



RESEARCH PAPER

Frozen Moments and Fleeting Seasons: An Ecocritical and Phonetic Study of Temporality in Keats's Major Odes

¹Muhammad Yousaf Khan and ²Nasir Jamal Khattak

1. Assistant Professor of English, Department of Humanities COMSATS University Islamabad, Attock, Punjab, Pakistan

2. Professor, Dept of English & Applied Linguistics, University of Peshawar, KP, Pakistan

*Corresponding Author

usafmarwat@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the Keatsian notion of temporality in his two major odes, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to Autumn." By examining the diction, imagery, sound patterns, and other phonetic qualities of the odes, it investigates how John Keats employs stylistic elements to give diverse perspectives on the perception of time. The investigation focuses on how "Ode on a Grecian Urn" depicts time as a timeless and frozen moment, highlighting an image of eternal stillness and permanent tranquility. "Ode to Autumn," in contrast, portrays time as a constant and flowing cycle, shown through seasonal changes and transformations of nature. The analysis explores Keats's choice of words and structure of language to understand how these elements enhance the themes and underlying concerns in both odes. The opposing and divergent interpretations of time in these poems echo Keats's complex approach toward the passage of time and its impression on human experience. Future research could further explore how Keats's stylistic choices influence the reader's perception of temporality in other works, potentially extending the analysis to his broader body of poetry. Additionally, examining how these temporal themes resonate with or differ from those in the works of Keats's contemporaries could provide deeper insights into the Romantic period's treatment of time.

KEYWORDS

Diction, Imagery, Keats, Ode on a Grecian Urn, Ode to Autumn, Phonetics, Temporality

Introduction

"Ode to a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to Autumn" are two of the most celebrated and major odes of John Keats—the central figure of the younger generation of Romantic poets. Known as a poet of beauty, Keats explores time, art, and nature in these odes in quite a deep and nuanced manner. He wrote both these poems in 1915, which was a year of personal chaos, and intense creativity for him. Not only can one witness his genius as an artist, but also his unique and perplexing take on the nature of time. These two odes invite the reader to experience contrasting meditations of time; he reflects one perspective through the mirror of art and permanence in his "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and the other through the lens of the natural world and flow of seasons in his "Ode to Autumn."

"Ode on a Grecian Urn" gives a novel view of time. Composed in May 1915, the ode echoes the charm and fascination Keats felt with art and its power of transcending nature's temporal limitations. Being an artifact of the ancient times, the Grecian urn symbolizes timelessness, containing frozen moments of time in a permanently preserved state. The urn's portrayal of the eternal scenes from antiquity gives a sense of permanence and immutability. Keats highlights this unalterable and static view of time in his exclamatory remark to the urn in the "thou still unravish'd bride of quietness," where he

gives the reader the impression of its permanent and undistorted nature, despite its travel through the eternity. Unlike the flowing and cyclical nature of time, which his "Ode to Autumn" portrays, his "Ode on a Grecian Urn" arrests time in the form of frozen moments. This two-fold view point about time gives a unique and clear contrast between the timeless realm of art, and the temporal nature of the natural world.

Keats minutely describes the various pastoral scenes engraved on the urn. These include country folks busy in diverse activities like dancing and pursuing lovers, frozen in perpetual movement. The opening line of the ode, "Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness," suggests that the urn is quite and eternal spectator of man's activities recording the "movements in moments." This makes it a historian who inscribes frozen moments of time instead of recording the progression and flow of time. This depiction of art as an eternal witness through time contrasts with the dynamic, ever-changing nature of time presented in "Ode to Autumn." The theme of eternity and timelessness is further highlighted in Keats's language and choice of diction in "Ode to a Grecian Urn." The ode's careful choice of poetic diction, and its magnificently measured rhythm exudes a sense of stability and permanence, which supports our earlier contention that the urn arrests moments and preserves them under the coating of art which is permanently immune to change and alterations. This stationary representation of time invites readers to reflect on the relationship between reality and art, as the urn's scenes remain undistorted by the otherwise powerful attacks of time.

