

## Ode on a Grecian Urn

John Keats (1795-1821) studied different great poets and writers of the ages \_\_\_\_\_ Spenser, Homer and the Renaissance poets. From his personal life, it was known that he was unlucky in love. His beloved deceived him and the real life engulfed him in pain and dejection. He turned his face away from reality, and loved beauty in all forms. He composed sonnets, odes and a legendary tale of the mythical lovers, Endymon and Phoebe. His all odes (Ode to Nightingale, Ode to Grecian Urn etc) are brilliant and possess an eminent place in English literature.

His ode on 'a Grecian Urn' was composed in May 1819 and was published in January 1820. He composed this poem being inspired by the English writer Benjamin Haydan. Besides he was quite aware of the Classical Greek art. He is of the opinion about the Greek literature that it is idealistic and enriched with Greek virtues. Apart from it, he was in a great creativity mood by being fallen in love with Fanny Brawne. So this ode is composed under the Greek influence and his intense love that's why he is addressing it as it were a beautiful woman. It is divided into five stanzas and each stanza consists of ten lines focusing Grecian urn.

The poet sees a Grecian urn where on the human figures are depicted. He nicely addresses to the urn and its eminent silence because it has passed its life in silence in the corner of the museum. Despite it, it is safe and fresh with a good condition. He calls it a foster child adopted by silence and slow time, and it is the product of the ancient Greek artist. After the decline of its flourishing days, it was buried thousands of years. So it was considered the age of its silence. The poet addresses it by different names and titles. He calls it Sylvan historian or the historian of woods or forest because it depicts the history of the people who lived in the forests. The poet gives him a title of the best story teller because it uses pictures. He shows the comparison between the poet and the historian. The poet uses rhymes where as the tale of urn is flowery and sweet. The depiction of scenes of nature makes it more literary piece. The poet looks closer to the urn in order to know what is going on in the carved pictures. He finds it bordered with a pattern of leaves. It means it is built on the forest history and looks to be a ghost story. The poet uses the word 'haunt' that is connected to the dead or the characters died a thousand years ago. Now he thinks about the characters that they might be gods or common human beings. He puts the reason that all the gods in Ancient Greek were like people, and the story might have taken place in Tampe or Arcady. He finds in the picture, the men are chasing the women whether in playful mood or teasing or reluctant mood. He imagines that the women are struggling to escape and concludes that it might be a game. The poet finds pipes and timbrels are played and all are seemed to be happy. The poet does not consider this merriment simple but it is a wild ecstasy.

In the second stanza, the poet turns to the second picture of the urn, where in, the piper is playing a song. The poet, by his strong imagination, accepts it better and more melodious. It is vivid that the poet prefers the world of fantasy to the physical or real world. He himself plays here the role of musician as well as of audience. He further describes about sensual or physical and spiritual ears. He is of the opinion that spiritual ears are more treasured because they issue rich and unique pleasure. He asks the piper to play imaginary songs. Besides the piper, the poet sees a good looking young lad, sitting

under the tree. The poet imagines that he has made the urn a real place. He, under the tree, plays the same and same song because his pose or place is unchangeable, and the trees will not be bald. The urn enjoys same song, same season and same place. The place is naturally decorated with leaves, and in the world of fantasy and imagination, the same sweetness will ever remain.

Now the speaker turns back to the first scene where the guys are chasing the women. He calls the lovers bold because they are chasing the women in the forest like a game. The poet describes their chasing will remain same and fresh for ever in the urn. Their strong desires of love will remain same, and the beauty of the chased women will never die. The poet loves beauty in all forms, and he keeps such beauty in imagination, for it will never die but attract the poet more and more.

In the third stanza, the poet describes about the branches of tree which will ever remain decorated with leaves because the world of urn is unchangeable. It is a spring time, and the trees will always remain green without the fear of summer. In the second scene of the urn, where the young musician is playing the pipe under a tree, he calls him unwearied and ever fresh because the pipe is in his mouth will ever remain fresh with same magic and same force. It is in the world of urn that is imaginary and unchangeable. John Keats compares the love of real life with the love carved into the urn. According to him, the love of real life is imperfect and fraught with pains and sorrows and unquenchable desires. The lover comes away with a burning forehead and a parching tongue.

Now the poet turns to the third picture carved into the urn. In the picture, the heifer is depicted dressed in the garlands of the flowers, coming to the altar for sacrifice. Altar is a place where the animals are sacrificed, and for its sake, it is decorated with leaves and vegetation. So, it seems green. The poet imagines that the animal moans at the sky. These garlands symbolize it a holy thing that is destined for the gods. There the poet sees a priest and a crowd must have been coming to participate in the sacrifice. He imagines that these people are coming from the town that is built on the mountain, and he watches a small fortress, protecting it. The town is empty because all have come out side to participate in the ritual. The poet calls it a holy morning. He describes that its streets will always be silent because there is not any soul, all are gone, and he is unable to find or collect his information about the sacrifice.

In the last stanza, the speaker shows his excitement about the beautiful appearance of the urn because it possesses an idiosyncratically Greek appearance with a graceful posture. The lovers are braided to gather in the chiseled marble. It is decorated with the images of plants and leaves. The poet is a little annoyed at the forest branches and the trodden weed because they have made the urn crowded. The poet calls it quiet one and it compels him to think or view that the urn shows the world where things never change or ruin. He calls the scenes, depicted on the urn, are of country life. All these images are of peaceful and empty town, lovers and nature. Now the poet turns to the old age or the age of characters depicted on it. He imagines that every one of his age is dead but it is still in good condition and alive. He finds that the urn is snared in other woeful problem; for his all present problems are surpassed by new problem. He is expressed as a good friend that will be healthy and advisable to every one of new generation. In last two lines he talks about beauty and truth, both are same thing. He finds what ever is carved into the urn is beauty, and beauty is truth. It will lead good and meaningful life. The

poet does not need the knowledge of other departments because beauty is enough for him, it is truth; otherwise the worldly knowledge would suffer him. Such point makes Keats one of the most romantic of the romantics.

From his work, it is vivid that he is a man of great creativity and the follower of ancient Greek. His using of Greek names and knowledge is really appreciable that showers great knowledge and refreshes the minds of the readers. Besides; he honestly expresses both the positive and negative sides of the search for beauty.