

Max Shi

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HLI 114 A

I pledge my honor that I have abided by the Stevens Honor System.

Final Exam

A.2. "Ode on a Grecian Urn" focuses on personifying and showing the beauty of the Grecian urn, as a mysterious historian telling the story of an old tale. As he is speaking to an inanimate object, Keats uses rhetorical questioning in the first and fourth stanzas to ask the urn its story, signifying the intellectual stimulation he gathers from the urn. Throughout the poem, he consistently alludes to and praises the inanimateness and vagueness of the urn, stating, "sylvan historian, who canst thus express a flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme", or "heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter," or "thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought as doth eternity", showing his appreciation for the unique art form of the urn, and how its vagueness, again, creates a curiosity that excites the mind. Another theme that Keats appreciates in the urn is the idea that the image is frozen in time, writing "fair youth...thou canst not leave thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare", "happy melodist, unwearied, for ever piping songs for ever new", and "little town, thy streets for evermore will silent be." Keats, in the stillness of the images, provides his own interpretations of the stories, a testament to how intellectually stimulated he is to let his imagination run wild. For example, in the third stanza, the scene is said to depict trees and musicians playing instruments, while Keats conjectures the happy love, warmth, youth, and passion he feels from the scene. Through these themes, Keats portrays how art can be appreciated and the ways art affects an audience.

B.2. "Ozymandias" tells a story of a fallen ruler, through the use of a description of the statue of Ramesses II, an ancient Egyptian pharaoh. The poem begins with a description of his tattered statue, with head separated from the legs of the statue, as if the statue had been decapitated, bringing parallels of events such as the French Revolution. The expression on the face, described as "a shattered visage...whose frown, and wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command" imply that the person depicted in the statue was emotionless and cold, giving an image of a ruthless leader, hinting at the reason of Ramesses's fall from power. The inscription on the statue adds to the effect, which states, "My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings; Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!" Obviously, Ozymandias regarded himself as a great ruler, having many rare items during his side to show his greatness. However, as the last three lines of the poem state, the present-day Ozymandias has no power, his works are nowhere to be seen, and it presents an ironic juxtaposition to what is written on the pedestal. Through the lens of "Ozymandias", Shelley tells a story about rulers' rise and fall from power: how rulers have ambitions to greatness and how time eventually wears their significance and power away.

C.1. "The Raven" is a poem about a speaker who recently lost a lover named Lenore. His mood and tone change throughout the poem, beginning with sorrow, then hope, with the raven's answers to his questions finally driving him into a rage. At first, before the raven appears, the speaker is grieving Lenore with a sad tone, with words such as "eagerly I wished the morrow; vainly I had sought to borrow From my books surcease of sorrow – sorrow for the lost Lenore." The raven's tapping and speaker's delusion that the tapping could be Lenore furthers the grieving and dedication the speaker has toward

her, his hopefulness here is doomed after the raven appears. This idea pushed even more as even after the speaker affirms that “nevermore” is the only answer the raven gives, he begins to ask questions to the raven in a frenzy. His questions seem to be self-destructive, as in one instance, he asks if he will “forget this lost Lenore,” to which the raven’s answer suggests he will continue to grieve her memories forever. In another instance, he asks if he will be reunited in Lenore in heaven, to which the raven’s response either suggests he will never meet Lenore again, Lenore did not go to heaven, or he will not go to heaven. The ending, where the raven still sits on the bust of Pallas with its shadow on the floor, suggests that the narrator will forever be grieving Lenore, and the depression on his mind—signified by the raven on Pallas Athena, the god of wisdom—will continue with him forevermore.

D.1. The significance of hats in the play is best seen in the scene with Lucky’s speech. Pozzo, wanting to show Lucky thinking, affirms that Lucky cannot think without his hat. After Vladimir gives Lucky his hat, and Pozzo commands him to think, Lucky’s entire personality changes, from having not spoken before in the play to spewing a huge, nonsensical monologue, with remnants of intelligence throughout the speech. Large words and biblical references are combined with allusions to crude jokes (Testew and Cunnard) in a complete twist of expectations. He refuses to obey as all three of them struggle to stop him from continuing his monologue. The removal and trampling of Lucky’s hat as Lucky lays lifeless on the floor solidifies the significance of hats: as a symbol of thinking and identity, as an article closely associated with the head and brain. This is also seen in other parts of the play, where Pozzo, Estragon, and Vladimir all take off their hats to think, where Vladimir and Estragon cycle between each other’s and Lucky’s hats and impersonate Lucky, or where Lucky’s hat changes in the second act along with Pozzo and Lucky’s relationship.

E.1. The modern individual is portrayed through the speaker of the poem, in his actions and thoughts throughout. One trait of the modern individual is portrayed as insecurity, seen especially when he says, “With a bald spot in the middle of my hair – [They will say: ‘How his hair is growing thin!’]”. He is hyper-aware of his physical shortcomings, so much so that he is afraid of how others will judge him and his physical appearance, also compounded the next three lines when he is afraid of others’ remarks on his arms and legs. Another portrayed aspect of the modern individual is the lack of focus on the self and the glorification of others, especially noted when the speaker says, “No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be; Am an attendant lord...advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool.” This, stemming from his insecurities, shows how he lacks ambition and is content with being a side character in other people’s lives, rather than controlling his own fate. Finally, another important aspect of the modern individual is the fear of rejection, seen both in the speaker’s hesitancy to speak to the women, the analysis of all possible scenarios that could happen, and questioning whether or not taking the chance would have been worth the risk.