



***Dr. DEVESH CHAND***  
***(ASSISTANT PROFESSOR)***  
***DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH***  
***FACULTY OF ARTS***

***UDAI PRATAP AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE***  
***VARANASI 221002***

***EMAIL: [deveshchand10@gmail.com](mailto:deveshchand10@gmail.com)***

**SUBJECT**  
**CLASS**  
**SEMESTER**

**: ENGLISH**  
**: B.A.**  
**: 2<sup>ND</sup>. SEMESTER**



**NAME OF THE PAPER : “ENGLISH POETRY”**

**TOPIC : ‘ODE ON A GRECIAN URN’**  
**KEYWORDS : ANCIENT GREECE, ART, ETERNITY, SENSIBILITY**

**Dr. DEVESH CHAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**  
**FACULTY OF ARTS**  
**UDAI PRATAP AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE**  
**VARANASI 221002**  
**[deveshchand10@gmail.com](mailto:deveshchand10@gmail.com)**

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE POET

- ❖ Of all the great poets of the early 19th century, **John Keats** was the last born and first to die. He was the son of Thomas Keats, a west country head ostler in a livery stable, and was born prematurely on the **29<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup> of October, 1795, at Finsbury, London.** He was the eldest of the five children of his father. He was brought up amid surrounding by no means calculated to awaken poetic genius.
- ❖ . Hereditary influences and family environments seemed unpromising, and it is difficult to explain the birth of a genius in a family of relatives, for or near none of whom showed any taste for art.. Keats must have been a born genius, otherwise it is not easy to explain the birth of a great poet in the family of **an** ordinary stable -keeper.

- ❖ During his last two years at school, *Keats* had developed a great enthusiasm and love for literature, which remained unabated during his four years apprenticeship, and he spent all his leisure during this period in reading books of literature and translating *Virgil's Aeneid* into English prose. At school, Keats devoured every book that came in his ways, specially relishing stories of the god and goddesses of ancient Greece.
- ❖ The poetic Muse was already at work in him before his switching over from surgery to poetry- a for cry. His reading of *Homer's* poems revealed to him a vast unexplored treasure of mythology and wonder.



❖ According to a critic of Keats's John Keats poetic career has three important features:

- 1) The sudden flowering of the poetic sensibility which had lain slumbering for a comparatively long time.
- 2) A continuous development towards maturity of style and profundity of thought which emerges gradually through the struggle between the lure of the imaginative beauty and a growing consciousness of the world.
- 3) The concentration of all that is best in his poetry within brief span of a single year, a spell of the most vigorous assertion of creative spirit before it was quenched by his premature death.



# ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

- ❖ Keats wrote sonnets, ballads, narrative poems and odes. But it is in the odes that his best poetic qualities are found. His odes are the gems of literature, the jewels of poetry. They are the peacock-throne sitting on which Keats has become an immortal poet and has achieved a place on the Parnassus.
- ❖ In the words of *Sidney Colvin*, “Odes of Keats constitute a class apart in English Literature.” *Prof. Selincourt* admires the Odes for their indefinable beauty and emotional intensity and writes, “Nowhere in our literature, save in some of *Shakespeare’s sonnets*, do these emotions affect us with the same haunting pathos, for nowhere else do they find such intensely imaginative expression.



- ❖ *ODE ON A GRECIAN URN* is Keats's best known poem, Keats composed in the summer and autumn of 1819. It is in the form of an ode celebrating the beautiful scenes which adorn an ancient Greek urn. In the Grecian Urn he contrasted the unsatisfying human life with art, which is everlasting beautiful . Keats was deeply attracted by Greek art and after he visited the British Museum the world of Ancient Greece became a source of continuous inspiration and a presence in his poetic production.
- ❖ The speaker stands before an ancient Grecian urn and addresses it. He is preoccupied with its depiction of pictures frozen in time. It is the “still un ravished bride of quietness ,” the “ foster child of silence and slow time.” He also describes the urn as a “historian” that can tell a story.

❖ He wonders about the figures on the side of the urn and asked what legend they depict and from where they come. He looks at a picture that seems to depict a group of men pursuing a group of women and wonder what their story could be: “What mad pursuit ? What struggle to escape ? What wild ecstasy?” Keats was very much influenced by the eternity of Greek art. Which are completely Unaffected by time. The pictures which are engraved on the urn conveying eternal meanings.





# CENTRAL IDEA

- ❖ The central idea in the poem is the belief that whereas the brief experience of beauty is fleeting, the embodiment of the same experience in art is a source of joy which is eternal. Human life and happiness may be brief, yet art may enshrine them with an ideal beauty that outlives the years. The figures on the Urn and all they symbolized are gone, but art has given them a lasting durability and so links the ages together.
- ❖ The *Grecian Urn* is the happiest stroke of invention, the sudden and surprising detachment of beauty from the flow of time and change. In the words of *Sidney Colvin*, the main theme of the poem is the vital difference between life, which pays for its unique prerogative of reality by satiety and decay, and art, which is forfeiting reality, gains in exchange permanence of beauty and the power to charm by imagined experience, even richer than the real.

- ❖ The central idea has also been expressed in the last stanza of the poem- *'Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty'*. According to Keats, Beauty and Truth are not two separate things, but one and the same things seen from two different aspects; what is beautiful must be true and what is true must be beautiful. Beauty in art or ideal beauty is the external truth.



# *IMPORTANT QUESTIONS*

## *Question 1.*

- ❖ Discuss the subject and theme of the poem 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' ?

## *Question 2.*

- ❖ What were the occasion and source of the poem 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' ?

## *Question 3.*

- ❖ Write a note on universality of John Keats ?

## *Question 4.*

- ❖ Discuss the style of John Keats ?



# ***DECLARATION***

“The content is exclusively meant for academic purpose and for enhancing teaching and learning . Any other use for economic/ commercial purpose is strictly prohibited. The users of the content shall not distribute-disseminate are share it with anyone else and its use is restricted to advancement of individual knowledge .The information provided in this e-content is authentic and best as per my knowledge”.

***Dr. DEVESH CHAND***

***(ASSISTANT PROFESSOR)***

***DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH***

***FACULTY OF ARTS***

***UDAI PRATAP AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE***

***VARANASI 221302***

***deveshchand10@gmail.com***



# *REFERENCES*

- ❖ *John Keats, Selected Poems : Prof. H. Ghose & Dr. K.N. Khandelwal*
- ❖ *Introduction Ode On Grecian Urn :*  
*English Literature*  
*The New Beginning*



*THANK  
YOU*

