



Philosophical Revelation As Depicted In John Keats's *Ode On A Grecian Urn*

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Abstract

Beauty transcends worldly desires and the deepest of suffering was proven to the world by Keats. Creativity was the focal point of his poems and imagination was his weapon. The theme of his poem is to arrest beauty which is done by the permanence of art. Beauty was ideal and an essential part of his life. It evoked goodness which in turn gave eternal beauty in poetry. He was not satisfied with the mere praising of beauty but he wished to attain the greatest perfection in it. Beauty to him sharpened the senses and widened the unimaginable horizons in life. With the knowledge of beauty one can liberate the sensuous passions and gain the depths of intellectual magniloquence and the pinnacle of spiritual ecstasy. His commitment to the absoluteness of the truth and beauty in poetry was obvious, but he was metaphysically remained neutral. Finding pleasure in beauty and truth was his astounding nature. The paper deals with the philosophical revelation of beauty, truth and goodness that is portrayed in John Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

Keywords: beauty, truth, imagination, poetry

The English language consists of a number of genres of which poetry has stood the test of time. It was the broadly used type during the ancient times next to plays. Its relevance can never be taken advantage of as it is a very popular genre even in its contemporary age. It has the ability to teach morals within few lines which is not possible in the other types. Brevity is its closest alliance. Poetical lines can be filled with farfetched

geniuses that can be done easily when compared to essays, novels or criticism. It has been a favorite to numerous writers and poets who have exploited its capacity through all possible ways.

The subject matter of poetry is treated in two ways. The handling of the external details gives rise to Objective poetry while the incorporation of the poet's thoughts and attributes raises the Subjective poetry. To put them more briefly Subjective poetry is personal while Objective poetry is impersonal. The latter is older than the former. Theoretically, these attributes cannot be separated one another. There are eight poetical types, Ode being one of them. It is a form of lyric and has its origin from the Greek. It is a dignified composition and always has a specific rhyme like the lyric. Ode is composed in such a way that it directly addresses to the object that it is referring to.

Generally Odes are classified into two types: Dorian or Pindaric Ode and Lesbian or Horatian Ode. But these classifications were unsatisfactory for the usage of the English writers. So they made few changes to make it flexible for their purpose by making few changes. It was either regular or irregular in its form. The former had exact stanza arrangements while the latter had different arrangements. The Romantic poets used their own versions of Odes by changing the rhyme schemes and have composed a number of them. One among them is the renowned poet, John Keats who has composed six Odes in his life time. Among them, *Ode on a Grecian Urn* is his eminent work.

It poem was published on January, 1820 and initially it was not well received. Its philosophical intelligence was so serious and lofty that its value was not recognized. But after the death of Keats in 1821 its fame took off. It is regarded as his masterpiece. The last line has faced considerable amounts of debate regarding its significance yet there is no one explanation to it. Each stanza contains ten lines each with an ABAB rhyme scheme and ending with a Miltonic sestet. Its rhyme scheme is little distorted but it follows iambic pentameter (with a few exceptions) i.e. each line has ten syllables with an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. For example, the first line, "Thou still un-RAV-ish'd bride of Qui-etness".

For Keats, poetry must spring naturally from one's soul and must be reproduced through imagination. The details that struck his imagination were beauty to him and it always soothed his senses. Not having experienced any happiness in life he tried to bring that out in his poetry. It made him choose beauty to be his central theme in almost all of his poems, as it was his sole consolation. It was because of it frustration in life that made him write that the memory of anything that was beautiful gave instant pleasure. He worships beauty and it is the driving force in his poems. Quite interestingly one can find truth and beauty intertwined in his works as well.

Keats's imaginative powers are not only artistic in nature but has the ability to engage with truth also. It does not mean that he wishes to do away with the philosophical perception of the word 'truth'. Though he confesses to the difficulty that one would face in seeing how deductive reasoning helps in raising truth. Keats is satisfied to allow for the dual perception of truth. On one hand, there is truth that is discernible by the consecutive derivable philosophical mind and it kind of genius that is associated with truth was something that Keats always found happiness and satisfaction in. On the other hand, Keats also focuses on the truth of imagination. According to him, whatever the imagination recognizes as beauty is always truth, whether it survived or not.

It truth in imagination establishes in beauty in imagination. As for Keats, creative force was constituted by imagination and the beauty that is witnessed is not accidental but through its existence it creates an essential identity. Moreover imaginal truth in discrepancy to its philosophical equivalent is depicted as ethereal and is correlated with heaven. He is totally convinced that imagination is one among passion, affection of the heart and holiness. It was a very spiritual entity in his eyes. He strongly believed in the dichotomy between philosophical truth and imaginal truth.

