



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of English Language and Literature

**THE USE OF MYTH, THE SUPERNATURAL AND THE GOTHIC
IN JOHN KEATS'S POETRY**

Deniz Kırpıklı

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2013

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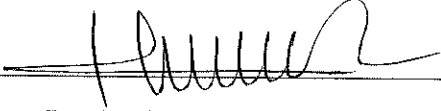
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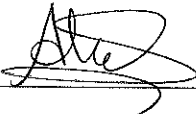
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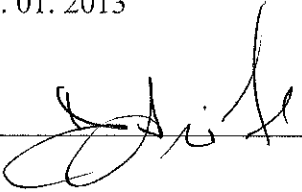
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ÖZET

KIRPIKLI, Deniz. *John Keats'in Şiirlerinde Mit, Doğaüstü ve Gotik Ögelerin Kullanımı*. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2013.

On sekizinci yüzyılın sonlarında İngiltere’de yaşanan değişimlerin sonucunda Romantizm yeni bir edebiyat akımı olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Dönemin devrimci etkileri altında, Romantik şairler doğadan ilham almış ve akıl yerine içgüdülerin rehberliğine inanmışlardır. İkinci kuşak Romantik şairlerden olan John Keats bu yeni akımın özellikle estetik yönleriyle ilgilenmiştir. Keats’in eserlerindeki başlıca odak noktası, gerçekle bir tuttuğu güzelliğe ulaşmak için daimi bir arayıştır. Hayal gücünün önemi ve gerçekliğine inanan bir şair olarak Keats, gerçeğin algısında aklın hakimiyetini kabul etmez. Aklın tek başına yeterli olmadığı gerçeği kavrama sürecinde onun gizemli yönlerini öne çıkarmak için alternatif bir dünya sunar.

Bu tezin amacı Keats’in şiirlerinde mitoloji, doğaüstü ve gotik ögelerin kullanımını incelemektir. Bu ögeler, şairin güzellik ve gerçeğin çeşitli yönlerini göstermek için yarattığı diyarları oluşturan temel unsurlardır. Ayrıca, Keats’in şairin rolü, şiirin işlevi ve “kendi benliğini yadsıma yeteneği”¹ kavramı hakkındaki görüşlerini konu ettiği mektupları da eserlerdeki bazı unsurları açıklamak için önemli detaylar içermektedir. Çalışmanın birinci bölümünde *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, *The Fall of Hyperion* isimli eserlerle, “Great Odes” diye adlandırılan kısa şiirler Keats’in mitolojik ögeleri kendine özgü bir tarzla nasıl kullandığını yansıtmak amacıyla incelenmektedir. İkinci bölümde ele alınan *Isabella*, *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, *Lamia*, ve “La Belle Dane Sans Merci” adlı eserler ise şairin gotik ve doğaüstü ögeleri nasıl yorumladığını örneklemek açısından önemlidir. Aynı zamanda, tüm bu eserler Keats’in hayattaki zıt değerleri şiirlerinde uzlaştırma gayretini ve bunu yaparken de bir şair olarak yaşadığı gelişimi ortaya koymaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın sonucunda Keats’in hayal gücüyle şekillenen unsurlardan yararlanarak

¹ Mina Urgan tarafından bu şekilde ifade edilmiştir (676).

Őiir sanatında ölümsüzlüğe ulaşan, güzelliklerle bezeli diyarlar yarattığı görölmektedir. İncelenen eserlerde Őair mit, doğaüstü ve gotik ögeler kullanarak içinde yaşadığı dünyadaki kısıtlamaların ötesinde, gerçeğe eşdeğer gördüğü güzelliğe ulaşır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

John Keats, Romantizm, mit, doğaüstü, gotik, hayal gücü, güzellik, kendi benliğini yadsıma yeteneđi

ABSTRACT

KIRPIKLI, Deniz. *The Use of Myth, The Supernatural and The Gothic in John Keats's Poetry*. Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2013.

As a result of the changes England experienced at the end of the eighteenth century, Romanticism emerged as a new literary movement. Under the revolutionary influences of the period, the Romantic poets turned to nature and believed in the guidance of instincts rather than reason. Being one of the second generation English Romantics, John Keats particularly deals with the aesthetic aspects of the movement. His chief interest in his works is a constant search for beauty which he equates with truth. As a poet who believes in the authenticity of imaginative faculty, he does not accept the dominance of intellect in the perception of truth. Rather, he builds an alternative world of beauty to highlight the mysterious aspects of reality, the perception of which requires more than reason.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Keats's use of mythological, supernatural and gothic elements in his poetry. These elements, which are the fundamentals of the realms he created, enable him to demonstrate the various aspects of truth and beauty. Furthermore, Keats's letters provide crucial details to explain his ideas about the role of the poet, the function of poetry, and also his concept of negative capability. In the first chapter of the study, the poems entitled *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, *The Fall of Hyperion*, and the "Great Odes" are analysed to illustrate Keatsian use of mythology. *Isabella*, *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, *Lamia*, and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," dealt with in the second chapter, are important with regard to Keats's interpretation of supernatural and gothic elements. These poems also point out Keats's attempts in reconciling the opposing qualities in human life and his development as a poet.

This thesis, therefore, concludes that by employing the products of imagination Keats creates a world of beauty that is immortalised in poetry. In the poems that are studied within this context, through his use of myth, the supernatural and the gothic, Keats attains truth and beauty that is beyond the restrictions of the earthly reality.

Key Words:

John Keats, Romanticism, myth, the supernatural, the gothic, imagination, beauty, negative capability

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INTRODUCTION

1. A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND

Poetry [...] is an imitation of Nature, but the imagination and the passions are a part of man's nature. We shape things according to our wishes and fancies, without poetry; but poetry is the most emphatical language that can be found for those creations of the mind. [...] It signifies the excess of the imagination beyond the actual or ordinary impression of any object or feeling. [...] It is strictly the language of imagination; and the imagination is that faculty which represents objects, not as they are in themselves, but as they are moulded by other thoughts and feelings, into an infinite variety of shapes and combinations of power. (Hazlitt 389)

The prominence given to imagination in poetry during the Romantic period in England, as expressed in Hazlitt's words, was a challenge to the dominant ideals of the Age of Reason. Romantic movement brought along a total break away from the literary principles of the eighteenth century. Romanticism reveals a general sense of freedom from imposed forms of expression, and from established categories of understanding. In Everest's words, "[t]he Romantic revolt is in a sense not so much a revolt against the shared standards and conventions of an earlier age; it is a revolt in a more thoroughgoing sense, against the very existence of dominating shared standards and conventions" (2). Thus, it can be said that the Romantic period was an era of revolt not only against the poetic convention of the previous era, its rules or precepts, but also the notions and boundaries that restricted the freedom of creativity in general. In order to have a better understanding of the prominent features of the Romantic literature, it is essential to review the social, historical and philosophical background of the period.

The Romantic period in England, the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, was an age of great change inspired by the philosophical trends in Europe and revolutions, including the American War of Independence (1775-1783) and the French Revolution (1789). By the end of the eighteenth century, with the growth of the middle

class and the industry, and with the decline of monarchy and the aristocracy as representatives of power, a new age dawned. Philosophical, political, social and historical thought all underwent a transformation. Thus, it was an age of upheavals in political, economic, and social traditions; an age that witnessed the fundamental transformations of the Industrial Revolution. In England, with the expansion of the industrial population in towns with factories, the way of life changed. As Beiser puts it, there was a general dislike towards the industrialisation which arises from two sources:

First, the growth of modern technology, which made nature into an object of mere use, having no magic, mystery, or beauty; and second, mechanical physics, which made nature into a vast machine and the mind either a smaller machine within nature or a ghost standing outside it. (32)

The revolution brought about a change from an economy based on farms to one that depends on mechanisation and factories. Consequently, while the French Revolution indicated a chaos which would dominate European political and cultural life for the next quarter of the century, the Industrial Revolution in England spread to the continent bringing out new concerns. Watson suggests that, “the England which [the Romantics] looked out on was divided between the progressive, forceful, energetic, and successful elements on the one hand and the discontented, neglected, and poverty-stricken on the other” (“Keats” 77). While some people cherished the convenience of the new inventions, the others suffered from the problems of the industrialisation. Hence, the dislike towards the industrial changes and materialistic civilisation, and sensitivity to the sufferings of the poor became a major subject of English literature of the period as well.

A brief revision of the European scene would be beneficial to understand the principles of Romanticism. In 1789, French bourgeoisie revolted against the established order and wanted to have a new system based on equality, freedom, and fraternity. The notion of sovereignty of common people spread throughout Europe. For them, “free individual was the man who ruled himself and correspondingly the free society was the society which ruled itself” (Cranston 43). However, as a result of the wars, the feelings of fraternity, peace and liberty were replaced by violence and disappointment. These

changes infused artists with the ideals of liberty and individualism. In France, Rousseau defends the independence of individual, delivered from the artificiality and impositions of society. He regards society as a corrupting force on man, who is good by nature. For him, “the wishes of the individual heart [are] the only criterion of reality” (Bisson 49). It is his feelings, senses, and imagination that lead man to live in his true state (50). In accordance with this, in the field of philosophy, contrary to the classicism of the Age of Reason, the new era was marked by idealism. Age of Reason supports reliance on

intellectual achievements such as the scientific discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton, the rationalism of Descartes and the empiricism of Francis Bacon and John Locke. It is often characterized as a movement which held that through the exercise of reason human beings could clear away the darkness of ignorance, intolerance and prejudice, and move towards a juster and better life. (Day 64)

They ignored such qualities like passions, feelings, instincts that make man an individual. However, German philosophers Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767-1845), Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), and Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854) began to emphasize the significance of the emotions of man, imagination, individual experience and senses in the apprehension of truth. They all rejected the idea that human mind is a passive receiver. The German philosophy assigned an important role to individual mind and creativity in the formation of knowledge. According to these philosophers, “each individual had to realize his human powers in his own unique and individual fashion. No two persons were ever alike; each had characteristics that distinguished him from everyone else” (Beiser 27). Likewise, Bowie summarises the essence of German idealism as follows: “the nature of the thing depends on the conceptual activity of the subject, which itself depends on the transcendental unity of apperception. The subject’s own reality cannot be the same as the reality of what it knows, which is always relative” (63). In other words, the important role of human subject in the perception of the object was underlined. For each individual, the concept of reality was unique and valuable. Hence, in relation to the individual, various possibilities of creative power and its different ways of operation,

depending on the individual, were recognised. The emphasis shifted from social issues to individual man.

With the increasing attention given to the individual, the determining quality of human mind and his perception became important. Appropriately, man was in a continuous attempt to contemplate the external world. Mind and reason were the great instruments of him in this trial. However, in the Romantic period, there was a great emphasis on the role of faculty of imagination in man's evaluation of the external world. At this point, the importance of his feelings, instincts, sensations that shape his imaginative creativity increased. The German philosophers of the Romantic era attach much importance to the creative capacity of imagination. McNiece emphasises that "[t]o the Romantics, imagination was God in man" (56). Its role in creation of art bears resemblance to God's power. This idea is best conveyed through Immanuel Kant's theory. Kant's idealism displayed a belief in the eminence of the individual as the creative interpreter. In his interpretation, there was no objective reality but subjective modes of perception. His idealism expressed a belief in the supremacy of the individual as the creative interpreter. For Kant, as he states in *Critique of Judgement* (1790), "[i]magination (as a productive faculty of cognition) is a powerful agent for creating" (397). He claims that the subject plays a primary role in defining the function of object. Kant's ideas on beauty, sublime and aesthetic judgment are also influential on the Romantic theory. He states that

the poet essays the task of interpreting to sense the rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, hell, eternity, creation, &c. Or, again, as to things of which examples occur in experience, e.g. death, envy, and all vices, as also love, fame, and the like, transgressing the limits of experience he attempts with the aid of an imagination which emulates the display of reason in its attainment of a maximum, to body them forth to sense with a completeness of which nature affords no parallel; and it is in fact precisely in the poetic art that the faculty of aesthetic ideas can show itself to full advantage. (397)

The imagination, united with the mind of a poet, can generate "a wealth of vivid material" (McNiece 23). In this sense, it can be argued that imagination brings together the senses and the ideas; nature and the creative mind. The perceived object and its

perceiver cooperate closely in the creative imagination. As Berlin emphasises, for Kant “liberation [...] from the leading-strings of others, [...] any kind of established values” is essential (70). He claims that the subject plays a primary role in defining the function of an object. It is imagination and consequently art that proves man’s creative power.

At the heart of the principles of these ideas lies the belief that human beings have the autonomy to create the world around them. Likewise, Schiller “is constantly harping upon the fact that the only thing which makes man man is the fact that he is able to rise above nature and mould her, crush her, subjugate her to his beautiful, unfettered, morally directed will” (Berlin 79). This autonomy or freedom of man is best expressed in art. Fichte took Kant’s philosophy as a starting point and “stressed the isolation, the independence, and supremacy of each man’s mind (Cranston 28). Since the individual is the maker of the life he lives, its assertion is unique and infinite. As Bowie explains, in Fichte’s theory “the ‘absolute I’, which cannot be construed in merely objective terms, is the ultimate foundation of the world” (62). With the notion of independence of the individual mind, the awareness of individual’s intuitions, experiences, and creativity came to the foreground. Fichte’s theory postulates that “reality is seized not through speculative knowledge but by active will, that is to say, the world of objects can only be deduced from the free activity of the moral, creative ‘I’” (McNiece 26). In this sense, mind, which gathers knowledge through what senses receive, alone is not adequate to interpret the reality, because attaining truth requires the creativity of the individual. In a similar way, Berlin summarises Fichte’s theory as follows: “Things are as they are, not because they are so independent of me, but because I make them so; things depend upon the way in which I treat them, what I need them for” (89).

In relation to man’s role in the universe it can be said that he must be active and must continually create. Man is in need of surpassing the narrow limits of his apprehension. Fichte considers this need necessary for man’s “creating reality” (Cranston 29). This need for expressing himself by creating is the major quality of art. Art is a field through which man reflects his feelings, passion, intuitions together with his mind. In other words it mediates between the external world and man. This idea can also be found in

Schelling's theory. Highlighting the essence of his doctrine, Berlin maintains that human beings are the most "self-conscious representatives" of nature, so "the function of the artist is to delve within himself, and above all to delve within the dark and unconscious forces which move within him, and to bring these to consciousness by the most agonizing and violent internal struggle" (98). These dark or unknown forces in man contribute to his imaginative faculty. The production of art necessitates that struggle which stems from man's attempt to perceive the external world through his imagination. The common point of the theories of these philosophers is that, subject or individual, has a primary role in perceiving the world around him.

The ideas of the German philosophers influenced the English both intellectually and literarily. With the increasing importance given to the individual, imagination became an indispensable part of the art forms. In McNiece's words,

[a]rt represents and objectifies the divine creativity of beauty through the action of the imagination, which molds the many into the one, bonds and interpenetrates ideal and real in the form of beauty. Art, therefore, is the key to transcendental idealism. In art there is an identity of conscious and unconscious, freedom and necessity, activity and passivity. (108)

The creative power of imagination brings forth circumstances that one cannot experience in the limits of reality. This idea bears a parallelism with the poetical ideas of the Romantic poets, which will further be elaborated in the following parts of this study. Besides, Jean Jacques Rousseau's writings, which presented primitive man as the ideal, stimulated the ideas of English Romantics. He was "the first of the Romantics and revolutionaries who hoped for a new world in which man could return to his original goodness" (Watson, *English* 45). Through his writings, Rousseau paved the way for the Romantics to perceive and employ the spirit of revolution in their works. Likewise, Coleridge, who read widely in criticism and philosophy of Germany, was an eminent figure of English Romantic literature; his literary theory was "enormously influential on subsequent generations of English poets and critics" (Ashton 498). Coleridge's theory of poetry which was shaped by all these factors has a significant role in comprehending the tradition of Romantic poetry and in understanding Keats's art of poetry. The concept

of imagination introduced by Coleridge is a principle accepted by all the Romantic poets. Keats adopts Coleridge's view of imagination by adding his own view of life to it.

The revolutionary spirit was the basic element which inspired the art forms, particularly, the poetry of the period. The old order seemed to come to an end, hence the Romantics who supported these ideals, needed to build a new order, or reshape the older systems which were not sufficient enough to keep up with the rapid changes. Together with the way of perceiving the world, the theory and practice of poetry also changed. The Age of Reason relied on the virtues of the intellect. According to the general precepts of this period, both nature and art depended on the principle of rationality. Reason was the greatest human faculty which was associated with the works of the Augustan poets. Regarding the principles of the period, Bernbaum asserts that "they demanded correctness and adherence to literary rules which were clear and reasonable. They were chiefly interested in the urban rather than the rustic, in maturity rather than youth, in the civilized present rather than the ruder past" (9). The Romantics rejected these precepts of the Age of Reason because they thought they limited the freedom of the individual. In this regard, this revolt against the eighteenth-century conception of reason was actually based on the mechanistic universe they created and the corruption of man. However, the Romantics's revolt was not a denial of the value of man's intellectual capacities. The fundamental aim of their revolt was "to recreate the unity of all the arts and sciences and to reestablish the unity of art and life" (Beiser 22). In accordance with this view, it can be said that reason is an indispensable instrument of creative imagination of the individual. As Fairchild interprets, "if the English romantic has his head in the clouds, he nevertheless keeps his feet on the earth. His hunger for illusion is balanced by his respect for actuality and his love of the concrete" (25). They just put an emphasis on emotions, intuitions, and instincts as crucial complements of logic. Therefore, while they seemed to deny access to objective truth, they admitted individual's yearning for what surpasses the limits of his perception.

Consequently, the articulation of feelings and the precedence of imagination became the essential features of Romantic poetry. Consequently, this new era is marked by turning from reason to senses, imagination, intuition; from the mechanised present to the medieval past. As industrialisation progressed, a reaction against the mechanisation and factories also grew; disappointed by the present conditions, people yearned for the past. Thus, the revival of medieval life and literature, the supernatural along with the magic and enchantment came into prominence. A revival of older forms like ballads, sonnets, blank verse, Spenserian stanzas marked the poetry of the period. Unlike the poets of the previous age, the Romantics tended to value the irrational, nature, belief in man's goodness, individual perspective and subjectivism because, "feeling and intuition were gradually acknowledged to be more important in grasping the meanings of experience [...] and thereby communicating their significance to readers or beholders" (Bernbaum 24). All the tenets they valued were related to the creative imagination of the individual. Hence, it is necessary to further examine the concept of imagination by the Romantic poets.

At the heart of Romantic criticism lies the dissatisfaction with the ugliness of values brought out about the industrialisation and rationalisation. In a letter, Keats complains that "[t]he more we know the more inadequacy we find in the world to satisfy us" (*Letters* 98, 259). The dislike towards the new order and social tendencies led their interests to new realms created by the individual's imagination which was free from what the new age brought. In this way, the artist perceived the truth as a whole which includes both the ugly visible reality and the hidden forms of beauty attained by imagination. In this respect, for the Romantics, the ideal world, which was bound to the individual, was a realm of beauty and infinity, but the contemporary world, which they lived in, was a realm of appearances, ugliness and wretchedness. They thought that "man was gifted with a higher reason, called imagination, which enabled him to see that the good, the true, and the beautiful were not removed to a sphere unattainable to him in this life, but were interwoven with his human existence" (Bernbaum 304). At this point, they considered literature as a means through which imagination operates in order to portray the beauty in the actual world. For that reason, even if they lived in a

materialistic, industrialised society, they believed in the capacity of man to overcome despair and to find happiness. William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), Robert Southey (1774-1843) who are the first generation Romantics, and George Gordon Lord Byron (1788-1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), John Keats (1795-1821), who are the second generation Romantics, and most of their contemporaries reacted against the scientific, rationalistic, and mechanistic view of nature and man. At that time these poets were grouped in several schools “the Lake School of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey; the Cockney School of London intellectuals and artists, including Keats, Shelley, and Hazlitt, that centered on Leigh Hunt; or the Satanic School, Southey’s derogatory name for the partnership of Byron and Shelley” (Cox 11). For them, “the poetic imagination transcends mere intellect; it is reason in its highest and purest form, the intuitive faculty by which man apprehends unity and reality” (Bush, *English* 130). It was a natural reaction to a decadent classicism, artifices of civilisation, and artificial constructs of humankind. Hence, they found the solution in engaging in the rediscovery of older literary themes and created a new kind of poetry which emphasised intuition over reason.

The first generation Romantic poets, who generated the poetic theory, were highly interested in the political and social issues of the day, because they witnessed the upheavals during the revolutions. The second generation Romantic poets were influenced by their theory and displayed the clash between the ideal and the real in their works. Clubbe and Lovell state that

[t]he second generation of Romantic poets had read their Wordsworth and Coleridge, comprehended their questions and answers, and felt a clear need to move on into pastures new. They more or less deliberately built new structures upon a number of typically Wordsworthian and Coleridgean bases. Or at times they refused to build. Quantitatively, they theorized less than their elders. They had little or nothing new to say, for example, about the nature of the symbol, about the relationships among the reason, imagination and fancy, about the reconciliation of man and nature. (110)

Keats reflected the difference between imagination and fancy as will be illustrated in the following chapters. Moreover, he constantly emphasised. He explored his poet's desire to attain immortality through his works.

The Romantic literature, which was shaped by the social and historical experiences, connected the mysterious part of life to truth. In Haskell's words, the Romantic poets regarded intuitions and imagination as the "great human faculty in the acquisition of truth" (31). These factors played an important role in finding out the mysterious or unknown parts of human life. On the literary level, English Romanticism began with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *Lyrical Ballads* became the major work to redirect English taste from the Neo-classical to the Romantic. Cranston maintains that "Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience* had come out four years earlier, but has passed almost unnoticed at the time. The *Lyrical Ballads* were widely read, and established the two poets at the head of their profession" (58). During the time of the French Revolution, the Romantic poets were already highly influenced by the American War of Independence in 1783. The revolutions encouraged the individual to hold hopes. Everest explains the enthusiasm for the revolution as follows:

The very breadth and unity of English sympathy with the Revolution was its most remarkable feature; or so it appeared to radicals in the early years of the decade. The sense of joyous brotherhood made for a heady atmosphere. Possibilities were boundless; it seemed just a short step, and a generally desired one, to the material realization of a perfected society. (17)

The men of literature of the period began to have complete faith in the principles of the French Revolution. English poets like Blake, Coleridge and Wordsworth saw the Revolution as a growing number of people in support of freedom and expected some reforms in Britain. They had high expectations such as "the abolition of slavery, the reform of the prison system, and the education of the poor" (Dawson 51). However, things did not proceed as expected and their hopes faded, replaced with disappointment. Man sank into a state of deep sorrow. Hugo reveals that the Romantic man of feeling "dwelt in a world of emotions where sadness predominated over happiness. Here he

ramified the eighteenth century cult of sensibility and diverted it into a single mournful channel” (31). The revolution brought forth a war between those who supported changes and those who rejected innovations. The hostile attitude of France towards neighbouring nations, and the rise of a military dictatorship under Napoleon caused great despair (Everest 19). The political turmoil of their own day made men worse as they turned to tyranny, slaughter, and imperialist expansion. Everything that the Romantics believed in was ignored or despised. Therefore, gloom and melancholy prevailed in most of the works of the time. The characteristics of literature which were shaped by these conditions, can be found, with their most comprehensive expression, in Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s statements.