In stark contrast, "Ode to Autumn" often receives acclamation for its rich and suggestive picturization of the autumn season. Written in the same year of September 1915, the ode contains three stanzas, each dwelling upon a distinct facet of the autumn season. In the first stanza the poet is happy for the rich and productive season. He calls it a time of abundance and harvest when the farmers receive their reward for their yearlong labour. Keats reflects the bustling activities accompanying the crops and harvesting season, and the eagerly awaited ripening of fruit through his art of powerful imagery. He uses images of the "stubble-plains" and "the cider-press," to create a mental picture of nature in its mature and full splendour. Through such representation of autumn as a time of growth and fruition, Keats suggests that time is neither something static nor a linear phenomenon. It is, rather, cyclical in nature having an ever-flowing process with each fleeting season transitioning smoothly into the next with no end to this ever-revolving process.

There is a mood shift in the second stanza of the ode when the language and atmosphere of the ode shifts from being noisy and tumultuous to more mature and quieter one. The mood becomes introspective, and concentrates on the later period of autumn season when the year has already begun to wane. Keats personifies the season as if it is a human who, in a tired but optimistic mood, is "sitting careless on a granary floor." This further emphasizes the atmosphere of stillness, serenity, and reflection. Likewise, the contemplative mood which Keats creates through the imagery like "the mists" and the "soft-dying day," induces a mood of contemplation, which gives the mental picture of vitality connected with the harvest transitioning into the somber beauty of the end of the rewarding autumn. This harvesting and then waning stage of the season reflects a natural slowing down and the approaching shift towards winter, emphasizing the passage of time as a calm but inevitable process.

The depiction of the onset of winter season can also be noticed in the concluding stanza of the ode. The imagery used in the final stanza of "Ode to Autumn" points to the forthcoming quiet and cold season. Here Keats speaks of the "the flowers and the green" giving space to "the newly come frost." This smooth and natural transition of autumn to winter strengthens the concept of time's circular nature, where one season fades into the

next one – here autumn transitioning into winter – and so on, with no end to the process. This shows the time as a cyclic process where there is nothing linear, hence no full stop at the end. The rhythmic flow as well as the rich sensory details of the ode echo the natural flow of time, demonstrating Keats’s skill to catch and freeze the movements in the form of moments while still recognizing the flowing nature of the time which he depicts through the continuity and “inter-transitioning” of the fleeting seasons.

Through analyzing the thematic contrasts between the “Ode on a Grecian Urn” and “Ode to Autumn,” an inquisitive reader can make out how Keats upholds two divergent views of the phenomenon of time. “Ode on a Grecian Urn” gives an eternally motionless view of time by portraying the immutable and unalterable scenes of art. On the other hand, “Ode to Autumn” offers a natural and self-repeating view of time. The ode shows this perspective through the use of its rich imagery, and the flow of the seasons into the successive ones as an endless process. Through a careful analysis of these contrasting portrayals of time, our paper aims to show how the stylistic choices of Keats – imagery, diction, and phonetic elements – form and shape the readers’ perspective on time in terms of frozen moments and fleeting seasons, and how they interpret the temporality of time as explored dissimilarly in the two odes under discussion.

On a hindsight, one can see critics looking at Keats’s odes in isolation. They focus on the stylistic and thematic essence of each ode. Our proposed comparative examination of “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” and “Ode to Autumn”, however, offers a new outlook on how Keats treats the phenomenon of time. Our study seeks to illustrate that each of these two odes depicts different facets of temporality, and posits a nuanced appreciation of Keats’s poetic craft. Besides offering an added perspective on the literary analysis, our paper also aims at addressing the larger themes of Romantic poetry. His treatment of time in these odes, particularly, portrays how much fascination the Romantics feel with art, nature and the fleeting nature of time. By juxtaposing these otherwise divergent odes, our study demonstrates how Keats explores the subjects through diverse lenses of stylistic approaches. Thus, this paper is an attempt to offer a deeper insight into the philosophical and artistic concerns of the Romantic era.

So to speak, the paper aims to offer a new interpretation of Keats’s poetic techniques, and their importance in the larger milieu of Romantic poetry. Our study focuses on imagery, diction, phonetic style, and other stylistic elements of Keats poetic craft to unravel the contribution of his treatment of time in “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” and “Ode to Autumn”, to the broader impact and meaning of each ode. The paper aims at offering a nuanced comparison and insightful analysis to offer novel and deeper insights into how Keats treats temporality, focusing on illuminating its implications for comprehending his poetic works.

