

# Keats as an exponential representative of using dramatic and romantic literary de...

[Environment](#), [Nature](#)



Within the work, *To Autumn* by John Keats, there is a central theme that pays respect to all the aspects of autumn. Keats uses dramatic and even romantic devices in order to create a work that is centered in the genre of the ode.

This use of imagery, diction, and other devices come together to showcase the beauty and blessing that is nature. Keats represents the genre of the ode well, giving his work a lyrically charged feel, which proves to be ethereal and as breathtaking as the subject itself.

The genre of the ode is one that is centered in praise and recognition of those things, and often times people, who are beautiful and deserve to be noticed. This genre has been seen as far back as the era of the ancient Greeks, who wrote crafted these wonderful works in their infancy. There is something almost holy or, blessed, about an ode, which showcases the wonders of our world. This can be seen in the earliest records of its existence, when Solomon wrote an ode which featured, "...[The] poet's consciousness of the presence of the grace of God within him (Schoedel)." Keats is able to tap into this ancient power and bring about the face of god through his imagery of the beauty of nature in autumn. Though, through time the face of an ode may have altered slightly, in rhythm, grammatical conventions, and subject matter, the essence of the ode remains true. One scholar can be quoted saying, "...There is in western literary tradition a significant sub-genre of the lyric, the ode...and it has come down to use from the ancients...The spirit of the ode as practiced by the originators remains intact...Further, the motivation for the ode is so fundamentally powerful as to give continues rise to unique and exceptional nonce forms (Wright)." Keats understood the spirit of the ode, and was able to portray his subject,

autumn, in a way that put beautifully vivid images within the reader's head, which is what the ode is trying to do make you appreciate it's subject matter.

Use of diction within Keats work helps to set a tone that is peaceful, as well as multilayered. Looking at the first two stanzas of his work this use of diction can be seen. The text reads, " Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun...(Keats)." Overall, the tone this sentence sets is reminiscent of a fairy-like fantasy land. The use of the word, mists, in particular plays a huge role at setting this fairyland tone. The word, mists, brings about images of foggy dew covered greeny, an image that could be twisted to a more negative side ( the classic fog covered horror scene), however, the following use of, mellow fruitfulness and close bosom-friend of the maturing sun, gives the tone a more peaceful calming approach, rather than suspenseful. Specifically, the use of the word, fruitfulness, implies fertility or life itself. This can also be seen in the choice of the word, bosom, which is where we all get life from in our infancy. The fact that Keats chose to incorporate the sun, and in particular, the maturing sun, also suggests life and the cycle of growth. The imagery here is important because it showcases the beauty of life within nature, which is the center of everything we are. The imagery of the sun with these lines also paints a very vivid picture that alludes to the bright, natural, and warming. In these attributes Keats uses his words much like the Pre-Raphaelites of the Victorian era used warm bright colors to enhance their art to show life. The imagery presented here is important because it causes the reader to recount a similar instance, in which, they experienced the same occurrence.

MacInnes and Price had this to say in regards to imagery within the human brain, "...Imagery is defined here as, a process by which sensory information is represented in the working memory. Imagery processing and information processing, in general, fall on a elaboration continuum that ranges from processes limited to the simple retrieval or evocation of a cognitive concept...(Mac, Price)." When we read something that incites a certain image in our mind, the material will automatically become realer and contain more depth. By giving us this image Keats is bringing the reader into his mind and how he sees the wonders of autumn. This elaboration, so to speak, of the tone and meaning behind the words, which can only be seen using diction and imagery, works to promote the aspects of the work that make it a great ode.

Going on from here, we are able to again see the aspects of god within the work. In the third and fourth stanzas the text reads, "...Conspiring with him how to load and bless, With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run... (Keats)." From these lines the reader gets the impression that god himself is blessing the vines with it's fruit. This can be alluded to from the use of the word, bless, which suggests that they are being bestowed the fruit from a holy presence. The imagery here is one that, again, is very peaceful, green, and overall alive. In the mind's eye, everything within this realm is fertile and hanging low with the bounty of it's gifts. The blessing of the fruit can be seen once more as an allusion to growth and life itself. These images create the perfect atmosphere for an ode, and really plays to the strengths of the natural beauty within nature.

The bounty of nature only continues to increase from this point on, which can be seen in the lines that read, "...To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core; To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells With a sweet kernel; to set budding more, And still more, later flowers for the bees..(Keats)." Within these lines vegetation is featured and enforce the idea of life and growth. We can also see another allusion, in a way, to god in the mention of apples that bend the trees. This is very reminiscent of the garden of eden and the apples which tempted Adam and Eve. By including this Keats gives off a tone that this scene is something so wondrous it is straight out of the Garden of Eden. The apple bending the tree can also be seen as an abundance of life, because they are literally so large that the tree can barely hold them. In the next line we see the word, ripeness, alluding to life and reinforcing the idea that this garden blessed by god. The use of the word, core, in this sentence also holds a great bit of significance because it alludes to the fact that the fruit is ripe to the core, meaning that it is good right down to its very being. The ripeness of the fruit only proves that god walks amongst these leaves and foods.

