

## AN ECOFEMINIST ANALYSIS OF JOHN KEATS SELECTED ODES

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### **Abstract**

*This research explores the representation of an equal association between the subjugation of women and the exploitation of nature by utilizing cultural eco-feminism by Ortner(1972). The aforesaid theory of Ortner (1972) opines that the parallel position of females and nature suffering is the result of patriarchy. In this work, the poems namely Ode to the Nightingale and Ode on a Grecian Urn by Keats are unveiled for the elements of cultural eco-feminism. For this purpose, the qualitative analysis of the poems carried out to expose the equal representation of both nature and women by Keats by using personification at various places. The result depicts that Keats has depicted the dualistic, patriarchal hierarchical culture by giving allusion to the traditional mind set up that subjugated women and oppressed nature. Such elements are frequently found to be used by Keats to maintain the involvement which is between the misuses of nature along with the domination of men over women in his poetry. Resultantly, Keats has juxtaposed nature to history to show how the ecosystem including natural world, ability, birds, and women are dominated and exploited.*

**Key Words:** John Keats, Patriarchy, Miseries, Nature and Women Cultural Eco-Feminism.

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The philosophy of eco-feminism relates women with nature in terms of their power of procreation and as a means of solace to the weary. Yet, across the world and in various cultures, both are inhumanely treated. From where this cruelty against both arose, deserves consideration and thought. It is the goal of this study to assess Keats's poetry from the perspective of Eco- feminism, with the end goal being the study of mutual anguish of women and nature. The research would aim to find potential way of altering such a patriarchal mindset for good.

According to a commonly considered argument, the lower status of women stems from the patriarchal mindset that considers nature inferior to humans and women inferior to men, which Ortner(1972) calls as a 'major cultural reality'. The aim of this study has been to assess the supremacy of men over women and nature through the poetry of Keats, and how through his poetry can provide an answer of altering the patriarchal mindset. The present study intends to identify basics of cultural Eco-feminism in the poetry of John Keats by looking at Ode to the Nightingale, and Ode on a Grecian Urn selectively.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

Art is an imitation of life. Artists aim to discover their surroundings, of which women and nature are also a part, through their art. Keats, a Romantic poet, takes nature, women and their mutual subjugation and oppression at the hands of the construct of patriarchy. Keats's poetry when looked at from the perspective of Eco-feminism highlights the comparable suffering of women and nature alongside collateral issues of racialism, gender stereotyping and ecological ruin. Furthermore, Cultural Eco-feministic poetry recognizes and lauds the endeavors of feminists against centuries of harm done to women and nature.

Ortner (1972) explains that why the secondary position of a woman in a the world is considered as widespread and intellectual truth. However Ortner has brought women to men in relation for that reason as nature is to culture in the outward appearance of secondary status. Natural world is



overwhelming by traditions to have conservation on it. Man less for instance dominating, hostility along with forcefulness are the various cultural features.

Women are more close to nature than the culture in their physical body, the features which are based on society in her physique. The body features of a woman through which she can reproduce to bring up by breastfeeding and the periodic cycle ties her to child birth and it decrease common representation and her involvement in society. She has been imaginary in a close relation with natural world and generally renowned on physical ability shared with it. She has contributed to very firm and truthful interpretation which takes part to direct other than imaginary or conceptual. The existing practice has downgraded women to the household problem moreover; if any accepted wave is found to be out of order it has been considered as rather departing in opposition to the natural wave or process.

According to Moghadam (1992) a kinship-ordered public structure along with the firm distinct sex roles in which women are ranked as subordinated to men is known as patriarchy. Therefore, the roles of gender and the position that belong of women had been tied and shaped by forms of creation and property relations.

However, in other words the patriarchy might be sum up as an individual man holds power from beginning to end for the establishment of fatherhood, the 'symbolic power' of father as the spirit of patriarchy within culture and the unconscious. (Foord & Gregson, 1986; Mendes, 2011; Moghadam, 1992; Barrett et al., 2005, and Antonijevic, 2011).

To focus on the current situation of the environment and the condition of women in the world, it has been noticed that it is very often the decisions of men, mainly because of the exclusion of women entering into the position of power and has been thoroughly restricted to get the formal trainings (Warren, 1997).