Literature Review

John Keats’s odes, “Ode on a Grecian Urn” and “Ode to Autumn,” –two of influential works in Romantic literature–offer deep and insightful understanding of the theme of temporality. These Odes have an extensive critical lineage. Critics have extensively discussed Keats’s representation of art, nature, and time using his unique stylistic tools like imagery, diction, and phonetics. This literature review focuses on some valuable critical opinions and interpretations of these odes, and attempts to provide a broader comprehension of how Keats treats nature, time and art.

“Ode on a Grecian Urn” uses the lens of art and timelessness to offer a unique perception of time. This ode, though written in the same year as “Ode to Autumn,” deals

with the theme of permanence and timelessness through his subjective interpretation of the scenes on an ancient urn. According to Vendler (1983) "Ode on a Grecian Urn" gives an eternal and static view of time through portraying the scenes engraved on the urn. She contends that the urn's portrayal of "thou still unravish'd bride of quietness" gives it the status of an everlasting observer of man's activities through the ages. This observer, she posits, arrests significant moments in time that are untouched by lapse of ages (Vendler, 1983). Similarly, the images on the urn, "forever piping" and "happy, happy boughs" show that the urn is a storehouse containing beauty and joy, in stark contrast with the cyclic, and ever-flowing nature of time found in "Ode to Autumn."

For Vendler (1983), the unchanging scenes on the urn have significant symbolic importance. She notes that the portrayal of various figures engaged in different activities – dancing and pursuing lovers – essentially represent a form of reality that is both static as well as ideal, with various passionate moments captured and conserved in a perpetual state of beauty (Vendler, 1983). Similarly, Zamili and Hanif (2021) posit: "The scenes on the urn are frozen in time and seem to have captured life in its fullness as well as they excite, mystify and fascinate the speaker in equal measure" (Zamili and Hanif, 2021). This depiction of timelessness contrasts sharply with the fluid, ever-changing nature of time in "Ode to Autumn," highlighting Keats' exploration of art as a means of achieving permanence. Still another renowned critic of romantic strains and immortal elements in Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," Song (2019) reflects that the images and folk scenes of antiquity painted on the Grecian urn are actually "all symbols of immortal beauty (p. 172)," supporting the last two lines of the ode when the urn speaks to man: "Beauty is truth, Truth beauty, – that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Phonetic elements in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" also contribute to its depiction of timelessness. Barnard (1987) examines how the poem's consistent rhythm and rhyme scheme reinforce the urn's static nature. He points out that the poem's measured cadence and use of regular meter create a sense of stability and permanence, mirroring the unchanging scenes depicted on the urn (Barnard, 1987). For instance, the line "Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time" underscores the urn's role as a timeless observer, captured through its steady, rhythmic quality (Keats, 1915). Stillinger (1999) adds that the poem's phonetic elements contribute to the overall sense of stillness and immutability. Keats employs the stylistic devices of controlled pattern for rhyming, and skillful enjambment for evoking an added eternity and immobility to further highlight the urn's role as an observer and historian of human deeds (Stillinger, 1999). This thematic divergence and conceptual conflict between the two odes, highlighted through the difference in their rhythmic flow depicts that Keats looks at the theme of temporality in two different ways.

In contrast, "Ode to Autumn," composed in September 1915, gives a rich description of the autumn season, and is celebrated for its treatment of time as a cyclical process with no end to it. Critics feel fascinated with Keats's poetic skill in the use of word picturization through diction, and imagery to expression his version of passage of time. Highlighting the rich imagery of Keats in his "Ode to Autumn," Jack Stillinger (1999) notes how the ode captures the abundance and transition of Autumn season. Keats, he contends, relies on the use of sensory details to create and highlight the fullness of the season symbolizing the imminent change. Citing the season's specialties like "the stubble-plains" and "the cider-press," Stillinger argues that this imagery is symbolic of the harvesting time which points to the end of the agricultural cycle (Stillinger, 1999). The description of autumn as "the close-bosom friend of the maturing sun" further emphasizes the season's role in the natural cycle, portraying autumn as a period of culmination and reflection. According to Blackstone, the first stanza of "Ode to Autumn" suggests a sensorial insight

(Blackstone 1970), in complete accordance with autumnal maturity of fruits, vegetations, and season signifying time.