Wordsworth in the *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* (1800), and Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), declaring their freedom from the mechanical precepts, state their aim and their movement away from the principles of the previous age. Essence of Romantic poetry is to rely on sources of inspiration other than what the rational thought can supply. A new perspective is aimed to be established, and accordingly, Coleridge’s contributions to *Lyrical Ballads* are intended to turn the supernatural into natural, while Wordsworth’s are intended to turn the natural into supernatural. Coleridge himself writes about “persons and characters supernatural, or at least Romantic,” but though supernatural they have to possess “a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith” (*Biographia Literaria* II, 5). Wordsworth, for his part, is “to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us” (*Biographia Literaria* II, 5). Both poets, in their own way, seek to interfuse two realms of being; “two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination” (*Biographia Literaria* II, 5). Wordsworth wanted to relate poetry as closely as possible to common life. For him, poetry “is the image of man and nature” (*Preface to Lyrical Ballads* 257). He presents

everyday characters and incidents in the light of imagination. Coleridge, who is inspired by the unseen world, gives imaginative or supernatural characters in the light of truth. Moreover, with the growing interest in the older forms of literature like fairytales and ballads, a tendency towards the use of the supernatural became an important component of Romantic literature.

The supernatural had the power to evoke an atmosphere of mystery, and pathos, which will be further illustrated in the following chapters. Bernbaum claims that the supernatural “suggested the eternal mystery of the interpenetration throughout universal life of spirit and matter, of good and evil” (64). Poets needed some mode of utterance to explain deep feelings, significances and what they experience. The gothic or supernatural themes enlarge the emotional capacity of the reader and exploit “the mind’s readiness to assent to other kinds of conviction besides that of intellectual proof” (Ball 96). Therefore, hoping to find a way to express their feelings, the Romantics turned to myths, the gothic world of enchantments, magic and supernatural.

The Romantic poets all experienced disillusionment, and they began to seek a cure and liberation in a return to the former literary themes and forms. In other words, they sought a return to the poetry of myth after the long eighteenth-century dominance of the poetry which reflects rational issues. Especially the second generation Romantic poets tend to use mythological elements in their poetry. Besides, as Kalter states, the nostalgia for the Medieval age “was born of dissatisfaction with the present, its erosion of traditional hierarchies, its rationalism and dullness, its political corruption (991). Characteristics of the Romantic spiritual essence were conceived to be “a passion for Gothic cultures, for futurist paintings; for talking exclusively about oneself in an ecstatic contemplation of nature” (Abrams, *English* 5). With the Medieval revival, the longing for the past brought about a tendency for melancholy, nostalgia and the gothic as themes. Fantastic creatures of the Medieval literature, such as fairies, elves, witches, came back into poetry with the literary works of the time which have gothic and supernatural elements. In this way, the Romantics celebrated the mysterious aspects of imagination in creation of literature.

Aske states that the Romantic writers turned to the gothic, because “it offered an escape from the potential tyranny of Rationalism” (20). Thus, it can be argued that since the imaginary realms, created within the older literary forms, display settings far from those of the Age of Reason; they stimulated the interest of the Romantic poets. As Watson argues, the gothic also “is concerned with the unusual or strange behavior of individuals, with alienation, heart-searching, and frustrated hope” (*English* 81). Similarly, in their study *The Gothic*, David Putner and Glennis Byron confirm that gothic elements “reveal something about the possibilities and depths of human misrecognition, something about the degree to which life is pursued in the light of a certain degree of untruth, of misunderstanding” (295). The extraordinary quality of the unfamiliar realms or supernatural happenings, invoking awe and dread, can be used as symbols of spiritual facts which emphasise the unknown or tragic dimensions of life. In a way, these elements, with a mysterious tone, make the reader confront different realities. Besides, the use of the supernatural and gothic was important because one of the most significant characteristics of gothic elements is its evocation of strong feelings like horror and amazement. The mysterious characters with supernatural powers and the use of castles, ruins, ghosts, and miraculous events contributed to the arousal of emotions and mystery. Together with Keats’s related poems, these qualities of the supernatural and gothic will be analysed in the following chapters.

The use of symbol and imagery is another significant characteristic of Romantic poetry. These are the instruments of imagination which “signify the coincidence and fusion of the expressed and the inexpressible” (McFarland, “Involute” 57). In other words, through symbols, imagination reflects and transforms how mind perceives the world. As each individual’s experience is authentic, their products of imagination are different from each other. Watson claims that

for the Romantics the recognition that the sense-data are transformed and understood by each individual mind is vital, because it is that transformation which declares the individual. If the subject-matter of the poem is affected by the perceiving mind, then every apprehension of the external world is different, and therefore the form of Romantic poetry is individual too. (*English* 23)

In this respect, as symbol, which receives its meaning through the creative perception of mind, reflects how the poet understands the external world, it is the element that provides the poem with originality and individuality. This is a reflection of the German philosophers's idealism that forms a relation between the mind and the external world. In Abrams's words, Kant's doctrine emphasises that "the mind imposes the forms of time, space, and the categories on the sensuous manifold. [...] Mind discovers what it has itself partly made" (*The Mirror* 58). According to this theory, the external world could not exist without a mind to behold it. In this sense, as Watson indicates,

imagination is a mysterious power enabling individual to realise the relationship between himself and the world through the shared understanding and governance of time. This idealism points out the Platonic ideal as well. John Keats's creating contrast between the ideal and the actual is found in much Romantic poetry. It is part of the fascination which the poet has with the world of dream and vision, and it is part, too, of the idealism which leads to revolution. (*English* 27)

In Romantic poetry, dreams operate through symbols which allow one thing to stand for another. In Watson's words, "the dreams of sleep are interesting to the Romantics because they reveal something of the strange inner workings of the mind, its astonishing capacity for beauty and its fearful and dark terrors" (71). Dreams provide various realms in which imagination is active in creating combinations. Therefore, it can be said that, dreams provide a new realm in which imagination can freely operate; they are open to every possibility. In many of Keats's poems, the use of dreams is an indispensable aspect. Keats places the dreams prominently in poems like "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" and *The Eve of Saint Agnes*. In his works dreams have a mysterious quality about the private occupation of individual mind. The hidden desires, fears and emotions are reflected by means of dreams. Besides, the harsh reality and the beauty of the ideal world are often contrasted in dreams. Keats turns the dream into an inspiring situation in his long narrative poem, *The Eve of St. Agnes* which centers on the differences and similarities between dreaming and reality, and raises questions about the consequences of each.

Another characteristic of Romantic poetry is the idealisation of nature. The dominant view is that nature has a lively and mysterious aspect that stimulates imagination (Fairchild 20). Besides, this mysterious essence of nature can be perceived through inspiration and intuition. At this point Beiser's remark about Schlegel's ideas is worth mentioning. As he puts it, "both the self-realized individual and a work of art exhibit freedom, the absence of constraint or outside interference, since both appear to follow their own internal laws, their own inner dynamic, independent of external forces" (Beiser 28). In art, the truth of the essence is attained by the agency of imagination and reflected with the help of myth, supernatural figures and happenings. Therefore, the Romantic poets's common aim was to invent new literary forms or to revive the old forms in which the appreciation of nature could be best expressed. They found the inspiration they were seeking in nature, solitude, and simple life; nature is identified with poetry. Hazlitt states that, "[w]herever there is a sense of beauty, or power, or harmony, as in the motion of a wave of the sea, in the growth of a flower that 'spreads its sweet leave to the air, and dedicates its beauty to the sun,' there is poetry in its birth" (387). Art was considered to be the recreation or interpretation of nature in beautiful forms. In opposition to the "vices of civilization," the Romantic poets drew attention to the countryside which stands for simplicity and nature (Saunders 3). Nature as a source of inspiration is seen as a pure world set against the world of disorder. In Peckham's words, "the universe is alive, not dead; living and growing, not a perfect machine; it speaks to us directly through the creative mind and its senses. Its truths cannot be perceived from the 'evidences of nature,' but only through the unconscious and creative mind" (18). For the Romantics, there was joy to be found in nature which man-made institutions cannot provide. Wordsworth, in the *Preface*, emphasises that

[I]ow and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more

lasting; and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. (245)

Nature provides man with a way of thinking about human feelings and the self. The Romantics believed that nature was an object of contemplation; richly variegated but it was also “a harmonious whole, a source of tranquillity” (257). Hough comments that “when the world of man is harsh and repugnant, in need of violent reform, yet so often irreformable, the poet is apt to seek consolation in the world of nature which does not need reforming” (7). In a way, nature is a refuge from the artificial constructs of civilisation. While industrialised world was full of defects, nature was pure, free from all the artificiality. Accordingly, the revolutionary spirit and its results forced imaginative minds to be one with the nature. As Fairchild argues, man is regarded to be a “part of the universal harmony” and man and nature are seen as a perfect whole (20). The poet realises this fact and wants to awaken the people to the reality. Therefore, contemplation of the natural world leads individual to the truth that lies behind the mere reality.

In the Romantic theory of poetry, imagination is seen as the greatest human faculty which reconciles human nature to the external reality. Imagination is a “feeling, a sensibility, an intuition, immediate and intense, by which the ego apprehends the character of something outside itself” (Bernbaum 323). It is about individual’s interpretation of the external objects by involving his “conscious and subconscious” feelings and experiences. However, it does not just consist of pleasing illusions and “emotional self-expression” which do not look into the problems of humanity (Bernbaum 323).

The Romantics’s understanding of imagination and its criteria received its best expression in Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria*, which is a milestone for the study of Romantic theory. His theory of the imagination regards imagination as a unifying and creative power (I. 202). For him, imagination is the faculty which idealises and unifies; a power which enables man to face the opposites in the external world. He mentions two different kinds of imagination, both of which must be distinguished from “fancy.”

First there is “primary imagination” which refers to man’s creative power repeating God’s act. Within man’s creative power, there is some power which links him to his creator. Secondly, there is poetic imagination which distinguishes an artist from an ordinary man (I. 202). Emphasising the importance of imagination in poetic compositions, Cranston states that “this is the faculty by which the artist imposes order on the chaos of the universe and unifies the diverse elements of experience into significant form” (61). However, fancy is not creative; it is described by Coleridge as a “mode of memory” while imagination is essentially vital, representing the mind’s active contribution to the fabric of experience (I. 202). He, in the first part of *Biographia Literaria* says that, “with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of consciousness. [...] Imagination dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealise and to unify” (I. 202). For him, it is a superior kind of reason. Artistic or poetic imagination is controlled by the conscious will which struggles to unify the patterns of experience into an artistic whole. In this way, the artist sees the harmony of nature through imagination and recreates it in artistic works. He is capable of perceiving the hidden meanings behind the visible materials and give them new forms by means of his unique imaginative creation.

This self-consciousness can be best summarised in the intuitive knowledge. Artist is the individual creator and his creative imagination is accompanied by his intuitions. It is what the rational mind neglects; the quality of perceiving larger unities that is the unknown to the mere reason. At this point, individual’s way of perceiving the world is very significant in attaining what reason cannot reach. Hence, imagination is the primary means by which truth, virtue and ideal beauty can be grasped; and poetry is the product of the poet’s own mind where imagination works through inspiration from nature. In this way, the poet finds a better world than the familiar one. As Dawson also states “in a society whose practices and beliefs constituted a denial of human imagination and creativity it was the poets’ role to keep open a sense of alternative possibility”(73). John Keats fulfils this role in creating alternative realms of imagination. Not totally deviating from the probable realities, Keats establishes a realm

of imagination which combines the visible and the unearthly things beyond the visible. In this way, the spiritual and the material can be reconciled with each other; the supernatural enables the mortals to apprehend the beauty of nature. The concept of imagination which constructs the tenets of Romantic poetry is the basis of Keats's poetry. The importance given to imaginative faculty thematically forms the subject of most of his poems as will be analysed in the following chapters.

2. JOHN KEATS: A LIFE DEDICATED TO POETRY

Poetry [...] is the utterance of a passion for truth, beauty, and power, embodying and illustrating its conceptions by imagination and fancy, and modulating its language on the principle of variety in uniformity. Its means are whatever the universe contains; and its ends, pleasure and exaltation. (Hunt qtd. in Abrams, *The Mirror* 49)

Keats's friend and supporter Leigh Hunt's ideas on poetry, indicated by his answer to the question "what is poetry?" is one of the tenets that form Keats's poetic conception. Keats dedicated his life to uniting the mundane and the ideal through imagination. Bernbaum states that "none of the other Romantics surpassed [Keats] in sensuousness of appeal, richness of colors, exquisiteness of rhythm, and stateliness of forms" (235). In his poetry, rather than making critical comments on the events of his day, Keats tried to grasp the beauty of the moment which he experienced in the realms of imagination. Dawson, in his essay "Poetry in an Age of Revolution," refers to Keats as the "most apolitical of the great Romantic poets" (49), because his poetry does not intend to give any political messages or raise awareness about the social problems and his inspiration comes to him through poetry, art and beauty in nature. As Cranston also points out, "his response to ethereal things was aesthetic, not as what that of Coleridge, for example, intellectual" (69). Within the Romantic canon, Keats differs from the others in that he regards the products of imagination in terms of their aesthetic beauty.

Keats's poetry deals with an unending pursuit of beauty and truth, love of the past and nature, and in his poems, supernatural elements stand for various forms of beauty and truth. Despite his short life, but one with distress, he is considered one of the most important literary figures of the Romantic period. His desire for leaving an immortal work behind, and his dedication to poetry was an essential source of energy in his life. In his letter to Fanny Brawne he writes, "I have left no immortal work behind me — nothing to make my friends proud of my memory — but I have loved the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remembered" (*Letters* 186, 467). In a way, his dealing with the past is a claim for timelessness. His experience of pain, sickness, and sorrow made him a very sensitive poet who regarded human existence as frustration and unhappiness. This belief is also revealed in his letter to Reynolds. He writes, "the world is full of Misery and heart-break, Pain, Sickness, and oppression" (*Letters* 64, 144). Thus, the aesthetic ideals in his poetry are about what is irrecoverably lost. The loveliest things in human life must pass away just as beauty, the only thing which is delightful in this miserable life, has to perish. In his poetic conception, the delightful things fleet like a dream, thus, "poet's duty is to celebrate those moments of life in which love, beauty, and delight are found. If, when they happen, it seems like a dream, or a dream come true, then that is one of the functions of the imagination" (Watson, "Keats" 74). Since all the happy moments are on the brink of departure, Keats's poetry is concerned with the theme of transience and permanence:

My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams;
 My soul had been a lawn besprinkled o'er
 With flowers, and stirring shades, and baffled beams:
 The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,
 Though in her lids hung the sweet tears of May;
 The open casement press'd a new-leaved vine,
 Let in the budding warmth and throstle's lay;
 O shadows! 'twas a time to bid farewell!

("Ode on Indolence," 40-49)

In his poems, Keats creates imaginary but ideal settings which go in accordance with his themes. However, these dream landscapes are not far removed from reality, and as Hough points out, are "always made up out of elements that are actual enough, not out of the starry and cloudy imaginings" (160). The materials taken from the actual world

are turned into abstractions or symbols by means of poetic imagination. In these realms where reality and dream are mingled, Keats tries desperately to find some permanent and unchanging refuge in a world of instability. While he is drawing imaginary worlds in most of his poems, he makes use of nature and the mysterious occurrences in it. The characters in his imaginary realms go through human experience by facing joy and sorrow. In addition to the objects of nature, interaction between heart and mind which form the human soul prevail in these realms. Therefore, his poetry is not totally made up of imaginary things; ordinary characters and feelings can also be observed in his exotic or remote realms.

In this regard, as his philosophy of life and poetry is highly influenced by what he experienced in his life, it will be useful to give a brief account of Keats's life. John Keats was born in 1795 to a poor family. He had three brothers George, Thomas Junior, Edward who died in infancy, and a sister Frances who was always called Fanny, all younger than him. His father's sudden death in 1804, was followed by his mother's remarriage and temporary separation from her four children. When his father died he was only nine, then in the same year his mother married again, but later separated from her husband and took her family to live with her mother. John Keats and his brother George were sent to a small academy run by John Clarke at Enfield. From 1803 to 1811 he received a sound education which encouraged his interest in arts, a tolerant attitude in religion, and a liberal political stance. However, after his mother's death, the orphans, with a small inheritance from their grandfather, were placed under the guardianship of Richard Abbey and Rowland Landell who withdrew them from school and apprenticed John Keats to a surgeon and druggist. In 1815 he registered as a student at Guy's Hospital and in July 1816 was licensed as an apothecary, but the thought of a medical career was unpleasant to him because the love of literature was overpowering everything (Bernbaum 215; Bate 13; Hough 169). Leaving his medical studies, he began to pursue a nobler mission which was healing the sorrows of human beings through poetry.

Keats's friendship with the headmaster's son Charles Cowden Clarke guided his taste in reading and Clarke introduced Keats to Leigh Hunt, the young writer John Hamilton Reynolds, the painter Benjamin Haydon, and others who were later to become his closest friends. Most of them were keenly interested in painting and sculpture which would inspire the visual quality of Keats's imagination. In Ian Jack's words:

Keats's interest in painting and sculpture sharpened his own powers of observation and helped him to maintain that balance between the introvert and extrovert which is so triumphantly evident in his mature poetry. [...] The visual arts taught him how to paint pictures of his own. By allowing his imagination to work in the way in which a painter's works, he could produce a passage of which we cannot say whether it is based on a particular work of art or not. (140-41)

When Keats became acquainted with Shelley, Hazlitt, and Lamb he found himself in a literary and artistic circle in which aesthetic beliefs and political sympathies were shared. He got acquainted with Spenser's poetry on Clarke's advice. His earliest venture into poetry was encouraged by his inspiration from Spenser. Upon this, in 1814 he wrote "Imitation of Spenser" which was his first poem. Clarke also influenced Keats's interest in politics, lending the young poet copies of *The Examiner*, the leading liberal magazine of the day, and helping him to form his opinion about the injustices in the world around him (Bloom, *A Reading* 126). It was Leigh Hunt, a well-known radical Whig poet, who strongly encouraged him to write poetry. Keats's first published poem "O Solitude" appeared in Leigh Hunt's *The Examiner* in 1816. Hunt's encouragement, and "his public praise, for publishing of Keats in *The Examiner* probably determined him to give up medicine and to devote himself to poetry" (Watson, *English* 340). Furthermore, Clarke's introducing him to George Chapman's sixteenth century translation of Homer led him to write the sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." This poem was one of the first reflections of his love for Greek mythology. Regarding the effect of the poem on Keats, Hill points out that the sonnet, "was his most individual and most unified poem up till then. [...] he proved that he could do it, and so gained assurance that he would sometime do it again" (17).

The influence of this literary circle encouraged him to publish his first volume, *Poems*, in 1817. Among his first poems, “Sleep and Poetry” is an important one in terms of formulating his poetic beliefs, hopes and ideals. He depicts “the value of true poetry as the revealer of the mystery of life” (Bernbaum 227). In the summer of the same year, 1816, he wrote “I Stood tiptoe,” which is also a prominent poem in terms of Keats’s understanding of poetry and natural description. Then he continued with a mythological narrative poem *Endymion*, a romantic quest poem that parallels his own poetic quest in real life. During those years his source of inspiration was Shakespeare whom he saw as the greatest master of poetry (Bate 150). He intended to write on the quest of the soul for the ideal but *Endymion* was found too obscure and digressive. The main reason behind the attacks directed to Keats’s poetry was his friendship with Hunt. Keats, who was a liberal, has radical political sympathies with the Whigs. He was seen as a disciple of Hunt who was the major influence on his liberal views in politics (Roe 10; Bate 91). Hunt had been imprisoned from February, 1813 to February, 1815 for publishing a libel against the Prince Regent; and when he was released Keats wrote a “Sonnet on Hunt Leaving Prison” (1815) (Bernbaum 217). The Tory *Blackwood’s Magazine* condemned and despised Hunt and his circle; labeled them as “the Cockney School” of poetry. The name, beside suggesting “a city-dweller’s coarsely sentimental hankering for the rural life,” also “hinted at low social origins, contemptible in any man who aspired to write poetry” (Everest 82). John Gibson Lockheart, who coined the defamatory term “the Cockney School” for Hunt, Hazlitt, and Keats, in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1818, wrote a bitter criticism on Keats’s poem:

The phrenzy of *the Poems* was bad enough in its way; but it did not alarm us half so seriously as the calm, settled, imperturbable drivelling idiocy of *Endymion*. [...] It has just as much to do with Greece as it has with ‘old Tartary the fierce;’ no man, whose mind has ever been imbued with the smallest knowledge or feeling of classical poetry or classical history, could have stooped to profane and vulgarise every association in the manner which has been adopted by this ‘son of promise.’ [...] It is a better and a wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet; so back to the shop Mr John, back to ‘plasters, pills, and ointment boxes. (qtd. in Matthews 100-106)

As stated in Lockheart's satirical comments, Keats had no first-hand knowledge of classical literature. Keats's conception of Greek world came to him through the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets; he did not receive education on the subject. Therefore, he was considered completely ignorant of poetic technique and his use of Greek mythology was regarded incongruous. Because of the harsh criticism the poem received, Keats lost his confidence and could not hope for much public encouragement. Even before these criticisms, he felt that in order to write great poetry he had to grow in knowledge and culture. He noticed the defects of his poetry and decided to provide an intellectual and genuine background to his works. With the purpose of improving his poetic faculty, that summer he travelled to the Lake District of England and Scotland with his friend Charles Brown (Watson, *English* 349). The tour was seen by Keats as a necessary step forward in his poetic apprenticeship because Keats entered a period of rapid intellectual and poetic development, as reflected in his letter to his brother Tom:

I shall learn poetry here and shall henceforth write more than ever, for the abstract endeavor of being able to add a mite to that mass of beauty which is harvested from these grand materials, by the finest spirits, and put into etherial existence for the relish of one's fellows. (*Letters* 71, 154)

And in another letter to Benjamin Bailey he mentions the contribution of being surrounded by nature:

I should not have consented to myself these four months tramping in the highlands, but that I thought it would give me more experience, rub off more prejudice, use [sic] to more hardship, identify finer scenes, load me with grander mountains, and strengthen more my reach in Poetry, than would stopping at home among books, even though I should reach Homer. (*Letters* 79, 193)

The scenes he saw and the experiences he had during his travels seem to inspire his imaginative writings. Furthermore, he began to study poetry by reading the works of the earlier and the contemporary poets in search for new subjects. In Hampstead, while looking after his brother Tom, who was suffering from tuberculosis, he fell in love with a young girl named Fanny Brawne and they got engaged. During this time, Keats began

to experience a strong creative inspiration that enabled him to write. However, Tom's illness and George's financial problems interrupted his poetic career (Bate 364).

In 1818, taking Milton as his chief inspiration, he began his epic poem *Hyperion*, but Tom died, leaving him with a profound consciousness that he too might not have much longer to live. Keats left the poem unfinished. Later, in 1819 he took up the subject again in *The Fall of Hyperion* by concentrating on Hyperion and Apollo. The poem is significant in reflecting Keats's thoughts about the function of poetry and the stages in the development of a poet. With a considerable artistic mastery, Keats wrote almost all his major poetry, "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," *The Fall of Hyperion*, and his famous odes between January and September of 1819. But his own health began to plague his life as he experienced the first signs of tuberculosis, that had killed his mother and brother (Bate 612). In the summer of 1820, his last volume of poetry titled *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems* was published. Concerning the volume, Bate states that it was "in many ways, perhaps, the most remarkable single volume to be published by any poet during the past century and a half" (*John Keats* 650). It received encouraging criticism not only from his close friends like Leigh Hunt and Charles Brown, but also from several critics of the magazines (Bernbaum 220). As will be traced in the following chapters of this study, he showed an improvement in his narrative skills in these poems. Surely, he had much more to write but his health did not let him continue. In September 1820, attended by his friend the painter Joseph Severn, he sailed to Italy in the hope of restoring his health but he died in Rome on February 23, 1821. At his request, the following lines were engraved on his tombstone: "Here lies One Whose Name was writ in Water." Seven weeks after the funeral, Shelley, who was greatly affected by his friend's death, memorialised Keats in his poem *Adonais* (Bate 615).

