

A Stylistic Study on “ Ode on a Grecian Urn” (John Keats)

NEZU Akihiro

「ギリシャの壺」(ジョン・キーツ) についての1つの文体論研究

根津 明広

桜美林大学

桜美林論考『言語文化研究』創刊号 2010年3月

The Journal of J. F. Oberlin University

Studies in Language and Culture, The First Issue, March 2010

キーワード：文体論、統語論、英語学、英語詩

## 要 約

この拙論では、詩の持つ特有の文構造が、詩人が送り出す固有のメッセージとどのように関わるのかを言語学的に考察を行うものである。ここで扱う研究分野は、文体論研究の分野である。そこでまず、文体論の意義を考察し、文学研究との関係からその位置づけに関して私論を交えて確認する。文体論は、文学作品の価値を認識するために英語学または、言語学アプローチを一つの道具として使用する。言語学的アプローチと一言にいても、援護研究の分野は、幅広の広い研究領域を有している。ここでは、一つのアプローチとして、変形生成文法概念を取り込み、キーツの詩、「ギリシャの壺」の分析を行った。その中でも特に、倒置法を取り上げて、キーツ自信の意図がこの文体を通して作品「ギリシャの壺」に如何に反映されているかの分析を試みた。

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of this paper will be to gain an understanding of the meaning of style and the way in which language has been used in great literary masterpieces. An account of the language of literary works, especially in poetry, will be central to this task. This will also bring a deeper appreciation of the joy of the literary experience.

The field of linguistic approaches to literature is called “(linguistic) stylistics.” This field also carries the assumptions and intellectual background of modern linguistic theory. Although there is not yet a single, dominant approach in the field, the theory of “generative-transformational grammar” offers many important insights, and will be the main focus in this work.

One major contribution of stylistics is its effectiveness in helping non-native English students to study English literature. Stylistics can be an important aid for those students and others in their appreciation of great literary masterpieces in English. Secondly, scholarly interest in disciplines external to stylistics, such as psychology, biographical history, political science, sociology, anthropology, and theology, has been able to provide new evidence, new interpretations and new ways of explaining and evaluating literary works. In such cases, these disciplines make contributions to the literary field, but those contributions are not based on a scientific theory. As opposed to these less scientific disciplines, stylistics can bring scientific rigor to the study of literature. Finally and here importantly with the intellectual background and assumptions of linguistic theories through which linguists have become more and more aware of the complexity of human language, stylistics is the most promising line of research in the aesthetic use of language in literary works. As D. C. Freeman remarks, “linguistics gives literary criticism a theoretical underpinning as necessary to that undertaking as mathematics is to physics.”<sup>1</sup>

The first part of this present article will seek to establish a workable theory of style. The theorist of style is confronted by many views to explain the meaning of style. The Oxford English Dictionary has approximately 30 main entries for it. These many entries make it necessary for most critics to redefine style to suit their immediate purpose. By observing the phenomena of style, one can determine the role of stylistics. If the meaning of one particular style can be found in distinguishing and characterizing features of language, critics will be able to establish a scientific approach to stylistics. Stylistics, therefore, is an attempt to put criticism on a scientific foundation.

As a scientific discipline, modern linguistics has moved from the anthropological and philological study of language to three main areas: structural linguistics, based on data-restricted studies and taxonomy; and cognitive linguistics, based on a forum for linguistic research of all kinds to focus on language as an instrument for organizing, processing and conveying information including the cultural background, the discourse context, and the psychological environment of linguistic performance; and generative-transformational linguistics, based on how the surface structure of language is created from the deep structure of the mind just as the relationship between

linguistic competence and linguistic performance.

Since Noam Chomsky's book, *Syntactic Structures* (1957), was published, theoretical linguistics has developed the innovative possibility of a partnership with literary criticism, especially in the syntactic and phonological subfields of the discipline. Chomsky's hypothesis offers the possibility of bringing the light of science to literary criticism through his theory of generative-transformational grammar. Chomsky's hypothesis is that language is a mirror of the mind, as he himself remarks:

There are a number of questions that might lead one to undertake a study of language.