“Ode to Autumn” has aptly been called as poem of nature celebrating its beauties in new and unique manner. This is evident from Keats’s letters which demonstrate that his “Ode to Autumn” dwells upon nature and its beauty in a novel manner. One may find this fact in following text Keats addressed to J. H. Reynolds:

How beautiful the season is now. How fine the air – a temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather – Dian skies. I never liked stubble-fields so much as now – aye, better than the chilly green of the Spring. Somehow, a stubble field looks warm, in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday’s walk that I composed upon it (Keats 1938: 184).

Barnard (1987) builds on this analysis by exploring how the poem’s structure and imagery reflect the passage of time. He points out that the first stanza of the poem depicts autumn at its peak, with images of ripeness and abundance such as “fruit with ripeness to the core (Barnard, 1987).” This imagery captures the height of the season’s productivity, while the subsequent stanzas shift to portray autumn’s transition towards winter. He notes, how Keats uses minute sensory details to arouse a sense of fullness and completeness. Barnard emphasizes that Keats’s use of imagery, such as “soft-dying day” and “the mists,” his description of the “moss’d cottage-trees,” the “budding more,” paint a vivid picture of autumn at its peak – a time of both happiness and melancholy, both beauty and decay signifying the impending death. Keats suggest the gradual change from the vibrancy of harvest to the quiet of the approaching winter (Barnard, 1987). For him, Keats does not describe a season alone; he rather points to the autumn season in a more philosophic manner. He uses the season as a metaphor for the whole life cycle of man, which essentially progresses continuously from birth towards the inevitable death which in a holistic approach to humanity is a cyclic and timeless process of birth, death, and rebirth. In contrast to “Ode on a Grecian Urn”, Keats suggests that time is a recurring and ever-revolving phenomenon, which is discernable in its cyclical demonstration in “Ode to Autumn” (Yáñez, 2008).” This perspective has thematic parallel with the overall Romantic belief of nature as a reflection of human experience.

Phonetic elements also play a crucial role in conveying the poem’s themes. According to Vendler (1983), Keats’s use of rhythmic patterns and rhyme schemes enhances the depiction of time as a continuous, flowing process. She notes that the meter used in the “Ode to Autumn” is in the form of iambic pentameter, which suggests the unbroken, and steady flow of the seasons (Vendler, 1983). The lines “Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind” have a rhythmic effect creating a sense of movement and progression, which is parallel with the cyclical and natural flow of time as represented in the ode. Barnard (1987) analyzes the ode in terms of how phonetics put its impact on how “Ode to Autumn” depicts time. The sound patterns used in the ode, he posits, add to the thematic emphasis on the flowing and ever-revolving essence of time. For instance, Barnard (1987) argues, the recurring and constant use of assonance and alliteration in phrases such as “soft-dying day” and “winnowing wind” appeal to the sensations of the season. This sensory experience of autumn season adds to the aesthetic appeal of the ode on one hand, and offers the reader a perception of time as something cyclic and an ongoing process (Bernard, 1987).

Comparing “Ode on a Grecian Urn” and “Ode to Autumn” reveals significant contrasts in Keats’s treatment of temporality. While “Ode on a Grecian Urn” explores a static, eternal perspective, “Ode to Autumn” emphasizes the cyclical, flowing nature of

time. For (Yáñez, 2008), the opening lines of the “Ode to Autumn” reverberate and reflect the opening lines of “Ode on a Grecian Urn.” They, however, demonstrate this in an altered style and tone. Analyzed minutely, it is evident that while the opening stanza of the latter ode is a continued and unchanged apostrophe, the former relies on a more descriptive approach to introduce the “Ode to Autumn”. This has an exact parallel with the style used in John Reynold’s Poem:

I saw old Autumn in the misty morn
 Stand shadowless like Silence, listening
 To Silence, for no lonely bird would sing
 Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
 Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn;—
 (Reynolds 1971: 737, ll. 1-8)

The imagery in “Ode on a Grecian Urn” offers a timeless and fixed view of time by portraying the eternal scenes and movements, frozen in moments, on the surface of the urn. In contrast, the imagery in “Ode to Autumn” reflects natural, cyclical view of time, as discussed by Stillinger (1999) and Barnard (1987). The ode portrays the autumn season as transitioning from abundance to decline. This representation of time as ever-flowing phenomenon gives a semblance of continuous, fluid, and inevitable quality of time’s natural cycle. According to Vendler (1983), the dynamic imagery of “Ode to Autumn” in contrast to the static nature of the urn in “Ode to a Grecian Urn” suggests a different perception of the progression of time.