John Keats's poetic career was deeply influenced by his personal life, especially by his pain and sense of loss of his family members and his relationship with Fanny Brawne. In a letter to Fanny Brawne he writes: "I have never known any unalloy'd Happiness for many days together: the death or sickness of some one has always spoilt my hours"

(*Letters* 134, 353). As Waldoff expresses, “[n]o other Romantic poet suffered the loss of so many members of his immediate family in such rapid succession or in such an early period of his life” (199). Moods of depression and absence he experienced, when his mother temporarily abandoned him, and later frustration, when he was separated from his fiancée Fanny Brawne, agitated his poetry (Waldoff 200). The trace of his broken love affair with Fanny is seen in his works. Also, his emotional and financial situation was continually threatened by the events within his family. Therefore, the course of his life tended to alternate between joy and sorrow and this is expressed in his poetry in that he attempted to reconcile the eternal joy of the earth and its transient pleasures with ugliness and destruction.

Keats’s experiences and his deepest feelings about art and life are expressed in his letters too. In these letters, there are many references to how Keats sees poetry and himself as a poet throughout his career. In his letter to John Taylor, he says that “I find there is no worthy pursuit but the idea of doing some good for the world” (*Letters* 62, 134). He describes the role and function of the poet as “a humanist, physician to all men” (*Hyperion*, I. 186). This idea lies at the basis of Keats’s Romantic point of view. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge agree that poetry creates a soothing effect. Wordsworth also writes, “[t]he end of poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure” and its effect is “to rectify men’s feelings” to produce the capability of being excited without the application of in *Biographia Literaria* that “the poet brings the whole soul of man into activity, [...] he diffuses a tone and spirit of unity” (II, 12). Thus, it is possible to argue that, the Romantic poets value the ability of poetry to soothe man and to foster sensibility. The poets believed that poetry had the capacity to heal or to unite or reunite the society. According to Keats’s poetic conception, poetry fulfils this function by uniting the real world with the unseen one through which one can attain truth and beauty. Imaginative faculty and intuitive knowledge are “the most authentic guide to ultimate truth” (Thorpe, *The Mind* 104). Like all the English Romantics, Keats saw in imagination the essential poetic faculty. His poetry is concerned with “transcendence of earthly limitations by means of the

visionary imagination” (Stillinger 100). Similarly, Keats emphasises the significance of sensations in apprehending truth in a letter to Benjamin Bailey:

every mental pursuit takes its reality and worth from the ardour of the pursuer -- being in itself a nothing Ethereal thing [sic] may at least be thus real, divided under three heads — Things real — things semireal – and no things – [...] Things semireal such as Love, the Clouds &c which require a greeting of the Spirit to make them wholly exist. (*Letters* 53, 112)

Imagination itself, which has the power to create the external reality, is the chief mediator of the ethereal. Blackstone points out that “ethereal is an important word for Keats: it means precisely the opposite of ‘material’ [...] it belongs to the category of [...] the purest elements” (101). The imaginary elements should be in unity with the real ones. In other words, Keats’s poetry is not all about imaginary or unreal things. He was aware of the turmoil which the society lived in as he reflected in his letters to Tom Keats: “we live in a barbarous age” (*Letters* 75, 173). Thus, it can be argued that, for him, a poet must not rest in poetical dreams but must share the sorrow of humanity as experienced in the real world. As will be seen in his poetry, his imagination tries to come to terms with reality. In his poems, imagination operates to produce something sublime, but even if his characters retreat to imaginary realms, they come back to earth. Hence, in his letters, and especially in his poems like “Sleep and Poetry,” *Hyperion* and the Great Odes, he deals with the idea that the love of beauty can only fulfil itself through participation in the actual conditions of human life.

Accordingly, Keats praises the power of imagination to transform the everyday lives from the mundane to the ideal. In other words, uniting the world of imagination with the world of observable reality is important to Keats because without imagination the mundane world is confined to ugliness. As mentioned above, like other Romantics, Keats regards imagination as the greatest human faculty through which one can reach truth. Apprehension of truth requires elements such as intuition, inspiration, creativity beside intellect. In a letter to Benjamin Bailey, emphasising the significance of these “sensations,” he states that

I have never yet been able to perceive how any thing can be known for truth by consequitive reasoning — and yet it must be — Can it be that even the greatest Philosopher ever arrived at his goal without putting aside numerous objections — However it may be, O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts! (*Letters* 31, 68)

In line with this view, according to the Romantics, while philosophers confine themselves to what logical reason could prove and ignore other means of access to truth; poets use imagination and intuitive apprehension to perceive truth. As imagination has a significant role in a poet's perception of truth, he uses dreams, supernatural and gothic elements, and myths in his poems as a means to attain the unknown. Ernest Bernbaum explains this as follows:

To minds darkened by confinement within merely practical concerns, poems and works of art seemed as unreal as dreams. [...] To poets, however, to find something beautiful meant to find something true. To discern and to reveal the beauty of a phenomenon did not mean merely to represent it in a manner which might strike contemporary taste as pretty in color, sound, or form; it meant to disclose its inward nature and purpose in the light of eternal values. Thus beauty, being that quality of an object which was discerned when its essential nature was seen, was a mode of truth. (222)

The things representing truth and beauty are not necessarily concrete because they are hidden in the essential nature of things. Hence, beauty or truth is a value that could not be grasped by mere rationalisation. For that reason, one needs a transcendental release in which he could leave the boundaries of earth to communicate with the spiritual world of immortality.

The most striking victory of imagination over reason is its sovereignty. In McNiece's words, "imagination posits no fixed boundaries; rather in determining the subject it posits an infinite boundary" (27). In Keats's perception, as knowledge and reason operate in the visible world, they are restrictive; however, through the power of imagination, the poet can surpass the earthly circumstances and restrictions. In a letter to George Keats, he writes:

I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone but in a thousand worlds - No sooner am I alone than shapes of epic greatness are stationed around me, and serve my Spirit the office which is equivalent to a King's bodyguard - then "Tragedy with scepter'd pall comes sweeping by." According to my state of mind I am with Achilles shouting in the Trenches or with Theocritus in the Vales of Sicily. Or I throw my whole being into Troilus, and repeating those lines, "I wander like a lost Soul upon the stygian Banks staying for waftage," I melt into the air with voluptuousness so delicate that I am content to be alone. (*Letters* 94, 241)

Through imagination, or poetic flights, one can wander anywhere, do anything; the world of imagination is a realm of infinity. In Thorpe's words, "imagination with its springs in the heart rather than the head, though the head too has its place, becomes with Keats the highest and the most authentic guide to truth" ("Keats" 177). In the "Ode to a Nightingale," the poet can fly away with the bird on the wings of poetry into an immortal and beautiful world. Imagination is constantly active, creating the world as it reaches out towards the infinite. It is such detachment from the actual world that enables him to be free from constraints. As Keats shows in his sonnet "The Poet" imagination knows no boundaries:

[...] to his sight
 The husk of natural objects opens quite
 To the core; and every secret essence there
 Reveals the elements of good and fair;
 Making him see, where Learning hath no light. (4-8)

In opposition to the restrictive quality of reason without imagination, these creations open doors to contact with nature and the unknown. The same idea can be found in "I Stood tip-toe:"

Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly singing
 From out the middle air, from flowery nests,
 And from the pillowy silkiness that rests
 Full in the speculation of the stars. (II. 186-89)

This yearning for surpassing what is known is the basic element of the function of imagination. In other words, imagination is the only faculty to help move beyond the

disillusionments of the material world, because it provides the essential beauty as Keats states in his letter to Bailey, "I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination. What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth - whether it existed before or not" (*Letters* 31, 67). Imagination derives its power from the faculty of being identified with the essential nature of the objects. In fact, Keats believes that knowledge and reason can only be supportive to imagination in attaining truth. A poet must also acquire knowledge and wisdom without adhering to any system of thought that would ignore the mystery of life. The rational mind has limits because it excludes everything that it finds irrational. In other words, it applies rules to reality and denies all the things that do not fall into line with its rules. Therefore, as a poet, Keats lets the imagination deliver his mind from the temporary to the mysterious existence.

Through imaginative insight of the creative art, the ugly side of real life is removed. This unity of beauty and truth lies in the harmony of the universe. Its beauty stimulated the imagination of the poets of the past and in particular, the ancient Greeks to create myths. Keats realises this harmony in Greek myths, the supernatural and gothic, which will be considered in the following chapters. Myths reflect the beauty of nature and primitive thought. Keats's major concern is explicitly with the truth of beauty and art, as he told to Fanny Brawne: "I have lov'd the principle of beauty in all things" (*Letters* 186, 468). Besides, the simplicity of nature, his readings of Elizabethan poetry, and his interest in visual arts stimulate the use of myth in his poetry. His imagination is attracted by the grandeur of the Middle Ages as well as the glory of the ancient Greeks. Most of his poetry is inspired by the past, the mysterious tales and the supernatural elements in them. Likewise, for Keats, ancient Greece and its objects, such as a Grecian urn, have a permanence that contrasts with the temporary nature of life. In ancient cultures, Keats sees the possibility of permanent artistic achievement. By employing these cultures and objects in his poetry, he tries to reach out the everlasting beauty, or truth, and make his works immortal. Thus, in most of his poems, he reaches the peak of his imaginative flights and when that fascination is over, he returns to his present state

and continues to live like the ordinary human beings with all the sorrows and joys of life.

Keats's endeavour to reach beauty and truth gives objectivity to his poetry. His passion for pursuing beauty both appeals to senses and leads one to meditate on the human condition, the unity of the miseries and joys of life. This quality of Keatsian poetry is expressed best in Keats's aesthetic theory of negative capability which distinguishes him from the other Romantics. Negative capability means the competence to objectively examine what is observed or experienced and to bring out something universal (Bate 243). Douglas Bush claims that Keats "alone among the Romantic poets, consciously strove to escape from self-expression into Shakespearean impersonality" (*Mythology* 81). He is likened to Shakespeare in the plainness and the objectivity in his nature interpretations; he is content with the nature as it is. It gives him a peculiar characteristic in his interpretation of myths, the supernatural and the gothic as well. Negative capability is expressed in his letter to his brothers written in 1817. He says:

It struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in literature & which Shakespeare possessed so enormously - I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact & reason. (*Letters* 32, 72)

The theory stems from the idea that through a lack of personality and tolerance to ambiguity the poet must negate himself to attain the "human agreement with reality" (Bate 243). The poet who is "in uncertainties" has no worry to categorise his object. Contradictory aspects of nature are received with no concern of personal identity. Therefore, he dislikes the kind of poetry "that has a palpable design upon us" (*Letters* 44, 96). In other words, poetry should not be a means of self-assertion. In this way, the poet "would make his way toward a comprehension of the Infinite by a self-forgetful observation of the finite" (Bernbaum 223). Poetry must come from a source which is enigmatic. The poet is the one who is totally content with the mystery and ambiguity of things in general. By transcending himself, he merges into his object through imagination. Hence, he yields to different experiences he may not be wholly aware. It can be understood by his strong wish to participate in the life and understanding of other

people, because as a poet, he must focus on the intuitive apprehension of the joys and pains of human existence.

“A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence; because he has no identity” says Keats in one of his letters (*Letters* 51, 108). Accordingly, negative capability is a kind of claim for receptivity and acceptance. For Keats, poetical character

has no self - it is every thing and nothing - It has no character - it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated - It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. [...] It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things any more than from its taste for the bright one; because they both end in speculation.” (*Letters* 93, 227-28)

The poet is longing to break through the narrow bonds of self. Only imagination can behold things as they really are, because it has the capacity to place the good and the evil in a harmonious whole. For him, it is the poetic identity, informed by negative capability, which has the power to see life as a whole. In a letter that dates to February 27, 1818, he states some of his principles on poetry as follows:

In Poetry I have a few Axioms, and you will see how far I am from their Centre. 1st I think Poetry should surprise by a fine excess and not by Singularity—it should strike the Reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear-almost a Remembrance — 2nd Its touches of Beauty should never be half way thereby [sic] making the reader breathless instead of content: the rise, the progress, the setting of imagery should like the Sun come natural natural [sic] too him — shine over him and set soberly although in magnificence leaving him in the Luxury of twilight — but it is easier to think what Poetry should be than to write it — and this leads me on to another axiom. That if Poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree it had better not come at all. (*Letters* 51, 108)

So, the poet’s negating his identity enables him to take part in every experience of imagination. He accepts human nature, with its joy and melancholy because anything felt with intensity is true and beautiful. Apart from this, it enables one to accept the mysteries of life without trying to put them in rational precepts. The poet should be able to write on subjects, which cannot be resolved by reason, by leaving his own views

unknown. Essentially Keats means that he wants his consciousness to become one with nature. With a direct contact with nature and the rest of the world, Keats appreciates the beauty of the unknown without the restrictive rules of the mundane world.

Throughout his poetic career, Keats sought to develop his skills as a poet and advance his poetical concepts. His poems are products of rapid development as his personal and poetic approach underwent changes. In his earliest poems, he predicted that he must one day desert the realm “Of Flora, and old Pan” to “find the agonies, the strife Of human hearts” (“Sleep and Poetry” 103, 124). He begins his career as a dreamer, then moves towards reality with an expression of the unity of what is earthly and ideal. One of the prominent characteristics of this is his movement out of the world of illusion into the world of reality. It can be argued that in his poems of 1817, Keats is trying to find a way out of the everyday experience to construct another world for himself. In his earlier poems, he associates classical myth with poetry and nature; through nature and art one can transcend human limitations. He becomes detached from his surroundings in *Endymion*, searching a way out of the earthly realm. However, his early desire to attain a transcendental beauty or truth through imagination is “eventually subdued and chastened by a sober acceptance of the human condition” (Bush, *John Keats* 15). As Thorpe also states, “the poet must still fly to his dream world, but in his flight he does not escape reality; rather he carries [it] with him” (*The Mind* 94). Without a relation to humanity, creative imagination is nothing but fancy, which leads to disappointment and delusion. Accordingly, it can be said that Keats gradually comes to realise that knowledge and experience are the basic tenets and advocates of creativity and poetic truth. His facing the reality and moving towards the real world is explicit in his “Ode on Melancholy” and “To Autumn,” through which he seems to accept the human life as it is.

The process of poetic growth is fundamental to Keats’s poetry. His five odes, written between March and September 1819, are thought to be the best representative poems of his creative art (Sperry, *Keats* 291). His personal feelings, his delight in nature, sorrow for the transience of beautiful things and his joy in the immortality of art dominate his

odes. As Bernbaum indicates, the odes are “exactly suited to express the temper of Keats, his high seriousness, his meditateness, his leisurely and caressing manner of approaching a thought, and his fondness for developing and enriching it with abundance of concrete imagery” (232). In these poems, revealing almost all his poetic aspects and approaches, he is at the height of his poetic development. In terms of mingling the mythological and classical themes with the Romantic spirit, these poems are the proof of his poetic development. Besides, the odes are the examples of Keats’s appeal to the senses; the five senses are involved in experience leading to the production of art. All of the characteristics of Keatsian poetry, his understanding of beauty and truth, the transience of human life in time, medievalism, Hellenism, negative capability, the romantic touch and images of nature can be found in the odes that are the final destinations of Keats’s poetic growth.

Romanticism affected all aspects of human thought. Romantic poetry was written under the influence of the social, philosophical and literary changes. With the rise of concepts like individualism, idealism, and consequently imagination, Wordsworth and Coleridge, and in a later generation, Byron, Shelley, Keats discussed the imaginative creation as the most crucial aspect of writing poetry. Among them, Keats is the one who devoted his life to beauty and truth. His letters, addressed to the friends and close relatives, provide the reader with a proof of his concept of poetry. Accordingly, for him, imagination is truth because its power enables one to go beyond appearance to grasp reality. For Keats, man, though dwelling in a finite world, through his revelatory imagination, has the power to discern and experience the infinite and mysterious (Bernbaum 326). What imagination creates through poetic creativity comes from human heart and nature. These creations take place in abstract forms. For that reason, Keats uses ancient Greek myths, supernatural and gothic figures in which he finds the mysterious elements in the world.

This thesis aims to study Keats’s idea of poetry and his attaining beauty through use of myths, the supernatural and the gothic in his imaginary, yet real, realms. Keats’s poetry, which is the most profound reflection of his aesthetic ideas, is an embodiment of his vision of beauty that he sees everywhere in nature, in art, in the supernatural and in the

fascinating tales of ancient Greece. Thus, the first chapter of this study analyses Keats's works in which mythology is employed in the light of his poetic principles. His major works *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, *The Fall of Hyperion*, and the related odes which reflect his concept of imagination are examined. In the second chapter, *Isabella*, "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," *Lamia*, *The Eve of Saint Agnes* are analysed to illustrate Keats's use of supernatural and gothic figures. While examining the poems, Keats's poetic development is also emphasised. Besides, Keats's letters through which he reveals his deepest feelings about art and life are used to comment on certain aspects of the poems under consideration.

CHAPTER I

KEATS AND THE USE OF MYTHS

O latest born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy! ("Ode to Psyche" 24-25)

Psyche seems to be a particularly appropriate symbol that can be associated with Keats when his relation to his age is taken into consideration. Psyche came into godhead too late just like Keats, who, as the youngest of the Romantics, was appreciated late. As previously mentioned, Keats's education had no grounding in Greek language and culture. This is the major cause of the attacks directed against his poetry. However, his use of myths is founded not on the basis of classical education but on imagination. It is with this imaginative faculty that he creates a realm shaped by the beauty of nature and crowded by nymphs, deities, and other supernatural beings.

When Keats's poems are studied, one of the most outstanding themes is the function of poetic imagination and its working through myths. In Bush's words, "into myth Keats put his deepest questionings of himself, of art, and of the world" (*Mythology* 527). In his mythological poems, his ideas of beauty and truth, function of poetry, and the dichotomy of permanence of art and transience of beauty in human life are found. Therefore, before the analysis of his use of myths, it is necessary to explain the sources of Keats's interest in mythology.

Aske asserts that "[t]he point is that Keats did not need to learn Greek — perhaps, in the end, he did not even want to" (34). Keats created a personal use of myths in his works inspired from art objects and literary texts. Aske further claims that

the question of Keats's ignorance of ancient Greek is, then, a false problem, and it seems misleading to argue, as a recent critic has done, that Keats was impeded by the fact that he hankered after classical legend yet never troubled to master Latin, Greek and the reading in mythology that should go with it. (35)

Although his lack of classical education is regarded as a disadvantage in Keats's age, Aske argues the opposite. In Keats's poems, antiquity emerges from the poet's encounter with literary texts. The use of Greek mythology was already familiar to him, and widely valued in the literature of the time. In the Romantic period, as Stern claims, "together with an enthusiasm for Greek ruins there is the conception of ancient Greece as an Arcadia where life was ideal because it was primitive, simple, and idyllic. Ancient Greece becomes the symbol of liberty and happiness" (Stern 4). Thus, one of the distinguishing characteristics of especially the second generation of the Romantic poets is the inspiration which they find in the contemplation of Greece and its remains. It is a world proposing a joyful alternative to the repressive contemporary society. In other words, the Romantic idealism finds its expression in ancient culture, especially in mythology. The use of myths enables him to reflect his concept of beauty and creative imagination. The major preoccupation of Keatsian poetry is the disappointment with the temporariness of beauty. It is a quality expressed in his "Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds," where he says he is "sick" at the thought of the "eternal fierce destruction" which prevails in nature, where "the greater on the less feeds evermore." (95-99). As Shackford observes,

[L]acking technical instruction in Greek, he devoted his energy to attaining the knowledge that would be a substitute for formal training. The appeal which Greek life made to him was not factitious or merely visionary. For him, the remote past was a world of idealism, of escape out of the petty and tiring days of London. (49)

In his attempt to get out of the world which is devoid of beauty, and enter into mythical realms, Keats imagines a world in which nature preserves its joy. Deriving inspiration from Greek literature, he turns repeatedly to ancient Greece where life has the serene, ideal beauty with eternal youth of the figures. For him, this world is a pure one, free from the vulgarity of the contemporary life. In his hands, myths become sources of creating realms of which limits are extended by his imagination.

There are aesthetic reasons for Keats's attraction to Greek mythology. Watson emphasises that "[Keats's] code book is not the Bible but classical myths, and legends,

then the earlier English poets, and especially Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton; then his contemporaries, especially Wordsworth and Coleridge” (“Keats” 84). Admiration of Greek mythology has always been the sign of an accomplished poet; Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser all used mythical figures in their poetry (Ryan 263). Accordingly, it can be said that Keats’s preoccupation with Greek mythology goes hand in hand with his admiration for the poets of the earlier times that also made use of mythological elements. The mythological themes were made possible by the prevalence of materials in the cultural connotations of his experience, and by the age itself (McFarland, *The Masks* 77).

Brotmarkle argues that “many of [Keats’s] poems point to an allegory of the [i]magination as the reigning monarch of all the arts throughout history, so that poems celebrating art, celebrate the [i]magination, though indirectly, as well” (107). In this sense, the literary works, especially those of Spenser highly influenced Keats’s poetry. Ian Jack highlights that Keats’s reading of *The Faerie Queene* is one of the most important influences directing his imagination towards the mythology of Greece. “*The Faerie Queene* made it inevitable that Keats should associate poetry with classical mythology, as with fairy land” (119). In other words, like Spenser, Keats creates both real and imaginary realms in which myth and poetry are used as inseparable parts of a whole. Furthermore, Bush also indicates that “Spenser, more than any other English poet had equated poetry and myth, had used myth for both decoration and symbol” (*Mythology* 85). Similarly, it could be argued that Keats views mythological elements as a part of ancient poetry. The creative faculty of imagination is best expressed in those art works, especially literary ones. Keats uses myths as the representations of human experience and beauty. It is best expressed in the use of natural objects in his poetry. In most of his poems Keats identifies mythical figures with nature. Furthermore, he treats natural objects as mythical figures through personification. He provides them with characteristics of human nature. In his poetry, myths and legends are an expression in imaginative terms of “the goings-on of the universe, of the natural forms and forces it contains and of their relations” (Blackstone 134).

The other source of inspiration Keats's Hellenism comes from is the artworks. The influence of painting or sculpture leads him to the world of the myths. In *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry*, Douglas Bush claims that "[n]o English poet has drawn more authentic inspiration from sculpture, painting, and literature, all of which are a part of 'life', than Keats" (87). Keats knew antique art only through books, such as the Musée Napoléon, and particularly, through frequent visits to the British Museum. Keats's friend Haydon became very influential on Keats's enchantment with art and Hellenic culture. As Haydon was profoundly interested in the Elgin Marbles, classical Greek sculptures, he supported the bringing of the marbles from Greece (Jack 35). Ian Jack states that "Haydon took Keats to see the Marbles on the 1st or 2nd of March 1817, and he must have heard endless talk on the subject in Haydon's painting room" (36). He was always urging Keats to nourish his imagination on paintings, works of sculpture, faces and attitudes, and above all on the scenes of external nature (42). It is probable that Haydon's enthusiasm for the marbles influenced Keats's sonnet "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles," written shortly after his visit to the British Museum with Haydon in March 1817, which shows his view of the Greek art as ideal. With regard to this, Shackford claims that

[t]he hours spent in the British Museum studying the Elgin marbles under the expert guidance of Joseph Severn and of Benjamin Haydon, (the man who had done most to interpret them to the British public), reacted powerfully upon the poet. The freedom and natural expressiveness of Greek life were visibly outlined in the figures of horsemen, old men, burden bearers, blithe maidens, and other worshippers going to do reverence to Athena and her guests, those gods whose stately presences form the east frieze of the Parthenon. The buoyant energy of life depicted there, the absorption in the immediate occupation, the sense of grave and lofty musings regarding men's relation to the gods all contributed to make Keats understand the spirit of classicism. (49)

Besides, his study of the visual arts is helpful for Keats to paint pictures in his mind through imagination. The grandeur of the mythological world suggested by the marbles shows the poet's personal and historical restrictions; his mortality. He is affected by the fact that these marbles belong to a distant past. Thus, art objects not only strengthen his visual imagery but also make him aware of the history, and the world that creates them.