Personally, I am primarily intrigued by the possibility of learning something, from the study of language that will bring to light inherent properties of the human mind<sup>2</sup>

He believes that we can research a better understanding of how the human mind produces and processes language through the generative-transformational grammar. This understanding is a vital aim of stylistics because the discipline is basically concerned with investigating style as a property of the creativity in the human mind. With formal and qualitative analyses, its purpose is to study how a work of art reflects the artist's mind. Therefore, the literary artist is directly subject to all formal procedure and conventional of the standard grammar provided for by the language.

Through poetic grammar in contrast to standard grammar, the uniqueness of poetic structure can be seen. Poetic language is unique by virtue of its unusual use of standard linguistic elements especially in terms of deviant language use. This virtue of poetic language will be investigated using the generative-transformational theory. A conceptual theory of stylistics will be offered in the part II.

In the part 3, Keats work, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," will be analyzed. Keats' syntactic manipulation will also be seen to be his favorite technique, as well as his central idea of poetry.

## **2. THE THEORY OF STYLE AND STYLISTICS**

### **2.1. Style**

An accurate definition of style is that particular way in which some human behavior is accomplished, as distinguished from substance. This abstract definition can be amplified by the following example. Human beings live by many necessary essential and highly ordered behaviors, such as eating food: on the other hand, there is a significant amount of freedom to accomplish a certain behavior within that order. Consider the case where the goal of the behavior is eating food. Orientals eat food with chopsticks, but Westerners use knives and forks. The difference between Oriental and Western eating utensils is a difference in style. Style is, therefore, the actual result of human creativity, applied to accomplishing a certain behavior.

Style exists as a function of the human mind. In order to find a workable theory for literary style, we have to explore style as a function of the human mind. E. L. Epstein presents a workable

schematic method for the investigation of style.<sup>3</sup> According to Epstein, differences in style exist at many different levels. In music, for example, on the first level, we are able to distinguish between noise and music (random vs. ordered sounds). If the sound one hears is ordered, one recognizes this distinctive feature and interprets the sound to be music. On the second level, this ability to recognize differences in style deepens to include the identification of a particular type of music, such as classical, rock and roll, or jazz. On the third level one is able to identify particular kinds of classical music by how a piece is arranged for performance (such as for orchestra or chamber ensemble). On the final level, after identification of a particular piece of music one can identify the composer. For instance, Beethoven has his own particular “style.” This schemata ends with the identification of a specific creator. To summarize this procedure, the first level is the primitive human ability to recognize ordered sound from simple noise. The second level is the partial recognition of musical style. The third one is on comparison with other pieces, which is normally taken to be the level where most people recognize and “appreciate” music. Finally, an originator of a style is identified in the fourth level.

The identification of stylistic features is based upon the content. Each stylistic level deals with content differently: every goal on different levels is dependent upon the content at that level. For example, if a musician wants to create music on a very primitive level (such as the first level dealt with above), he can create music with only noise as its content and need not think about a particular genre of music, or instrumentation, etc. As long as the noise is ordered, a primitive “style” is felt. However, if we deal with much less abstract levels of style on the third or fourth level, the content becomes more precise. For example, if the goal is playing a Haydn trumpet concerto, the trumpeter has certain restrictions in content, such as striking certain notes in a certain order, playing a certain tempo, and in a certain relation with the other players. But the trumpeter also has the freedom to choose dynamics. The particular combination of dynamics the trumpeter chooses helps to determine that person’s style. In this case, the certain restrictions that the trumpeter has is the content which determines what behavior is accomplished, and this content also helps to determine the trumpeter’s style.

Stylistic research is based on two important aspects: what the content is and how distinguishing features occur in the content. As E. L. Epstein remarks:

The observer perceives an identificative element, which establishes the nature of activity; at the same time he also perceives the stylistic element, the one which distinguishes the way in which the activity is performed.<sup>4</sup>

The task of stylistics is to determine and to define style, partially in terms of that content.

