is observed. Consequently, as Holquist (2002) continues Bakhtin extends his idea that there is no one meaning: "the world is a vast congeries of contesting meanings, a heteroglossia so varied that no single term capable of unifying its diversifying energies is possible" (p. 24). **Being** for him is not just an event but an event that is shared. Being is simultaneity; it is always **co-being**. In Holquist's opinion (2002) what makes dialogue a centre of focus in dialogism is exactly the kind of **relation** conversations display, the conditions that must be met if any exchange between different speakers is to occur at all.

The self-other form is an essential form of our consciousness. Therefore, reflective consciousness suggests a social circumstance that is its precondition. Utterance becomes the topic of analysis when language is conceived as dialogue, the main unit of studying communication. Holquist (2002) believes that utterance in Bakhtin's view is a kind of exchange between the needs of speaker and also a language as a system. He then contends that: "The Bakhtinian utterance is dialogic precisely in the degree to which every aspect of it is a give-and-take between the local need of a particular speaker to communicate a specific meaning, and the global requirements of language as a generalizing system" (p. 59).

The contradictory environment of words is not only present to the speaker, but also is in the consciousness of the listener, which is pregnant with responses and objections. Therefore, the speakers' environment toward the listener is an orientation toward the world of listener which causes to introduce new elements into his discourse. Holquist (1981) says that:

The speaker strives to get a reading on his own word, and on his own conceptual system that defines this word, within the alien conceptual system of the understanding receiver; he enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system. The speaker...constructs his own utterance on alien territory... (p. 282).

Bakhtin claims that there is no one-line definition of a sign playing a role in dialogism. Rather we have to follow the work of signification as it shows itself at different places in the ranking levels where utterance is formed. So it can be inferred that people are in a particular place, and must respond to all these stimuli either by ignoring them or in a response that takes the form of making sense, of producing meaning out of such utterances. Holquist (2002) differentiates phonemic differences from semantic ones by maintaining that: "Phonemic differences are cut out of the physical fabric of the natural world's acoustic pressures; semantic differences are patterns cut from the ideological cloth of the social world" (p. 48). **Ideology and social world** are concepts which are best grasped when dialogism's emphasizes on addressivity. Furthermore, nothing means anything until it achieves a response. In other words, addressivity is **expressivity** and what we usually thinks of life is not a strange pivotal force, but an activity that would be the dialogue between occurrences addressed to me in the special place I occupy as a human being and my response to such occurrences from that particular place. Holquist (2002) adds that: "In dialogism, life is expression. Expression means to make meaning, and meaning comes about only through the medium of signs" (p. 49).

Each utterance has theme, which relies upon meaning. In Dentith's view (1995) theme is reaction by the consciousness in a generative process to the existence. Meaning is the practical equipment for the application of theme. Dialogically discussed, an utterance is always an answer to another utterance that precedes it and is also conditioned by the prior utterance. Thus it expresses the general condition of each speaker's addressivity, making it necessary for me, to answer for the particular place I occupy. As a result, this **in-between-ness** of all utterance, ascertains that communication is possible to take place barely in society, since the rules that govern precedence in speaking grow out of group practice. Holquist (2002) concludes that rather the utterance is an active and productive deed "which resolves a situation, brings to an evaluative conclusion, and extends action into the future" (p. 63). Consequently, discourse does not reflect a situation, it is a situation.

When class is considered as the ground of all dialogical accounts, the multiple contradictions of social life can be seen as operating in and through utterance. Dentith (1995) expresses that: "Economic and political forces artistic and educational histories are producing the multiple changes that constitute the history of a language" (p. 51). In fact, they are produced by historical forces that are external to language but act partly in language. In Bakhtinian account, as Holquist (1981) mentions, each and every utterance: "is intersected by these forces, realizes itself only by virtue of participating at once in the normative-centralizing system of unitary language and contributing to living heteroglossia" (p. 272). The word which comes to its speaker or writer already identified by its history as Dentith (1995) puts "is bearing the traces of its previous uses" (p. 54), which any user must continue, reflect or contest. He then maintains that: "There is no neutral language; the world does not speak its own meanings, but can only be alluded to by means of a socially marked language" (p. 54). In other word, every utterance expects a response, in which the listener is not merely passive but actively adjusts or challenges the preceding word. It only exists between people who occupy particular places in a network of social relationship. Dentith (1995) then says that: "Utterances and their speech types, that is, speech genres, are the drive belts from the history of society to the history of language" (p. 57).

