Sohee Park

[Name of Instructor]

English

22 August 2019

# Essay 1

# A Wall Flower

A wallflower is a short poem, penned by Amy Lewis themed around sociological, cultural and sexual themes. The author of the poem is known for penning her struggle, difficulties with the social system and her opinions on them. Amy Levy in the poem depicts the introverted women’s desires to be part of the contemporary. However, being a wallflower, the spectator silently observes and desires to be with her muse Jane who is happy moving along the others. The themes of envy, jealousy and the emotions of despair are evident from the emotional state of the spectator. Levy’s subject of attention is demonstrated as an individual who exercises free will while the spectator cannot do anything about it except to enviously wish for a world where there are free to exercise their will.

Levy illustrates and attaches a sense of superiority to those who can dance with Jane while it hurts Jane to look at those extending a feeling of jealousy towards Tom, Dick, and Harry who can dance with her without any hesitation or restrictions. The Poem revolves around the observer's restrictions which may be tied to societal stigmas i.e. metaphorically described as the doorway while the hall can be described as the society as a whole. The poet seems to advocate the notions of feminism taking roots in the spirituality and heterosexuality which may be above all notions of being according to the writer (Bristow).

The poet represents the isolation that is evidently seen in the unrequited emotions from her beloved as she is happy with the society quo. The desire to love and expand the poet’s horizon upon the notions of the love desired for someone else and the will to move freely without any restrictions makes her envious. Amy also highlights “somewhere” a place with lesser restrictions and utopian and fantasy world where she desires to be the object of affection i.e. Jane. She makes a cultural reference to the future from the Victorian era, where the unconventional identities of the queer would be normalized and not considered a taboo.

# Sappho Fragment 94

Sappho’s verses demonstrate works from more than 2000 years ago. Sappho is known for her rich legacy in the literature that is themed around the sexual desires, love and between women. Her works although don’t remain but are popularly themed around the tragic and emotional state of loss.

Sappho belonged to an aristocratic background and was known best for her bridal songs. The poems of Sappho are set in the patriarchal era in Greece where women could not exercise much freedom. Sappho expresses her desires to be loved. The poet aspires recognition through free will in sexuality. The popular theme revolves around lesbian love and desire to be with them.

The Fragment 94 revolves around the expression of consoling a loved one out of grief. The poet is jealous of the beloved love for a past lover. She desires to be engaged in a realm of the past where the love of Sappho’s beloved was immortal and happy. Sappho is internally envious of the memories of the beloved, which she thinks has the power to summon the past into the present. The beloved although is in proximity according to Sappho but the distance does not matter, the poet recognizes that the distance is relative and reflects the phenomenon of near but far (Burnett).

Sappho states that although she reminded her of all the luxuries, love and experiences they gave had together, and the happiness they had. But unfortunately, this could not stop her. She still left against the poet's will. Sappho hence recognized that loss and absence exist. The poet is jealous of the unrequited love she has against a non-existential one. She is enraged and despises the beloved for her desire for death instead of loving life with her.

# One Girl

‘One Girl’ is another fragment by Sappho where the beauty of a woman is paralleled to that of women. The poem themes around the chastity of the women and how the themes are related to the hymeneal hymns that celebrate the ideas of eternal love and marriage. The poet highlights the mythic beauty of the institution of marriage. This also reflects the security and the acknowledgment of women’s recognition.

The poetess disagrees with the ultimate societal norms of self-worth irrespective of skills and talents and the beauty a woman hold to patriarchal patterns that add to the value of women in the society. She is envious of the systematic stigmas that have placed the thoughts before the ideals of reality.

The youthfulness of the woman is stereotyped as to compare with the apple that ripens at the bough of a tree (Lefkowitz). However, it is usually under-acknowledged and left unpicked or forgotten. The poet states the envy that may arise between the maiden and the woman who has a husband to protect her. She correlates the beauty of the women to the attachment of men only. This creates competition and unhealthy jealousy amongst women associating their worth with men only. Moreover, the suppressions so deeply rooted in the psychological state of women that they would not stop until their powers and exercises are contained and limited to men only.

Another interpretation of the verse could be that Sappho is interested in a girl, who may be interested in the liking of a man. This mirrors the natural instincts of a human, that Sappho may be jealous that man loves her beloved. The scene is not confronted but delivered through metaphorical expressions in the poem.

# On a Grecian Urn

The poem ‘On a Grecian Urn’ is a poem written by John Keats. The tone of the poem is soft and sad as the poet indulges in a conversation venting his sorrows praising the beauty of the object. The poem illustrates the ideals of thoughts the poet has about an urn, which is aesthetically beautiful and timeless in nature. These characteristics arouse the feelings of envy and jealousy in him.