## **2.2. Stylistics**

Stylistics is the linguistic study of literary language. Literary language can be related to one aspect

of communicative behaviors: the relationship between reading and writing. As we have seen in the notion of style above, one can perceive style differently depending upon which level of style is focused on. If one perceives the first level of style, one's perception is based on more primitive and basic kinds of content. Deeper levels of style require a more sophisticated content. For example, style on a primitive level would be defined broadly as a category of writing such as an essay, novel, poem and so on. On a deeper level, a literary artist could choose, for instance, a narrative or dramatic style perhaps for a poem. The deepest level would be making the creative use of language from linguistic categories such as phonological, lexical, and syntactical categories.

Stylistic study is based on this deepest levels of style, which is the use of language. There are also four levels that can be applied to an artist's mind. On the first level, the artist perceives the world on the broadest level. On the second level, a theme or subject begins to be formed. Thirdly, the artist finds a technique as a tool for communication. Finally, the artist uses the technique in a particular way necessary for the expression of those particular ideas. So, a literary technique for accomplishing a communicative behavior through language is created.

Stylistics can be defined as an attempt to base criticism on contents as explicit as possible. In other words, if a piece of cake is an object for analysis, literary criticism analyzes the cake's taste; but stylistics analyzes the cake's recipe and ingredients. Stylistic analysis applies this fundamental procedure to a poem or any literary endeavor. As Stanley E. Fish says,

For the appreciative rapture of the impressionistic critic, stylisticians purport substitute precise and rigorous linguistic descriptions, and to proceed from those descriptions to interpretations for which they can claim a measure of objectivity.<sup>5</sup>

As to its necessity; he continues.

... the desire for an instant and automatic interpretive procedure based on an inventory of fixed relationships between observable data, and meanings, meanings which do not vary with content and which can be read out independently of the analyst or observer who need only perform the operations specified by the "key"... . a desire as new as information theory and as old as the impulse to escape from the flux and variability of the human situation to the security and stability of a timeless formalism.<sup>6</sup>

Applying the previous analogy to Fish's comment, the analysis of the cake's recipe and ingredients makes one feel more secure than the analysis of the cake's taste. This is useful because in order to reproduce or improve the taste of the cake, one needs a precise description (recipe) for it.

### **2.3. Stylistics and Generative-Transformational Grammar**

The most important development in recent linguistic theory and the philosophy of language has been the formulation of the theoretical concept of "generative grammar." This was developed by Noam Chomsky who has defined a "generative grammar." of a language as an explicit description

of a native and ideal speaker-hearer's intuition called "competence." This enables him to speak and understand his language. The ideal speaker of a language can also recognize "performed" constructions which are not grammatical. As Chomsky remarks:

A grammar of a language purports to be a description of the ideal speaker-hearer's intrinsic competence. If the grammar is, furthermore perfectly explicit--in other words, if it does not rely on the intelligence of understanding reader but rather provides an explicit analysis of his contribution--we may call it a "generative grammar."<sup>7</sup>

The importance of this is the distinction between competence and performance. Competence implies powers of the speaker/writer's knowledge about the language. Performance refers to what a speaker/writer actually does when he speaks or writes: the syntactic utterance produced by the acts of performing speech behaviors. Competence, on the other hand, refers to what a speaker/writer knows about the language he uses. In comparison with performance, competence is generally without those aspects which performance has (such as adequate performance, poor performance, etc.). All native speakers possess the same general understanding of linguistic structure and recognize whether a sentence is grammatically acceptable or not, and also what is "grammatical" and what is "ungrammatical" in a syntactic sense. Further, there are two important structures in the transformational-generative grammar: one is the "deep structure" which is the internal representation of rules, categories, repertory, and so forth in the speaker/writer's mind; the other is the "surface structure" which is the external representation of this same set of rules, categories, and so on (the actual words uttered in a syntactic structure). "Transformation" relates sentences to their underlying deep structure, but without changing the original meaning. Transformations will provide all possible variations of surface structures which have the same deep structure. Chomsky's theory of the generative-transformational grammar shows tremendous advances in the philosophical concept of language and its theoretical procedure.