Life and art are two distinctive inventories of dialogue that can be observed only in dialogue. They are both forms of representation; therefore they are different aspects of the same crucial factor to mediate that defines all human experience. Thus, the artistic form and meaning emerge between people. The text itself is never in itself; it is always composite of what the author produced at one given time and in one given place, and the meanings that the text will benefit from subsequent time. Holquist (2002) adds that:

A reading undertaken in the light of historical poetics will not concentrate (at least initially) on lexical or stylistic features of traditional literary analysis. It will give attention to details often dismissed as trivial: spatial and temporal markers in the text such as 'before' and 'after' or 'here' and 'there' (p. 121).

An awareness of social desires inherent to Keats's lower-middle-class background can help to explain his aestheticism and his vulgar approach to beauty. At the same time a dialogical approach accentuates the complicated nature of Keats's engagement with social and cultural discourses.

Dialogism on the one hand emphasizes the multiplicity of social discourses, as Sider (1998) believes, and on the other hand it highlights the open-ended nature of this interaction. He approaches Keats' poetry dialogically and maintains that:

Keats's poems become the uncertain products of their 'dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment,' works entangled in the complex interrelationships between other works on the same theme in Keats's culture. Keats himself emerges in this reading as an author caught in the process of negotiating his way through this cultural dialogue, an uncertain poet whose ambivalence is the result of his contemporaneity, his immersion in the shifting discourses of what Bakhtin calls 'the incomplete and therefore re-thinking and re-evaluating present'(p. 6).

The meanings of poems which evade from social problems are regulated by the social issues that they run away from. In the case of lyric poetry, what is social about art is not its political stance but its dynamics in opposition to society. The oppositional politics of art is not a direct statement about politics, but the work's desire-driven projection of a different and better world although a dreamed and momentary one. Consequently, the most apparently escapist art is social, because it is a sign of inadequacy of modern society to actual human need. Ryan (1998) believes that lyric poetry has social nature in itself and marks that: "Schleiermacher observed that a language system produces meanings that are social rather than personal and historically specific rather than abstract" (p. 156). He, in fact, associates unconscious origins of the meaning of poetry with the fact that meanings are social, rather than personal, in their formation. He then talks of outside-story point of view and reveals that it concerns the historical function that aestheticism has. He contends that:

There is nonetheless much to say in terms of the outside story. If a political unconscious, or historical anxiety, or class anxiety, or the ordinary purposes of business did condition or determine the production of a poetry of pleasure and beauty and removal in short, if such determiners did produce an illusion of a treasured aesthetic autonomy from the dirty world then, at the level of authorial intention, politics and material history are part of the dirty world that the poet is deliberately avoiding. The poem's evasion bears witness to the dirty world that the poem evades (p. 157).

As a result from this outside- story point of view, the poet's conscious intention is never enough to explain what is meaningful about the poem. Therefore, in Ryan's (1998) view: "the lyric work of art's withdrawal into itself, its self-absorption, its detachment from the social surface, is socially motivated behind the author's back" (p. 155).

A dialogical approach to Keats emphasizes the culturally responsive nature of his poems. In fact, Bakhtin allows us to continue the search for Keats's active and critical response to his own cultural moment, thereby extending the work of those scholars who have argued for Keats's social responsibility. A writer's word, according to Bakhtin, forms itself in the environment of what has been said about its object within the writer's culture; the word addresses this object as a cultural discourse already active with others' intentions and meanings. The way in which the text is seen to represent its object must account for the fact that all objects exist within this context of others' discourses. Indeed, any utterance in the process of shaping discourse is influenced by others' thoughts and values which may appear in its semantic properties.

Thus, with an awareness of dialogism, the literary work reveals that representation goes beyond the singularity of the writing subject and the individual utterance. A dialogic model of representation understands the author's word as at least double, directed toward its object and toward another's socio-ideological word about this object.

As Keats's account of social and political progress is complicated by periods of tensions in England, he; in the midst of all these social conflicts and unrests; could find his own style and generates meanings only by struggling with socio-ideological voices which surround his themes. Sider (1998) argues that: "in this sense, any text is shared or dialogic territory, a process of often conflicted negotiation with the many differing cultural voices that speak and have spoken on the author's chosen theme" (p. 432). In his view, the context of other people's words on the same theme which every utterance must struggle with in order to achieve its own meaning is almost inexhaustible to Bakhtin. He (1998) then adds that:

There are literally "thousands of dialogic threads woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance" (p. 436).

