

Keats' romantic eco-poetics

Philosophy



**ASSIGN
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Ecocritics work to develop and demonstrate the connection between nature and humanity by expressing how places are connected to the people that live in them. Likewise, those places, or nature, affect the people that live within them and vice versa. John Keats' eco-poetics often convey a Romantic adoration for nature by means of a self-conscious, philosophical imagination's connection to nature. His enthusiasm for the philosophical as well as the corporeal scopes of nature plays an obvious fundamental role in his theory of consciousness and aesthetics. Keats has specific qualifications for truth and beauty.

Truth is all inclusive, combining all experiences with nature in one's life, whether they are affirmative or undesirable experiences, into one functional vision. However, Keats separates his poetry from nature in a dominating way. He does not believe that nature only funds the aesthetics of his poetry, but rather that his poetry forces readers to recognize a deeper meaning to existence. 'Ode to a Nightingale' is an excellent example of Keats' use of nature in developing the poet's assumptions of consciousness and philosophy. The initial use of a bird singing, in its poetic aesthetics sense, portrays the beauty and concord within nature.

Keats embraces the thought of a painless death only while listening to the nightingale's song. This is because of the bird's ability to be free, which wills Keats' to want a similar freedom, apart from the suffering and pain within human life. He even speaks as though the nightingale is immortal and incapable of the sorrow of death. Within the same stanza, which can be found below, Keats speaks of a magic this nightingale holds. It is as if Keats firmly believes in the nightingale's ability to transcend the natural world, into

a world free of cares and lacking death. 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 had sunk: 'Tis but through envy of thy happy lot, But being too happy in thy happiness, That though light-winged Dryad of the trees, In some melodious plot Of beechen green, and shadows numberless, Singest of summer in full-throated ease. (Lines 1-10) Though wast not born for death, immortal Bird! No hungry generations tread thee down; The voice I hear this passing night was heard In ancient days by emperor and clown Perhaps the self-same song that found a path

Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home, She stood in tears amid the alien corn; Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. (Stanza VII) Likewise, the seasonal transition depicts nature's ability to change in spite of man's inability to look past their monotonous and speculative life. Keats focuses on the phenomena of metamorphosis in regards to the conscious self. This pattern of cycles which can be directly connected to the process of life and human existence can be seen in the fifth stanza of 'Ode to a Nightingale' as well as in 'to Autumn. Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves; And mid-May's eldest child, The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine, The murmurous haunt of lies on summer eves. (Lines 47-50 'Ode to a Nightingale') Where are the songs of Springs? Ay, where are they? Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,— While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day, And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue; Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn Among the river

swallows, borne aloft Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies; (Lines 23-29 ' To Autumn')

Again, Keats' implies a connection between human existence and the fact that there would be no meaning to life without the inevitability of eventual death to the seasons, life in spring and death in winter. Along with this rendition of life and death, Keats creates a feeling of comfort in his ecological representation of death. In ' To Autumn,' Keats displays a world in which fruit is ripe and flowers are budding. Colors are alive and bright. However, each season brings the death of the one preceding it. In other words, every season, as with every human existence, has the capacity of life and death.

The ecology behind this declaration appears within the recurring and inexhaustible rebirth of nature's beauty. On the other hand, I do not believe that Keats' sole intention was to display the beauty of nature. Keats often uses the exploration of nature and its imagery as a socio-political symbol of freedom, sovereignty, and harmony. Although autumn is beautiful and Keats uses this ecology to the political and personal strife found within every human being. I believe this to be true because Keats wrote ' To Autumn' in September of 1819, shortly after his brother, Tom, died in December of 1818 of tuberculosis.

Also the Peterloo Massacre, which occurred in August of 1819, about a month before Keats wrote ' To Autumn,' may have influenced his language and aesthetics within the poem. Keats was obviously pondering the concept of death and his undeniable belief in an existence after death. It is important to consider the context, both political and social, in which ' To Autumn' was written. This is because “ ecocritics enlarge the vision(s) of texts and their

role and function in our lives while challenging, the readers, to investigate and grapple with our personal understanding of humanity, texts, and nature itself (Bressler). Our understanding of humanity, text, and nature is often greatly influenced by the experiences we face from day to day. Keats is able to use his poetry to address a number of reoccurring ideas: the relationship between art and existence, the limitation of that existence and how those limitations are embraced by people, and the inevitability of death and loss of everything that is capable of reproduction and beauty. Although his poetry is beautiful, his ideas are somewhat tragic.