The phonetic elements in both the odes reflect how Keats perceives temporality. Readers can visualize the measured flow through the consistent rhyme used in “Ode on a Grecian Urn.” This consistency points to stability and fixity, which is symbolic of the unaltered nature of the urn, and of art too, who is a timeless witness to the life activities of man since time unknown (Barnard, 1987). Conversely, the phonetic elements, the rhythmic flow, and other sound patterns in “Ode to Autumn,” according to Vendler (1983) and (Barnard, 1987), reveal that time is not a linear phenomenon; rather it is an ever-revolving process marked with perpetuity and continuity. The meter and rhyme scheme of the ode depict the inevitable transition of time, giving a sense of fluidity and mobility. This contrast in phonetic style highlights Keats’s dual perception of time through the poetic use of sounds and sound patterns.

This survey of the general critique of Keatsean odes highlights his two-fold concept of time. Keats portrays these contrasting pictures with the help of various stylistic devices. Critics pinpoint that Keats, in his “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” relies on the eternal scenes on the surface of the urn to hint at the durability and permanence of time. However, he deviates from this stance in his “Ode to Autumn” where Keats portrays time as fleeting and ever-moving phenomenon, through his use of rich imagery, sound patterns, and rhythmic flow of the ode’s lines. This literature review, through a broader survey, depicts how different critics see through the texts of these odes, and how they read Keats’s genius through his perceptions of temporality.

Material and Methods

This study conducts a comparative analysis of Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to Autumn." The analysis is divided into three main parts: imagery, diction, and phonetic style. The paper examines each ode for their use of imagery to comprehend how visual elements add to their respective version of time. It analyzes each of the two odes in terms of its choice of words and their impact on the overall picture of time. Finally, it explores the phonetic element of the odes such as rhythm and rhyme to evaluate their role and significance in highlighting the issues of temporality. This approach allows for a more comprehensive comparison of each ode's unique treatment of time through the skillful use of stylistic elements.

Results and Discussion

John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to Autumn" use their unique stylistic techniques to highlight the themes offering a contrasting and paradoxical portrayal of time. This section discusses Keats's use of symbolism, imagery, sound patterns, and other phonetic elements. It probes into how using these stylistic elements enable him to undertake his philosophical exploration of the universal theme of temporality, timelessness, and progression. From this in-depth analysis of these themes and concepts, one can gain a unique and deeper understanding of Keats's poetic craft and thematic concerns.

"Ode on a Grecian Urn" gives a detailed description of the permanent and fixed scenes on the urn's surface to reflect his view of time as a timeless and static phenomenon. The urn, according to Helen Vendler (1983), is addressed as "thou still unravish'd bride of quietness," which is symbolic of it being a constant and timeless observer of man's day to day dealings, and life activities (Vendler, 1983). Likewise, one can find a utopian kind of reality in the imagery used in the ode. The word pictures, which the phrases "for ever piping songs for ever new" and "happy, happy boughs" give, capture the moments of joy and beauty and freeze these moments in perpetuity (Keats, 1915). Exploring the symbolic significance of the portrayal of permanent scenes on the urn from antiquity, Helen Vendler (1983) notes that the urn reflects movements frozen in moments. Accordingly, it confines the time within the boundaries of eternity and permanence, by depicting various folks engaged in daily rituals of common life. The depiction of "mad pursuit" and "bold lover," for example, portray a static, and idealized kind of existence, in which the passionate moments of joy and beauty are arrested in a state of timelessness and permanence (Vendler, 1983). This depiction is in sharp contrast with the cyclical and flowing essence of time depicted in "Ode to Autumn" which by extension highlights how Keats uses art as a tool to achieve permanence and immortality in time.