As it had been highlighted that philosophically knowledgeable explanation of the relation of women and nature, along with the thought about relating male domination to the domination of nature is important and yet remains a dilemma for women. (Plumwood, 1994)

However, Dixon (1996) had discussed that assessment for the sake of similarity between women and animals does not essentially demonstrate the subjugation of animals, much less that they are oppressed by patriarchy. In addition to inquire about the symbolic connections, ecofeminists essentializing women as emotional and bodily and closer to nature than men.

On the other hand Adams (1994) has attached the ill-treatment of women, kids, and favorite animals sexually through the brutal evident in men dominating civilization. Subsequently when discussed such relations, he has established a concept to take these links seriously for the sake of allegation for theoretical analysis, epistemology, political, environmental, and applied philosophy.

On taking help from culture, Ortner (1972) claims with evidence those women relates nature to themselves and consider it evidence with appropriate proof against women violence throughout the world. Looking at the same point of view, the poet as well in the domain of his poetry in appearance to cultural eco-feminist, all over to protect her own existence, women are in close relation to its nature. It appears to be the late persecution which happened than what is reflected in the essays of Ortner (1972). After the detailed overview of the whole literature, the researcher has found the point that the poetry of John Keats is examined from numerous perspectives that include the distraction of Keats; Keats as a poet of attractiveness, a sensory poet, a writer who has the ability to explain negative capabilities, but the point is that none of his works are analyzed from the perspectives of cultural Eco-Feminism. Thus, by identifying the space, current learning is paying attention on cultural Eco-Feminism characteristic of Keats' poetry.

## METHODOLOGY

To find attitude which is possessed by men and women, towards the social and cultural approaches of life, this research work is based on the qualitative and interpretative analysis. The method used in this research is the qualitative and descriptive analysis and this is the reason that considerable approach has presented throughout qualitative textual essentials which has been explored through Mckec (2005). So as to those examiners who desire to describe common behavior by referring to the



number of different cultures by selecting any specific text for the cause of research in the way of analyzing text which shows that what are the predictions of other human beings about the world.

The present study is based upon the interpretation of nature. The activity of interpretative research starts with supposition that research in the direction of the truth that has been based ahead to the common construction such as a speech, conscious intellectual ability. The theoretical center leading the interpretative approach which is based on hermeneutics. (Butler, 1998).

The study of interpretation is normally based upon the meaning to understand the phenomena, so interpretative research has been applied to get deeper understanding of Keats' poetry.

The present study analyzes the poems of Keats, *Ode to Nightingale* and *Ode on a Grecian Urn* find out the elements of culture eco-feminism. This qualitative research elucidates the representation of nature and females at various occasions in the text through analyzing aspect of personification in Keats selected poems.

In the realm of art, personification is often used to focus on a various themes in any piece of art. This technique is used to present various features of the living and non living things such as the animals, humans, natural powers and objects. (Drlbaere, et al.

The specific human qualities or adjectives which highlight way of thinking, wits, sentiments and thinking patterns. However personification is also called as anthropomorphic where somebody gives the feelings of humans to that of animals or to some other creature which signifies personification of a conceptual manner but this possibly will enlarge to man. To analyses the chosen poems of Keats through personification and with the help of the element of cultural eco- feminism which presents Keats as one of the social constructivists and tracing a fresh means in favor of research in the imaginative, fantastic and incredible world of Keats.

This task has been achieved through the lens of Ortner's (1972), cultural eco-feminism. He opined that females are exploited from their core and basic rights, the reason moment comes to voyage. Contrary, eco-feminism is a peaceful way.

Howell (1997) too defines eco-feminism as bridge between female and nature. Traditionally, link as a mean of empowerment is appreciated. Objective of this research indicate major angels classifying different factors of cultural eco-feminism from Keats' poetry.

### **Analysis**

Personification is expression where object holds human traits. It portrays non-human qualities as human. Human qualities like, motivation perception, emotion, feelings, wishes, sensation and needs are shown, sometimes, through metaphors. (Delbarere, et al 2011). Cultural eco-feminism Bridge environmental issues with patriarchal society and gives other alternative of empowering male and female. Women and nature's presentation is experiential as an element of talent. Talent survives at all civilization and traditions. *Ode of John Keats, Ode on a Grecian Urn* conveys both practice of talent along with the spectators of talent. Keats effort is loaded with pure music and in *Ode to Nightingale*, stress is over visual senses rather than auditory. On contrary, he is recitation *Ode on Grecian Urn* which stresses in excess of demonstration.