Through reading, and a thirst for knowledge, Keats became acquainted with Greek culture. From all these elements which strengthened his adoration of the beautiful, he established the principle: beauty is truth. In a way, mythological figures and stories are vehicles for Keats in his search for beauty and truth. He founded the basis of his own aesthetic theory with the value he attached to art objects, history and Greek myths. For Keats, to attain truth was to concentrate on more than meets the eye; and beauty was an elevated concept that could be perceived through the power of imagination. Among his first poems, “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer,” published in 1816, promises his future power in showing what was most glorious in ancient life and literature. The Renaissance poet, George Chapman’s translation paved the way for Keats’s entry into the world of “Romantic Hellenism” and for expressing his understanding of beauty and truth (McFarland, *The Masks* 9). In the poem, Keats says:

Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow’d Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold. (5-8)

With regard to Keats’s admiration for Homer, Aske states that “[t]he name Homer represents the most privileged site of the beautiful mythology of Greece – the ‘pure serene’ of an origin” (42). For Keats, he is the model without a rival. To express his respect towards the ancient poets by whom he was influenced greatly, Keats says he has “travell’d” in the “realms of gold” (“On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” 1), exploring classical literature. He has visited “many goodly states and kingdoms” (2), including the “western islands” (3) where poets pledge their loyalty to Apollo, the god of poetry; yet he has only been “told” of “one wide expanse” (5) where “deep-brow’d Homer ruled” (6). Keats’s early works are characterised by Bates as “a poetry about trying to write poetry” (70). According to Keats, the old poets have a realm of gold to which he is obliged to travel; it is a quest to encounter with the muse. Similarly, in “Sleep and Poetry” he implies his wish to be a great poet:

O Poesy! for thee I hold my pen
That am not yet a glorious denizen

Of thy wide heaven — Should I rather kneel
 Upon some mountain-top until I feel
 A glowing splendour round about me hung. (47-51)

References to ideal realms become a means of expression while he is narrating his desire to become a great poet. He is overwhelmed by the antique culture, and he wants to be a glorious denizen in that kingdom which seems to be an ideal world far removed from the actual. The specific passion in this poem is “a longing for completion of his poetic vocation, striking an anxious balance between envisioned fulfillment and realized lack of fulfillment” (Gerlach 32). As he also shows in the lines “My spirit is too weak — mortality / Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep” (1-2) of sonnet “On Seeing Elgin Marbles,” he is an aspiring poet with the desire to become one of those inhabitants of “realms of gold.” This can be regarded as his expression of desire to take part in literary history. Through Chapman’s translation of Homer, Keats comes to know these unknown realms. In this sense, Keats’s dealing with mythology or the ancient culture is related with the poetic creativity and poetry itself.

The materials of Keats’s imagination with which he shapes his poetic realms are drawn from the natural objects as well. In a letter to Richard Woodhouse, Keats writes: “The Sun, the Moon, the Sea and Men and Women who are creatures of impulse are poetical and have about them an unchangeable attribute” (*Letters* 93, 228). These are his materials and sources of inspiration to create greater states of mind. Likewise, his delight in observing nature is a fundamental aspect of his poetry. Sperry states that “poetry originates for Keats in a contemplation of the natural world and in a full awareness of the various sense impressions it affords” (*Keats* 30). The natural world inspires his poetic invention. The link between myths and the beauties of nature is his basic source of inspiration; all the tales of Psyche, Endymion, Cynthia spring from his delight in nature. Thus, his poetry arises from a sense of external reality. In his “Epistle to George Felton Mathew,” he refers to nature in mythological figures. In other words, he tries to see miraculous happenings in the workings of nature:

[...] I am oft in doubt whether at all

I shall again see Phoebus in the morning:
 Or flush'd Aurora in the roseate dawning!
 Or a white Naiad in a rippling stream; (20-23)

Brotemarkle regards this poem as a product of the poet's imagination which is created through mind's interaction with nature (115). Keats uses Phoebus, Aurora, Naiad as the symbols of joys of nature and poetry. In his own words, nature provides him with the "Wings to find out an immortality" ("Sleep and Poetry"). With the perception and contemplation of the beauty of these objects "he becomes detached from his surroundings, [...] and visions of human form appear, until presently his imagination takes wing, and poetic creation is accomplished" (Thorpe, *The Mind* 50). Thus, poetic imagination is not irrelevant to reality; it takes its essence from the awareness of the actual world. In his poems, imagination acts as a primary medium to turn the concrete material and sensory qualities found in nature into existences in the ideal realms.

The first poem of 1817 collection, "I Stood tip-toe," which was titled *Endymion* until Keats decided to write a long poem on that subject, contains a passage on the origin of mythology. In the poem, the scene presents a variety of natural objects for "the greediest eye, / To peer about upon variety" (14-15). The dew on the buds forms "starry diadems / Caught from the early sobbing of the morn" (6-7). In relation to Keats's use of images from nature and mythology, Sperry argues that

[p]oetry, as Keats proceeds to develop the idea in "I Stood Tip-toe," originates in mythology, for the images and stories of myth are poetry in its most primitive state — the product of that imaginative vitalization (basically personification) of natural forms and situations all men are in certain moods led to experience. (*Keats* 82)

The figures and happenings he draws from nature are used to explain human experience. As will be studied in Keats's major poems, the poet uses a common pattern in which he begins depicting nature, then departs from it, goes on creating imaginary figures with ideal qualities in imaginary realms out of it, and finally having had experience, he returns to the actual world again. As the poem proceeds, the natural landscape turns into an imaginary one:

I gazed awhile, and felt as light, and free
 As though the fanning wings of Mercury
 Had play'd upon my heels: I was light-hearted,
 And many pleasures to my vision started; ("I Stood tip-toe" 23-26)

This is the essence of Keatsian poetry; he desires a transcendental flight; a visionary experience. He wishes to fly from the earthly realms to the ones that "will encompass spiritual experience without denying physical" (Dickstein 48). Through this flight imaginative knowledge is achieved that brings about the act of creation. Keats puts his ideas and feelings about human life by evoking shapes and actions of natural objects to represent them symbolically. He personifies nature throughout the poem; the buds have "a modest pride" (3) just like human beings; swarms of minnows "show their little heads, / Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams" (72-3). All these natural beauties make the mind of the poet "hover till it dozes" (108). The feelings or sensations perceived from nature and art objects are accumulated and combined by the imagination in order to create. Furthermore, Keats uses this relationship of nature and mythological figures in expressing his poetic aspirations. He depicts the poetic scheme in his mind in his poem "Sleep and Poetry." It is an example of his preoccupation with the nature of imaginative experience:

For ten years, that I may overwhelm
 Myself in poesy; so I may do the deed
 That my own soul has to itself decreed (96-98)
 [.....]
 [...] First the realm I'll pass
 Of Flora, old Pan: sleep in the grass,
 Feed upon apples red, and strawberries, (101-103)

First the realms of Flora and old Pan, the pleasures of nature occupy his lines. Then, he is summoned by a "nobler life" (123) where he can find the "agonies, the strife of human hearts" (124-5). These lines imply Keats's progress through various realms as will be seen in *Endymion*. In the realm of Flora and old Pan he aspires to ascend from the beauties of nature, from pleasures of the sense to the agonies, the sorrow of human hearts, deeper mysteries of life and experiences of the soul. He will renounce himself from the indulgence of fancy for the contemplation of human life as it is. Sperry claims

that Keats “could find in the origins of mythology [...] a precedent sufficient to account for that spontaneous emergence of natural forms under the pressure of the imagination into images of human relevance and truth.” (*Keats* 88). Keats forms this relation between mythology and human experience by uniting the joys with grief; imaginary realm with the earthly realm. Therefore, the common theme of his mythological poems is the speaker’s process of development and in the end his coming to learn that the ideal is attainable “only through immediate sympathetic experience of the real” (Wigod, “The Meaning” 787).

Keats’s longest poem *Endymion: A Poetic Romance*, which is also the most attacked, is an allegorical quest for ideal beauty. The poem is not only a revival of an ancient myth but also a “subjective and personal appropriation of that myth” (Dickstein 55). In this poem, as a poet who strictly believes in the truth of imagination, Keats brings together the mythological figures and his concept of imagination. The narrative shaping the poem is the story of Endymion and Cynthia, the love of the moon-goddess, Diana, and the shepherd prince, Endymion. Keats’s major concern in dealing with the Endymion myth is the nature of poetic creation, because Endymion’s quest symbolises the poet’s pursuit of beauty. As Barnard states, “*Endymion*’s mythological figures and inset stories are vehicles for Keats’s exploration of beauty and truth, and an attempt to recreate [...] the ‘beautiful mythology’ the Greeks had drawn from nature” (51). In other words, in Keats’s hands, the tale of the love of the Greek shepherd-prince and the moon-goddess turns into a tale of the poetic soul trying to reach out the ideal beauty. The myth becomes a means of expressing his sensuous love of nature and his yearning for transcending the actual realm.

The poem is marked by mythological figures in an idealised landscape as the sources of creative inspiration. Endymion lives in Latmos, a heavenly place. The scene is crowded with little children, a company of shepherds, damsels and priests. They gather around an altar and pray to Pan, god of shepherds and flocks. It is a world that is alive, filled with trees, mountains and river. Regarding Latmos, Dickstein states that “everything about this land exudes a mythical fruitfulness and richness. A perfect though secret reciprocity

exists between the earth and the vegetation” (70). Latmos evokes a mythical realm of “simple times” (*Endymion* I. 171). With Latmos, Keats launches the first step of describing nature before an imaginary journey:

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
 Its loveliness increases; it will never
 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
 Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
 Of all the unhealthy and o’er-darkened ways
 Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
 Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon. (1-14)

He lists the beauties from which his imagination is inspired to create an ethereal existence that stands for perfection and immortality. Besides, he points out the permanence and transience of things; the ideal world is a refuge for “sweet dreams, health and quite breathing; while the other one cannot preserve these things forever. These things of beauty are means for people to endure their mortal destiny. In his letter to Haydon on May 1817, Keats mentions what inspires him the most: “Looking upon the Sun the Moon the Stars, the Earth and its contents as materials to form greater things — that is to say ethereal things” (*Letters* 15, 31). With the poetic imagination these natural objects are turned into greater things. In his idealised realm, these “thing[s] of beauty” are endowed with timelessness:

With the green world they live in; and clear rills
 [.....]
 All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
 An endless fountain of immortal drink,
 Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink. (I. 16; 22-24)

Here he moves from the physical realm of nature to the imaginary realm of poetry. Thus, as his letter indicates, the ethereal or the ideal is depicted as dependent upon the real.

In his creation of the ideal realms, Keats frequently uses the imagery of light and brightness. For Keats, the image of light is closely associated with the sources of beauty. He employs it while he is describing the ideal realms with mythological figures, his poetic aspirations, or natural objects. In the preface of the poem Keats states: "I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness." He identifies the theme of light with Greek mythology and as McFarland comments, "the whole point of *Endymion* is to garner the Apollonian brightness of Greek mythology" (*The Masks* 87). Apollo, as the god of light and poetry, holds a great place in Keats's poems. The sun, or light in general, symbolises the higher existence, the ideal realm. In "I Stood tip-toe" he says:

Open afresh your round of starry folds,
Ye ardent marigolds!
Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,
For great Apollo bids
That in these days your praises should be sung. (47-51)

Apollo's name connotes the realms of gold which is associated with the sun and light. Similarly, his "Ode to Apollo" begins with the following lines:

In thy western halls of gold,
When thou sittest in thy state, (1-2)
[.....]
With fervor seize their adamantine lyres,
Whose chords are solid rays, and twinkle radiant fires. (5-6)

McFarland suggests that the vision which is rendered by Apollo is of security, calmness and brightness (*The Masks* 90). Furthermore, the god has a life-giving quality. Apollo is the bringer of light, sun and morning in *Endymion*:

And so the dawned light in pomp receive.
 For 'twas the morn: Apollo's upward fire
 Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
 Of brightness (I. 95-97)
 [.....]
 It was a jasmine bower, all bestrown
 With golden moss. His every sense had grown
 Ethereal. (II. 270-73)

The association of the imagery of light with beauty can be found in Keats's concept of ethereal things. As stated before, it is included to the category of the purest elements. In his letter to his brother Tom, Keats mentions adding the beauty of nature "which is harvested from these grand materials" to "etherial existence" (*Letters* 72, 157). Regarding Keats's use of the terms ethereal and material, it can be said that this transformation forms the essence of poetic creativity, which will be further illustrated in the analysis of the proceeding poems.

The "Hymn to Pan," between the lines 232-306 of the first book of *Endymion*, is equally noteworthy in terms of exemplifying Keats's use of mythical figures. A group of shepherds and girls chant the "Hymn to Pan" as Pan is magnified by extensive description of his characteristics. He is the god of shepherds, fruition, plenitude and natural process, and here he is celebrated as the god of sensual beauty.

O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles
 Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,
 What time thou wanderest at eventide
 Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side
 Of thine enmossed realms: O thou, to whom
 Broad leaved fig trees even now foredoom
 Their ripen'd fruitage; yellow girted bees
 Their golden honeycombs; our village leas
 Their fairest-blossom'd beans and popped corn; (I. 247-55).

Garrod argues that "Pan is, in fact, the symbol of romantic imagination, concrete in a thousand objective shapes, the very life itself of 'sensations rather than thoughts'" (qtd. in Bush, *Mythology* 102). The gathering of the forest inhabitants around Pan's altar (89-

231) evokes the simplicity and beauty of this world which is quite different from the dominant values of the contemporary society. It is a pastoral world with a physical quality which gives animation and life to existence. Pan is often represented as a goatman and a musician playing on the pan-pipes of reed which is associated with a myth Ovid used in his *Metamorphoses*. According to the myth, Syrinx, a nymph pursued by Pan, asks for help from her sister nymphs and is turned into a bunch of reeds, out of which Pan made his famous Pan-flute. Keats mentions the story in “I Stood tip-toe:”

Telling us how fair, trembling Syrinx fled
Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.
Poor nymph,- poor Pan,- how he did weep to find,
Nought but a lovely sighing of the wind
Along the reedy stream; a half-heard strain,
Full of sweet desolation- balmy pain. (157-63)

Pan loses the nymph but the musical instrument substitutes her. His beloved’s metamorphosis turns Pan into a kind of poet who makes music on a pipe. Therefore, Pan becomes an important figure in terms of music and poetry like Apollo, the god of poetry and music whom Keats deals with in *Hyperion* fragments.

Beside the idealisation of the perfect harmony in nature, there is an unexplored side of that nature. Its mystery is embodied by Pan:

O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth hang
From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;
Who lov’st to see the hamadryads dress
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken;
And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken
The dreary melody of bedded reeds -
In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth; (I. 232-41)

In these lines, “eternal whispers,” “glooms,” “desolate places,” and “strange overgrowth” imply the part of nature beyond human reach. In Dickstein’s words, “Pan

is seen as presiding over the very sources of being, the fundamental rhythms of existence. [...] Keats sees these essential rhythms as a kind of somnolence, for sleep in *Endymion* is frequently linked with access to transcendent knowledge” (73). Just like the unattainable realms, to which Endymion attains through sleep, nature, embodied by Pan, has an exotic life in itself. Thus, for the Latmians, he is the “opener of the mysterious doors / Leading to universal knowledge” (I, 288-9). This again refers to the essence of Keatsian poetic concept: like the joys and grief of human experience, there are familiar and unfamiliar aspects of nature. According to Sperry, Pan represents at most a tendency, a kind of thought that is only

latent, as ‘a touch ethereal’ throughout the universe of natural life. He remains inscrutable, something ‘unimaginable,’ precisely because he is too diverse and inexhaustible in his implications ever to be perfectly defined or brought to full ‘conception.’ (*Keats* 98)

He is a mysterious figure in that he is a source of an endless discovery. Likewise, Endymion, as a mortal being, is bound to earth, but as a poet he is eager to “drink the nature of the soil” (“Sonnet to Spenser” 11), and he desires an imaginative flight to learn the mysteries of the universe. In this sense, he is different from the Latmians. Pan can be taken as a symbol for the poet but Endymion does not attend to the rituals of the Latmians who “come to pay their vows” (I. 291) to Pan. As Dickstein argues,

[t]he Latmians are content with a static, sacramental relation to Pan. [...] they seek him through ritual, perform a homage which leaves his mystery and their innocent intact. Endymion’s mission, however, [...] is certainly different from the Latmians’ relation to Pan. Endymion’s quest leads toward understanding rather than ritual. (74)

Endymion aspires to reach the secret essence of the universe. He seeks a transformation; he prefers to discover the unknown rather than a worship to the unknown. For Keats, a true poet must learn the essence of the universe through the perception of beauty. In “Sleep and Poetry” he mentions his vision of his poetic development. First he has to pass through sensuous poetry which he calls the realm of Flora and old Pan, then he will go on with a nobler one inspired by the vision of Apollo. Therefore, Keats illustrates the

transformation of true poet through Apollo, a genuine figure of ideal poet as this study will further illustrate below.

Since “a thing of beauty” gives eternal joy, Keats chooses a goddess to represent this beauty. Cynthia, also called Phoebe, sister of Phoebus (Apollo), represents light and brilliance. In Book I, Endymion, like a poet in search of truth and beauty, removes himself from the earthly festival of nature and tells his sister that he longs for his immortal lover. He spiritually withdraws himself from the worship of Pan; he takes no part in festivities and pays no heed to the actual world around him. When compared to his beloved, Endymion believes “all the pleasant hues / Of heaven and earth” (1:691) fade. His sister Peona, as a representative of realist-philosopher, wants Endymion to give up his commitment to his imaginative experiences:

[...] The Morphean fount
 Of that fine element that visions, dreams,
 And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams
 Into its airy channels with so subtle,
 So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,
 Circled a million times within the space
 Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a trace,
 A tinting of its quality: how light
 Must dreams themselves be; seeing they're more slight
 Than the mere nothing that engenders them!
 Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem
 Of high and noble life with thoughts so sick?
 Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick
 For nothing but a dream? [...] (I. 747-60)

She believes that it is futile to go after dreams or retreat into imagination. As a shepherd prince, Endymion neglects his role of leading his people. His belief in attaining truth by his visionary pursuits is challenged by his sister. However, his visions are not sufficient yet; he

[...] must wander far
 In other regions, past the scanty bar
 To mortal steps, before [he] canst be ta'en
 From every wasting sigh, (II. 123-25)

In fact, Endymion is not wrong for thinking that beauty resides in the abstract or the ethereal world; he is just wrong for not seeing that it has also a constant presence in the ordinary world. He is desolate because he does not realise the interrelationship between the real and the ideal. Since he attempts to apprehend ideal beauty away from the real, he only attaches value on the ethereal realm. Nevertheless, for Keats, a poet must seek the attainment of true poetic creativity which involves gaining knowledge through pain and suffering. He should move from selfhood to expand his poetic sensibilities so that he can perceive the unity of all things; the universality of human experience. During all his wanderings, Endymion will learn the value of the earthly realm and understand that his ideal may be found in human experience. Therefore, it can be suggested that Endymion's isolation from the rest of his society displays his self-interest. It is only through an identification of himself with the sufferings of the others that he will be able to attain what he desires.

Until he reaches ideal beauty, Endymion must gain experience of joy and sorrow. He seems pale, alienated from his fellows due to his pursuit of the ideal, so Keats calls him "Brain-sick shepherd-prince" (II.43). The evanescent quality of his vision of Cynthia grieves his heart. Cynthia says:

Endymion: woe! woe! is grief contain'd
 In the very deeps of pleasure, my sole life? -
 Hereat, with many sobs, her gentle strife
 Melted into a languor. He return'd
 Entranced vows and tears. (II. 823-27)

Keats believes that "pleasure is oft a visitant; but pain / lings cruelly to us" (I. 906-7). Similarly in the fourth book, sorrow is presented as a part of experience of beauty. He sees human life as a whole; united in joy and grief, as will be seen in *Hyperion*. The crucial issue here is Keats's identification with Endymion. Like Endymion, he learned "to endure the anxiety of isolation — the loneliness of the long-distance runner — and, toward the end, the possibility of failure" (Ward 60).

However, as Endymion gets experienced he will see that the struggles of imagination are evasive. They are fragile and transient most of the time:

[...] like a spark
 That needs must die, although its little beam
 Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream
 Fell into nothing — into stupid sleep. (I.675-78)

This elusiveness of Endymion's dream of heavenly goddess makes him dissatisfied with the present reality. His dream leaves him in despair and loneliness. To attain his ideal love, without knowing that she is Diana, he sets off. In his dream the goddess comes to him from the sky, from a well, and in a cave, therefore, he is to search for her in the regions of earth, water, and air. In fact, it is a quest that involves the spiritual development necessary for Endymion, who is the poetic soul in love with the principle of beauty, to learn the secrets of life. With regard to Endymion's quest, Barnard suggests that "in addition to knowledge of the universe, empathy with human pain, and a final commitment to earthly life, are essential to Endymion's simultaneous assumption of poethood and godhead" (36). Hence, Endymion will meet some mythological figures; on his long way to development, he will learn to sympathise with the sufferings of the other lovers. As in the depths of the earth he comes across with lovers whose stories teach him maturity.

In the second book, first he encounters Venus and Adonis — a pairing of mortal and immortal — a similar couple to Endymion and his immortal beloved. Here Cupid relates the story of Venus and Adonis to Endymion. Their story is parallel to the Endymion-Cynthia story, for just as mortal Endymion loves immortal Cynthia, so immortal Venus loves mortal Adonis and therefore, she prophesies success for Endymion. Venus, the goddess of beauty, aims to unite Endymion and his beloved but she disappears without revealing the beloved's identity; she just says: "Endymion! one day thou wilt be blest" (II. 573). Then Endymion meets Alpheus, the river god, who searches for Arethusa on his journey. Arethusa is one of Diana's huntresses, and since she vowed chastity their union is impossible. When Endymion meets the lovers, he

begins to sympathise with them, and prays for their happiness. In this way, he accepts the various dimensions of life, the mystery of life with a realisation of human suffering. He says:

But this is human life: the war, the deeds,
The disappointment, the anxiety,
Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,
All human. (II. 153-56)

Since Keats endows these mythological figures with characteristics of human nature, he calls them "all human." Throughout his journey, with several adventures Endymion will learn to sympathise with others but he never forgets about his love. In the third book, wandering under the sea, he reflects how the moon has moved his heart since his childhood:

Yes, in my boyhood, every joy and pain
By thee were fashion'd to the self-same end;
And as I grew in years, still didst thou blend
With all my ardours: thou wast the deep glen;
Thou wast the mountain-top--the sage's pen--
The poet's harp--the voice of friends--the sun;
Thou wast the river--thou wast glory won;
Thou wast my clarion's blast--thou wast my steed--
My goblet full of wine--my topmost deed--
Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon! (II.160-69)

The moon goddess is the embodiment of all that is beautiful. She is presented as the source and the ideal symbol of all revelations of beauty. Endymion is enchanted by the moon as his words indicate: "And moonlight; aye, to all the mazy world / Of silvery enchantment!" (I. 460-61). She is not only beautiful but also associated with light, which illustrates Keats's common usage of light imagery and mythology. Brightness of the moon-goddess is pointed out:

[...] once more I rais'd
My sight right upward: but it was quite dazed
By a bright something, sailing down apace,
Making me quickly veil my eyes and face: (I. 600-3)

The moon is magnificent because she gives pleasure to him in her lunar manifestation; she is the ideal beauty. Yet as it is pointed out by Ford, “before he can be fully worthy of union with the absolute Beauty (Cynthia), it is assumed that he must demonstrate a concern for others’ happiness and purge away all selfishness” (“Endymion” 71). He must undertake an adventure in which he not only feels pity or sympathy with a human being but also participates actively in his rescue. Accordingly, in the third book, Endymion enters the region of undersea where he sees dead men’s bones, and wrecks. In such a ruined land, he meets Glaucus, a man who is cursed by old age. The moment he sees Endymion, Glaucus greets him joyfully, expecting him to be a deliverer from the curse which binds him. However, Endymion cannot endure the thought of being diverted from his own quest and rejects him. Then, Glaucus weeps, and Endymion, struck with remorse and pity, begins to sympathise with him. It indicates that the pity which Endymion felt in Book II for Adonis, Alpheus and Arethusa was not an accidental pity; it is a quality in Endymion’s nature by now:

Had he then wrong'd a heart where sorrow kept?
 [.....]
 He had indeed, and he was ripe for tears.
 The penitent shower fell, as down he knelt
 Before that careworn sage. (III. 283-89)

Glaucus tells Endymion his story. He was leading a quiet life as a fisherman and befriended with all sea-creatures until he fell in love with the sea-nymph Scylla and she feared and fled him. Then he asked the aid of the enchantress Circe, who trapped and made him her thrall. He was seduced by the sensual delights of Circe the “arbitrary queen of sense, and the “long love dream” (III. 440) turned to nightmare which led him to feel, like Endymion, “distemper’d longings” (III. 374). He found Scylla, killed by Circe; conveyed the body to a hall of burial under the sea where she and a multitude of drowned lovers still remain. Upon this, Circe condemned him to endure “Ten hundred years” (III. 597) of crippled existence under the sea. However, a magic scroll found by Glaucus, promised him the appearance of a youth who will be responsible for freeing Glaucus. Consequently, he, doomed by old age, begs Endymion to save him from his

cruel fate. Endymion helps to restore Glaucus back his youth and revives all the drowned lovers of the past and Scylla. The lost lovers who Endymion calls the 'beautiful multitude' (III. 818) is now free from oppression. Then they approach the palace of Neptune, the god of the sea, who presides on a throne between Venus and Cupid. Dance and revelry follow the blessing of the gods, and Endymion swoons.

