

JOHN KEATS AS A ROMANTIC POET

BEFORE WE EXPLORE JOHN KEATS AS A ROMANTIC POET, LET'S FIRST LEARN WHAT ROMANTICISM IS AND WHAT ITS CHARACTERISTICS ARE.

WHAT IS ROMANTICISM?

ROMANTICISM IS A TERM THAT DESCRIBES A MOVEMENT IN THE ARTS AND LITERATURE THAT ORIGINATED IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY AND LASTED UNTIL THE MID-19TH CENTURY. IT WAS CHARACTERIZED BY AN EMPHASIS ON THE IMAGINATION AND EMOTIONS, AS WELL AS A REACTION AGAINST NEOCLASSICISM AND RATIONALITY.

ROMANTICISM VALUED INDIVIDUALITY, CREATIVITY, NATURE, FREEDOM, SPONTANEITY AND ORIGINALITY. IT ALSO EXPRESSED A FASCINATION WITH THE EXOTIC, THE MYSTERIOUS, THE SUPERNATURAL AND THE SUBLIME. ROMANTIC ARTISTS AND WRITERS OFTEN EXPLORED THEMES SUCH AS LOVE, DEATH, BEAUTY, HEROISM, NATIONALISM AND REVOLUTION.

SOME OF THE FAMOUS FIGURES OF ROMANTICISM INCLUDE WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, LORD BYRON, PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, JOHN KEATS (IN LITERATURE), LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, FRANZ SCHUBERT (IN MUSIC), FRANCISCO GOYA (IN PAINTING) ETC.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMANTIC POETRY OF JOHN KEATS

JOHN KEATS WAS A PROMINENT ENGLISH ROMANTIC POET WHO LIVED FROM 1795 TO 1821. HIS POETRY IS CHARACTERIZED BY SEVERAL FEATURES THAT REFLECT HIS ROMANTIC SENSIBILITY, SUCH AS:

PURSUIT OF BEAUTY: KEATS FOCUSED HIS WRITERLY ATTENTION ON UNDERSTANDING AND EXPLORING BEAUTY IN VARIOUS FORMS, SUCH AS NATURE, ART, MYTHOLOGY AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS.

FOCUS ON FAMILIAR THINGS: UNLIKE SOME OF HIS CONTEMPORARY ROMANTIC POETS, KEATS FOCUSED ON COMMON AND FAMILIAR THINGS IN HIS POETIC ATTEMPTS TO UNDERSTAND BEAUTY. HE USED EVERYDAY LANGUAGE AND IMAGERY TO CONVEY COMPLEX EMOTIONS AND IDEAS.

REMOVAL OF SELF: KEATS BELIEVED THAT A POET SHOULD BE A “CHAMELEON” WHO CAN ADAPT TO DIFFERENT SITUATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES WITHOUT IMPOSING HIS OWN PERSONALITY OR BIASES. HE CALLED THIS QUALITY “NEGATIVE CAPABILITY” AND PRACTICED IT IN HIS POEMS BY AVOIDING PERSONAL REFERENCES AND ADOPTING DIFFERENT VOICES.

ODAL HYMNS: KEATS WROTE SEVERAL POEMS IN THE FORM OF ODES, WHICH ARE LYRICAL POEMS THAT ADDRESS A PARTICULAR SUBJECT OR PERSON WITH PRAISE OR ADMIRATION. SOME OF HIS MOST FAMOUS ODES ARE “ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE”, “ODE ON A GRECIAN URN”, “ODE ON MELANCHOLY” AND “TO AUTUMN”.

LOVE OF NATURE: KEATS HAD A DEEP APPRECIATION FOR NATURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HUMAN EMOTIONS AND IMAGINATION. HE OFTEN USED NATURAL IMAGERY AND SYMBOLISM TO EXPRESS HIS FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS. HE ALSO CELEBRATED THE CHANGING SEASONS AND THE CYCLE OF LIFE IN HIS POEMS.

LYRICISM: KEATS WAS A MASTER OF LYRICAL POETRY, WHICH IS POETRY THAT EXPRESSES PERSONAL EMOTIONS OR THOUGHTS IN MUSICAL LANGUAGE. HE USED VARIOUS POETIC DEVICES SUCH AS RHYME, RHYTHM, METER, IMAGERY, METAPHOR, SIMILE, ALLITERATION, ASSONANCE AND CONSONANCE TO CREATE MELODIOUS AND MEMORABLE VERSES.

USE OF IMAGINATION: KEATS RELIED ON HIS CREATIVE FACULTY TO TRANSFORM REALITY INTO POETRY. HE USED METAPHORS, SIMILES, PERSONIFICATIONS AND OTHER POETIC DEVICES TO CREATE VIVID IMAGES THAT APPEAL TO THE SENSES¹²⁵.

GLOW OF EMOTION: KEATS EXPRESSED INTENSE FEELINGS AND PASSIONS IN HIS POEMS, SUCH AS JOY, SORROW, LOVE, FEAR AND DESPAIR. HE DID NOT RESTRAIN OR RATIONALIZE HIS EMOTIONS BUT RATHER CELEBRATED THEM AS SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

NOW THAT WE HAVE LEARNED WHAT ROMANTICISM IS AND ITS KEY CHARACTERISTICS, LET’S MOVE ON TO JOHN KEATS AS A ROMANTIC POET.

JOHN KEATS AS A ROMANTIC POET

JOHN KEATS WAS AN ENGLISH POET OF THE SECOND GENERATION OF ROMANTIC POETS, ALONG WITH LORD BYRON AND PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. HE LIVED A SHORT LIFE OF ONLY 25 YEARS AND DIED OF TUBERCULOSIS. HIS POEMS WERE NOT VERY POPULAR IN HIS LIFETIME, BUT THEY BECAME MORE APPRECIATED AFTER HIS DEATH.

HE IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS ODES, WHICH ARE LYRICAL POEMS THAT EXPRESS HIS EMOTIONS AND THOUGHTS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS, SUCH AS NATURE, ART, LOVE, DEATH AND BEAUTY. SOME OF HIS FAMOUS ODES ARE "ODE TO A GRECIAN URN", "ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE", "ODE ON A GRECIAN URN" AND "ODE ON MELANCHOLY". HE ALSO WROTE A LONG EPIC POEM CALLED ENDYMION, WHICH TELLS THE STORY OF A SHEPHERD WHO FALLS IN LOVE WITH A MOON GODDESS.

KEATS WAS INFLUENCED BY THE CLASSICAL LEGENDS AND MYTHS OF ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME, AS WELL AS BY THE WORKS OF OTHER POETS SUCH AS WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, EDMUND SPENSER AND JOHN MILTON³. HE HAD A PHILOSOPHY OF NEGATIVE CAPABILITY, WHICH MEANS BEING ABLE TO APPRECIATE SOMETHING WITHOUT TRYING TO EXPLAIN IT OR UNDERSTAND IT LOGICALLY³. HE ALSO BELIEVED IN THE POWER OF IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY OVER REASON AND LOGIC.

KEATS IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE GREATEST POETS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE AND ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL FIGURES OF ROMANTICISM. HIS POEMS ARE ADMIRER FOR THEIR RICH IMAGERY, SENSUOUS APPEAL, MUSICAL LANGUAGE AND EMOTIONAL DEPTH.