The urn uses the images of the "sylvan historian" and the "fair youth" to allude to the timeless and eternal aspect of art (Keats, 1915). These figures show that the activities being done are the never-ending activities. This eternity of the moments of activities signify that they have an idealized, static existence with the flow of time being effectively suspended forever. In this unalterable picture of time, one can find a counterpoint to the ever-flowing and dynamic nature of temporality portrayed in "Ode to Autumn." This highlights how Keats treats temporality in different, paradoxical, but convincing manner through his poetic craft and apt stylistic devices.

Conversely, Keats appeals to the sensory impacts of the season by employing vivid and powerful imagery, portraying the revolving and self-repeating essence of time. In the very beginning of the "Ode to Autumn", he depicts the image of autumn as the "close-

bosom friend of the maturing sun (Keats, 1891). This opening remark instantly establishes the role which the autumn season plays in the natural cycle of time. The autumn season, thus personified as a cohort of the sun, highlights that time is but a recurrent series of seasonal stages. Symbolically, this highlights Keats's belief of time as a continuous transition to growing to harvesting, to decaying, and back in a cyclical process. Readers can interpret this in terms of life and death, as the autumn season fundamentally points to a perfect identification with human existence (Furst, 2002) which is but a cycle of generation, elimination, and re-generation in the form of birth and death cycle. According to Jack Stillinger (1999), the imagery employed in "Ode to Autumn" emphasizes the dual and paradoxical character as both the creator and the destroyer. It is both a season of fruition, and a harbinger of winter. The phrases like the "granary floor" and the "cider-press hint at climax of the agricultural cycle. This portrays autumn in its dual identity as a time of both plentitude and a precursor to the chilly moths of winter (Stillinger, 1999). Additionally, the image of "the stubble-plains" further enhances the idea of the end and the new beginning simultaneously, which is symbolic of the end of the old and the regeneration of the new (Keats, 1915).

Building on this analysis, John Barnard (1987) explores Keats's use of imagery in the ode. He contends that the imagery employed is a reflection of its thematic concerns on the fleeting aspect of time. He posits that the image of "fruit with ripeness to the core" echoes autumn's productive aspect at its zenith. The later stanzas of the ode, on the other hand, talks about images of "the mists" and "soft-dying day" which reflect a paradigm shift and complete transition to the freezing months of winter (Barnard, 1987). This progression from vibrancy to quiet reflection stresses the ode's portrayal of time as a continuous and recurring process. Moreover, the sensory details used in "Ode to Autumn" also add to the overall picture of time as visualized by Keats. Through the images of "gathering swallows" and "the hazel shells" Keats sends direct sensory signals to the readers' mind to visualize the richness and activity of the autumn season. Similarly, the picture of "the cloud" and "the sun" also evoke an image of change and transition (Keats, 1915). This radical shift of the imagery from plentitude to decay strengthens the claim that time is an ever-revolving phenomenon, reflected through the seasons of the year, fading into and emerging from, one another in perpetuity.

Readers can also see a more consistent and measure rhythm in "Ode to Grecian Urn" which highlights the stationary nature of the scenes depicted on the urn. Barnard (1987) asserts that the rhyme scheme and its regular meter of the ode exude a strong feeling of permanence and stability. This displays the urn as the one who has been performing their duties of a keen observer of man's actions since time immemorial (Barnard, 1987). This is further reinforced when Keats addresses the urn as "Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time" which mirrors the urn's static but timeless nature shown through its continuous, rhythmic cadence (Keats, 1915). Similarly, Helen Vendler (1983) notes a pervasive atmosphere of immutability and stillness in the sound patterns and other phonetic elements employed in "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Keats employs stylistic elements of controlled rhyme patterns and enjambment to convey a sense of intransience and stability, reiterating the urn's depiction as a timeless witness to the daily affairs and activities of man (Vendler, 1983). This measured phonetic feature of controlled rhythm is in a stark contrast with the moving and fluid nature of time explored in "Ode to Autumn." All this highlights that Keats gives two quite complex and paradoxical versions of temporality through the adept use of phonetic patterns in these two major odes.