A generative grammar with a transformational mode provides an instrument for breaking down a sentence into underlying strings of grammatical operations which are performed on then. Similarly, the notion of style concerns the different ways of expressing the same content. Chomsky mentions a central concern of a theory of grammar.

The theory of grammar is concerned with the question, what is the nature of a person's knowledge of his language, the knowledge that enables him to make use of language in normal, creative fashion.<sup>8</sup>

The literary artist has to have this intuitive knowledge in order to create an artistic structure. The reader understands the content within this structure and recognizes differences in style by using the sane knowledge.

The goal of stylistics is, therefore, to find the grammar which most accurately describes the structure of this other (literary) language.

The present work seeks to apply the above to poetry. According to Jan Mukarovsky, linguistic elements in ordinary communicative messages are, as a rule, “automatized” which implies communicative speech or normal patterns of language use but in poetry they are “deautomatized” or “foregrounded,”\* which implies that the speaker/writer treats and change the form of language for their own sake.<sup>9</sup> Automatized linguistic elements are elements that occur with high-order probability and are to that extent redundant. Foregrounding is a function of transformational probability and occurs only in selected sentences. “In poetic language, ‘foregrounding’ achieves maximum intensity to the extent of pushing communication into the background as the objective of expression and of being used for its own sake.”<sup>10</sup> To study poetry under this condition, the application of the generative grammar with the transformational mode is necessary for stylistics.

### **3. TOWARD A STYLISTIC STUDY OF KEATS’ “ODE ON A GRECIAN URN”**

The general purpose of this section will be to describe in what ways and to what degree Keats’ language is unusual in one of his major poems, “Ode on a Grecian Urn (see Appendix B).” What is unusual about the syntax Keats or other poets employ is, in general, that it is simply not common in modern non-poetic English. Among unusual syntactic forms in poetry, T. L. Dillon (1975) describes a great many “inversions” and “deletions” as most poets’ favorite syntactic pattern.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Keats also employs a number of different inversions and deletions in this poem as the most distinguishing linguistic feature. This chapter will mainly focus on Keats’ use of inversions and deletions.

First of all, the general theme of “Ode on a Grecian Urn” needs to be considered. Wasserman points out that the poem’s theme “has something to do with both an opposition and fusion” of “the human and mutable on the one hand, and the immortal and essential on the other.”<sup>12</sup> Keats uses several symbols to describe the nature of the urn, each containing a paradox. For instance, through the symbol “Songs,” Keats conveys the idea of both sound and silence. Kenneth Burke terms those paradoxes “oxymorons,” and claims that Keats uses them to show the reader the mysticism inherent in his world view.<sup>13</sup> Things that are clearly perceptible can be easily known, but Keats attempts to show us his mysticism in which imperceptible things can become perceptible through the power of imagination. The symbols (or figures) in the poem are the tools which Keats uses to presents the paradox and his mysticism.

The importance of considering the poem’s theme is that one can relate the general theme to the probable purpose of Keats’ employing unusual syntactic forms: that is, Keats probably intends to emphasize his message in the syntactic forms to call the reader’s attention to his theme. Moreover, as Freeman says, another purpose is that:

A poetic development of his language’s transformational aspect in its syntactic patterns not only reflects cognitive preference -- a way of seeking the world --, but also reflects the fundamental principle of artistic design by which the poet orders the world that is



the poem.<sup>14</sup>

The purpose of the stylistic study of this poem is not only to find distinguishing or unique features in the poem but also how those features imply Keats' ordering of the world. Based on those ideas, let us begin the discussion of the poem.