Endymion's moving away from his own problems and reaching out other levels of understanding is parallel to Keats's doctrine of negative capability, which is the acceptance of life revealing good and ill as necessary and true. The encounter between Glaucus and Endymion and their subsequent mutual restoration through sympathy and friendship is a significant incident in terms of poetic development. On hearing Glaucus's tale, Endymion is able, for the first time, to genuinely sympathise with another: "Then, cried the young Endymion, overjoy'd, / We are twin brothers in this destiny!" (III. 712–13). With the friendship between them, therefore, Endymion breaks his isolation with real feelings of sorrow and joy, representing a marked change from his earlier position in Latmian society where he lives in seclusion without hearing others' problems.

In this adventure, he learns the mysteries of the different realms, sympathising with others. In this part of the poem, it is significant that Glaucus is also yearning for an unattainable love. He pursues the nymph Scylla, just like Alpheus pursues Arethusa. By freeing Glaucus from the chains of captivity, in a way Endymion rejects his self-centeredness and prepares himself for his meeting with the Indian maid, the symbol of human sorrow and suffering for whom, he is able to renounce immortal love. Apart from this, this selfless involvement is expressed with a note of deep joy:

The two deliverers tasted a pure wine
Of happiness, from fairy-press ooz'd out.
Speechless they eyed each other, and about
The fair assembly wander'd to and fro,
Distracted with the richest overflow
Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven. (III. 801-6)

These lines indicate that Endymion's involvement in helping to relieve the pain of others leads to spiritual recognition and hence points out the pathway to the ideal. The sorrowful isolation of Endymion is removed by this process of sympathy with other beings that provides relief and joy.

As he steadily progresses from the dreamer's naive quality towards the poet's recognition of the unity of the real and the ideal, Endymion reaches a stage in his quest which is vital for his own development. After all he experienced, he has awareness now of the joys and sorrows, thus he cannot return to his former state. In Dickstein's words, "[h]e will have to deal with his experience, with its darker as well as its lighter shades, with its grief as well as joys" (116). As Keats's negative capability indicates, the oneness of the real and the ideal necessitates the loss of self through sympathy with others' grief. Endymion needs a selfless task; therefore, the main action moves towards his full acceptance of the human world as it is.

In the fourth book, Endymion experiences the last step of his quest; now he has to learn that all his previous encounters, which seem to come between him and his pursuit, are actually encouragements to that pursuit. Endymion is to set off for the region of air but he falls in love with the Indian maid who sings a "Song of Sorrow." Only after listening to the maid's sorrowful song, he will declare himself ready to give up Cynthia and will dedicate himself to the maiden:

[...] Poor lady, how thus long
 Have I been able to endure that voice?
 Fair Melody! kind Syren! I've no choice;
 I must be thy sad servant evermore:
 I cannot choose but kneel here and adore.
 Alas, I must not think--by Phoebe, no! (IV. 298-303)

The appearance of the Indian maid, forces him to choose between actual human love and his dreams. He seems ready to align himself with the mundane world of the concrete reality represented by the Indian maid. She is a figure who embraces the actual and the ideal; the world of humanity with its joy and imperfection. She seems to live

with sorrow and welcome it. Her song implies the involvement of love and pain. She teaches Endymion a lesson in the interrelation of joy and grief, and he, recognising the reality of pain and sorrow embraces these feelings. In a letter to Bailey, Keats says:

I scarcely remember counting upon any Happiness—I look not for it if it be not in the present hour. [...] The first thing that strikes me on hearing a Misfortune having befallen another is this. ‘Well it cannot be helped.—he will have the pleasure of trying the resources of his spirit.’” (*Letters* 31, 69)

This notion of the necessity of experiencing happiness and sorrow is a significant concept Keats develops throughout his poetic career. Here Endymion’s voyage teaches him to value these feelings. Having found himself in love with both the Indian maid and Cynthia, Endymion feels both joy and pain. At this point, Mercury descends suddenly; touches the ground and two black horses rise through the ground. Upon the horses, when Endymion and the Indian maid are carried on an airy voyage, Endymion dreams and sees that the goddess he loves is Diana. He embraces the Indian maid as she sleeps; so the goddess disappears. Upon his choice of the Indian maid, the vision of the goddess is gone and he cries in misery because he feels true to both indeed. Furthermore, the Indian maid vanishes, too. After he loses both of his beloveds, he passes beyond the anguish, and this experience enables him to return to earth. He realises that he has undergone a spiritual transformation:

Can I prize thee, fair maid, till price above,
Even when I feel as true as innocence?
I do, I do.--What is this soul then? Whence
Came it? It does not seem my own, and I
Have no self-passion or identity. (IV. 473-77)

These lines also illustrate Keats’s concept of negative capability and the poet’s ascendance to the levels of non-identity. The imaginative genius is a selfless entity; for Keats “Men of Genius are great as certain ethereal Chemicals operating on the Mass of neutral intellect — but they have not any individuality, any determined Character” (*Letters* 31, 67). In this sense, Endymion needs to achieve this neutral quality before

reaching his goal of unity with the ideal. To explore this, when the maid fades from his sight, he comes into the Cave of Quietude:

[...] There lies a den,
Beyond the seeming confines of the space
Made for the soul to wander in and trace
Its own existence [...] (IV. 513-16)

Besides, he emphasises the fact that the cave cannot be discovered by everyone, “Just when the sufferer begins to burn, / Then it is free to him” (IV. 533-4). After he realises his poetic sensibility, he is able to establish a balance between the actual and the imaginary; so he is ready to apprehend the ideal beauty. When he returns to earth, he declares:

[...] to him
Who lives beyond earth’s boundary, grief is dim,
Sorrow is but a shadow: now I see
The grass; I feel the solid ground. (IV. 619-22)

Through suffering, Endymion has learnt the balance of joy and sorrow in the world. Indeed, this is a recurrent theme emphasised by Keats. In a letter to Reynolds, he states that “Sorrow is Wisdom” (*Letters* 64, 142). Endymion’s attaining this level of comprehension can be seen as an expression of Keats’s view of life. Endymion expresses his recognition as follows:

[...] I have clung
To nothing, lov'd a nothing, nothing seen
Or felt but a great dream!
Or felt but a great dream! O I have been
Presumptuous against love, against the sky,
Against all elements [...] (IV. 637-41)

He realises that in his quest he had nearly lost belief in the beauties of nature and human love. After his despair and self-reproach in the Cave of Quietude, he wakes up and finds the maiden beside him. Declaring his intention to live with her forever, he regrets his previous neglect of human and earthly values. However, she renounces him saying that

this joy is forbidden as she decides to serve Diana, the goddess of chastity. Upon this, Endymion, stunned with astonishment, after all he has gone through, decides to be a hermit. After the departure of the Indian maid, Keats presents Endymion as sunk in apathy. He decides not to take part in common pleasures of men and goes to Diana's temple to bid his last farewell to the Indian maid. There he witnesses that the Indian maid is Diana herself. In isolation, he feels that the two passions, for the ideal and the real, are inseparable:

[...] I did wed
 Myself to things of light from infancy;
 And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,
 Is sure enough to make a mortal man
 Grow impious. (IV. 957-61)

[.....]

At which that dark-eyed stranger stood elate
 And said, in a new voice, but sweet as love,
 To Endymion's amaze: By Cupid's dove,
 And so thou shalt! and by the lily truth
 Of my own breast thou shalt, beloved youth!
 And as she spake, into her face there came
 Light, as reflected from a silver flame:
 Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in display
 Full golden; in her eyes a brighter day
 Dawn'd blue and full of love. Aye, he beheld
 Phoebe, his passion! (IV. 977-87)

This is an important level of recognition; at first he sets off in quest for his beloved but then he attains higher values. Now that he gives up the pursuit of union with Cynthia, the actual rises into prominence, and the ideal within it can be discovered. Consequently, he accepts his mortality, and takes the maid's hand, and she transforms into Diana. When symbolically interpreted, this event shows that the things of the actual world, if perceived with higher reason, imagination, are one with the ideal. After his painful experiences, Endymion learns that his defeat is real victory. The first two books of the poem represent the realm of nature's pleasures received by the senses; the last two books show the sphere of human love and grief. The visionary yearnings cause heart-ache, but when Endymion experiences the actual love with the Indian maid, he understands that previously he loved an illusion. At the end, he understands the necessity of "A flowery band to bind us to earth" (I.7) to perceive the value and

appreciate the “glorious infinite” (I. 29). He is spiritualised through his experiences in the actual world and his relationships with humanity in this realm. Beauty is necessarily incorporated within the earthly realm. It is nature one sees around that prompts him to value the earthly realm. This is an important step for Keats’s poetic development and his attempt to reconcile his desires for transcendence with his awareness of the realities of human life.

Regarding the fourth book of the poem, in which the Indian maid is introduced, Sperry comments that, “Endymion is unexpectedly confronted with the choice between two quite different and opposing ideals of love — the one transcendent, ecstatic, and immortal; the other warm, earthly, and filled with the passion of the human heart” (*Keats* 109). With the union of these two seemingly opposite values, there is no ascension to the skies; there is just a balance between the ideal and the real; the immortal and the mortal. It is only by dreaming and idealising that he can learn to see beauty and love in the world of reality. The last stage of his journey is a return to the earthly realm and this is “the goal of consciousness” (II.282). He says, “There is no depth to strike in: I can see / Nought early worth my compassing” (II.161-2). He is willing to learn “the silent mysteries of earth” (II.214). Endymion’s experience is also parallel to Keats’s faith in affections of heart. The human heart is something sacred to him because it unites the spiritual with the physical; through heart, feelings, sentiments and passions of man unite him with the physical world. Endymion recognises that the attainable pleasures of the world offer more than those pleasures that remain beyond the grasp of humans. His experiences allow him to participate in the process of living reality. In this sense, the maid’s transformation into Cynthia suggests that the human acceptance of earthly beauty leads to immortality, thus linking Endymion’s story to the concept introduced in the poem’s first line. Hence, in the end, with the discovery of the ideal in the actual, the quest for transcendence finishes in nature again.

The bower imagery used in the poem is worth mentioning. The bowers form a parallel to Keats’s view of poetry in that the first two bowers provide Endymion a refuge from the difficulty of his quest like Keats’s earlier poems of *Flora* and *old Pan* display a

happy pastoral world. On the other hand, last two bowers prepare a ground for the transformation and maturity of Endymion, like Keats's later poems show his transformation as a poet who faces reality of the actual world. In the first book, Peona takes Endymion to "a bowery island" (I. 428) which allows him to reveal the visions that cast him into melancholy. Here, the image of bower is a part of nature which is the source of mythology for Keats. The bower links him to nature; a world of refreshing sleep through which he is "calm'd to life again" (I. 464). It is a paradise-like place described as follows:

[...] great key
 To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
 Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,
 Echoing grottos, full of tumbling waves
 And moonlight; aye, to all the mazy world
 Of silvery enchantment! [...] (I. 456-61)

Accordingly, this still life is associated with beauty in the opening lines of *Endymion*: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever [...] A bower quite for us" (1; 4). According to Dickstein, during his journey Keats longs to return to this bower. Endymion's "backward longing finds expression in the most important episode in Book II, the vision of the bower of Adonis whose story is [...] a parallel to Endymion's quest" (102). The bowers are still, idealised places. The bower of Adonis also offers a refuge from the pains of the world. Endymion's experience of the bower of Adonis increases the power of the senses in the narration:

[...] His every sense had grown
 Ethereal for pleasure; 'bove his head
 Flew a delight half-graspable; his tread
 Was Hesperean; to his capable ears
 Silence was music from the holy spheres; (II. 670-75)

Sperry maintains that "the bower represents a perfectly self-contained world of sensuous and imaginative luxury, idealised beyond all threat of interruption" (*Keats* 105). Although the bower offers Endymion a dream-like isolation from the world, he

finds his ideal beauty in the realm of dreams. During his dream encounter with the goddess, he addresses her as “O known Unknown!” (II. 741). In this bower, the goddess, who represents the unknown, expresses her desire that Endymion participate with her in “a sort of oneness,” (I. 795). In this respect, the bowers link “the realm of nature with that of mind or imagination” (Brotemarkle 80). This participation refers to Endymion’s attaining a unified knowledge of the imaginary and the actual world.

The first two bowers depicted in the poem form a parallel to Endymion’s visionary ideal. These places are refuge from the pains of actuality. However, in Book III, Keats depicts a dark and threatening bower. Circe, weaving “a net whose thralldom was more bliss than all / The range of flower’d Elysium,” (427-28) offers Glaucus “a long love dream”(III. 442):

Who could resist? Who in this universe?
 She did so breathe ambrosia; so immerse
 My fine existence in a golden clime.
 She took me like a child of suckling time,
 And cradled me in roses. Thus condemn'd,
 The current of my former life was stemm'd. (III. 453-58)

Then Glaucus sees that she is endowed with images of deformity and grotesque figures. The bower turns into a “real hell” (III. 476). Unlike the former bowers of light, this is a “dark lair of night” (III. 560). Dickstein states that “Circe’s bower, [...] turns out to have been not the reward of the quest but an impediment to it, or at best a stage on the negative way toward selfhood and identity” (114). It can be said that Keats’s bowers embody the pleasure principle in his early poetry and then transform into his tragic view of life in Circe’s bower where Glaucus is kept captive. The last bower is the “Cave of Quietude” which offers “a dreamless sleep” (III. 545). Through the Cave of Quietude, Endymion experiences a state of mind in which desperation, lethargy are all very intense. As Sperry suggests, “[t]he very intensity of Endymion’s otherworldly longing has fatally overtaxed the sustaining, elemental power of those bands of natural association and human affection that prompt man’s higher intimations even while they bind him more securely to the earth” (*Keats* 110). He has tasted the agonies and strife,

now he is aware of the unity of joy and pain. In this regard, the bower is a cite of recognition for Endymion. This bower provides renewal like the other ones but in addition to relief, the Cave offers “griefs and woes” (IV. 546) that are universal parts of human experience. After experiencing the sorrow of the others and contemplates the meaning of his quest, Endymion accepts the earthly reality:

My life from too thin breathing: gone and past
 Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone, farewell!
 And air of visions, and the monstrous swell
 Of visionary seas! No, never more
 Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore
 Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast. (IV. 650-55)

First Endymion imagined the ideal one, which is also shown in the first two bowers, then he realised that through a commitment to the actual and as a result of his contemplation in the last two bowers, the ideal can be attained. While he seems to deal with only imaginary realms, he shows that “[i]magination can be grounded upon human actuality” (Barnard 43). This situation justifies his expression: “The imagination may be compared to Adam’s dream — he awoke and found it truth [...] Adam’s dream will do here and seems to be a conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflection is the same as human Life and its Spiritual repetition” (*Letters* 31, 68). He points out the liabilities of imagination as reflected in dreams. Furthermore, Endymion’s movement from dream-vision to actual world is similar to the progress from the infant chamber to the chamber of maiden-thought in Keats’s letter to Reynolds, in which he attempts to explain the gradual stages of personal development. He forms an analogy between development and a mansion made up of many apartments:

Well — I compare human life to a large Mansion of Many Apartments [...].
 The first we step into we call the infant or thoughtless Chamber, in which
 we remain as long as we do not think — We remain there a long while, and
 notwithstanding the doors of the second Chamber remain wide open,
 showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length
 imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle within us
 — we no sooner get into the second Chamber, which I shall call the
 Chamber of Maiden-Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light
 and atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying
 there for ever in delight: However among the effects this breathing is father

of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of Man — of convincing one's nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression. (*Letters* 64, 143-144)

It is like a reflection of personal growth in Keats's poetry, especially an account of his earlier poems. These chambers are symbols of his perception of life as a poet. He expresses a growth from unthinking delight in pleasure to a vision of humanity. In a way they symbolise the growing awareness he builds as a poet. He passes from the infant chamber of thoughtless enjoyment of the beauty of the world to the atmosphere of a world full of sorrow. He asks a question "Was there a Poet born?" (241) in "I Stood tip-toe," but he could answer it only in his further attempts at poetry. For Keats, the myths are means of experiencing this progress. Throughout his poetic life, he traces this progress from "Maiden-Thought" to the poet who understands the world's "sickness and oppression" as will be argued in the following parts of this study.

Keats started writing *Hyperion: A Fragment*, an unfinished epic in three books, during the autumn of 1818, and the poem was published in 1820. In his first epic trial, Keats selects his theme from Hesiod's *Theogony* which tells the events when the Olympians overthrow the race of the Titans. The immediate sources of *Hyperion* are probably were read by Keats in the translation of *Theogony* by Thomas Cooke (Shackford 53). The poem begins at the time when Saturn has been driven into exile by Jove, when Oceanus has been superseded by Neptune, and when Hyperion is faced with dethronement by the coming of Apollo. In Keats's dealing with this mythological story, it is significant that he provides the characters with human qualities and visual details. Besides, in *Hyperion* and its sequence *The Fall of Hyperion: A Vision*, Keats extends his ideas on poetic identity, beauty and truth, and the relationship between myth and human history by using imaginative power.

In his expression of imagination, visual elements are intensively used, hence, descriptive scenes are vividly presented in the poem. Brotemarkle emphasises that "classical sculpture and some neoclassical painting ignited Keats's myth-making powers" (21). His expressing imaginative elements in such vivid manner is a result of

his interest in art objects which is mentioned in the Introduction. Keats's interest in visual arts is apparent especially in the descriptions of the fallen Titans. Such are the pictures of Saturn and Thea:

[...] postured motionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet. (I. 85-88)

Keats introduces Thea:

She was a Goddess of the infant world;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height; she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
But oh! how unlike marble was that face. (I. 27-34)

The Titans are like great statues, massive, and motionless. As Ian Jack indicates, “critics have often compared these figures (the Titans, especially Saturn and Thea) to the Elgin Marbles, and there can be little doubt that Keats remembered these great fragments as he wrote the opening of his poem” (38). *Hyperion* is itself subtitled “*A Fragment*,” so it can be said that just like the fragments of Greek mythological arts, Keats's poem is a fragment. Besides, since the myths are the source of these art objects — Elgin marbles — it is natural that Keats associates Greek mythology with the tenets of art and beauty. He describes the fall of the figures of a great past, replacement of them by a new race. Hence, the poem constitutes a parallel to history in which the new takes the place of the old. In other words, the use of the myth as a parallel to history and the succession of gods as an expression of historical events show that Keats relates myths to human experience.

Keats uses his vivid descriptions not only in narrating events and physical qualities of the characters, but also in depicting the psychological aspects and feelings of these

characters. He emphasises the sorrow of loss that the Titans experience. Describing Saturn's solitude and despair he says: "[...] old Saturn lifted up / His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone" (I. 89). These two adjectives, "old" and "faded" refer to the reality of defeat. What has faded is Saturn's sovereignty:

No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unscripted; and his realmless eyes were closed. (I. 16-19)

By providing the desperate state of Saturn, Keats refers to the weakening of all Titans and the giving way of one ruling order to a new emergent power. He is using the myth as a symbol of change and subsequent powers in history. Saturn, without realm, indicates the total loss of his entire expansion. On the other hand, Hyperion, the god of sun who is destined to be overthrown by Apollo, is waiting for his imminent fall. It is significant here that these gods have fear like human beings do. Hyperion, a great divinity who gives light to the world, has anguish. They are all vulnerable to change:

In the face of Saturn, Thea sees:
[...] direst strife; the supreme God
At war with all the frailty of grief,
of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.
Against these plagues he strove in vain; for Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison. (II. 92-98)

The gods are associated with human qualities, yet they do not lose the grandeur they have. This can be seen as an example of Keats's uniting the real with the imaginary. Dickstein indicates that Keats "tries to unite epic largeness with the pains of real experience" (187). Towards the end of Book I, Coelus, the father of Hyperion, remarks that the rebellion of the Olympians has changed his sons, who no longer appear solemn but display the emotions that he sees "on the mortal world beneath, / In men who die" (I. 334-35). Therefore, the gods and Titans are not only supernatural beings operating as

unknown powers in human world. Keats reinforces this notion by showing them suffering from human emotions.

Another aspect of this human quality is their nostalgia for the glory of the past. Titans see themselves as the children of “the infant world” (I. 26) which is used to emphasise the former realm of innocence:

The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled;
 Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
 When all the fair Existences of heaven
 Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak:
 That was before our brows were taught to frown,
 Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds; (II. 334-40)

As opposed to these days of peace, now they have to face a world of “fear, hope, and wrath; / Actions of rage and passion” (I. 332-33). Time passes cruelly and the beauty and joy are transient. Therefore, Coelus urges Hyperion to “oppose to each malignant hour / Ethereal presence” (I. 339-40). This fear comes from their consciousness of their fall and the imminent presence of a new race to replace them. It is possible to see that consciousness casts them into pain. Hyperion experiences Saturn’s fall and his own possibly imminent fall in agonies. Waiting in his palace which is filled with dark shadows, overcome with dread, he cries out:

[...] O dreams of day and night!
 O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
 O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
 O lank-ear’d Phantoms of black-weeded pools!
 Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why
 Is my eternal essence thus distraught
 To see and to behold these horrors new?
 Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall? (I. 227-34)

Hyperion is agonised by muscular spasms, and he is filled with anxiety and frustration because of the terrors of approaching doom. Instead of “The blaze, the splendor, and the symmetry,” all he can see is “darkness, death and darkness” (I. 241-2). He foresees the

future of his race and thus the darkness he sees comes from his consciousness of their absolute end.