A dialogized word (text) is always open to this context, always finding new resonance in its response to the inexhaustible array of words with which it comes into contact. Every word confronts us with its “semantic openness”, its “capacity for further creative life”, its unfinishedness and the inexhaustibility of our further dialogic interaction with it (Sider, 1998, p. 436).

Discussion

To Autumn

‘**To Autumn**’ is one of the most thematically rich of Keats’s odes. It was also directly influenced by historical events and, as Roe (1998) argues, has a direct connection with some of his own times’ events that is Peterloo Massacre. He claimed ‘*To Autumn*’ elevated the moderate climate of Britain over tropical spirits. Since this ode is a clear encounter with death, it can be considered as an illusion of social violence. The three-stanza poem may seem to generate three different stages of *Autumn*: growth, harvest, and death. The theme running in the first stanza indicates that *Autumn* is a season of bringing fulfilling and fruition, yet the theme ending the last stanza pictures Autumn as a season of dying. However, Keats employs the stages of *Autumn*’s as a metaphor for the process of death to put the concept of death in a distinct and more approving light.

‘**To Autumn**’ discusses the excellences of grown-up political engagement versus childish drawbacks from political life. Nicholas Roe (1998) reads ‘**To Autumn**’ as systematizing a mature and secret awareness of potential rebellion, where contestation is placed in semantic groups as **close bosom-friend** and **clammy cells**, phrases seemingly reminiscent of its bed-fellow – **barred** imprisonment. He finds in the ode not chronological or artistic maturity, but political maturity, sharply escape, and all but covered in seemingly innocent words and phrases suggesting revolution and plotting. These include references such as **close bosom-friend of the maturing sun, clammy cells**. Turley (2004) also believes that : “In these strong and undeniably exciting readings, ‘**To Autumn**’, whether through conscious subterfuge on the part of Keats, or by less directed means, is assumed to reflect and comment – maturely – on the turbulent politics of the period” (p. 32).

He then concludes that: "Keats's contestation of grown-up power begins to look distinctly less opportunistic and rather more programmatic – constituting, indeed, a careful schema of 'boyish' opposition to rigid aesthetic and political dogmas" (p. 75). In '**To Autumn**' Keats also tries, by means of artwork, turn nature into culture, therefore, the ending part of the poem is joined in song as nature is replaced by civilization, which displays the self-sacrificing of both the artist and nature for society. In fact Keats employs nature to engage the socio-ideological discourses of his cultural moment in order to challenge any attempt to see him as apolitical.

Keats forms a theory in which a human being grows self and identity through pain, in a way that a world of suffering and death seems as compulsory. On the other hand, whereas he uses pain and suffering in his poem, he blends this with sensuous delight and pleasure. Indeed, the conflicted nature of life and the effort to unite opposite run through his poetry. '**To Autumn**' is basically an ode to **Autumn** and changing of seasons. The poet was ostensibly stimulated by observing nature; his detailed description of natural events is pleasantly appealing to the reader's feelings. Keats also utilises an illusion to a certain unpleasantness related to **Autumn**, and connects it to a time of death. By depicting the pain- pleasure or nature-death theme of his ode he shares in dialogism of his cultural moment a cultural dialogue; human suffering and conflicts along with delightful romance themes is part of Romantic environment; that takes part in a plurality of lyrical Romantic discourses.

Ode on a Grecian Urn

Keats's '**Ode on a Grecian Urn**' images political revision of traditional civic humanist discourses. It can be noticed that, the urn is a public companion, a friend to man, because what it speaks is a common social truth. Keats emphasizes this idea in the Ode's concluding lines which tell us that beauty is the one fact people in society possess in common, and the only fact we all need to know. Sider (1998) notes that the urn reminds us of what we share with others, therefore it fulfils the social role. He argues that Keats:

...uses its beauty to forge a sense of community. This community, moreover, is socially level. It is a grand democracy of taste, a society in which taste alone (the ability to appreciate the beauty of the urn) dictates citizenship(p. 162).

Furthermore, every person in this society is capable of taste and thus citizenship, since the appreciation of beauty is something indeed, the only thing human beings all possess in common (Sider, 1998, p. 162).