Keats' employs a subject and verb inversion in the second stanza of the poem (line 17 and 20):

(1) ... never, never canst thou kiss,

(2) For ever wilt thou love,

According to Dillon, s/v inversion is the most common linguistic feature in English poetry. But in comparing the s/v inversion to standard English, it is an unusual use. In standard English, s/v inversions are frequently seen in the form of questions, coordinating conjunctions, and sometimes negative adverbials such as "not," "never," etc. They are used as the initial elements in the following kinds of inversions:

(3) What do you want to study?

(4) I don't want to study mathematics, nor (neither) does John.

(5) Not only did he go home, ...

Sentence (3) contains an inversion, but it can be excluded from further discussion because it is based on the grammatical system for the form of questions, and is not optional. However, Keats' used of inversion does not follow any of the mentioned patterns above. As referred to by Dillon there are numerous unusual and optional s/v in versions in English poetry, for example: directional adverbs, prepositional phrases, compared adjectives, etc.<sup>15</sup> (6) and (7) are examples of these kinds:

(6) Into the car got John.

(7) Most important is tomorrow's weather.

These are extremely common in poetic language, especially in 19th century poetry.

Keats utilizes semantic opposition in (1) and (2). These lines are identical in structure which is s/v inversion with adverbials. These adverbials, moreover, have a different modifying function. "Never" negates the semantic meaning of "canst," which indicates the possibility or ability of a certain item: "For ever" is a positive element and also a time adverbial element, an endless continuation of events or possibilities. Keats tends to stress those particular adverbs "never" and "For ever." Keats' other intention here is to emphasize the semantic opposition of (1) and (2) through s/v inversion. Keats successfully employs s/v inversion with adverbials to call the reader's attention to the thematic emphasis of the opposition.

Another important aspect surrounding this inversion may reflect the fundamental principle of artistic design. Let us focus on the adverbial phrase "For ever." Keats tends to establish parallelism in the third stanza with the patterning of the theme of the concluding line of the second stanza. The parallel phrases in the third stanza are "For ever piping songs for ever new," and "For ever panting and for ever young." Keats s/v inversion in the second stanza is effectively tied with the songs of

the next stanza to continuously carry the theme.

Another unique structure can be found in the same lines (17 and 20). Objects of each transitive verb are deleted:

(8) ... never, never canst thou kiss ?,

(9) For ever wilt thou love ?,

Since the transitive verb requires a noun phrase object in standard grammar, objects should be found in Keats' lines. In order to find the objects, the deep structures of line 17 through 20 should be diagrammed:

(10) See Figure 1. "Deep Structure of Line 17 Through 20" (on the next page).

As we can see, the main sentences are joined by the coordinating conjunction "and":

(11) thou canst never kiss; (and) she cannot fade

(12) thou wilt for ever love, and she be fair.

In terms of coordinating conjunctions, these are several cases of deletions in standard grammar. First of all conjunction reduction deletes the first object when the first object is identical to the second:

(13) Mary cooked and John ate the hamburger.

Secondly, conjunction reduction deletes the second subject if it is identical to the first subject:

(14) John cooked and I ate the hamburger.

Thirdly, verb phrase deletion occurs when the second verb phrase is identical to the first.

(15) John ate some hamburger. and Mary did (so/too/as well, etc.).

But the case of (11) and (12) does not contain any case of standard grammar above. So in order to find the objects, we have to take another approach.

The useful procedure for this case is an application of Wh-movement in order to recover a grammatical condition. First of all, if the relative pronoun "whom" could be placed immediately after two verbs, the deep structure would be expressed like:

(16) thou canst never kiss [whom]; (and) She cannot fade.

(17) ... thou wilt for ever love [whom], and she be fair!