The phonetic structure of "Ode on a Grecian Urn" strengthens the ode's thematic attention to art, stability, and perpetuity. The consistent rhyme scheme and regular meter conveys a sense of eternity and timelessness, reflecting the urn's role as a figure of endless

joy and beauty (Barnard, 1987). This contrast with the rhythmic flow of 'Ode to Autumn' emphasizes the different ways in which Keats represents time through his poetic technique. The phonetic elements used in "Ode to Autumn" enhance the ode's portrayal of time as a non-stop and unending phenomenon flowing in a cyclical manner. The iambic pentameter gives a rhythmic flow to the ode which mirrors the natural movement and changes of the seasons. According to Vendler (1983), the meter of the poem creates an unbroken and steady rhythm which is perfectly in line with the revolving nature of time (Vendler, 1983). To quote from the text, it is evident that the line "Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind" contains assonance and alliteration that appeal to human perception. The line suggests a feeling of fluidity and gentility of movement which echoes the odes treatment of autumn season as a time of change and transition (Keats, 1915).

John Barnard (1987) further explores the role of phonetic elements on Keats's treatment of time in "Ode to Autumn." He posits that the readers, through the rhythmic flow of the ode, perceive time as an ongoing process. They resonate with the frequently used assonance and alliteration in the ode which enhance the sensory appeal of the season visualizing it as a continuously flowing phenomenon (Barnard, 1987). The phrases like the "season of mists" and "soft-dying day" contain musical sound patterns which evoke a sense of flow and movement, which further enhance the thematic concern of the ode's version of time as a recurrent process (Keats, 1915). Barnard further explores the theme and argues that the skillful use of enjambment – poetic lines flowing into each other with no pause between them – further enhances a sense of perpetuity and movement. This echoes the natural and inevitable change of seasons, and also the proverbial movement of time (Barnard, 1987). This musical and rhythmic feature of "Ode to Autumn" reinforces Keatsean version of time in the form for a continuous progression possessing both destruction and construction at the same time.

John Keats was essentially grappling with the philosophical riddles of his dual conception of time and the role of art. This engagement with these questions can be witnessed in his completely divergent versions to temporality in his "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to Autumn." In 'Ode to Grecian Urn' Keats deals with philosophical questions of the nature and relationship of time and art. For Helen Vendler (1983) the ancient urn conveys reality in its idealized form where one can see the blessed moments of joy and beauty frozen in time in the form of a piece of art. This depiction of eternity and timelessness reflects that Keats considers art as aesthetic means to transcend the limitation of time-bound world to a timeless zone of permanence and immutability (Vendler, 1983). The fixed character of the urn contrasts with the transient, and ever-changing nature of time which "Ode to Autumn" reflects. This contradictory portrayal of time in these two odes highlights the different angles from which Keats looks at time and the concept of temporality. Vendler (1983) further maintains that "Ode on a Grecian Urn" engages the reader with philosophical questions about the essence and ability of art to arrest and freeze moments of joy and beauty to give it timeless durability. The eternal scenes depicted on the surface of the urn from antiquity signify Keatsean wish to achieve permanence in a world marked by bitterness, death, and the passage of time, offering a contrast to fleeting nature of time highlighted in "Ode to Autumn" (Vendler, 1983). This contrast stresses Keats's exploration of different conceptions of time and the role of art in transcending confines of time and mortality.

Conversely, Keats gives a Romantic appreciation of the world and its natural cycle of time in his "Ode to Autumn." In this ode, Keats highlights the beauty of nature and the constantly occurring change. Keats portrayal of autumn as a season of fruition and transition, marks the point that Keats has a unique philosophical approach towards time, showing it as unstoppable, inevitable, and continuous phenomenon moving in a cyclical,

ever-revolving manner. Jack Stillinger (1999) notes that Keats, in his "Ode to Autumn," portrays nature and its cycles in an idealized form which aligns with the Romantic spirit of the age. Keats portrays the season of autumn as a time of abundance and transition. He, thus, posits his version of time as a dynamic and recurring phenomenon carrying the potential for growth, decay, and regeneration (Stillinger, 1999). This view is perfectly in line with the Romantic love with nature and its rhythms, symbolizing a belief in the harmonious passage of time as an unstoppable, natural process.