Without their power, these Titans will have the qualities of the mortals, so this transfer of power can be seen as a shift from immortality to mortality. In this sense, Hyperion the sun god, whose place Apollo usurps becomes the tragic figure who symbolises the passing of the old order. The council in the Book II presents scenes of suffering and despair again. Saturn attends to the gathering place of the Titans. Here, the deposed gods voice reasons for, and responses to, their change of state described in sculptural poses; they are trying to come to terms with the woe of mortality. While Enceladus violently advocates war, Oceanus, the sea god, opposes the idea of war and violence, and he declares his faith in natural process: “We fall by course of Nature’s law, not force/ Of thunder, or of Jove,” (II. 181-2). In a way he urges the others to accept inevitable change as the necessary condition of progress. In this respect his speech is crucial:

And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
 So art thou not the last; it cannot be:
 Thou art not the beginning nor the end (II. 188-90)
 [.....]
 Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain;
 O folly! for to bear all naked truths,
 And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
 That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well!
 As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
 Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;
 And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
 In form and shape compact and beautiful,
 In will, in action free, companionship,
 And thousand other signs of purer life; (II. 194-211)

His speech is like a “consolation to man as historical creature” (Eggers 996). For Oceanus, “top of sovereignty” is “to bear all naked truths.” With reference to Oceanus’s speech, Sperry claims that “its vision of eternal change and gradual evolution toward ever higher states of being is closely related to the modified ideal of progress Keats had come to espouse” (*Keats* 184). Furthermore, Oceanus welcomes the fall because he

thinks that the new gods are more beautiful: “For ‘tis the eternal law / That first in beauty should be first in might” (II. 228-9). This expression connotes Keats’s pursuit of beauty and his famous remark: “What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth” (*Letters* 31, 67). Clymene also expresses a kind of reconciliation. In this sense, both Oceanus and Clymene clearly represent a solution to the grief of the Titans, they both stress how beautiful the new gods are, insisting on the necessity of progress:

So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
 A power more strong in beauty, born of us
 And fated to excel us, as we pass /
 In glory that old Darkness” (II. 212-15)
 [.....]
 With music wing’d instead of silent plumes,
 To hover round my head, and make me sick
 Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
 And I was stopping up my frantic ears,
 When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
 A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
 And still it cried, ‘Apollo! young Apollo! (II.287-93)

Their excel is justified because the new generation will be more beautiful, and this view is approved by Clymene, who describes the effect of Apollo’s music, underlining how beneficial the new god will be for humanity. Douglas Bush maintains that

Oceanus’s speech is certainly Keats’s own testimony to the principle of beauty and the grand march of the intellect in human history. [...] Keats had quite early evolved the larger and deeper conception of beauty created by all our passions in their sublime, that is, a vision, refined by intense apprehension, of all the varied and painful stuff of actual life. (“Keats” 334)

For Keats, this beauty is not just a physical one, it is something beneficial for mankind like Apollo’s music. Besides, the unity of joy and grief is also mentioned here to indicate Keats’s understanding of beauty which is the unity of the parts of human experience as will be further illustrated.

The Titans are not subject to death but to a possible loss of power. According to Brotemarkle, “their dismay is rooted in their illusory faith in nature as a permanent

social and political order. Keats, however, places their suffering in a broader context of cyclical nature” (29). In this sense, the succession of the powers is both a necessity of the order and nature. Oceanus says: “Receive the truth, and let it be your balm” (II. 243). He believes that it is inevitable and this solution is necessary to sooth the anxiety and grief of the Titans. This is evident in what he states:

We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
 Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
 But eagles golden-feather’d, who do tower
 Above us in their beauty, and must reign
 In right thereof; (II. 224-28)

He applies this law of “first in beauty should be first in might” to himself when he describes his successor Neptune as having “such a glory of beauty in his eyes, / That it enforc’d me to bid sad farewell / To all my empire” (II, 237-239). The essential meaning of this part is symbolical; it means the dethronement of a ruder order by the one which is more humane and gives the idea of beauty a larger place. Here, it is implied that it is a matter of succession like the historical cycles. In Brotemarkle’s words, “by amalgamating his Titans as symbols of Beauty and time (i.e. imposing human consciousness on the ideal), Keats has begun to play a role in the formulation of modern art history” (30). Progress is achieved through the displacement of an older generation by a younger one, which is always more beautiful than their ancestors. Change is inevitable and this is the truth man has to accept.

According to Bush, the speech of Oceanus is “essential to Keats’s whole conception of the Titans and the significance of their defeat” (*Myhtology* 123). The Titans are majestic; they are “[...] symbols divine, / Manifestations of that beauteous life / Diffus’d unseen throughout eternal space;” (I. 315-17). But “they failed to justify the continuance of their reign” (Bush, *Mythology* 125). Keats renders the ideal sublimity to Apollo, the god of poetry, music, medicine and sun, because he has something which the Titans lack. In the third book, Apollo attains his power by experiencing pain and gaining knowledge as its consequence. As Sperry suggests, “true poetry implies not only imaginative activity but the perception of value and meaning relevant to all

mankind. (“Keats” 78). Apollo meets Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory and a kind of muse-figure, who brings him to a sudden understanding of his own immortal nature. In Keats’s representation, Mnemosyne holds the musical instrument, a harp, while Apollo speaks:

O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
 That waileth every morn and eventide,
 Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves!
 Mute thou remainest - Mute! yet I can read
 A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
 Knowledge enormous makes a God of me. (III. 108-13)

In contrast to Oceanus’s talk “in murmur” (I.171), and Enceladus’s “ponderous syllables” (II. 305), Apollo’s speech is life-giving. With the knowledge, he becomes a god and thus the true poet is born:

Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,
 Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
 Creations and destroyings, all at once
 Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
 And deify me, as if some blithe wine
 Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
 And so become immortal. [...] (III. 114-20)

Mnemosyne’s role is considerable in terms of Keats’s concept of poetry. Her identification of poetry with knowledge and consciousness of human experience indicates that a poet must be both earthbound and in touch with the mysteries of the world. She is the agent that makes Apollo face the good and the ill of the universe. Mnemosyne stands for the “vision derived from human history and the inevitable agonies of change and time” (Talbot 75). Appropriately, her face reflects all life, past present and the future; she is a mirror of the old and the new, the creations and their agonies. As a result of the agonies, Apollo achieves knowledge that makes him more beautiful than the former race. Regarding this status of Mnemosyne, Eggers states that

[m]emory confronts the persona of the poet with a reflection of himself in the glass of history; the wild commotions that shake him are the shock of

recognition. As Apollo dies into life Keats assents without reservation to the importance of history as ultimate reality. (996)

The new race who accepts this ultimate reality has knowledge of history through suffering. In *Endymion*, Keats brings together joy and grief to attain the ideal beauty. Here, he goes one step further and uses these elements to shape the true poet.

[...] Thus the God,
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
 Beneath his white soft temples, stedfast kept
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs;
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
 Or liker still to one who should take leave
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
 As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
 Die into life: (III. 120-30)

Keats elaborates on the characteristics of a true poet or artist in general which is a theme he presents in *The Fall of Hyperion*. While he is reflecting his ideas on art of poetry and creativity, he attributes various meanings to certain imagery. In this respect, Apollo is an important figure that should be particularised. Apollo is introduced as the “Father of all verse” (III. 13). While in earlier poems Apollo was the sun god, here he is god of poetry with intellectual skills. Besides, the beauty of his music and his attraction are added to his perfection. Clymene’s description of the music he produces together with the description given of him in the third book supports this view. Despite all such perfection, these qualities are not enough to make him a god; only after he experiences the pain of deification he gains knowledge. Highlighting the theme of dying into life, Bush states that “the enduring truth of art: a vision of life that embraces but transcends all suffering, that unifies all diverse and limited human judgments [...]; the supreme sensation and insight of death without death itself” (“Keats” 338). Using figures from mythology, Keats emphasises the god-like power of the artist, which is gained through historical awareness and immensity of pain. In this respect, it can be argued that Keats views beauty not merely in sensuous and physical terms but as having intellectual and moral excellence.

The emergence of a new race of gods can be interpreted as to define the hierarchy of poetic values and aesthetics. According to Sperry, the theme of fall in the poem is chosen for its universality and contemporary relevance:

The sense of loss, endemic to the times, was one that could be described or elaborated in a variety of ways, most often through the feeling of a broad decline in power and ability from the past. [...] It was the loss of control over the great, simple forms and modes of belief — those of mythology, for example — for an understanding fractured by reason, science, and the growth of historical awareness. (*Keats* 157)

Thus, Apollo's dying into life is a parallel to the increased attention paid to imagination in the Romantic poetry. By incorporating this hierarchy of aesthetic values and process of human history in a myth, Keats not only displays his personal use of myths but also shows the function of mythology in expressing his ideas about poetic creativity. Pertaining to the suffering of the mythological characters, Ryan claims that "[t]hat suffering may be instructive and formative for human beings was a common enough theme in Greek tragedy, but except in fertility myths the Greeks were unable to see much value or logic in a god's agony" (270). In this respect, the suffering which brings wisdom is Keats's interpretation of myths. For the sufferings of the Titans, no reward is offered except for the consolation that the one who is the most beautiful will be the most powerful. Thus, as Ryan also states, this "rereading of human history and its possible future [is] Keats's original contributions to the myth" (270).

Each generation interprets the material of the past in the light of its own experience. In a letter to George Keats, Keats says "there should be a continual change for the better" (*Letters* 156, 406). Therefore, those who accept the change can bear the strife of life. However, Saturn cannot accept the loss of power, because he is a self-centered figure. In the first two books of the poem, Titans try to understand the reason for their fall. In relation to this, Sperry argues that Saturn and his fellow gods have fallen because, "they have outlived their usefulness to a destiny they are unable to comprehend except in terms of narrow self interest" (*Keats* 182). The Titans are so self-centered that the succession of the universal values is not significant for them; all they care about is their

power. Saturn is a solitary figure, and a crucial question he cannot answer is: “Who had power / To make me desolate? Whence came to strength” (I.102-103). As his immortality fades away, he says:

[...] But cannot I create?
 Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
 Another world, another universe,
 To overbear and crumble this to nought?
 Where is another chaos? Where? (I. 141-45)

He speaks as if the universe will go down with his powers. Similarly, for Hyperion, loss means the loss of his light. Hyperion’s strength and energy “appeal too much to physical dread and awe, it is not yet the appeal of glorious intelligence and fine appreciation of values for the spirit” (Shackford 58). In this regard, they are not “first in beauty” because they are not attached to the higher values of the universe. Similarly, they are not aware of the knowledge that provides Apollo with pain and joy in the process of deification. As Sperry explains, “[Saturn’s] might is one in extricably involved with his whole sense of [identity] which now fled from him, provides the necessary clue for understanding the nature of his plight” (*Keats* 180). Therefore, the reason for the fall of the Titans is their self-absorbed nature and lack of thinking.

The Titans, as Shackford states, “in mood of revolt and dire dismay, arrogantly demanding safe continuance of power, are addressed by that personified force in nature which most completely represents the law of ceaseless movement. (56). The younger race of gods were destined to dispossess their ancestors because of “the eternal law” (II. 228) that demands the succession of the beautiful one. It is presented as the harmony of the universe, however, one can understand from Saturn’s lines that they have lost their empire through their own shortcomings; through the “fear, hope, and wrath / Actions of rage and passion” (I. 334-5) which, as Coelus says, make them “most unlike Gods,” (I. 328). These things are “[...] frailty of grief, / Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge, / Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.” (II. 93-95). Saturn is “blind from sheer supremacy” (II. 185). Together with pride and self-centeredness, it is this weakness that causes the lack of beauty in Titans. Their frailty is presented as a flaw that prevents

them from understanding the events that they cannot dominate. However, poetic creativity necessitates forming a relation between the poet's self and what he observes. Unlike the Titans, Apollo unites the quality of true poet and a perfect god in his identity because "the quest for grandeur and sublimity, would need to be founded on a deeper knowledge and fidelity to the roots of all experience buried in the human heart and its attachments" (Sperry, *Keats* 150).

Regarding the loss of power of the Titans, Harris maintains that, "they had to be seen and faced for what they were, wherever they were, truthfully, with as much consciousness as humanly possible and bearable, and their damaging potential or effects could not be avoided or denied" (44). In contrast to the Titans, Apollo's deification is an experience with the harsh facts of the world. Talbot expresses his views on the admirable quality of Apollo as follows: "He has immortal longings, wishing to change from dreamer to poet [...] though he is not at first sure what he wishes. [...] Apollo takes upon himself the sorrows of the world, including the sorrows of the old gods, and therefore becomes deified" (74). For Keats, poetry is a truly expressive form of life; thus, within beauty there is darkness as well. To deny this fact is to move away from engaging in life. This is the truthful beauty which he wishes to attain throughout his poetic career.

In the third book of *Hyperion*, "Apollo is once more the golden theme!" (III. 28) the poet proclaims. Apollo is a central figure "whose complex being embraces the functions of poet, prophet, musician, physician [...]; and with whom Keats feels himself to be analogically identifiable" (Blackstone 227). In most of his poems, Apollo is an emblem of artistic creation and its ideal form. In *Hyperion* he replaces the sun god. He is described in terms of light with the adjectives like golden, blazing, and bright. Apollo is also associated with "embers" and "fire" (IV. 364-66) in *Endymion*. His poem "Ode to Apollo" (1815) can be seen as the first example of Keats's use of Apollo and the images of brilliance. He presents Apollo as joining to the muses and "great God of Bards" (47). There are references to "halls of gold," "solid rays" "laurel" and "silver" (1; 6; 20; 30) which are all related to the sun god. Besides, with this quality of brilliance Apollo can be associated with Keats's devotion to art as he uses the phrase "realms of gold" in "On

First Looking into Chapman's Homer." This idea of Keats can be seen in *Endymion's* remark: "I did wed / Myself to things of light from infancy" (IV. 958-9). In the imaginary realm of gold, Apollo is the symbol of art and imagination, so he can dethrone Hyperion. The light imagery is used as an attribute intrinsic to the mythological figures; *Endymion* says: "On some bright essence could I lean, and lull / Myself to immortality" (III.172-173). As White argues, "[l]ight is the perfect symbol for the dichotomy of ideal beauty (essence) and perceived beauty (nature)" (16). Thus, extensive use of light imagery refers to the ideal beauty in Keatsian poetry as Apollo is both the sun god and the god of artistic beauty. Likewise, Apollo's sister Phoebe, or Cynthia, as a moon goddess, is equated with light and beauty as Keats makes clear in *Endymion*. White comments that Cynthia represents the ideal beauty "that the poet found sustaining the physical beauty of nature, particularly the physical nature of beautiful women" (28). According to White's comment, it can be said that Keats begins his descriptions by the perceived beauty, the beauties in nature, than he transforms his material into something ethereal, which is the ideal beauty. It is parallel to the pattern of *Endymion* which begins with the "thing of beauty" in the nature and proceeds to imaginary realms in which morning light is described as Apollo's fire:

And so the dawning light in pomp receive.
For 'twas the morn: Apollo's upward fire
Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
Of brightness so unsullied, (I. 95-97)

Here Apollo is not only the symbol of brilliance but also Keats's attempts in turning earthly material into something magical. The poet is the one who is able to purify reality into its ultimate beauty. Apollo is the chief mediator in this sense.

The relationship between ideal beauty and brilliance is also seen in *Hyperion*. The imminent fall of Hyperion is defined by McFarland as "precisely a deprivation of light" (*The Masks* 89). To lose light is to lose power, throne, and beauty. Hyperion says:

Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,

This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
 These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes. (I. 235-38).

Hyperion's fall brings along total destruction; he will lose his light and consequently his beauty. On the other hand, Apollo is about to replace Hyperion. In the third book of *Hyperion*, Apollo is in pain of not knowing what is happening because he needs Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory and the mother of the muses, "to spur and guide his interpretation of the meaning of this shift" (Mclane 207). His experience of deification is likened to that of mortals, but he is already immortal. It is just an accession into new knowledge, so it can be interpreted in terms of a figure of the poet coming into his powers. Since for Keats, true poet is the one who unites the knowledge of the universe and the mysteries of the imaginative realms, Apollo has to go through the process of transformation to represent the highest achievement of poetry.

With regard to Apollo's significance in the poem, Brotemarkle points out that "a transcendent imagination, maker of art and civilized life, would be posed against inevitable forces of decadence and decay, threatening to compromise it as a form of knowledge" (35). Through his imagery of imagination and beauty, Keats makes use of the succession of values through which the genuine creative imagination is challenged by changing aesthetical ideals in the arts. This succession involves the old order represented by the Titans and the new order of Apollo. Keats puts this notion into practice by setting Apollo in opposition to the Titans. Apollo's deification is the central event in Keats's interpretation of the origin, the growth, and the destiny of a poet. Apollo's skill in music has already been described by Clymene in the council. His music is described as the "blissful golden melody" (II.280) that is "sweeter, sweeter than all tune" (II.292). It can be said that this skill must belong to the poet, must be his most obvious characteristic. Therefore, Apollo is the most appropriate figure for Keats to explore the characteristics of a true poet.

Apollo, as the god of poetry, is not only the ideal character of poetic accomplishment but also the god of medicine. As Almeida puts it, through the figure of Apollo,

“Western mythology has connected poetry and the making of music with the creation of medicine and that power of life and death inherent in the practice of physic” (*Romantic* 17). Apollo is the father of Asclepius, whose offsprings Hygeia and Panacea are all connected with the discipline of health. In this sense, Keats, who received medical education before his poetic career, unites healing and poetry in the character of Apollo. As a poet and musician, “Apollo makes music to soothe the creatures in his care and ease the anxieties” (Almeida, *Romantic* 209). Therefore, since Keats regards true poet as a “physician to all men” (*The Fall* I. 190) imagination and its products are not useless, “just as nature reveals the necessity of the seasons, the imagination and its connections are necessities” (Brotemarkle 36). The “benefit” (I. 167) which the true poet can deliver to the world, then, is an ability to represent pain and suffering with compassion and humanist concern. The function of poetry is not to illustrate the concept of beauty or to divert people from reality by taking them to imaginary realms. Poetry, with its beauty, heals human soul and teaches it how to cope with the difficulties in the actual life.

Hyperion is left unfinished with Apollo’s “shriek” (III. 135) after his deification. With regard to this, Sherwin states that this poem “is Keats’s dying into life” (387). There are various speculations about why Keats left his epic trials unfinished. In a letter to Reynolds, he himself explains it as follows: “I have given up *Hyperion* — There were too many Miltonic inversions in it” (*Letters* 151, 384). Gaull states that “Keats abandoned the poem because structure, imagery, narrative, poetry itself, even epic poetry, cannot convey the ‘knowledge enormous,’ the knowledge of human and natural history that deified Apollo and on which the rest of the poem would have depended” (192). Another interpretation may be that Keats identifies himself with Hyperion. Lockridge points out that “Keats may have given up *Hyperion* through too much self interest when he recognized in *Hyperion* an uncomfortable mirroring of his own sense of poetic powerlessness” (410). While Apollo represents the ideal he desires to achieve, *Hyperion* reflects the distraction which Keats experiences due to the problems in his life. Thus, although he wants to be an Apollo, his sympathies remain with Hyperion. In the light of these approaches, it can be said that Keats identified himself with Apollo

who is deified by knowledge, and he, by writing an epic, assumed the role of a great poet but when he considered it impossible, he gave up.

The Fall of Hyperion: A Vision is not a continuation of *Hyperion* but elaboration on it in the form of a dream. As Sherwin states, the failure to finish *Hyperion* stimulates Keats to elaborate on “the full burden of the mysteries of self and vocation” and so he puts a figure of poet instead of a god in his second trial (Sherwin 394). Keats develops the theme of poetic creation which he starts in the third book of *Hyperion*. In *The Fall*, he works on his preoccupation with what the life of the poet should be, moreover, he tries to find out what is beauty and its relation to the suffering humanity. Therefore, this poem is very significant in understanding Keats’s concept of art. In *The Fall of Hyperion* the disappearance of the Titans is announced in the title, and the poem begins long after their fall. As its subtitle indicates it is a dream-vision that the speaker or the poet experiences in this poem. With the use of dream vision the poem takes a more personal tone than *Hyperion*, with a first-person narrator who shares his emotions and his progress with the reader. Therefore, it is rather subjective in its dealing with the meaning of poetry to the poet himself who deals with human experience. In the first version, the Titans suffered much but it was the indication of a power which works through perpetual change as reflected in Oceanus’s speech. In this version, Keats reinforces the notion that sorrow brings wisdom.

The Fall of Hyperion focuses on the nature of poetry and the process of development and attempts to determine what the poet-narrator of the dream vision sees on the suffering goddess Moneta’s face, goddess of warning, who is a mysterious figure and a counterpart of Mnemosyne. She can be seen as the “depository of the ‘knowledge of good and evil’ a Keatsian symbol of the tragic mystery of man’s fate” (Sallé 156). In line with this characteristic of Moneta, Vogler maintains that her temple “represents the art of the past. It is necessary for the poet to be exposed to and to appreciate such beauty before he will be able to create things of beauty himself” (126). This is a stage in the poet’s development; therefore, he must ascend the steps of the altar in this temple. Even

if it will be a tremendous struggle, he should submit to the pain before he can overcome it.

The narrator is established from the start as a poet; after “pledging all the Mortals of the world” (I. 44) in sympathy, he drinks a “full draught” (I. 46) of a beverage, which gives him access to the temple of knowledge. With this unknown beverage in Canto I, he loses consciousness to awaken to find himself in a sanctuary. Then he hears words from a figure of “veiled shadow” (I. 141) — Moneta, as she later reveals herself to be — telling him that if he cannot ascend the steps leading to the altar, he will die where he is. This experience means the death of the poet without fame; no one will know his existence. The difficulty of the movement is conveyed as follows:

[...] I strove hard to escape
 The numbness; strove to gain the lowest step.
 Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace: the cold
 Grew stifling, suffocating, at the heart;
 And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not.
 One minute before death, my iced foot touch'd
 The lowest stair; and as it touch'd, life seem'd
 To pour in at the toes: I mounted up, (I. 127-34)

He ascends the steps with great difficulty, thereby experiencing physical suffering; he eventually meets the shadow, who will prove to be the goddess Moneta. He is allowed to gaze at the “high tragedy” (I. 277) of Moneta’s face where he will read the events related in *Hyperion*. Then the veiled shadow tells him the significance of what has just happened and the essential nature of the change he has experienced:

[...] Thou hast felt
 What 'tis to die and live again before
 Thy fated hour. (I. 142-43)
 [.....]
 “None can usurp this height,” return'd that shade,
 But those to whom the miseries of the world
 Are misery, and will not let them rest
 All else who find a haven in the world,
 Where they may thoughtless sleep away their days,
 If by a chance into this fane they come,
 Rot on the pavement where thou rotted'st half. (I. 147-53)

The debate between the narrator and Moneta questions the value of Keats's poetic achievement and expresses his final idea of the poet as a dreamer. Moneta questions:

What benefit canst thou do, or all thy tribe,
 To the great world? Thou art a dreaming thing,
 A fever of thyself think of the Earth;
 What bliss even in hope is there for thee?
 What haven? every creature hath its home;
 Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,
 Whether his labours be sublime or low
 The pain alone; the joy alone; distinct:
 Only the dreamer venoms all his days,
 Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve. (I. 167-76)

Moneta presents the poet as a dreamer. However, the true poet's function lies in the questions of the narrator. Unlike Moneta, he thinks his desire for the knowledge would enable him to live up to his new ideal as a poet. He says:

Majestic shadow, tell me: sure not all
 Those melodies sung into the world's ear
 Are useless: sure a poet is a sage;
 A humanist, physician to all men. (I. 190)

Here, the poet is ready to sympathise with the miseries of the world. Haworth indicates that "the poet who endures the agony of the knowledge of good and evil will have something vital to communicate to mankind, a depth of experience and knowledge that can come in no other way" (648). Only if he can get the knowledge of the joy and sorrow, the poet can become a physician to mankind, which is the condition of being a true poet in Keatsian terms.

Regarding Moneta, Talbot asserts that "[s]ince she is priestess of Saturn and foster-mother to Apollo she has comprehended all the manifestations of truth in all ages of gods and men, and all manifestations of truth in all ages of suffering are necessary included in this comprehension" (78). It is only through this vast knowledge, he manages to become a true poet. Without this "truth," which is present in sorrow and joy, poetry would be mere fancy. However, the true poet is the one who through self-

renunciation shares and tries to alleviate the troubles of the others. Thus, Moneta explains that the poet and the dreamer are not alike:

He further questions:
 [...] Art thou not of the dreamer tribe?
 The poet and the dreamer are distinct,
 Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.
 The one pours out a balm upon the world,
 The other vexes it. (I.198-202)

Although he is one of those who feel the miseries of the world, paradoxically he is also one who adds to them. The altar is a symbol of historical knowledge where the poet can find inspiration after sacrificing himself. According to Moneta's division, there are three types of men: the true poet, "to whom the miseries of the world / Are misery" (I. 148), he ascends to the altar; the dreamer who fails to ascend the altar steps and dies; and the philanthropist who is too busy to enter the temple (McFarland, *The Masks* 115). She seems to be accusing the poet of being a dreamer, however, this is a test indeed. It is clear from the logic of the narrative that the altar towards which the dreamer advances represents the higher condition the true poet must achieve. In this respect, he is not a dreamer since he has managed to ascend the altar steps.