### **Ode to the Nightingale**

*Ode to the Nightingale* is one of the Keats most amazing poems. It gives the reader excitement and pleasure. It also has the idea of women's status and nature's position in the manmade world. In the beginning of the poem Keats is very gloomy and sad to be the part of the cruel and harsh world where man dominates in every field of life. "My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains", (stanza-1, line-1) He feels as he is in the great pain and his senses are numb to see selfishness around him. "Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains", (stanza-1,line-3) His unconsciousness sense which he highlights to be as a part of Men made world where he himself



is in the world of deadly opiate. He compares his dual senses as a Man and as sensitive human being. Keats is seemed to be agreed with the Ortner's (1972) argument when she says that cross ethnically and traditionally women as oppose to men, are seen close to nature. Keats presence in his sensitive world pinches him to speak for women and nature suppression in the patriarchal world. Furthermore he continue his emotions as he says "But being too happy in thine happiness", (stanza-1, line-6) He says that he is happy in the happiness of the invisible bird Nightingale who flies far from the patriarchal world and has taken shelter in the world of nature. Nightingale is personified as a woman in the poem who enjoys her world of freedom far away from the cruel man who damager nature and women both for the sake of his unsatisfied behavior. Intelligibly, "Dryad of the trees", (stanza-1, line-7) "Of beechen green, and shadows numberless", (stanza-1, line-10) of *Ode to the Nightingale* at the someplace poet characterize 'Dryad'. In Greek mythology, it has been submitted to feminine soul, concerned to tree that is born as soon as the plant grows and dies as the tree dies. It tells that the poet believes as the women and nature are not separate they are one. Here Dryad whose wings are light is present with the light weighted leaves is none other than a woman. It refers as Keats is saying that all peaceful creatures that were accompanied along with presence of female that creates harmonious world which discourage domination, injustice and cruelty. Introduction of 'Dryad' in the poem shows that Keats carried nature and women closed to him but both unfortunately are dominated by patriarchal society and are forced to move away if they want peace. Keats calls the Nightingale 'Dryad' means woman along with nature who is living on the land of peace with numberless companion singing and enjoying each other company. They have left the world where they do not have enough space to survive. "O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been", (stanza-2, line-1) Keats wishes in his poem that if he gets something that vanish away all the dissatisfactory desires of men which he carries and force them to harm women and nature. Ortner (1972) focuses on earth and says that earth is dominated by male developed and male controlled equipment. Keats personifies the "Earth" as a mother provides coolness to her children when suffer from any illness and cools him down as medicine does. He says as the earth gives calmness to the boiling liquid same happens to the woman who cures illness when become a mother so here Earth is none other than a Mother and man should understand this fact that the earth which cools the liquid if put it down for long period of time so does the man who needs to be in the process of realizing of women sufferings that is faced by her because of him. Keats wishes to cool down the dissatisfactory desires of men and asks not to possess any harsh behavior of dissatisfaction, cool down the ego which is not easy but possible and it will take time but the results will be great. All senses that woman possess are presented in this line where Keats speaks of the "Taste of Flora ", (stanza-2, line-3), Keats focuses on the importance of flowers which spreads the colors of joy. As the women spreads the happiness. He highlights that taste of the Flora which brings the pleasure and takes away men from all the worries so does the women when given respect. Keats focuses on the fact that it is not possible to get the real peace without nature existence and comfort of women. Ortner (1972) speaks of the women who are devalued in all cultures. Each culture in some ways and in some terms makes these evaluations. Keats speaks of the fertility of the green field which feeds men without any interest as the mother does both are very necessary for the survival of men. Keats says that this is only possible when men will get him burn in the sun burnt which is none other than his own inner ego, "Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!" (stanza-2, line-4) In this line Keats portrayed as if he speaks of feminine body or nature. Dance and the melodies songs are to enjoy the life which needs the sweetness of women's voice and flexibility of her willingness. The Cold attitude, delight voice, exquisite appearance, all wine personification, being women with nature Keats believe peace will be achieved if they live freely.

