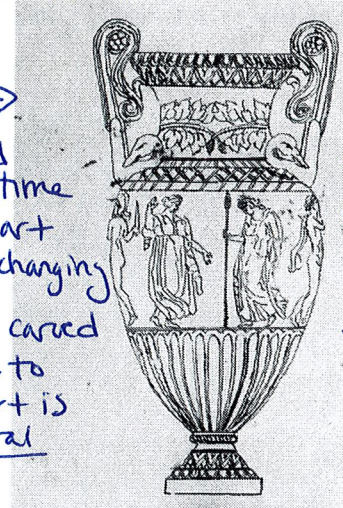


Ode on a Grecian Urn by John Keats (1795-1821)

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
 What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcadia?
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?
 Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!
 Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new;
 More happy love! more happy, happy love!
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting, and for ever young;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.
 Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
 What little town by river or sea shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.
 Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all"
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.



time + motion = div. entities
 impossib. of fulfillment
 foster child of time - subject to change
 * praising urn (flattering)
 * urn exists in "real" world subject to time + change but art is unchanging
 ↓
 figures carved not subj. to time = art is immortal
 * ode = a lyric poem that addresses a particular subject/object
 * oxymoron
 Contrast real vs. unreal
 * iambic pentameter by John Keats.
 * varying rhythm scheme (5)
 * 10-line stanzas = rich in ambiguity
 * paradoxes (opposites) = life vs. art, participation vs. observation, urn's changes vs. permanent (human) frozen action vs. dynamic life on urn
 * prolonged "apostrophe" to pottery - maiden pursued - begins w/
 * turbulent dynamic passion is portrayed on cold, motionless stone
 * can art ever be a substitute for real life?
 * ability of art to stir the imagination
 speaker imagines village (+) communal life vs. individuals
 * scene depicts sacrifice vs. natural elements
 silent, desolate town = both pain + joy
 no one to tell us why town is empty + urn communicates so much to speaker = irony
 * speaker observes urn as a whole
 draw out of real world into an ideal world; paradoxical
 neither imperfection nor change neither real nor changeable
 all/pronoun shift of shepherds; type of poem country life
 paradox - speaker did experience life on urn relationally
 couplet = pain is beautiful/truth = no lies = artwork = truth vs. humans = lies
 * urn offers temporary escape (art) from pains of life
 * Both Beauty + Truth lie beyond the possibilities of change
 * who's speaking? speaker? poet? urn?

lean engraved (art) records wood scenes valley in breeze sacred to Apollo not ear but to the soul - effect music

re

simile

couplet =