Thus, the poem reveals the idea that an object of art invites public participation in its beauty. The urn's beauty speaks not just to Keats, but to Keats's entire generation and not only to this generation, but to every generation:

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with bredeOf marble men and maidens overwrought, With forest branches and the trodden weed; Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thoughAs doth eternity: Cold Pastoral! (Abrams, 1987, p. 1848)

Consequently this ode emerges as a complex and uncertain political statement about art's historical accountability and the public's right to culture.

Keats in many of his poems leaves the real realm to find an unreal, mythical, or aesthetic world. At the end of the poem, the speaker comes back to his ordinary life changed in some way and equipped with a new kind of understanding. Sometimes the appearance or inspecting a beautiful object may make the departure possible. Keats's concept of negative capability can be displayed in his ability to get lost in a daydreaming state, to leave conscious life for imaginary life without regarding rationality. In Keats's theory of negative capability, the poet vanishes from the work so that the work itself records an experience in such a way that the reader finds out and reacts to the experience without any need to the involvement or clarification of the poet. Keats's speakers become so intrigued with an object that they remove themselves and their impressions from their representation of that object. In fact, the poet becomes one entity with the object that is described and indistinguishable from it. The speaker in '**Ode on a Grecian Urn**' goes on to describes the scenes on the urn for several stanzas until the popular ending bout beauty and truth that is included in quotation marks.

Critics, since the poem's publication in 1820, have tried to theorize about the one who speaks these lines, whether he is the poet, the urn, the speaker, or one or all the patterns or characters on the urn. Moreover, at the beginning of the poem the speaking between the poet and the urn makes the reader to search for more than just the relationship between them but also his own place as an observer.

Removing the speaker and the poet in this poem indicates Keats's impersonal outlooks and discloses that he has the ability to differentiate between the individuality of his own and the world outside. Therefore, this can lead his social impression to live on in his poetry. Consequently, the urn, as an artwork, needs an audience that will allow it to communicate with humanity in order to submit a narrative and also for the imagination to function.

A desire to transcend and to rise above the limits of reality engages Keats in higher imagination. In fact, by stressing upon the theme of superiority of imagined beauty to the really organized, he negotiates the suffering of actual world which he wants to escape from, with reader in a dialogical way. In the second stanza the speaker totally deals with the sounds and activities presented on the urn, focusing on the difference between the perfect nature of art and the defective, momentary nature of life:

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love and she be fair! (Abrams, 1987, p. 1847).

There are some juxtapositions in the '**Ode on a Grecian Urn**' that keeps the poem in the human realm .It is when Keats tries to put together melancholy and happiness, of the abandoned town and green trees, of the ideal silence and the probability of **piping songs for ever new, of the mad pursuit and the struggle to escape**. Permanently in the search of discovering the perfectness of human destiny, the poem would keep together the conflicts of human world. In so doing, the poem emphasizes that the only possible way to recognize tragic is along with its opposite — happiness, and that if each of these features of human life is to be identified fully, they should be experienced together. It can be noted that, the silent characters of the urn are not endangered by change or death, as they live **far above** in the world of ideal and are not associated with the world of living, which is not only destined to **fade, despite its vigour and clamour, but also brings listlessness and satiety**.

Again, the unreachable seems better than the accomplished, since it would offer a more lasting feeling of joy and happiness. These contradictory speech powers have been displayed everywhere in the poem, that is full of various tales which the urn, with its silence can tell. The most important fact is that this silence can haunt the readers of the poem, and keep them **For ever panting**, in a ceaseless dialogue with the urn, the poem and the poet. A dialogical ekphrasis is developed when the poet tries to introduce a verbal manifestation of a silent object, the urn, and allows it to speak without actually speaking. This is what turns the reading or interpreting the poem into as Denee (2010) believes, **multiple dialogues occurring simultaneously**. Then, it is unavoidable to stop the reader of the poem becoming the reader of the urn, since the speaker's unanswerable questioning makes him share his own contemplating experience in order to find any possible response from the surface of the urn and create his own explanation of the figures on this object of art.

The reader in '**Ode on a Grecian Urn**' also becomes, as Wilson (1993) states, **a reader of the fictionalized urn** or in Scott's view (2005), the urn as represented by the poet in his attempt **to translate the arrested visual image into the fluid movement of words**. Thus, the text continuously involves the readers in a dialogue with the poet, and forces them to investigate their ability to explore the urn's silence and change it into a piece of writing that persists the urn's existence, its creator, its poet and its own creation as well. In this process, Denee (2010) contends that:

the urn itself and the sculptor himself, both, by nature of the urn's existence, as well as its inscription, 'speak' to modern viewers, allowing them a voice in a dialogue. The sculptor, more importantly, is allowed a 'quasi-animate' existence beyond his own years; he can communicate with future generations without even breathing.