Ortner (1972) speaks of the social and structural arrangements that exclude women from participations and were contract with some around in which the highest parts of the society are kept reside. In second stanza readers witness Greek myth, "Full of true, the blushful Hippocrene", (stanza-2, line-6) is used, 'Spring' title which is winged horse Pegasus made of stamping legs on earth. Keats highlights earth's sufferings by power of men, who stamped their powerful feet on earth depicting power. 'Drinking' concept shows poetic shape. Wine personified female body, its red color such as



sign of glad to female. The blush when it appears on the face of a woman shows her inner shy. Hippocrene when takes the position of woman she comes in the true status of the existence. In the same line, Keats opinion that if truth lied in the happiness of women and nature but in pain there is no truth for them. . “With beaded bubbles winking at the brim”,(stanza-2,line-7) In this line the winking bubbles are personified as an innocent girl when look at the strange things with purity and amazement. It shows the surprising feeling of the girl when newly introduced to her society. Her feelings appear like bubbles but soon vanish away by the cruelty of harsh society.

Factually, stanza third paints depressing images. "Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget". "Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs", (stanza-3,line 1-5). Speaker personified, patriarchal society women living as ignored being in paralyzed state and eternally and externally, not able to move. She spends her whole live in serving the family but gains nothing in return. Her efforts are faded away and are broken up by forgetting them in the past very quietly. However this ignorance of a woman is sometimes understood but it also happens with only some of the people with gray hair in their old age. The feeling of their injustice shakes them like a disease when they realize the cruel act of dealing with the women. Ortner (1972) talks about nature and culture where she rejects the concept that the devaluation of women is because of nature and due to this women are inferior. Keats defends that the physical and mental tiredness of women which takes her to the position where she even does not enjoy the things which she wishes for her whole life. “Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes”, (stanza-3,line-9) Keats in a very tremendous way portray the picture of women’s status when personify the Beauty as a woman who gets so tired that cannot see the reality of her dreams with her shiny eyes that she watched once when it was the time to enjoy.

Such alien associations, in patriarchal society are to rescue them physically and mentally from cruel men and women. Keats addresses ignorant men to understand language of suffering. Support her when its time of need. He feels helpless being the part of man’s group but is hopeful that his words will bring change some day. However overall, it is observed that male in such scenarios is considered mighty in patriarchal society.

#### **Ode on Grecian Urn**

The poem is measured as the way of thinking in relation to workmanship, magnificence in addition to existence. Particularly of "An Ode" it is a sonnet that solitary tends to exclusive, thing, or an occasion, and gives a kind of accolade to determine things. Prior to go to 'Ode on Grecian Urn, here, it is essential to comprehend the Grecian urn's nonchalantly. At the point when one hears the word 'urn,' possibly it has moved toward the holders to bring to the table no more connection which has been crushed. In the sonnet, “Ode on Grecian Urn”, Keats really is in a disposition to portray a wide range of faculties. The analyst has seen that Keats approaches have different things which are the fundamental piece of ladies' and nature's hopeless life. Keats represented “urn” with virgin (a young lady who has never experience sex).

In the main verse ““still away from quitness's bride, Thou foster child of silence and slow time,” ( Stanza-1, line 1-2),” the communicator remained before a previous Grecian urn which has been embodied as lady and addresses that he feels the quietness of ladies being depicted as an astounded urn in the nature. Her intense life is passing so gradually, without griping. The entire view is interfacing the watcher to Keats unidentified torment. He is feeling the troubles of female world as it is so difficult for ladies to get by in the solid man centric world. Ortner (1972) focuses that blaming nature is useless. There is nothing that is inferior about women. Civilization and culture dominate the nature. In any case, all at unexpected, Keats calls upon for help when "quietness" is exemplified and the immaculateness of ladies is at serious risk. “Besides, when taking a gander at the unfortunate states of ladies who have been depicted and pursued by men having wild and nonhuman conduct towards them. “What men or gods are these?”, “What maidens loth?”“What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?” (stanza-1,line-8-9-10) Keats is so vexed in these lines. He asks himself that "Which men or divine beings are these? What ladies reluctant" "What frantic pursuit? What battle to get away?" Keats sentiments are emphatically harmed and he can't even to decide that climate the merciless disposition is truly of men, who are pursuing uncontrollably a guiltless ladies. Keats astonishes that this coldblooded conduct which has been looked by ladies, is truly by a