(16) and (17)'s; coordinate structures can be joined by the pronoun "whom" which corresponds with the pronoun "she," because "she" is the only available noun which can be the object of the transitive verb in these coordinate structure. If Keats' lines were restructured according to the Wh-movement, they would read as follows:

(18) She whom thou canst never kiss cannot fade

(19) She whom thou wilt for ever love be fair

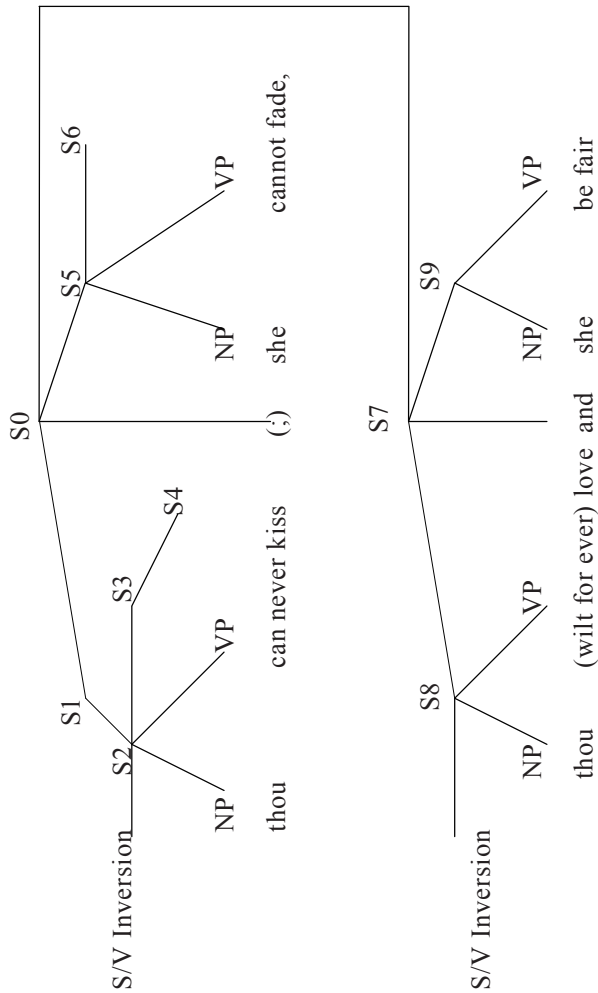
Furthermore, Wh-deletion can be employed if the relative pronoun introduces a restrictive clause:

(20) The man (whom) I saw on the street was a murderer.

This case of Wh-deletion justifies Keats' omission of his assured object "whom." In addition

Figure 1

The Deep Structure of Line 17 through 20



S3 refers to "Though winning near the goal"

S4 refers to "do not grieve," (functioning the extraposition and imperative sentence)

S6 refers to "Though thou has not thy bliss"

to deletion, Keats furthermore transforms the structure through inversion. In lines 17 and 20 he specially uses fronting movement. Semantically this phenomenon is concerned with the thematic subject of a sentence. A thematic subject is an expression used by the speaker to announce the topic (or theme) of his utterance. Linguistically, the initial position in the sentence is generally a necessary condition for thematic status, as in the following examples:

(21) John played the piano yesterday.

(22) Yesterday John the played piano.

“John” is the theme in sentence (21), and “yesterday” is the theme in Sentence (22). By saying (21), the speaker gives notice that he is talking about “John,” and in (22), on the other hand, that he emphasizes time (yesterday) as the topic of the utterance. Even though both sentences convey the same grammatical meaning: the speaker’s intention changes depending upon the word in the initial position. Keats uses this principle of fronting in (23) and (24),:

(23) thou canst never kiss; she \_\_\_ cannot

↑  
\_\_\_\_\_

(24) thou wilt for ever love and she \_\_\_ be fair.

↑  
\_\_\_\_\_

He isolates his thematic clauses, “thou canst never kiss” and “thou wilt for ever love,” removes them from the normal grammatical structure and places them at the beginning of the sentence.

In this transformational movement, an important aspect is to prioritize all information in the sentences. According to the content of the poem, the pronoun “she” may imply “bold lover’s” mistress: the bold lover cannot touch his mistress who never changes but he will for ever love his mistress who will for ever be happy (in 17-20). Keats wishes to focus on the independent role of the mistress: “cannot fade” and “(will for ever) be fair.” In this movement, Keats can focus on the bold lover’s role as well. In fact, Keats can add some other information about the bold lover with the clause “through winning near the goal” (line18). Keats’ complex structures create difficulty for the readers, but the role of standard grammar with transformational mode are capable of justifying a kind-of extra-syntactic competence in Keats. Keats’ insight into poetry’s inner form and aesthetic center is demonstrated in ordering syntactic form by his syntactic strategy.

