

## ENRICHING LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE IN UNDER GRADUATE CLASSROOM IN GUJARAT

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### **Abstract**

The present paper tries to focus on ELT with a specific approach to understand a literary poem with the aids of Audio/Visual to U.G. students of North Gujarat University in Gujarat. The researcher took a literary poem ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ by John Keats. It is in a syllabus for the first year special English students.

In the first part of the paper researcher try to deal with the motivation of the students for the poem. When and how the poem was composed? Here with the help of visual-of the composition of the poem-The picture of the bird Nightingale-The picture of the poet sitting in the garden-All these will help us to create motivation.

The language of the poem is highly poetic. It seems very difficult for the students. To understand the literary work-poem like ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ the specific vocabulary of Keats is explained in simple English. Keats presents the poem as if it is a journey from one place to another. Keats takes us from the real world into the world of imagination and the world of Nightingale.

**Keywords:** Nightingale, Tranquil

### **1.0 Introduction**

In the present paper researcher try to focus on ELT with a specific approach to Understands a Literary poem with the aid of Audio/Visual to U.G. Students of North Gujarat University. The literary work of poem is taken is Ode to a nightingale by John Keats. It is in a syllabus for the first year special English Students.

The first part of the paper will deal with the motivation of the students for the poem. Through the help of visual-The picture of the bird Nightingale, the composition of the poem, the picture of the poet sitting in the garden all these will help us to create motivation among the students.

The poem's language is difficult to understand. The specific vocabulary of Keats is explained in simple English. The poet takes the reader from the real world into the world of imagination and the world of nightingale. The poem is a journey from one place to another.

## 2.0 Ode to a Nightingale

It is a poem by John Keats. It was written in May 1819 in the garden of Spaniards In, Hampstead. It was first published in Annals of the Fine-Arts in July of the same year. (1819)

According to Keats' friend Charles Brown, "a nightingale had built its nest near his home in the spring of 1819. Keats felt a "Tranquil" and continual joy in her song, and one morning he took his chair from the breakfast table to the grass plot under plum tree, where he sat for two or three hours."

The pleasure and pain, joys and sorrow are inevitable in human life. Is it possible to get the true happiness in the mortal world, happiness that is lasting? The quest for such a permanent happiness seems to be the theme of the Ode TO a Nightingale. Unlike the Ode to psyche, this ode is not an expression of a single mood, but of succession of moods. The poem is in sense a journey from one place to another. Keats takes us from the real world into the world of imagination and the world of Nightingale.

It is a longer poem of Keats. It has eight stanzas. Each Stanza consists of 10 lines. The very first stanza opens with the poet's own sensation: "My heart Aches and a drowsy numbness pains. "The atmosphere of gloom and weariness is created by the poet through all images ...drowsy numbness; dull opiate; hemlock. All these feelings of drowsiness-numbness are created by the company of the Nightingale. Keats is not interested in the bird nightingale but in the song of the nightingale. The song represents immortality and eternity. Keats could visualize in the song a kind of release from the harsh realities of life.

**(2<sup>nd</sup> Stanza)** In the second stanza the poet wants to escape from the pain of reality into a world of imagination or fantasy. He calls for wine. It is associated with dance-song and mirth. Keats creates beautiful image of Flora the goddess of flowers. He seeks the aid of wine with a hope that it would lead him into the forest where the bird resides and sings its song. The poet wants to leave the mortal world and its harsh realities.

**(3<sup>rd</sup> Stanza)** In the third stanza Keats shows a contrast between the two worlds...The world of bird and world of men. David Perkins comments:" Keats has been "too happy" with the song of the nightingale;" (The Quest of permanence.p.249)

The beauty in the mortal world is passing beauty and Love is transitory. The bird belongs to another world that is free from **Sorrows and pains**. Hence it is that the poet wishes to fade away and dissolve. (Melt) He wishes to join the bird in the deep forest.

**(4<sup>th</sup> Stanza)** The wish to "fade away" with the nightingale becomes more intense in the fourth stanza. Keats rejects the help of wine and takes the aid of **poesy poetry**.The God of wine is referred here as **Bacchus**who is often depicted in a chariot drawn by leopards. The wings of poetry carry the poet to the region of the bird and the queen-moon. The night becomes tender for him. But then Keats returns to the physical world of man, where there is no light that descends from heaven itself. However, for the bird the queen- Moon illuminates the darkness. In this way poesy helps the poet by leading him towards the Nightingale. Poetry is more powerful than wine; imagination is stronger than hemlock (poison).

The fourth stanza presents a conflict which lies at the heart of the poem. It is a conflict between the spirit and the body. The spirit is roaming in regions of pure light. The body remains below in darkness.

(5<sup>th</sup> Stanza) The poet is unable to recognize the flowers at his feet. Keats can visualize flowers with sweet fragrance through his imagination. The flowers are smelt but not seen. The beauty of the physical world is presented through the summer evenings. It is a picture of the fruit wild-tree, the violets, and the musk-rose. The entire picture of summer and the musk-rose creates a sense of joy and pleasure.

(6<sup>th</sup> Stanza) In the sixth stanza the poet is found in darkness hearing the song of the nightingale “**Darkling I Listen:**”

The listening of the song reminds the poet about the death. The theme of the stanza is death and it haunts him much, In his letter to Fanny Brawne (25<sup>th</sup> July 1819) Keats had written --- “I have two luxuries to brood over in my walks, your loveliness and the hour of my death.” (HyderRollins.ed. The Letters of John Keats. Vol.2<sup>nd</sup> Cambridge, 1958, p.123)

Keats is in love with death, but **Only half in love** with it. The other half of his love he reserves for the muse (poetry) after hearing the very song of the nightingale, Keats tempted to feel death. To die at that very moment would be the most valuable and desirable experience:” Seems it rich to die----while thou art pouring fourth thy soul abroad/ In appears that Keats wishes to “cease upon the midnight with no pain”- Here it appears that Keats is thinking of death as a positive experience. In his sleep and poetry he has expressed that “I may die a death / of luxury.” (2<sup>nd</sup> , 58-59) The nightingale remains unaffected by the imaginative experience of death of the poet. Keats realizes that he is mortal and he cannot hope to approach the immortal bird.