Going on to look at the next stanzas which read, "...To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells With a sweet kernel; to set budding more, And still more, later flowers for the bees..(Keats)", the presence of life and growth can be seen. The "swell[ing] of the gourd" proves to be an image that rival that of the full tree bending apples. The use of the word, swell, in particular give way to the idea that these gourds are filling with the essence of life

itself. Keats does a wonderful job within this poem of expressing these ideas and concepts in a way that is very pleasant and godly. Southam had this to say in regards to the wonderful devices used by Keats, " To all levels of readers it is an immediately attractive poem within which we find an acute and vivid description of the season, its processes and phenomena rendered sensitively in the verbal texture and the movement of the lines (Schoedel)." The vivid aspect of the poem helps to improve the work as an ode, because it enhances the experience for the reader and makes it more realistic, which will allow for more appreciation of the subject. This vividness can be seen in the line which reads, " plump the hazel shells With a sweet kernel; to set budding more (Keats)." The use of the word, plump, within this stanza brings out, once again, the idea of fertility because it alludes to the plumpness of being with child, much like the hazel shells are with kernel. The fact that the line finishes with, "...to set budding more", only adds to the idea that these shells are impregnated with life and promise. This is reaffirmed further in the following line which reads, "...And still more, later flowers for the bees... (Keats)." The bees pollinating the flowers relate to spreading of life and growth, which can be seen as a huge theme within the work.

The overall tone of the previous line," With a sweet kernel", can be seen as quite innocent and peaceful, mainly due in part to the use of the word, sweet, to describe the kernel. The word, sweet, brings about images of the innocent, children, and a general benevolence. This tone of innocence continues within the next line which reads,"... Until they think warm days will never cease, For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells (Keats)." This

line is very interesting because it brings about images of frolicking in the warm of the day to a point where the happiness inside of you overflows. However, at the same time this line is also saying goodbye to summer because of the line that reads, "...they think warm days will never cease." This highly implies that summer will indeed cease making way for the autumn.

Within the following stanzas we see a change in imagery, along with tone, and make way for autumn in a way. The line reads, "...Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store? Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find Thee sitting careless on a granary floor (Keats)." From these lines the reader can tell that summer has gone, autumn replacing it with its slower nature. This slower nature can be equated to the fact that autumn is, in general, more about about strolling along a brownish red orchid, while summer entails more active methods of enjoying nature. This slowing down can be seen in the line which reads, ".... Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find thee sitting careless on a granary floor (Keats)." The speaker is not only sitting, he seems to be resting because of the use of the word, careless, which implies that he is completely at peace and comfortable in his position. This ease of nature really helps to promote autumn as a really tranquil and wonderful experience, which only builds on the poem's status as an ode. Overall, these lines give the section a tone of tranquility, which can be seen further in the next stanzas which read, ".... Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind; Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep (Keats)." These lines really play up the slow tranquil tone that the previous stanzas created. The diction within the

stanza is also quite tranquil in its attributes. The use of the phrase, "Thy hair soft-lifted", brings about images of the magical, along with the peaceful. Even the choice of the word, lifted, plays a huge role in literally uplifting the spirit, so to speak, of the tone. This is because when we think of the word, lifted, images of raising up to a higher sense of being are implored. This can also relate to the many allusion to god within the work, because of the connotation the word holds.

Looking further into the slowed down tranquil tone the poem has now set, we can see another example of this in the line, "...Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep (Keats)" This line brings the tone of the tranquil to the brim, because of the use of the phrase, sound asleep. This particular diction is important because not only are they asleep, they are sound asleep. This wording gives the act tremendously more effect for being at peace and tranquil. The image that plays within the mind when reading this line is someone who is tucked nice and warmly within their bed, fast asleep and at peace.

The poem takes a turn towards a different tone towards the 23rd stanza. Now the work begins to bring about the fact that autumn is the best season of all. Within the text it can be read, "... Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they? Think not of them, thou hast thy music too (Keats)." Within this line Keats is acknowledging that spring may have its wonders, however so does autumn. This can be seen in the line that reads, "...Where are the songs of spring...Think not of them, thou hast thy music too (Keats)." The use of the imagery of music within these lines is very effective at relaying



the beauty that is within autumn. The work continues on relaying the majesty that autumn has to offer. This can be seen in the lines which read, "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 sallows, borne aloft...(Keats)." Looking at the first line, "...barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day", an image of fluffy white clouds dancing across the sky comes to mind. The use of the word, bloom, within this stanza helps to play into the theme within the overall poem of growth and fertility. The word, bloom, incites within the mind this image of a flower slowly turning out its petals towards the sky, which can be seen as a very beautiful and erotic image. The fact that the line also states that the sky experiencing the soft-dying day, also plays into the idea of the beautiful and erotic. Taking a look at the rest of the stanza which reads, "...And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue; Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn Among the river sallows, borne aloft...(Keats)", Keats is clearly enforcing the idea of the beautiful and tranquil within nature. The first line which features the word, rosy, creates a wonderful image within the mind, one that is at peace, mainly because of the obvious meaning behind the word (everything's rosy). The word also can bring about images of young girls blushing softly, which really creates a innocent and tranquil tone. This is only reinforced in the next phrase which states, "...Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn."

The last two stanzas of the work really tie together the overall tone of the work, which is overall tranquil in nature. The lines read, "The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft; And gathering swallows twitter in the skies

(Keats).” The diction of these two lines work to hold up the tone of the section and overall tone of the work. The word, whistles, referring to the sounds coming from the red-breast, relate an image of joyful song. The bird doesn’t just crow, as some do, this bird sings which suggests freedom and peace. This can also be seen in the next stanza as the swallows, twitter, in the sky above. Again, the use of diction her helps to set an image and tone that is very peaceful and full of freedom.

Looking at the Keat’s, To Autumn, as a whole the work really sets a tone that is peaceful and tranquil. He uses his diction to create illusions and tones that also rely the beauty and blessing that can be seen within autumn and nature in general. Overall, Keats is able to use his devices and techniques to capture this slow and quiet beauty perfectly and showcase it in order to create a perfect ode to autumn.