

RESEARCH ARTICLE



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA
2395-2636 (Print); 2321-3108 (online)

THE MUSIC HAS SOOTHING EFFECT ON THE MINDS OF PEOPLE IN THE POETRY OF JOHN KEATS

ANDE BALA SOWRI

Lecturer in English, Hindu College, Guntur.



ABSTRACT

It is said that music has a power to melt stones. It has soothing effect on the minds of people. There are some music therapies with which the sick are healed. John Keats is a romantic poet. He believes that poetry is an incarnation of beauty. He says "a thing of beauty is a joy forever"; and it is the motto of his life and work. He loves nature for its own sake and for glory and for glory and loveliness which he everywhere finds in it. "The hunting of bee, the sight of flower, the glitter of sun, seem to make his nature tremble. The poet keeps listening to the melodious song of the Nightingale. He is enthralled by the joy of the moment. Keats treats the song of the Nightingale as a soothing effect on his mind.

©KY PUBLICATIONS

It is said that music has a power to melt stones. Music has soothing effects on the minds of people. A mother sings to her baby a lullaby to sleep the baby into a sleep. The music has balming and soothing effects on our minds. There are some music therapies, with which the sick are healed. John Keats (1795-1821) is a romantic poet. He believes that poetry is an incarnation of beauty. He says "A thing of beauty is joy forever", is the motto of his life and work. He loves nature for its own sake and for the glory and for the glory and loveliness which he everywhere finds in it.

Keats is the most romantic of the romantic poets. He handled even the Greek themes with a luxuriance of language and wealth of detail. The most obvious characteristic of his poetry is its abundant sensuousness. Mathew Arnold says; poetry according to Milton's famous saying, should be "simple, sensuous, impassioned. No one can question the eminency, in Keats's poetry of the quality of sensuousness. Keats as a poet is abundantly and enchantingly sensuous".

John Keats is the greatest lover of beauty. "The hunting of the bee, the sight of a flower, the glitter of the sun, seemed to make his nature tremble; then his eye is flashed, his cheek glowed and his mouth quivered". He is as sensitive to the beauty of art and literature as that of life and nature. As a poet; Keats is preoccupied completely with sensations instead of thought with gorgeous imagery instead of abstract conceptions. Poetry was for him like a drug which made him forget the weariness, the fever and fret of human life. It gives him immense pleasure. He is essentially the poet of colour. His lyrical quality is admirable. His vivid phrases are beautiful, sparkling, melodies and meaningful.

Keats "Ode to Nightingale was written after death of Tom, his brother. Keats was half in love with easeful death. He was conscious of his physical sickness and it was in such a mood that Keats composed his beautiful poem "Ode to a Nightingale". In the spring of 1819 a Nightingale built her nest near Keats house. He felt a calm and continued joy in her song. Keats listens to the sweet song of the

Nightingale. He feels very happy. In his rapture and ecstasy, joy makes his heartache. The sweet song of Nightingale brings to a sweet pain in his heart. There is a Telugu movie song "Pokiri" in which the hero sings a song addressing his beloved girlfriend that he gets a sweet pain in his heart, because of her beauty. In the same manner Keats gets a soothing effect after listening to the song of Nightingale. Then his senses become numbed. He calls the bird "light winged dryad of the trees".

Keats feels extremely happy to remain conscious of the pain and sorrow of the real life. Then the song of Nightingale is a soothing effect on his mind.

John Keats feels immensely happy. He remains conscious of the pain and sorrow of the real life. He feels as though he has drunk some intoxicating wine or opium which has dulled his brain and dimmed his consciousness. He is not envious of the Nightingale's song. He is too happy in the happiness of the bird. He is in a state of inertia and is led towards oblivion. His faculties of memory and thought seem to be lost. He feels to be sunk in the river of Lethe. Whose waters make him totally forgetful. Both pleasure and pain are deliberately heightened. The pain is a natural sequel of too much happiness. The Nightingale sings of summer in full-throated case. It is in some melodious plot of green colour.

"My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness
pains my sense; as though of hemlock I had
drunk, or emptied some dull opiate to the
drains. One minute past, and Lethe wards
has sunk; 'Tis not through envy of the happy lot,
But being too happy in time happiness - That
thou, light winged dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green and shadows numberless,
Singer of summer in full throated ease".

The poet desires still to prolong the state of intoxication, forgetfulness and excessive delight. Keats craves for a draught of red wine that has been cooled and preserved for ages in the deep delved earth. He thinks of Flora and the country green. He likes dance, song, and mirth. He likes to have a

beaker full of the warm south. It is Hippocrene that can make his lips red in colour.

The bubbles wink at the brim of the glass. His mouth becomes purple coloured. Keats wants to drink such famous and delicious wine to leave the world unseen and fade far away in to the dim forest.

The poet keeps listening to the melodious song of the Nightingale. He is so much enthralled and enraptured by the joy of the moment that he longs for "easeful death". He has been "half in love" with death for quite some time. When he listens to the song of Nightingale, he considers it to be the most appropriate time to die. He says,

"Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take in to the air my quiet breath,
Now more than even seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy! Still wouldst thou sing,
and I have ears in vain
To thy high requiem become a sod"

The above said quotation reminds us a song from a Telugu movie, enacted by Shobhan Babu and Jayanthi. "Nee Kougililo Thala dhalchi" that means the hero's beloved girlfriend wants to take rest in the hug of her beloved boyfriend and she wants to die in the hands of her beloved boyfriend and they want to continue their bond for so many births even after their deaths.