The comparative examination of Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to Autumn" gives us a deeper insight into how Keats looks at the phenomenon of time. While "Ode on a Grecian Urn" emphasizes a stationary, and timeless version of temporality by portraying the moments of joy and beauty frozen in art, "Ode to Autumn" presents the fluid, and ever-repeating aspect of time by employing rhythmic sound patterns, and rich imagery through the use of pictorial words. By exploring these contrasting Keatsean perspectives, the present study highlights how Keats engages himself with the philosophic issues of temporality, and what poetic techniques he employs to represent time in the different, paradoxical ways.

The in-depth examination of symbolism, imagery and phonetic elements in these two odes, gives a clear picture of how Keats deals with the question of temporality, and how he gives his dual but authentic perspectives on time. In "Ode to Autumn" John Keats portrays a timeless, stable perspective on the existential reality through the vehicle of art, while in "Ode to Autumn" he presents time as an ongoing process which is cyclical and self-repeating with on end to its movement. This circular and transitional quality carries the inherent seeds of birth, death, and rebirth in the form of generation, decay, and regeneration. Hence, these conflicting representations reveal the larger existential and philosophical issues regarding the of temporal reality, and the role of art in formulating our outlook on time temporality and time. The paper digs into the dichotomy of views on temporality in Keats's odes and uncovers the complexity and richness of his viewpoint on the notion of time. It scrutinizes how Keats employs symbolism, imagery, phonetic elements and other sound patterns to explain his view of time in this temporal world. It also discusses in detail, how Keats engages with the ideological inquiries in these odes, and how he develops his artistic vision of time in two different and conflicting forms.

Conclusion

John Keats's exploration of time in "Ode on a Grecian Urn: and "Ode to Autumn" offers a profound examination of temporality through contrasting poetic techniques and thematic elements. By analyzing these two odes, the readers gain insight into how Keats conveys his philosophical reflections on the nature of existence and the role of art. "Ode on a Grecian Urn" offers a static and idealized view of time through the depiction of the urn's unchanging scenes. The urn, with its eternal images of beauty and joy, represents a form of timelessness that contrasts sharply with the dynamic nature of time in "Ode to Autumn." This static portrayal of time reflects Keats's exploration of art as a means of achieving permanence, and transcending the limitations of the temporal world. The urn's depiction of "happy, happy boughs" and "for ever piping songs for ever new" emphasizes an idealized reality where moments of beauty are preserved in an eternal state. This portrayal raises philosophical questions about the nature of art and its ability to capture and preserve moments of joy, suggesting that art offers a form of escape from the inevitable passage of time. In contrast, in "Ode to Autumn," Keats presents time as a cyclical and harmonious process, characterized by growth, decline, and renewal. The poem's vivid imagery of the autumn season—its ripening fruit, the harvest, and the soft dying light—captures the essence of nature's rhythms and the passage of time. Through this depiction,

Keats reflects a Romantic appreciation for the natural world and its inherent cycles, portraying time as an ongoing process that is both beautiful and inevitable. The rhythmic flow of "Ode to Autumn" enhances this portrayal, with its steady meter and flowing lines mirroring the natural progression of the seasons. This rhythmic quality reinforces the poem's thematic focus on the continuity and interconnectedness of time, suggesting that each stage of the season leads naturally to the next. The sensory details of autumn's richness and the transition towards winter highlight the acceptance of change as a fundamental aspect of existence.

By juxtaposing the static depiction of time in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" with the dynamic portrayal in "Ode to Autumn," Keats provides a rich exploration of different conceptions of temporality. This comparative analysis highlights the poet's engagement with philosophical concerns about the nature of time, existence, and the role of art. Through his stylistic choices and thematic concerns, Keats offers a nuanced understanding of time as both a natural cycle and a realm of artistic permanence. Overall, Keats's odes illustrate the complexities of temporality and the interplay between the natural world and artistic representation. The contrast between the timeless quality of "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and the cyclical nature of "Ode to Autumn" underscores the depth of Keats's poetic vision and his philosophical reflections on the nature of time and art. This exploration not only enhances our understanding of Keats's works but also contributes to broader discussions about the relationship between art, nature, and the passage of time.

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