The poet subjects the poem ‘On a Grecian Urn’ around the innocence of the utopian world that exists on the physical abort of the Pot but he also suggests that it is indifferent of those where the poet and other humans exist. He states that the melodies he has heard maybe sweet but those he hasn’t heard are sweeter, making him envious of the Urn who has heard them. The poet idealizes the transience of inhabitants of the urn that are happily living irrespective of the changes in time, frozen in the beauty of the moment. He envies that them since they don’t have to deal with the ever-changing of environments, emotions, and conditions of this world.

The Urns in the poet’s vision reflects the timelessness and the solace of the lovers on the Urn. The poet views the lover running after a maiden, he suggests that although he may never get to her, he will forever stay in her love (J Keats).

Keats uses a sadder tone while referring to the Urn as a source of knowledge and wisdom. He resorts to the wisdom of the Urn as he is not feeling happy with his status quo, he delivers that Urns helps him reinstate the faith in the beauty of the truth which makes him happy.

The poet illustrates that there is something cold about the existence of the urn, he expresses that the people may die but the Urn will always be there regardless of its features for time and existence. He is envious that the urn is immortal. The speaker engages with the urn with a jealous and sadder tone that the wisdom of the urn. The timelessness and the intriguing paradox of the figures on the urn create happiness frozen in time and jealousy within the poet.

## **The Tomb of Keats**

The Tomb of Keats is a poem penned by Oscar Wilde, 30 years after the death of John Keats. The poet marks the superiority and the loss of a great literary and poet by describing his grave. Oscar in this poem expresses his sorrow and grief by illustrating the loss of the literary world. The poet expresses his envy for Keats by describing his demeanor in a superficial manner.

Oscar starts his poem by stating that Keats was in a better place with God. He describes this by illustrating that the world is full of bitter and cruel people. He suggests that Keats may be happy away from the discomforts of this life as it is conditioned to go through cruelty, tragedy, and sadness. Wilde celebrates the greatness of Keats and his works by comparing him to a saint.

Oscar holds a saint-like stature of Keats in his thoughts and idealizing him as Saint Sebastian. He is known for his brave contributions and righteousness. Sebastian was sincere to the cause of faith which marks the sincerity of Keats to his work and ambition although he was surrounded by the grief and illness (Wilde). The author considers him equivalent to the first martyr in Christianity. The importance of Keats is viewed by the poet as he compares his loss to death, as a sacrifice of the religion. He believes that death came too soon for Keats.

The character and personality created a huge impact on the poet’s life that he clearly mirrors in his work. Keats is known for his humble nature, which can also be seen in his last wish where he did not want his name to be inscribed. Wilde is moved emotionally, comparing it with Isabella’s love, which stood eternal and such is Keats contribution to the literature. The poet envies Keats standing and prominence of his legacy by highlighting his greatness.

**Facets of Envy and jealousy between the poems**

All the poems are different in their context and have provisional interpretations. In the poem, A Wall Flower, Amy Levy despises her beloved’s involvement with other beings and ignoring her feelings, which she cannot confess either since she is bound by cultural and societal norms. She is envious of times when heterogeneity will be legalized and widely accepted. The poem provides a pessimistic view of jealousy that leads to jealousy.

The Sappho verses are melancholic accounts of poetry that illustrate the metaphors interpreted as the non-existential intangible emotions such as memories and love for other beings, that cannot be countered either through beauty or material absence stating that loss and tragedy are inevitable. These verses imply a sense of pessimistic jealousy and envy.

The Grecian Urn reflects an optimistic desire that the poet displays in the poem. He suggests that the images on the urn hold frozen moments of happiness and timelessness without any cruelty. However, there is a cold edge to the urn as the poet that it does hold beauty but life is only worthy if you experience the tragedy and happiness alongside.

In the last poem, ‘The Tomb of Keats’ Oscar wild acknowledges the legacy of the famous literary John Keats, this poem is regarded as one of the optimistic features of envy where the poet despises the great legacy of the poet John Keats and how his contributions cannot be surpassed.

# Works Cited

Bristow, J. "'All out of tune in this world's instrument': The 'minor' poetry of Amy Levy." Journal of Victorian Culture (1999): 76-103.

Burnett, A. "Desire and Memory (Sappho Frag. 94)." Classical Philology (1979 ).

J Keats, M Phillips, K Bradner, PR Koch, J DeMerritt. "Ode on a Grecian urn." Gale Cengage (2003).

Lefkowitz, MR. " Critical stereotypes and the poetry of Sappho." Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies (1973).

Wilde, O. "The Tomb of Keats." he Irish Monthly,-JSTOR (1877 ): 476-478.