According to Blackstone, "[Moneta] calls upon Keats to assert his own identity" (251). The poet fears that since he is no poet, his utterance may be "sacrilegious" in the temple of Moneta (I.140). Moneta's voice criticising the dreamers is frightening. As McFarland argues, "Moneta's diatribe against the lack of social benefit in the commitment to poetry would seem, for the moment at least, to have lessened Keats's insistent concern with the purely aesthetic" (*The Masks* 116). By questioning himself due to his fear of Moneta, the poet explores the function of poetry. The distinction between the poet and the dreamer leaves him with the feeling of insecurity. In the poet's response, his anxiety is observed; he emphasises that a poet should have social concern. Out of sympathy with the miseries of the world the poet must develop a universal sympathy and employ his art to this purpose. In his *Endymion*, *Hyperion* and in minor poems, even in his letters,

Keats ponders over and over on the same theme that the poet's duty to humanity is to share and sympathise with human suffering.

The awe of Moneta experienced by the poet is caused by her veiled face. Moneta decides that for his "good will" (I. 242) he is allowed to see the vision of the fall of the Titans, which is still vividly present in Moneta's mind. When she speaks of the long past and promises to reveal him the past, she is unveiled:

So at the view of sad Moneta's brow
 I ask'd to see what things the hollow brain
 Behind environ'd: what high tragedy
 In the dark secret chambers of her skull
 Was acting, that could give so dread a stress
 To her cold lips, and fill with such a light
 Her planetary eyes, and touch her voice
 With such a sorrow 'Shade of Memory!'
 Cried I, with act adorant at her feet, (I. 275-83)

It is like the poet's attainment of impersonality or negative capability by being united with the sorrow of the world. Moneta warns the poet that "I humanize my sayings to thine ear, / Making comparisons of earthly things" (II. 2-3). He will see the events through her eyes and that the events will be "humanised;" apprehended in human terms. Sperry claims that "[h]er suffering is a living death, a misery that never ends but must endure through countless ages. In the continuous wasting of her features, the mutable and the immutable, the temporal and the eternal are both contained and reconciled (Sperry, "Keats" 82). In a similar way, the sorrow that the dreamer finds in Moneta's face is a symbol of world's fate, which he perceives through her eyes. Just like Endymion who undergoes his whole ordeal by acknowledging his kinship with Glaucus and hearing his story, the poet receives from Moneta her knowledge of the fall and suffering of the Titans. He is no longer an individual sufferer; he passes through a deep self-questioning and finally reaches an impersonal, universal sorrow reflected in Moneta's face.

The poet-narrator who experiences world's misery is a similar figure to Apollo in *Hyperion*. The deification which comes through the knowledge, seen in the eyes of Mnemosyne, was undergone by Apollo. Here, deification is replaced by being a true poet. Moneta's face reflects a similar knowledge that Apollo gained from Mnemosyne and here Keats the poet-narrator "reaffirms the godlike supremacy of the poetic vision" (Bush, "Keats" 338). In the first version, the Titans fall because of their self-interest. Here, Keats gives the message, connoting his concept of negative capability, that the poet must negate himself. As Lockridge remarks,

[c]reative acts, instead of emanating from pleasurable impulses alone, find their origins also in a deep pain. The contraries of pleasure and pain, of the aesthetic and the moral, are at the heart of creation. Since both modes of identification are disinterested, the poet is ideally a disinterested sufferer. (413-414)

The poet attempts to see human life from the outside, as a vision. This is what happens in *The Fall of Hyperion* when the poet becomes deified by the blending of the facts of suffering with the beauty of art. The process is parallel to the experience of Endymion. It is this blending of sympathy and awe that makes it possible to feel the joy and the attainment of truth. In other words, to be a sage, a humanist, a physician to all men, and to attain beauty and truth, the poet must himself suffer. Thus, the meaning of the poem is the poet's responsibility to the world.

The Fall of Hyperion is a major work that illustrates Keats's attempts to reconcile the poetic imagination with an awareness of suffering of humanity. The dreamer gains his poetic insight only through the identification of himself with the pain of the world. This pattern of dying into life can be associated with Keats's idea of "soul-making" which is essential for understanding most of the major poetry of Keats. In his letter to George and Georgiana he writes:

Call the world if you Please 'The vale of Soul-making.' Then you will find out the use of the world. [...]. Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul? A Place

where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways! (*Letters* 123, 336)

The soul-making is an “ideal distilled suffering” (Brotemarkle 109) that is referred by Moneta as “deathwards progressing / To no death” (*The Fall* I. 261). The importance of sympathetic identification with human suffering for progress is emphasised in this letter. It can be interpreted as a comment on Keats’s literary development and his philosophy of benevolence that stands for the last step of attaining beauty and truth. For Keats, truth is the apprehension of this harmony in human nature. When the poet comprehends his soul completely, he can become a real poet. He expresses a similar thought which he states in the letter of Chambers of Thought written a year earlier, in which wisdom and sadness are seen equivalent to each other. With the process of deification, Apollo passes through the Chamber of Maiden Thought and The Vale of Soul-making. Ward claims that

[i]n his description of ‘Vale of Soul-making,’ suffering is a positive force, not so much an obstacle in the hero’s path as the necessary means by which a mere intelligence or individual consciousness is schooled and formed into a soul or identity. (61)

In presenting mythological figures, Keats reflects the reconciliation of human beings with suffering, which is transformed into “soul-making.” The fall of the Titans and their experience of despair, and Apollo’s taking on of the “knowledge enormous” of the world’s sorrow embodies Keats’s concept of life as the vale of soul-making. The mythological figures have human qualities in accepting loss and experiencing the strife of life. Thus Keats forms an analogy between human life and the supernatural world of mythological characters. In other words, only by knowing the reality of the human condition can one become a god, a poet, or a true human being.

In his odes, Keats continues to explore the unity of joy and sorrow in human experience, but this time he emphasises the reason for this sorrow which is the transience of the beautiful moments in human life. These poems, called “Great Odes,” all written in 1819, are generally believed to have been written in the following order: “Psyche,”

“Nightingale,” “Grecian Urn,” “Melancholy,” and “Autumn” (Dickstein 190). As Brian Stone highlights, “although each of the odes is an individual poem, they may be perceived as complementary to each other, all being concerned with poetry as an art: its material, its images, the moods of its creator and its claims to immortality (68). Thus, the odes can be considered as parts of a whole dealing with themes of escape and transcendence, human limitations, beauty and permanence of art and transience of joy.

“Ode to Psyche” was the first of Keats’s odes to be written in the spring of 1819. As mentioned in his letter, Keats was inspired by the story of Psyche and Cupid from Apuleius’s *The Golden Ass*. He wrote to George and Georgiana:

You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apuleius the Platonist who lived after their Augustan [sic] age, and consequently the Goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervour - and perhaps never thought of in the old religion - I am more orthodox that [sic] to let a hethen Goddess be so neglected. (*Letters* 123, 340)

Psyche was a late addition to the mythological gods; she received no proper worship in antiquity. Therefore, Keats is determined to compensate for this lack of attention to her by his own devotion. According to the myth of Cupid and Psyche, after many trials and long separations, the goddess completes a spiritual transformation and becomes happy with her lover Cupid. Their love embodies the union of the mortal with the divine. Brotmarkle states that,

[t]he figure of Psyche, which in ancient Greece signified the soul, in Keats’s poem comes to mean the principle of Beauty in the work of art — and in a wonderful final image, she merges with a lighted lamp, an extension of herself, the symbol of the Imagination. (80)

Thus, it is likely that Keats identifies a poet’s soul-making, which is gained through suffering, with this aspect of the myth just like he does in *The Fall of Hyperion*. As Barth indicates, the poem “is, in effect, a continuation of his reflection on the nature of

the soul” (291). As Psyche is an image of beauty, the poet resolves to dedicate himself to the worship of Psyche.

The poem begins with an invocation to Psyche, who symbolises Keats’s celebration of man’s soul in the poem. Describing a vision of her with rich and vivid details, he turns to abstract discussion of her beauty. Keats first uses religious words like altar, choir, lure, pipe, shrine which form a parallel to his worship, but then he describes her with the words attributed to human beings because the goddess is the human soul in love. He mentions Phoebe and Aphrodite who were worshipped by the ancients while Psyche was not. However, for him, she is superior to those ancient gods:

Fairer than Phoebe's sapphire-regioned star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heap'd with flowers; (26-29)

She has been neglected; “she has known in her own person — as no true Olympian could ever know — suffering” (Allott 86). Therefore, for the poet, she has never been worshipped as a goddess but she is “fairer” than any of that now faded and obsolete canon of immortals.

The central idea of the poem is the essential relationship between art, religion, and man’s mind. The poet is the one who considers Psyche as “the brightest” (36) to be worshipped and a great source of inspiration. He mentions his ability to create himself as a poet. True poets must “sing by [their] own eyes inspir’d,” (43) and they must worship not the overthrown hierarchy of traditional religion but the very soul of man. For this reason, he aspires to worship Psyche as the ancients failed to recognise her as a goddess:

So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours;
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
From swung censer teeming;
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat. (44-48)

She is not just a goddess for him; she is the symbol of soul, so she is important to him as a poet. At this point Brotemarkle highlights that the figure of Psyche is an allegory of human soul but Keats gives “his own twist” to the story (73). As he further argues, adding a story of his own “is a central aspect of Keats’s genuine myth-making as opposed to borrowing or copying” (73). In Keats’s hands, Psyche is not exactly human soul, but the soul of art, the principle of beauty. Accordingly, the poet’s devotion to Psyche suggests the hope for artistic achievement. In order to worship Psyche, Keats summons all the resources of his imagination. Since he desires to become a priest of her, he will give to Psyche a region of his mind:

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind. (50-53)

In these lines he expresses his commitment to worshipping the goddess. In fact, he identifies himself as a priest dedicating himself to human soul. The fane which Keats says he will build is in fact in his own imagination. In order to describe this process he uses an oxymoron “pleasant pain” indicating that soul-making carries pleasure and pain as he deals with in *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, and *The Fall of Hyperion*.

Through imagination he creates a “rosy sanctuary” (59) for Psyche in which “the gardener Fancy” (62) is at work. The details of his description are so concrete that it is like a real sanctuary populated with “moss-lain Dryads” (57) and provided with a gardener. The gardener of fancy breeds his flower which is different from the gardener in actual world, because unlike the items of the mundane world, each imaginative creation is unique and eternal. In the last fourth of the poem he “shifts radically towards a presentation of Psyche not as a mythological being but as a personification of his own soul” (Wiebe 121). By promising that the sanctuary for Psyche will have “a casement ope at night, / To let the warm Love in!” (66-67) he refers to human love, not the mythological figure. It is a timeless human emotion as indicated in the myth. Thus, he is using the mythological figure for his own contemporary worship. The worship is his desire to become a great poet. Like in his previous poems, Keats relates mythology to

human experience in uniting mind and heart, soul and body. “Ode to Psyche” offers some of the general themes and moods present in his later odes, such as Keats’s worship of the imagination, and his celebration of beautiful moments in life.

The longest of the odes, “Ode to a Nightingale” reflects Keats’s poetic dream of escape to the imaginary realm. He chooses a figure with wings representing the freedom of imaginative capacity. The bird’s song is “too happy” (6) to be endured, therefore, the numbness of the speaker stems from the happiness he feels when he hears the song of the nightingale. This happiness forms a contrast with the human world and makes the poet “as though of hemlock [he] had drunk” (2).

Brotemarkle claims that “the bird is a natural symbol, but also a mythological figure” (120). Keats shapes it as the “light-winged Dryad of the trees” (7). The same Keatsian pattern is used in the poem; he begins with the objects from nature and turns them into something imaginary. In the opening line of the poem the nightingale with its song is presented as a part of nature but then it is turned into an imaginary being, a figure from mythology, and a piece of art with its song. Beginning by description of the “things” of beauty, the poem shifts to the imaginary realm which is contrasted by the decay and death in the actual world.

The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs,
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow. (23-30)

He presents how death, decay and transience pervade the human world. It is the worst part of the earthly realm in which beauty cannot abide for long. The bird can be seen as a symbol of beauty and imagination in this sense. In order to escape from this restricting realm and “[t]o cease upon the midnight with no pain” (56), the poet desires to fly with the nightingale into a realm of forgetfulness of the pain of the world. The shift from one

plane to another emphasises the difference between the imaginary and the actual. The desire to escape displays the poet's seeking to transcend the deficient world by moving into an ideal one that suggests freedom. In order to attain this ideal world of "Provençal song and sunburnt mirth" (14), first he thinks that wine will help. He imagines joining the bird through Bacchus, the god of wine:

With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim: (17-20)

Then he resolves to try another way: "Away! away! for I will fly to thee, / Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards, / But on the viewless wings of Poesy," (31-33). He decides to fly to the realm of the nightingale on the visionary wings of poetic inspiration. Poesy has wings that are viewless like the unheard melodies in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn." However, "the dull brain perplexes and retards" (l. 34), and he is left wondering whether the only way to become one with the bird's "ecstasy" (58) is to die. To "become a sod" (60), however, would make it impossible to hear, and it is its "voice" that makes the nightingale "immortal" (61), because its song remains "the same" (68) through the "generations" (62). Though the bird or its listener may die, its song is immortal like poetry.

The poet thinks of flying away with the bird to achieve a kind of immortality; however he knows its futility. As any physical escape is impossible, the poet yearns for death which would bring immortality in a realm far removed from reality. His wish to die can be taken as a spiritual death like Apollo's dying into life in *Hyperion*. In this respect, the "easful Death," (52) is a wish to merge with the object of contemplation; it will bring happiness. As Sperry maintains, "[f]or a moment death, conceived of as an eternal present, the prolongation of the ecstatic moment, is reconciled with the other values — love, beauty, enjoyment — that the bird expresses" (*Keats* 265). The poet desires to live an intense imaginative life through this death.

This notion of death stems from his obsession with the transience of human happiness and the need for permanence like that of the great works, however, he should see that it is not the bird but the song that is immortal. The nightingale is treated like a work of art, a symbol. The song, by consoling the sorrows of man, is in fact stimulating them to live this world of misery and joy. Then the poet realises the absurdity of this idea of death to unite with the ideal realm. One must enjoy nature and life because the song of the bird belongs to a timeless order of existence, free of misery and is beyond the grasp of death. He comes to feel unsure of himself:

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
 No hungry generations tread thee down;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown: (61-64)

While the song is immortal, he is surrounded by human limitations. In Bush's words, "whereas the momentary experience of beauty is fleeting, the ideal embodiment of that moment in art, in song, or in marble, is an imperishable source of joy" (*Mythology* 107). The bird flies away but its song will be remembered as a piece of art. At the end he understands that "fancy cannot cheat so well" (73). The music fades as the nightingale flies away, and the poet finds himself alone, tricked by the "deceiving elf" (74) of imagination. What has been presented is either "a vision, or a waking dream" (79) inspired by the bird's song. Thus, in the end, he bids farewell and after his flight he returns to reality. The poem ends with the question "Do I wake or sleep?" (80) indicating that he is in a state of ambiguity because he has not found the permanency yet.

Similarly, Keats continues to stress the contrast between the ideal and the actual realms in "Ode on a Grecian Urn." The Grecian urn can be seen as a symbol for artworks in general. In Brotemarkle's words, the urn becomes "an appropriate object for marking one quality that belongs to almost all the arts: frozen time" (59). For the poet, art objects, which belong to a distant past, especially Greek culture, have permanence opposite to the evanescent nature of human life. Like the nightingale's song, the urn can still relate the history to mankind for many centuries after its creation. While describing

the vivid life of ancient Greece on the urn, the speaker refers to mythological figures as they represent the immortality of art. They will transcend “All breathing human passion” (28). Keats contrasts the permanence of the figures with the transitory nature of human life. The carved figures exist in a world of permanence; they will “remain, in midst of other woe” (47) for generations as “a friend to man” (48). Besides, as Talbot explains “‘Tempe or the dales of Arcady’ are suggested because Tempe is where Apollo and the Muses tarried when nearest to men, but Arcady is where men lived the most pastoral, untroubled and godlike lives” (Talbot 63). This realm depicted by the poet is an isolated, undisturbed world carved on the urn which has existed for generations. The piper, the lovers and the other figures on the urn are forever young; they are immortal. Thus the rustic figures on the urn have godlike qualities as a part of art.

The speaker calls the urn the “unravish’d bride of quietness” (1) because it is a symbol of perfect beauty untouched by the destruction of time. In Patterson’s interpretation, the urn “does not reproduce itself, but remains itself and transmits itself and its meaning directly” (“Passion” 210). Besides, it is a piece of art which is immortal and telling a story. With the pictures of rural life on it, the urn is a “Sylvan historian” (3) keeping life fresh. Its shapes and figures tell the story of a pastoral world, and it will continue to speak when the poet is gone. Havens points out that

“Ode on a Grecian Urn” deals not only with the immortality but the mortality of beauty. Immortal beauty is the main theme, but the wistful tone of the piece comes from the poet’s acute consciousness that the loveliness of most living things and of many which are not alive—sunsets, rainbows, water-falls, and winds on the heath—is soon gone. As he looks at the urn he is troubled by two conflicting emotions: joy in the presence of eternal beauty and pain in the thought that the living things represented are creatures of an hour. (209)

With its joy and beauty which do not fade, the urn will continue to please man in the future generations. The happiness, movements, aspiration of the beings on the urn have been held permanently in art. It is beyond the mortal limitations that restrict the experiences of man.

Referring to the “pipes and timbrels” (10) on the urn, the speaker gets the idea of music and continues: “Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter” (11-12). The unheard melodies appeal to the spirit not to “the sensual ear” (13), so they are permanent and beautiful. It can be said that sensual experiences are transitory while the spiritual ones are permanent. These melodies are beyond the senses. Thus, through imagination, the poet passes beyond the actual realm. Besides, time will not destroy the happy scene on the urn:

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
Forever piping songs forever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,
Forever panting, and forever young; (21-27)

The scene represents perfection but in the next stanza the speaker realises the fact that it is his imagination that makes it perfect:

[...] emptied of its folk, [...]
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return. (37-40)

The town is motionless, silent and empty; therefore, realising that the urn cannot be a substitute for actual experience, he calls the urn “attic shape” (41) and “Cold Pastoral” (45) in the last stanza. As Wigod suggests, it requires an interpretation of human mind, an active imagination to give these figures “warm life” (“Keats’s” 115). It is just a representation of happiness and beauty of actual life. With regard to this, the significance of the urn stems from the fact that it is a product of human imagination. He is driven to accept the mortal world that is transient but concrete and vital. The imaginary realm of art and the actual world of human experience are complementary to each other. In Brotemarkle’s words, “mythology itself was both vehicle, or sign, pointing toward art works, and beyond to the Imagination and symbol or mediator as art object embodying Imagination” (126). The urn is a symbolic representation, a metaphor

of the universal human desire for youth, joy, fertility, love and the quest for permanence. By writing a poem about an art object, the poet wants to attain immortality through the power of imagination, because what these sculptured figures experience is beyond the pains of earthly realms.

As a contrast to the actual world filled with decay, the urn is pure and beautiful. With this quality, the function of this urn is to stop time at a perfect moment:

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.' (46-50)

The beauty of the urn is truth because time cannot waste it; it will live again by giving joy to the future generations. Hooton points out that “the identity of truth as beauty and beauty as truth is all that earth-bound concrete material individuals may know; all other speculations are just that, mere speculation, and should not be accepted as knowledge” (49). Beauty is truth because it functions both in the mythological realm and in the actual world of human life that is transient. If the speaker had not been preoccupied with the imaginary realm he would not realise the beauty and truth of the actual realm. As a product of imagination, art transcends the laws of time and place, therefore, art captures the truth and beauty of the actual life in an enduring form and keeps them alive forever. In this sense, Keats underlines his understanding of the ideal: it is through art and poetry that man can find a passage to his own humanity.

In “Ode on Melancholy,” Keats accepts the truth as the unity of the opposite experiences; therefore, the poet goes one step further to maturity in terms of his refusal to escape to an imaginary or unchanging realm. In this respect, the ode projects Keats’s recognition of the value of seemingly negative feelings like melancholy. In the ode, melancholy is welcomed because the poet accepts the inevitable contrasts of life. Likewise, he points out that beauty and joy owe their value to their transience and the

existence of their opposites. In his study “Keats and His Ideas,” Douglas Bush emphasises that

[i]n a world of inexplicable mystery and pain, the experience of beauty is the one sure revelation of reality; beauty lives in particulars, and these pass, but they attest a principle, a unity, behind them. And if beauty is reality, the converse is likewise true, that reality, the reality of intense human experience, of suffering, can also yield beauty, in itself, and in art. This is central in poet’s creed. (335)

In order to experience joy fully one must experience melancholy intensely. In the previous odes Keats shows the inevitable contrasts of life. However, in this one he indicates that it is the transience of beauty that makes it valuable; it is the sorrow, grief and melancholy, the opposites of joy, one must face and accept to grasp the beauty and joy. Also, he warns the reader not to reject melancholy:

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
 Wolf’s-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss’d
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine, (1-4)

He proposes that when melancholy reigns, you should not try to escape it, but instead intensify it. Mayhead argues that the poem “is concerned with coming to terms with what are in themselves depressing feelings by trying to find a means of making them bearable” (58). To make these things bearable is to intensify life; intensity of experience is necessary to feel the joy of life. It is an indicator of his strong acceptance of sorrow as good, for he is learning to accept the limitations of mortality. He mentions Lethe, river of forgetfulness in Hades, and Proserpine, the goddess of the underworld, to denote gloom and death. The poet tries to avoid these mythological figures of escape from death because one should be awake to attain truth. It is a mistake to seek escape from sorrow; it should be vividly felt because it is a part of human experience.

The reconciliation of the seemingly opposite elements in life constitutes the subject of the poem. The ideal and the actual meet in human experience; the pleasing and the painful in human life are brought together. As he indicates in his letter to his brother, Keats believes that “[t]he excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all

disagreeables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth” (*Letters* 32, 71). For this reason he welcomes melancholy which can exist in harmony with joy. The speaker says:

Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave, (15-19)

He advises what to do when sadness takes over. One must enjoy the beauties of life as fully as possible because melancholy comes from the knowledge that beauty is transient like the symbols salt sand-wave and morning rose. One has to face these harsh realities of life which include joy and sorrow, permanence and impermanence. Furthermore, he mentions “Veil’d Melancholy,” (26) personified as a female figure “has her sovran shrine” (26) “in the very temple of Delight” (25). She is veiled because melancholy is not expected to appear during the experience of joy. Besides, melancholy is female because she represents beauty. She dwells not upon gloomy and ugly things, but beauty:

She dwells with Beauty - Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips: (21-24)

Those who can experience melancholy as a part of “delight” can live intensely. As Smith observes, “what produces true melancholy is a heightened consciousness of beauty and an intense participation in pleasure and joy” (688). Keats wishes his reader to accept melancholy as a desirable experience. It should be endured and its sufferer improves in strength; it provides the way to attain truth. In this regard, suffering and pain which cause melancholy are fundamental elements of reality and cannot be separated from it. In *Endymion*, although he is sure that beauty is hard to attain, as it is symbolized by a goddess, he knows that it is also permanent: “it will never / pass into nothingness” (I. 2-3). However, as he matures, he realises that “beauty could be no guarantee against the passage into nothingness” (McFarland, *The Masks* 97). The

opposite feelings are inseparably combined in human experience; they are the fundamental conditions in life. Appropriately, if one accepts life as it comes, he can attain beauty and truth. In “To Autumn,” he further elaborates on this idea.