This perpetual dialogue, started and continued basically by the silence of the urn, associates the speaker to the listener, the author to the reader, and the present to the past, attaining the Bakhtinian existence as dialogue, in which as Holquist (1981) mentions:

There is neither a first word nor a last word. The contexts of dialogue are without limit. They extend into the deepest past and the most distant future (p. 373).

Even meanings born in dialogues of the remotest past will never be finally grasped once and for all, for they will always be renewed in later dialogue. At any present moment of the dialogue there are great masses of forgotten meanings, but these will be recalled again at a given moment in the dialogue's later course when it will be given new life. For nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will someday have its homecoming festival (Holquist, 1981, p. 373).

Ode to a Nightingale

In '**Ode to a Nightingale**' the theme of suffering is indicated in several ways, including invoking the elements of escape through the poetic great excitement of song. The bird is barely a voice in the poem, but a voice that obliges the narrator to untie with it and forget **the grieves** of the world. The song's conclusion represents the result of trying to escape into the realm of fancy. The poet's narrator listens to a bird song, but within the song '**Ode to a Nightingale**' it seems painful and much the same as death. In this ode, the poet attempts to retain the conflict, the tension between the flesh and the spirit, when he immediately refers to the dull brain which **perplexes and retards**, that draws man back from the heights of imagination that would lead him to ascend. The nightingale's song in the first parts of the poem manifests the joyful moments that stir and move the individual like a drug. However, experiencing these pleasurable moments would not continue forever, and the body is remained aspiring it until the speaker feels helpless without the pleasure. The narrator, instead of accepting the approaching truth, grasps the poetry to conceal from the loss of pleasure. Poetry would not create the pleasure that the narrator seeks, but it releases him from his desire for only joy and pleasure.

With the theme of a loss of pleasure and unavoidable death, the poem outlines the insufficiency of the romantic escape from the real world to the imaginative ideal one. Finally, the admittance of the loss of joy and pleasure by the closing part of the poem is an acceptance of life and death as well. Death was a continuous theme running through Keats' poetry due to the fact that he was perpetually exposed to his family members' death throughout his life. Within the ode, many death images are notable. It is when the nightingale seems to experience a kind of death and also the god **Apollo** undergoes death experience, although his death discloses his own divinity.

On the other hand, the nightingale is not considered to be simply dying. However, it should be noted that the god or the nightingale is capable of singing without dying, but; at least in a dreamlike way, as the ode clarifies it; man is not. After all, the nightingale and the discussion about the nightingale are not plainly associated to the bird or the song, but they actually are related to human experience, generally speaking. Therefore, the song is a multiple image that is created through the interaction of paradoxical voices of questioning and praise. From dialogical point of view, Keats with the bird's song communicates different voices in the ode in order to highlight the conflicted and troubled nature of human life through the association of themes such as joy/pain or death/ life in his poetry.

The unification of pleasure and pain is the prominent fact of human life that Keats has perceived and admitted. '**Ode to a Nightingale**' develops from a persistent sort of experience which dominates Keats's thoughts, feelings and attitudes during that period of time. As Bakhtin believes, it is a unique experience, although it is an aspect of a larger social experience in general. This larger experience is intensely conscious of both the pleasure and suffering, the joy and the grief, of human life. This consciousness is a feeling that becomes a thought which the poet observes it in others and feels it in himself. It is not only feeling that becomes a thought, it is also a kind of pondering meditation of a lot of human beings, who should fulfil their desire for happiness in life in a world that pain and joy are inevitably bound together. In the end, the poem accepts the fact that pleasure would not last and death is inevitable. In this ode, Keats pictures the loss of actual and real world and considers himself dead-as a *sod* which the nightingale sings for.

The theme of imagination occurs in '**Ode to a Nightingale**' as the poet seems unable to differentiate between his own artistic vision and the song that he assumes to have stimulated it into action. Although the imaginary world frees man from the pain of actual world, it also turns the world of actuality to appear more painful comparatively. The theme of paradox can also be noted along with imaginative nature of the ode in contrasts such as dream/reality, joy/melancholy, mortal/immortal, separation/connection and life and death. In fact, these conflicts are caused all by the effort of vision and fancy in the ode that is associated with conflicts of the real world.