person or are some other super powers. Keats is not happy with that wild and inhuman behavior which women face due to the unsatisfactory behavior. He feels guilty to be the part of this savage land where women are helpless to save their honor and prestige. Men chase them like wild beasts and they do not have any place to hide. "What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape" (Stanza-1, line-5) in this line "leaf-bordered" exemplified the nature. The poet is showing the mistreated state of nature. As Ortnier (1972) highlights that psychologically women are allocated greater affecting capability than men who are viewed more coherent and objective with a greater aptitude for abstract thinking. Keats has given the words to the canvas on the Urn where nature is pushed at the limit and ladies have been pursued fiercely at point of merci by men. This is the thing that, Keats recognized about their wretched conditions in the male centric culture. Ladies, who are in the safe house of the nature, are dealt with gravely. Blossoms and leaves alongside their old stories are talking noisily about their opportunity and tranquil presence far away from the male centric culture. "Happy ever bid the Spring adieu ;"( Stanza - 3, line 1) Here, Keats embodies urn as a lady and says that nature is content with ladies' regard, in the event that it is given to her by the man of male centric culture. Keats depicts his internal sentiments consolidating nature and ladies and demonstrates that nature appreciates the virtue of men's aim that cherishes a young lady yet doesn't have any desire to get her genuinely, however hangs tight for her ability and positive reaction. The entire idea shares the view that genuine joy lies in regarding and caring ladies. In this sonnet, Keats has been seen with a lot of shut and worried view about nature and ladies. In his words, as he calls the male centric culture to perceive how ladies and nature are placed into the circumstance of sufferings and torments. In man centric culture, there is a bad situation for ladies to inhale; their voices are overlooked and unheard. Keats says that the male overwhelming society needs forfeits from ladies and nature just however men here assume the part of an expert by directing them. This perspective of Keats can undoubtedly be seen when he embodies "penance" in "Who are these going to the penance? Keats asks that is there someone to have the self-punishment for all the bad deeds. Women and nature that are weak and delicate most not be handled with the cruel intentions. They need care and respect to survive these two things gives them the energy which helps them to anything for man as their companion, guardian or friend. Penance is associated with ladies and nature such that they are compelled to do things which they would prefer not to do however are constrained not to perform activities which they need to do. The male centric outlook, the barbarous, unforgiving, coldblooded and baseless conduct in the general public has demonstrated that men are the "baffling cleric" as represented by Keats. They drag ladies and nature to the circumstances where they don't have some other decision however to bow their heads before men and comply with their orders, regardless of how destructive it very well may be for them genuinely or inwardly.

Looking in to the view of cultural ecofeminism where women ecology and nature are distinguished as female supremacy the last verse of Ode on Grecian is maybe superb piece of verse. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."( stanza-5,line-9-10) Keats is talking straightforwardly to the actual urn, and exemplifies it by discussing its reasonable demeanor which he accepts is appropriate to associate it with ladies and nature. This association in evident sense tends to the force holder of male centric culture to investigate the sufferings and difficulties of ladies and nature that are in regrettable condition because of the hardhearted conduct of men. Keats calls nature and women the "Beauty". He believes in the certainty and the undoubted reality of both. Keats asks his fellow men to realize the truth which is none other than the "Beauty".

He spots of the regard and privileges of ladies with its sparkling appearance. Keats says that it has been the accounts of all chronicles when ladies are enslaved explicitly and defrauded for the delight of men. Keats featured culture; as per man's perspective that ladies don't have option to deny men's proposition for sexual longing and just men are exclusively liable for sexual practices. "Ode on Grecian Urn" by Keats, emerges struggle upon the craftsmanship, secret and love in the life.

### Conclusion

It can be concluded in the light of the above discussion that Keats draws very tactfully parallel between nature and women. He uses personification in order to bring this parallel. Ortnier (1972) explains in her essay that all women are devalued in all cultures as Keats has highlighted the

patriarchal mind set in the form of cultural eco- feminism that dismantles the cultural ideologies to bring reforms in the social behavior. He has identified the ancient cultural trends that push the women and nature in the backdrop and of course, into the on-human traditions. Keats continues the torturous sadness of women with the company of nature. Furthermore, Ortner (1972) says that the women provide us with one of the more challenging problem to be downward she gives vent to the static and unchanged situation of women and nature for a long time. In order to bring reforms in the two, Keats subconscious trigger in his poetry and highlight the needs of the two and release them from the menace of the so called civilized human beings.

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