Keats further suggests that the concern of imaginal truth as being truth is conditioned in two ways: firstly imagination being the angst of beauty and secondly arousing of the knowledge from the imaginal code of consciousness. To bring the dichotomy to a clear representation it requires further explanation. Keats was completely blown over by the satisfaction that he receives from the very essence of

the word 'truth'. Yet the question that cannot be ignored: What is the nature of beauty that makes Keats sense its core relationship with truth?

There is one probable explanation to it that Keats claims that poetry seizes with an unchanging metaphysical realm and acquires its truthfulness from an assumed fixity. Imagination is a quiet observer of metaphysical characteristics. The Platonic precedence of spirit over actuality is inverted in Keats apprehension of beauty which is marked as the striking feature of his poetry. Its definition of reversal leads us to another possible explanation of Keats's hold onto poetry's relation to truth. He believes that poetry's truthfulness can be ascribed to its relation with the real world. Precisely, for Keats it does not bear any identity of truthfulness but it has the power to make the reader feel a real life experience.

On examining his manner of connecting consciousness and truth, it is highly remarkable the way he has used the word 'heart'. It is used as a metaphor that is a locus for all the dimensions of experience that comes under passion. He indirectly tries to convey that the reference that is done to heart means the detachment from the brain. It reinforces his idea of the opposition between the truth given by poetry and philosophy. It is seen as a drawback by many writers as they feel that it misleads the consideration of passion to be lacking not only of thought but deductive reasoning also. It was clearly not his view as imagination is developed as a part of passion and to Keats it seizes experiences as beauty.

The common idea of thought becomes very clear on looking into the means to understand about emotions. According to Keats, the absence of thought corresponds to an inceptive state of budding consciousness which he claims to be the 'thoughtless chamber'. It has to be noted here that, Keats does not have anything to say about it thoughtless chamber except that it is an ephemeral episode of pre-cognitive crudity. The importance of it thoughtless chamber also called as the infant chamber depends on the notion that it is an early stage from which one finds themselves gradually impelled by the arousal of the thinking proportion within it. The principle notion is an impending awakening in which the senses find itself in another chamber, seemingly filled with soothing wonders and in which we are completely consumed in the very beginning.

The contradictory nature of its chamber of notions has its own nature where it bestows intelligence to the apprehensions of the heart and persuades one's memory of the world that is full of distress, subordination, pain, illness and suffering. Keats represents the consciousness in a figurative manner that provides the motive of creating one's own route to distinct mental state. From the state of analytic void, consciousness arrives, through notions, to an apprehension of the world and from there to acknowledging the heartbreak in others. The cognizance of all the sufferings in the world gives rise to a miserable mind. It causes the blackening of the consciousness that he finds to be an unavoidable result of notions, which is an occurrence that Keats advances to turn away through any other kind of flight through his poetical lines.

Contrastingly, Keats considers it as a minute investigation of its bleak chamber as a vow of intense poetical significance. He further ascribes the rational power implied in the ideas as a cognitive gift to the soul of humans. It explores into the suffering done poetically by throwing light on the link that he draws between truth and beauty of poetry. His conviction of poetry being the bearer of truth with dedication to its importance of the world around is highly suggestive that Keats trusts the anxiety of the beauty in poetry to have a significant recognition aspect. Another important thought is the reasoning emergence of the holiness from earth is a central pattern of his thoughts. It is usually both literary and theological.

The pattern or motif of an imminent stability within brevity is afar retrieved accurately through changeable reality which is reproduced in Keats's version of poetic truth and its beauty. From the poetic arrangement with the experience of agony, according to his poetical locale comes the imaginal anxiety of beauty and the understanding of truth in poetry. The apprehension of beauty revolves on a moment of grasping which at once takes its turn to be both a kind of recognition and a form of creation. The notion of an acknowledgeable aspect to the cognition of beauty is a backing in furnishing intelligible Keats's, that is otherwise known somewhat perplexed declare that the experience that one has with beauty in art is linked in one way or the other with truth.

By suggesting that the acknowledging experience that one has with beauty is also concurrently creative, he is assumed to be suggesting his readers that such a unique experience will be remarkably metamorphosed in some significant manner from an uncomplicated insight or consciousness of apparent pre-

given or the one given prior to the aesthetic encounter itself. Overall, Keats was conscious enough to prove the transformation of subjective which was an undeniable effect of poetry. The ongoing debate on the theme of beauty in Keats's poems shows his unique approach.

Keats believed solely on the beauty and truth in poetry that must be tasted by the readers as he did. It will take a lot of mental strength in order to understand his caliber and knowledge. There are a number of questions that still remain unanswered on the very subject of it poem. He envisioned his poetry to be able to take the reader on a journey to eternal bliss. It would be right to call him as one of the greatest mythical heroes.

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