There is one note unusual syntactic form concerning inversions in line 38-39:

And, little town, thy street for evermore

Will silent be.

Keats employs another optional rule which inverts a verb and its complements:

(25) ... thy Street for evermore/Will silent be .

This syntactic form differs from any rule of modern standard English. The most probable motive for this inversion has to do with prosodic effects. Keats probably tries to render a line less metrically complex.

A tendency toward a high degree of organization in poetry is obvious in the use of rhythmical language. The systematization of its rhythm is usually determined by the meter the relationships between accented (or stressed) and unaccented (or unstressed) syllables. Keats employs iambic meter here. By using this abstract device, Keats' sentence reads as follows:

(26) And, little town, thy street for evermore

W S W S W S W S W S (W)

will silent be, ...

W S W S

(further approximate statement for this line is:

W, S W S W S W S W S (W)

W S W S ...

Thus, one realizes that it is iambic pentameter. Those phonological aspects could be discussed further, but since the purpose of this work is to investigate unusual syntactic forms in Keats' poem, this discussion will look at the additional sequence of predicting the prosodic property of line.

The prosodic property of this line is that Keats tries to prevent its metricality from a complex metrical schemata. If Keats did not invert the verb and its compliment the line would be unmetrical (or more complex) as written:

(27) And, little town, thy street for evermore

W S W S W S W S W S (W)

Will be silent

W S S W

As we can see, the last part of the sentence has the metrical problem of two neighboring accented syllables. This causes the verse to be unmetrical. Keats may try to prevent the verse from the unmetrical verse in order for the song to be sung smoothly. Moreover, Keats intends to create a poetic world filled with rhythmical quality.

Although this work is only a partial study of Keats' syntactic uses, an understanding of his syntactic manipulation can illustrate how he deepens and orders his poetic world in this beautiful work of art. The heart of Keats' poetics is fulfilled through his syntactic strategies.

Transformational grammar is an important tool for investigating unusual syntactic structures and knowing a poet's insight into poetic inner form and aesthetic center. More importantly, this approach is capable of illuminating complexity the syntax to appreciate the meaning of the poem.

There are, however, obvious limitations in this approach to poetics. First of all, it has not been able to make a full account of the poem's linguistic features. For example, Keats uses Wh-questions many times in this poem. The repetition of some features is a significant topic for stylistics. But in this case, a semantic approach or rhetorical approach is effective rather than transformational

grammar.

Another important investigation into the poem is the etymological study. The poem was written in 19th century. Keats' selection of words should be investigated because the lexical study should directly relate to the meaning of the poem. As Gross suggests (1979), one of the weak points of generative-transformational grammar is that it has not dealt with lexis.<sup>16</sup> Thus, an etymological or lexical study would give the reader additional insight into Keats' poem. These approaches are all possible to deepen stylistic contributions to this poem. However, the problem is that poetry has language properties which are so rich that a complete investigation has not been possible. Consequently, this procedure is not unlike any other procedure: all are incomplete.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this work is to show the importance of a linguistic approach to literary works. A controversial issue remains: the division between literature and linguistics as well as the division between art and science. One might feel that an objective analysis of literature might possibly destroy the mysteries of poetry and reduce the study of literature to a set of lifeless mechanical procedures. Even though objectivity may be a theoretical requirement of science, in practice, a scientist (particularly in linguistics) relies on his own intuition to make discoveries and on his own judgment to corroborate his method of investigation. Linguistics and literary criticism to some extent are both concerned with explaining how or what a poem communicates and both disciplines perform the same fundamental task, but from a different perspective. Applying these different perspectives to the analogy of analyzing a piece of cake, one could say that literary criticism analyzes the taste of a piece of cake but stylistic linguistics analyzes the recipe and the ingredients of the cake. Both are concerned with what good cake is. Both disciplines, thus, are necessary and important.