(7<sup>th</sup> Stanza) The poet calls the bird “Immortal Bird” The immortality of the birds is a debatable issue. One might like to ask: Was the nightingale not born for death? Was it an immortal bird? Now let us consider the various interpretations.

- 1) According to Robert Bridges the entire thought is “ fanciful or superficial”.(Robert Bridges poetical works of John Keats London,1916,p.130)
- 2) The nightingale is a symbol. It is Keats’s own creative imagination.
- 3) The actual bird has been transformed into a myth.
- 4) The bird represents the species. It achieves a kind of immortality as a species.
- 5) The bird doesn’t know it’s going to die. We human beings know. We are subject to death. The bird is integrated in to nature. It is a part of natural processes whereas we are separated from nature.

The song lives on though the individual nightingales may perish. There are three references regarding the song of the nightingale. (1) It has been heard in ancient days by ‘emperor’ and ‘clown’. It is from the **Old Testament**. Ruth has also heard the song of the nightingale in her pathos. She represents human suffering. It is inevitable. The second image is from fairy tales. The song is heard in faery lands. It is a visionary world. Unless one possesses imaginative faculty, one cannot visualize this ‘faery land’ such land are closed to the human beings. They are beyond time, space, and specific identity. The faery lands have ‘magic casements’ These casements are opening on the foam of ‘**Perilous seas, such lands seems to be very remote and mysterious to men.**

(8<sup>th</sup> Stanza) Keats returns to the mortal with the sound of the word-‘forlorn’ the poet withdraws himself from the nightingale, from its song and from its visionary world. He is then tolled back to his ‘sole self’.The return to self is a kind of reminder that immortality and happiness can only be achieved in a visionary of the bird ‘faced’. The song has lost its power of ‘ecstasy’ and happiness. It now becomes a plaintive means complaining anthem. The song of the nightingale fades and the vision of the poet, too, fades. We should note the end of the **ode on a Grecian Urn** suggests a note of confidence. The beauty presented by the Urn is of permanent

value to man. (Beauty is Truth Truth Beauty—ye know ) The end the ode To A Nightingale leaves Keats in doubt whether his experience and encounter with the nightingale have been real or a kind of a ‘vision’ or a ‘walking dream’

The ode consist of eight stanza each containing ten lines. The rhyme scheme ababcbdecde has a link to the sonnet form. Each stanza uses a Shakespearean Quatrain abab with a petrarchan sestet cdecde. The first seven and last two lines of each stanza are written in Iambic pentameter; the line of each stanza is written in trimeter.



### 2.0 Vocabulary

John Keats has used the most effective words throughout the poem. In the first stanza we find ‘drowsy numbness’, ‘hemlock’, ‘dull opiate’, ‘Dryad’, ‘Beechen green’. These words create an atmosphere of gloom and weariness. The

word ‘dryad’-suggest a tree nymph. The ‘beechn green’ suggests a thick woodland in which the nightingale is singing its song.

In the second stanza the woods like ‘Flora’, ‘vintage’, ‘provençal song’ all these create an atmosphere of joy and happiness.

The third stanza presents a beautiful contrast of life and death through the words like ‘dissolve’, ‘weariness’, ‘fever’, ‘fret’, ‘groan’, ‘pale’, ‘spectre-thin’, ‘leaden-eyed’, ‘despair’. The compound word ‘leaden eye’ suggested the heavy grief and depression of the human beings. The poet reaches to the nightingale through the help of poetry-poesy. The chariot of Bacchus creates a beautiful picture of the God of wine driven by the tigers. In the same stanza we find the ‘Queen Moon’, ‘fairies’ and ‘the stars’. The atmosphere of summer is created in the 5<sup>th</sup> stanza through the woods like ‘bough’, ‘the grass’, ‘thicket’, ‘violets’, ‘musk rose’ and ‘dewy wine’.



The rare adverb like darkling is used by Keats in the sixth stanza to suggest a complete darkness. The death has been referred through the words like ‘quite breathe’, ‘to cease upon’ and ‘easeful death’.

The reference of the character of Ruth refers to the days of the Bible in the 7<sup>th</sup> stanza and in the last stanza the poet returns to the mortal world with the sense of a waking dream the song becomes plaintive anthem. Why end of the poem leaves the poet in a doubt whether his encounter with the bird was real or a vision or a walking dream.

### 3.0 Conclusion

In the present poem Keats has presented the two worlds---the mortal and the visionary. The nightingale belongs to an imaginative world, a visionary world. It achieves ‘happiness’ and ‘ease’. The poet belongs to the mortal world. It is suffering and sorrows. The very climax of the contrast between the bird and the poet can be seen in the 3<sup>rd</sup> stanza wherein the bird never knows ‘the weariness, the fever, and the fret’ of the mortal world. The poet is subject to death, while the bird transforms itself into a symbol and achieves immortality. The Ode ends on the most ambiguous and very typically Keatsian note:

“Was it a vision or waking dream?

Fled is that music:-do I wake or sleep?”

Here we can say that Keats does follow the pattern of the Romantic Ode that ends with a mystery and suspense.

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