Keats treats the song of Nightingale as a soothing effect on his mind. It is just like a sweet soothing effect on his mind. The poet thinks that when he listens to the song of Nightingale, then his breath soars high in the air. As the lovers aspire for an eternal bonding, and hugs, Keats wants to take rest in the lap of the song of Nightingale. Even if he were to die, the bird's song continues.

The thought of death makes the poet think of immortality of the bird and its song. He says that the bird's song must have pleased many emperors and clowns of bygone ages. The poet addresses Nightingale as an "immortal bird" for its song is unending. "No hungry generations tread thee down". The same song has continued from the

ancient times of Ruth, whose home sickness has been cured by the song of the bird. When he listens to the bird's song, then death sings to him more welcome than ever before. He wishes that he may die at midnight a painless death with the sweet song of the bird pouring in his ears.

In the middle ages some maiden are made captive by some wicked magician in some enchanted castle, the windows of which looked out upon a dangerous ocean full of foam as a result of the rise and fall of stormy waves. Such maidens felt quite forlorn or lonely in their captivity, and then the hearts of maidens were cheered by the song of the Nightingale which reached them through the open window. It is that very song of the bird is immortal, while individual life is temporary and short lived.

"The same that oft times hath, Charmed magic easements, opening on the foam, Of perilous seas, in faery lands of forlorn"

The song of Nightingale stands for permanence. The bird has become a symbol of continuity, of natural beauty / but ineffable beauty, available to all man; and all times. The word forlorn remains the poet of the actual world. Fancy cannot hold him permanently in thrall. The song of the bird has faded. But still the poet is haunted by its melody. He wonders whether he is awake or asleep. In his "Ode on a Grecian Urn", Keats has paid homage to the immortality of art is life and nature. Beauty vanishes and perishes too soon. But art renders beauty everlasting and immortal. The beautiful Grecian Urn has preserved its beauty. Though ages have passed since it was made, it still remains attractive, lovely and elegant. It is beauty and mysterious forever. No one has been able to learn in secret of its loveliness. The charming woodland seems engraved on it is far more beautiful than anything ever told in poetry.

The transitory nature of all things in life is contrasted with the permanence given to them in art. The figures engraved on the Urn lack one thing only, that is, reality. On the other hand, people pictured on the Urn are happy as they are not subject to trouble, decay, change, and death.

Indeed unheard melodies are sweeter. "Heard melodies are sweet, but unheard melodies are sweeter, argues the poet. It is because of the free play of imagination. The young musicians engraved on the Urn will never leave of singing. The trees will never be stripped of their leaves. The trees are forever green, tender and fresh. The bold lover is the picture may never kiss his sweetheart. Yet he does not suffer from any distress or disappointment. His beloved is always beautiful. His love can never get satiated or grow cold. It remains steadfast and pure and they will be forever young and attractive.

Keats observes that the engraved images on the Urn are in every way happier than real people in life. The trees engraved there enjoy internal spring. The handsome young minstrel sings endlessly songs that are forever new. The bold lover's passion never diminishes. His love is forever warm and knows no satisfaction. The fever and disquiet of actual world can never afflict the love of the lovers is the picture.

In the poem "Ode on Grecian Urn, Keats is drawn by a different picture. There are men and maidens engraved on the Urn, with its weeds and branches. The young musicians engraved on the Urn will never leave of singing. Real music is applied to our senses. They give pleasure to us. When music is imagined, it gives pleasure to our senses. An imaginary music is more melodious than real music. It applies directly to our soul. The poet, therefore, asks the musicians carved on the Greek Urn to continue their delightful music, and thus fill his soul with their silent melody. Keats sees the picture of the youth playing on the pipe under green, shady trees. The player will never cease playing, and the trees under which he sings will never shed their leaves. Keats will ever enjoy the permanence of art. The musician's song is ever new and fresh.

The principle of beauty haunted him like a passion. He has proclaimed that beauty and truth are one. What is beautiful is true and what is true must be beautiful. This knowledge would be sufficient to ensure bliss on earth. The last stanza in the poem "Ode to Autumn", refers to the musical notes which are characteristic of the Autumn season. The songs of spring are no more; but Autumn season too has its music. When in the evening the sun sends its rosy

rays with a soft glow over the stubble fields just harvested, then is heard the humming noise of the little gnats whose swarms ascend and descend in a wave as the gentle wind rises or falls. Added to this there is the bleating of lambs, the soft whistle of Robin redbreast and the gentle twitter of the shallow.

Thus Keats gives a delightfully vivid pageant of word pictures about the music and its manifold appeal to senses and soul and its soothing effects on the minds of people.

References

Herbert Grierson, J. C. Smith, "A Critical History of English Poetry", Bloomsbury Academic Collections: English Literary Criticism, 2014, ISBN:9781472508256

Fausset, Hugh l'Anson. Keats: A Study in Development. Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1966. Print.

Robin Mayhead, "John Keats", Cambridge U.P., 1967

Jack Stillinger, Twentieth century interpretations of Keats's Odes : a collection of critical essays, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, ©1968.

O'Neill, Judith, ed. Critics on Keats. Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami, 1968. Print..