Chomsky's theories have been used extensively in this work. They are capable of dealing with very difficult and complicated structures in poetic language. It also shows that language is capable of creating an indefinite number of utterances in a creative fashion, and therefore, it is also capable of being used for aesthetic purposes.

The techniques used in the present work are at the introductory level of stylistic study. There are many other possible approaches and other evidences, which can illuminate many other aspects of poetic language in Keats. If one can understand poetic language better, one can grasp the flavor of poetry better, and one's further approach to the study of poetry becomes much more open: whatever approach one wishes to choose, theological, anthropological, psychological, or historical, it can become easier. Although this has been a partial examination of this poem, the importance of stylistics has been established.

## Notes

1. D. C. Freeman, ed., *Linguistics and Literary Style* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970) p. 3.
2. Noam Chomsky, *Language and Mind* (New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1972) p. 103.
3. E. L. Epstein, *Language and Style* (London: Methuen, 1978). Chapter 1 of his work is used
4. Epstein p. 5.
5. S. E. Fish, *What is Stylistics and Why are They Saying Such Terrible Things About IT* (New York\* Methuen, 1981) p. 53.
6. Fish p. 54.
7. Noam Chomsky, *Aspect of the Theory of Syntax* (Mass.: MIT Press, 1965) p. 4.
8. Noam Chomsky, *Language and Mind* (New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1972) p. 103.
9. Jan Mukarovsky, "Standard Language and Poetic Language," ed. D. C. Freeman, *Linguistics and Literary style* (New York) Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970) pp. 40-56. \*"Foregrounding" is here employed as a technical term.
10. Mukarovsky, p. 43.
11. George L. Dillon, "Inversion and Deletions in English Poetry," *Language and Style* 8.30 (1975): pp. 220-237.
12. Dillon pp. 224-225.
13. Warl R. Wasserman *The Finer Tones: Keat's Major Poems* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1953) p.14.
14. Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1945) p. 449.
15. D. C. Freeman, *The strategy of Fusion: Dylan Thomas' Syntax*, ed. Roger Fowler, *Style and Structure in Literature* (New York: Cornell University Press 1975) p. 20.
16. Maurice Gross, "On the Failure of Generative Grammar," *Language* 55 (1979) pp. 859-885.

## APPENDIX

### “Ode on a Grecian Urn”

By John Keats

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Thou still unravished bride of quietness,<br>Thou foster-child of silence and show time,<br>Sylvan historian, who canst thus express<br>A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  | 5        |
| What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape<br>Of deities or mortals, or of both,<br>In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?<br>What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?<br>What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?<br>What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?   | 10       |
| Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard<br>Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;<br>Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,<br>Pipe to the sprit ditties of no tone:<br>Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave<br>Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;<br>Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,<br>Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;<br>She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,<br>For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair! | 15<br>20 |
| Ah, happy, happy boughs! That cannot shed<br>Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;<br>And, happy melodist, unwearied,<br>For ever piping songs for ever new;<br>More happy love! More happy, happy love!<br>For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,<br>For ever panting and for ever young;<br>All breathing human passion far above,<br>That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,<br>A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.   | 25<br>30 |
| Who are these coming to the sacrifice<br>To what green altar, O mysterious priest,<br>Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,<br>And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?<br>What little town by river or sea shore,<br>Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,<br>Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?<br>And, little town, thy streets for evermore<br>Will silent be; and not a soul to tell<br>Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.                                    | 35<br>40 |
| O Attic shape! Fair attitude! With brede<br>Of marble men and maidens overwrought,<br>With forest branches and the trodden weed;<br>Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought<br>As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!<br>When old age shall this generation waste,<br>Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe<br>Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,<br>Beauty is truth, truth beauty, --that is all<br>Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.                             | 45<br>50 |