Ode to Psyche

In '**Ode to Psyche**' besides the theme of devoting one's self for the mind, the theme of reception is heavily remarkable in the poem. In Bennett and Royle's view (1995), the ode like all poems, is heard both by the poem and by a reader that reads and hears the poem and differently. The poem's consideration of the audience as a third-party to the dialogue between the speaker and the goddess symbolizes the issue of narrative that is common among Keats's many odes and this makes Bennett and Royle (1995) to examine how accurately the reader should consider his place in the poem, or outside of it. Thus, the dialogue between the poet and the goddess goes beyond personal outlook and involves the reader to respond. In this ode Keats accepts the world of troubles and pains as compulsory for his growth. Keats says to Psyche in his ode:

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my
mind,
Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant Pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind. (Abrams, 1987, p. 1844).

In an **untrodden region** of his mind, untouched and fresh, Keats offers himself totally to whatever this refreshed perspective on life holds in store for him. His **branched thoughts** indicate the dividing of his **vale of soul-making**, Christian philosophy of **vale of tears**. Since Keats tried to change the idea in which only Christ can rescue you from sufferings of the world and introduced the concept which pain is necessary for soul-making, he was allowed to gain the kind of independence and commitment he needed to advance in poetry. Starting from that time, he could be armed with the calm and healthy spirit he was seeking in order to create his desired poems. Since then, pain had even been felt **pleasant**. He seems to understand the seemingly paradoxes as essential to individuals' growth and through a conversation with Psyche communicates these contradictions with reader.

Ode on Melancholy

Keats' odes are full of contradictory and paradoxical concepts-ascribing human experience to the silent and unmoving figures on the urn, for instance. But the '**Ode on Melancholy**' makes its whole theme on a clear paradox- that pleasure and pain are closely related and grief stays at the heart of joy.

This ode is more than plainly a combination of the previous poems. In it, the speaker ultimately looks into the nature of temporariness and transience and the negotiation of pain and pleasure in a way that leads him to go beyond the inadequate aesthetic comprehension of **Urn** and gain the higher understanding of '**To Autumn**'. In the third stanza, the speaker comes up with his most satisfactory amalgam of melancholy and joy, in a way that absorbs the tragic mortal nature of life but allows him to be attached to his own experience. It is exactly the fact that pleasure will terminate making the experience of joy such a stunning one; the truth that beauty will die making the experience of beauty ravishing and sharper. The main point is to see the core of sadness that remains at the kernel of all pleasure—as Roe (1998) believes, to **burst joy's grape** and achieve admission to the inner palace of melancholy. He argues that:

A good example of Keats using pain and suffering, as a form of poetic pleasure is '**Ode on Melancholy**'. This poem is about pleasure and pain and starts in the first stanza with pain. In this stanza there is a lot of diction to do with depression. The stanza contains many words telling the reader not to turn to narcotics when depressed. These words of depression and pain include "Lethe", "Wolf's bane", "Nightshade" and "Beatle". "Lethe" is one of the rivers of hell, "Wolf's bane" is a dull yellow plant, "Nightshade" is a plant with poisonous berries and a "Beatle" is an ugly insect. This diction shows the depressed mood (p. 67).

This shows that pain and suffering are a source of poetic pleasure in Keats poetry. In the final part of the poem Keats asks the question if it is worth experiencing pleasure when all that follows is pain and suffering. Keats feels that only those who experience pleasure will suffer from melancholy. The line **His soul shall taste the sadness of her might** shows that nothing can be done once pleasure has turned to pain. Thus, it is obvious that this synthetic understanding of joy and suffering shows that Keats's attempts in dialogical way to communicate human experience in the world of pain and pleasure with his reader.

Conclusion

To sum up, it can be noted that Keats in his odes tries to introduce various theme including paradoxes such as pain/pleasure, death/life, nature, imagination and beauty in order to provide a dialogical voice through which he can negotiate the conflicts and sufferings of his own time with readers. His appreciation of beauty and imagination that may seem in surface, a mere aesthetic attitude could, indeed, share a great deal with social, cultural and political outlook in deeper layer of his poetry. Moreover, expression of human agonies, which is the main concern of Keats's odes, seems to be related to the social unrests and tensions. In fact, his association of paradoxical themes in the odes grows out of a desire to release from an actual painful life.

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