“To Autumn” can be regarded as Keats’s final statement on the acceptance of truth of actual life. There is no theme of flight or a mythological realm in the poem. He is fully aware of the beauty and the meaningfulness of the earthly realm that stands for the richness of the great cycle of nature. Keats chooses autumn, which is the season of “later flowers” (9), since it connotes the themes of transience, change, and mortality that are used in the previous odes. He describes autumn with vivid images:

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run; (1-3)

All these materials are put together harmoniously by the poet’s imagination in order to highlight the necessity of ripening, maturing and decay for the continuity in nature. Autumn is a season at the peak of achievement; the cycle of nature comes full circle. Although summer has passed away, the season has life-sustaining qualities, because it is the time of harvesting. Keats observes nature with a poetic imagination and personifies the season: her hair “soft-lifted” by the “winnowing wind” (15). She is described as a harvester who is occupied with the end of summer. Reaping and winnowing are the central activities of the harvester:

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours. (19-22)

The speaker tells the natural process with sensuous observations. Just like the new gods’ taking over the place of the Titans in *Hyperion*, the seasons move in cycles: “Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they? / Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,” (23-24). Although spring is a time of rebirth of life, its songs are past now.

The poet recognises that the permanence he seeks throughout his career is the continuity of life itself in which “the impermanence of the individual human existence is one tiny aspect of a vast and deathless pattern” (Mayhead 96). He expresses his contentment with the cycle of birth, death and rebirth in life. He forms a parallel between the passing of the seasons and the transience of the beautiful moments in human life. Keats has come to accept that it is futile to regret the loss. Hence, the elements of transience, process, and death provide an impression of fulfillment in this poem. The fact that winter will follow autumn, which comes after spring, refers to human life which is in its maturity, having left youth behind. There are hints of death in the lines:

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, [...] (25-28)

The soft-dying day is not to be mourned because it is actually dying into life in a new day. The idea of death is not something horrible; on the contrary, it resembles the close of the new day which will be followed by the rise of the sun again. A day is ending slowly without any feeling of regret or melancholy. This cycle of nature is a great permanence in the universe. Thus, it is possible to form a parallel between joy and sorrow, and day and night that are complementary to each other. All the opposites are woven into a unity. The permanence paradoxically lies in the continuity of life. With this last poem Keats shows that he reaches maturity through a gradual progress. He does not try to escape from the earthly realm anymore; he starts to see the world in better terms. These odes portray how man can find beauty in the actual world, how through imagination he can transform it and create imaginary realms, and escape from the limitations of the actual momentarily. All the odes include the aspects of human experience, and therefore, have cohesion and unity with the other major poems.

In conclusion, Keats’s use of the myths is the result of “natural temper and sympathy in so far as it is not the result of rigorous scholarship and deep meditation on the texts of antiquity” (Aske 34). For him, myths are representations of imagination; essential to higher art and works of ancient poets, human strife, passion, and joy. Regarding Keats’s

use of myth, Brotemarkle emphasises that “Greek mythology [...] contains the power of the sublime. When he refers to it as beautiful, he does not use the word lightly. For Keats beauty always denotes art which bares the mark of genuine imagination” (116). Since myths are the indicative of beauty itself, that is, the perfect unity of the mundane and the ideal, they can be regarded as a medium between human feelings and earthly material. In this regard, Keats’s poetry originates from natural beauties and the impressions they evoke. Then, the poet, contemplating on this earthly material, becomes detached from his surroundings and moves into an imaginative realm that enables the poetic creation to reach beauty and truth. In order to attain beauty, Keats uses myths, as markers of higher art, as emblems of human passions. In this sense, through the ordeals of mythological figures, he celebrates the unity of joy and grief in human life which provides the basic matter of human existence. This union of joy and pain is the fundamental fact of human experience, and Keats observes and accepts it as true.

CHAPTER II

KEATS'S USE OF THE SUPERNATURAL AND THE GOTHIC

“He describes what he sees — I describe what I imagine — Mine is the hardest task.” (*Letters* 156, 413)

While mentioning the difference between himself and Lord Byron, Keats emphasises the importance of imagination for him in this letter. For Keats, it is imagination that provides the power to create reality. Those who lack this power are only capable of perceiving the visible truth. Therefore, what imagination reflects is more significant than what eyes see. In fact, it is the common characteristic of Romantic tradition in poetry. As McFarland puts it, “Romantic Hellenism and Romantic medievalism are important threads in the general fabric of Romanticism” (*The Masks* 2). In the Romantic period, the use of imaginary elements and the revival of the poetry of the Middle Ages became the major components of poetry. In this regard, the general tendency towards medievalism gave rise to the use of supernatural elements and gothic imagination in Keats's poetry. These elements include the wild and disorderly aspects of nature that stand for the unknown in human life. Contrary to the actual realm defined and restricted by physical reality, the unknown is full of possibilities provided by imagination. In other words, imagination presents the chance to surpass the limited reality. Keats's use of Hellenism was dealt with in the previous chapter; this section focuses on the ways Keats employs gothic and supernatural elements as reflections of imagination to attain beauty.

The word “gothic” is used in various ways to refer to certain cultural elements. Michael Gamer, in *Romanticism and the Gothic*, indicates that “at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century [...] neither ‘gothic’ nor ‘romantic’ had yet taken their modern meanings” and he adds that the gothic is rather “a discursive site crossing the genres” (2-3). Studies such as Anne Williams's *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*

and Robert Miles's *Gothic Writing*, discuss the influence of the gothic on the major poets of the Romantic era. As Miles argues, the gothic is not a set of conventions,

but “a ‘carnavalesque’ mode for representations of the fragmented subject. Both the generic multiplicity of the Gothic, and what one might call its discursive primacy, effectively detach the Gothic from the tidy simplicity of thinking of it as so many predictable, fictional conventions. (4)

Likewise, for Anne Williams the gothic “outlines a large, irregularly shaped figure, an irregularity that implies the limitations of language — appropriate for the category containing [the] unspeakable ‘other’” (23). As she further suggests, the gothic “is a discourse that shows the cracks in the system that constitutes consciousness, ‘reality’” (66). Accordingly, it can be said that there is not a fixed definition of the term gothic. Rather, its meaning is defined by various symbols, figures, and elements. These elements exceed the limits of simplicity to reach what is beyond the earthly existence. In this respect, the characteristics mentioned above are relevant to Keats's use of the gothic.

Another aspect to be considered about the use of the gothic is its place in the tradition. In the Romantic age, as Brennan emphasises,

in one sense, the Gothic tradition began as the shadow of eighteenth-century neoclassicism. Referred to at the start of the century to connote the barbaric and the wild — as in things post-Roman and medieval — eventually the term ‘Gothic’ became an antonym for ‘classical.’ (1)

The word came to indicate anything that was related to the Middle Ages, the feudal social order and sense of mystery. Stevens also states that “the fascination for ruins and relics permeated all the gothic arts, from architecture to literature, and frequently verged on the nostalgic in its idealization of the past as opposed to a complicated and unacceptable present” (47). It was basically a deliberate revival of older traditions. In other words, gothic revival became the symbol of opposition to the order. Besides, these above-mentioned places like ruins, dungeons, and dark tunnels, which are associated with the gothic and the supernatural, can be the major settings that evoke a sense of

obscurity and repression. With the suppression of what is not visible or rational in the Neoclassical culture, supernatural qualities like the vague, obscure, mysterious experience disappeared in literature. However, it was with Romanticism that such qualities became prominent in poetry which was indeed a reaction against this suppression.

Gothic revival also introduced new alternatives in terms of literary genres. In the range of forms available to writers who employed gothic elements, the ballad, dating back to an oral tradition, and the medieval romance were significant artifacts (Stevens 47). The supernatural is almost an obligatory component of the gothic. As Stevens further maintains

in everyday parlance the word 'supernatural' generally suggests something ghostly, unexplained — and there are plenty of such examples to choose from in the gothic repertoire. On a closer examination, the word itself suggests also a rather deeper level of meaning: beyond or above the natural, rationally explainable world. (49)

The tendency towards the use of supernatural is reinforced by disillusionment with rationalism and the reawakening of a body of older literature like romances and ballads which provided the poets with numerous themes and new sources of inspiration. In parallel with this tendency, in poetry, the function of the use of the gothic is to raise awareness of such values as mystery, superstition, instinct.

As stated above, Keats's approach to reality and the imaginative has a paradoxical quality. One side of Keats yearns for an imaginative journey towards an ideal world created by his poetic gift. On the other hand, he undertakes a mission as a poet: the mission to heal the sorrow and pain of the world through reconciliation between joy and sorrow. In order to bridge the gap between the actual world and the ideal one, he wants to create something permanent, which is art. Through imagination, truth is perceived in the form of beauty which lies in the unity of the seemingly opposite aspects of life. For him, it is only by means of man's highest imaginative capacity that he can make the ideal united with the actual one. Thus, Keats creates a kind of world in which the

qualities of human life are represented by the details of nature and his own poetic vision. In order to explain some themes or feelings, which are not easy to define — especially the mysterious aspect of love — he makes use of supernatural elements. Keats's poems include occurrences like spell-casting and transformation, explore love-relationship or ill-fated love from various perspectives.

Keats found the source of his *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil* (1818) in the chapter of Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1353) which tells of the tragic close of love of a maiden of Messina for a youth working for her merchant brothers. As Bernbaum states, "the Italian master related this as a realistic tale of terror, and dwelt upon the action; Keats entirely changed its atmosphere by imaginatively elaborating the feelings and sentiments of Isabella and her lover" (230). In the poem, especially the grief deeply felt by Isabella changes the focal point of the events. Keats adds a mysterious atmosphere and gruesome details to the story with the aim of presenting another aspect of life that is far from what is considered reasonable. However, he was not satisfied with what he wrote down and in a letter to Richard Woodhouse, he himself judges this poem as follows:

There is too much inexperience of live [sic], and simplicity of knowledge in it — which might do very well after one's death— but not while one is alive. [...] Isabella is what I should call were I a reviewer 'A weak-sided poem' with an amusing sober-sadness about it. (*Letters* 152, 391)

As his statement makes clear, Keats sees the poem a naive attempt to deal with the romance and his idealisation. He felt that he could produce better poetry, or he felt uneasy because of the possible attacks of the reviewers. Therefore, the poem can be evaluated as a product of a transitional period between *Endymion* and the odes. The story does not have a happy ending and the characters are not mature, or experienced, unlike those voices in the odes.

The risk of death dominates the majority of these poems that include gothic and supernatural elements. Several of them feature helpless male characters who are

directed towards death as a result of their passionate union with women. The illicit love has to come to an end if the outside world discovers it. Yet these lovers are breaking the conventions and rules at the expense of their lives and it is always the male character who takes this risk. Most of the time, just like imaginary occurrences, love is fragile and experienced in secret. In *Isabella*, Lorenzo is a naive figure who is a victim of forces beyond his control. Isabella and Lorenzo's love is destined to failure and destruction. At first it is merely human love that Keats describes with courses of nature:

With every morn their love grew tenderer,
 With every eve deeper and tenderer still;
 He might not in house, field, or garden stir,
 But her full shape would all his seeing fill;
 And his continual voice was pleasanter
 To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill;
 Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,
 She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same. (9-16)

Isabella's brothers want to wed their sister to "some high noble" (168). The brothers who are "enriched from ancestral merchandise" (106) consider themselves superior to Lorenzo, who is not wealthy enough for them. They are introduced as rich exploiters:

[...] for them many a weary hand did swelt
 In torched mines and noisy factories
 And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt
 In blood from stinging whip;--with hollow eyes
 Many all day in dazzling river stood,
 To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.(107-12)
 [.....]
 [...] for them alone did seethe
 A thousand men in troubles wide and dark:
 Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
 That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel. (117-20)

The brothers are so "proud" (125) that as Lorenzo is a servant to them, he cannot marry their sister. Furthermore, Lorenzo's love "is a 'crime' because it crosses class boundaries" (Fermanis 148). For them, he is not in the position to enhance their status. Providing an interpretation of the brothers' pursuit, Heinzelman points out that "[i]n

their economic practice they act so entirely for themselves that they literally permit no other interests but their own any place in the World” (165). This attitude of the brothers displays the assets of the actual society and how Keats interprets the world they live in. Because of the pressures of such society, Isabella and Lorenzo’s love cannot survive.

When the brothers learn the relationship between the young lovers, they kill Lorenzo. It is the proof of how love, the expression of beauty and truth, is sentenced to death by the cruel facts of life. The ghost of Lorenzo comes to Isabella in a dream informing her of his tragic fate and giving her instructions that will lead her to his body. After beauty is slain by the actuality, another door is opened for Isabella. The fact behind Lorenzo’s death is revealed to her in a dream vision. However, this is not a pleasing dream unlike those in *Endymion*, because the reality of tragedy inherent in human life is elaborated in the rich symbols in Isabella’s dream. Keats gives details of atrocity and violence within a gothic atmosphere. Lorenzo appears as a “pale shadow” (281) with “cold doom / Upon his lips” (277). His “forest tomb” (275) has “marr’d his glossy hair,” (276) and “loamed” (279). His words are described as “strange sound” of a “ghostly under-song” (286). Accordingly, Keats adds that “its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright” (289) implying that he is no longer a human being but supernatural. Regarding the murder and the weird characteristics of the figure, Agrawal points out that “*Isabella* presents before us the naked horrors, the brutality, and savagery of medieval times” (157). On the one hand, the atmosphere has unpleasant connotations in parallel with the actual life, on the other; it suggests another realm which is not of the real world. By the agency of the dream that presents an alternative world, truth is introduced to Isabella. Since truth means beauty in Keatsian principle, Isabella treasures the dream and what it brings forth.

Keats uses gruesome details to enhance horror and to emphasise the reality of human life. In the dream, Lorenzo begs Isabella to visit his grave with one purpose only: “shed one tear upon my heather-bloom, / And it shall comfort me within the tomb” (303-4). When Isabella and her nurse find and begin digging Lorenzo’s grave, their action is described in gruesome words:

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,
 Until her heart felt pity to the core
 At sight of such a dismal labouring,
 And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar,
 And put her lean hands to the horrid thing:
 Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore;
 At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
 And Isabella did not stamp and rave. (377-84)

Although the gothic elements suggest a “horrid” atmosphere, they are a part of Isabella’s love which is immortal for her:

With duller steel than the Persean sword
 They cut away no formless monster’s head,
 But one, whose gentleness did well accord
 With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,
 If Love impersonate was ever dead,
 Pale Isabella kiss’d it, and low moan’d.
 ‘Twas love; cold, - dead indeed, but not dethroned. (393-401)

After they carry Lorenzo’s head home, Isabella wraps the head in a silken scarf; buries it in a pot and sets over it the herb “sweet basil” (416) to hide. Her love for Lorenzo, the truth and beauty of her life, exceeds her fear in these lines:

And then the prize was all for Isabel:
 She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,
 And all around each eye's sepulchral cell
 Pointed each fringed lash; the smeared loam
 With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,
 She drench'd away:--and still she comb'd, and kept
 Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd, and wept. (402-8)

The details are thrilling and unpleasant; the head buried in a pot is an appalling image. As the definitions of the gothic have shown, these elements reflect the “unexplained” or “the unspeakable other.” Through these unaccustomed elements, Keats seeks what is beyond the visible. In the alternative realm Isabella creates for herself, gothic details seem beautiful and pleasant. Since beauty means truth, this suffering she experiences is the mere reality of her life. Fermanis argues that “[a]s Apollo is taught to ‘think of the earth’ by Moneta in *The Fall of Hyperion*, [...] so Isabella is educated in the cruel

realities of life by Lorenzo's death" (148). The miseries of the actual world lead her to find the reality which also reveals the identities of the murderers. In this regard, the basil pot becomes the emblem of beauty and truth, and misery of Isabella's present life. The loss of the pot means the loss of beauty in her life, therefore, without the pot, her life will be meaningless. Everything else loses significance for her:

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
 And she forgot the blue above the trees,
 And she forgot the dells where waters run,
 And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze;
 She had no knowledge when the day was done,
 And the new morn she saw not: but in peace
 Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
 And moisten'd it with tears unto the core. (417-24)

What is beautiful for Isabella is ugly, grotesque and horrific for her brothers who are so much involved with reality. Beyond the rules of earthly existence, things can be evaluated from different perspectives. In this respect, in placing the head in a pot, Isabella creates a reality for herself; she worships it by committing herself entirely to its beauty. For this reason, Isabella's brothers find her behavior puzzling and investigate the pot, only to discover the head of their victim staring at them: "The thing was vile with green and livid spot, / And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face" (475-76). Stealing the pot away, they flee forever from Florence into a life of banishment. When the brothers disappear with the basil pot they destroy Isabella's last meaningful possession and thus ruin her life; she laments her loss. Watkins regards the pot as "a relic that signifies truth" (62). As he states "it is not a human relationship itself, but a symbol of a human relationship. In her absolute devotion to the pot, Isabella reveals her real, if unstated, belief that life itself holds nothing of meaning for her" (62). After Lorenzo's death she cannot find purpose in life. Although all these gothic images like ghost, grave, and darkness seem to create a gloomy atmosphere, they are the components of beauty of Isabella's world. Thus, the gothic and supernatural details in the poem are important in order to understand the world that she invents. Sider also emphasises a similar point worth considering in a discussion of Isabella's situation. As he puts it, "Isabella's construction of the grotesque is, in fact, a form of failed idealism, the attempt [...] to bridge the gap between her ideal [...] love and the sensuous, real world." (85). In a way,

Isabella replaces her love for Lorenzo with her obsession with the pot. The reality of the world cannot accept her grotesque dreams of imagination and finally, her failure and disappointment cause her madness. This failure of imagination and its distance from reality is a theme Keats develops in his later poems.

Furthermore, the gothic scene is enhanced with the detailed account of Lorenzo's decaying body. The narration of a dead person with details of physical decay is grounded on Keats's medical education. It can be said that Keats's medical training provided him with a background to depict such events. As Gaull puts,

apprenticed to an apothecary, he witnessed human suffering on a daily basis, assisting in a number of such minor but disagreeable procedures as bleeding, drawing teeth, setting bones, and attending to infections in the days before anesthesia and antiseptics. His response to pain and despair intensified when he trained at Guy's Hospital, a charitable institution for incurable diseases, where he attended lectures, observed operations, assisted in the sick wards changing dressings, and dissected corpses that had been stolen from local graveyards by thieves who then sold them to the hospitals. (221)

His experience in hospitals was transformed into an art based on feelings. Particularly, by integrating his knowledge with imagination, Keats creates an alternative world. Apparently, his medical experience improved his ability to describe death and pain vividly. It is this vividness and ferocity that evoke feelings of horror, one of the fundamental qualities of gothic writing.

Another poem which deals with an illicit love affair is *The Eve of St Agnes*. The poem seems like a simple romance which narrates the love of two young people of feuding families. As for Blackstone, *The Eve of St Agnes* is "like *Isabella*, a 'Gothic' poem" (274). Likewise, Stillinger regards the poem as Keats's "most sustained production in the Gothic mode" (*Reading* 59). The poem, which was composed in 1819, is about a medieval legend that tells how young virgins who perform certain rituals on the night of January twentieth will envision their future husbands in dreams. This belief is mentioned by Robert Burton in the *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). Keats combined the

superstitious belief with *Romeo and Juliet* which is an important source for *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

The use of superstition is also a means of creating a gothic atmosphere. As Douglass H. Thomson states, “it is a term for the religious and political dimensions of Gothic Literature, especially its reception” (par. 39). St Agnes is the patron saints of virgins. In the poem, as the title suggests, the superstition is a part of the religious atmosphere of the day. The legend is passed down from generation to generation. Madeline learns the “legends old” (135) from “old dames” (45):

They told her how, upon St Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire. (46-54)

She is hopeful that her future husband will appear in her dream to make love with her and she will remain still a virgin. That night, Madeline retires to sleep in excitement. Then young Porphyro comes to her secretly; and Angela, Madeline’s nurse and confidante, tells him that the girl intends to perform the rites. Upon his persuasion her that he will not harm her, Angela takes him to Madeline’s bedroom so that he can hide himself in a closet. Before Madeline starts the ritual, Porphyro spies on her as she undresses. Then she falls asleep and he sings to wake her up. When she is in a condition between sleep and awakening she confesses her love to him. After that, she wakes up and the lovers run away from the castle together. Although it seems like an ordinary romance plot, as Sperry comments “St. Agnes is a romance of a sort totally different from any [Keats] had yet attempted” (*Keats* 198). The poem is not a simple exemplary of the triumph of love over the cruel society. The dreams of the characters are fulfilled in the very actual world. In this sense, the poem seems remote from actuality but in fact it depends on the actual materials from life. On the one hand, the characters enjoy a

dreamy world; on the other hand, they flee to the actual world which is full of threats. As opposed to the romances with happy ending, here the lovers head for an unknown end.

The poem begins with Christian devotions of the Beadsman. The description of the Beadsman and the piercing cold prepare a series of contrasts that contribute to the gothic atmosphere of the poem:

St. Agnes' Eve - Ah, bitter chill it was!
 The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
 The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
 And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
 Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
 His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
 Like pious incense from a censer old,
 Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
 Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith. (1-9)

His fingers are numb with cold as he tells his rosary. Even if the vocabulary used in these lines creates a religious atmosphere, it does not convey peace. Contrarily, uneasiness, fear and ambiguity prevail. This ambiguous atmosphere is enhanced by the phrase “without a death” that can be linked with a possibility of supernatural event. On the contrary, the scene is rich and comfortable in the castle:

The level chambers, ready with their pride,
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
 The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
 Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests, (32-35)

The setting is of gothic tradition and a world of enchantments with its dusky galleries, arched ways, and silken chambers. They all contribute to an increasing tension in the poem. Ridley emphasises that “in a tale of this kind Keats was not likely to trouble his head about historical accuracy; what he wants is a congruous setting for his story; and this is not a period castle at all” (128). It is a kind of medieval castle, of which the main features seem to be a chapel with aisles, wide stairs, gothic windows with stained glass,

and an iron gate. The main story takes place in the warmth of Madeline's chamber. The reality of the outside is contrasted with the romantic scenes in the castle. The description of the bitter cold, the owl, the hare, the Beadsman with his numb fingers and frosted breath are so vividly described that the reader can feel the cold appeal to the senses. The Beadsman, a "patient, holy man," represents Christianity and he is very far removed from earthly affairs as he renounces from the pleasures in the castle. He hears music as he leaves the chapel to draw attention to the revelry. Apart from this, his frosted breath conveys the idea of old age and death as he is a man who has passed beyond the joys of life: "already had his deathbell rung; / The joys of all his life were said and sung; (22-23). On the contrary, the warmth of love is emphasised in the lines below:

[...] Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, (74-77)

Then the scene changes to the crowd in castle rooms and the hall of revelry. The ballroom is full of lively images like music. The description of the setting continues with gothic details. In accordance with the aforementioned definitions of the gothic, Keats creates a mystical atmosphere. The images of "the sculptur'd dead" (14), "pale as smooth-sculptured stone" (297) and "like a throbbing star" (317) contribute to the gothic setting which has a more vivid and eerie dimension with the use of details containing magic. These are all elements that Williams calls "the unspeakable other" (23). The castle, which is amidst the moors, has a gloomy chapel, and the room is "silent as a tomb" (113). The liveliness of the indoor scenes is presented by the fires, which again convey the sharp contrast with the Beadsman's frosty surroundings:

[...]. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide;
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests. (30-33)

The striking contrast between passion of the participants of the feast and inactivity of the Beadsman shows his isolation and having nothing to do in life anymore.

Loneliness is also one of the themes that strengthens the gothic atmosphere in the poem. Both Madeline and the Beadsman are isolated figures. What Madeline deals with is actually a kind of religious ceremony that is parallel to the act of the beadsman. However, hers is related with her sensual desires. The Beadsman denies sensual experience as he is devoted to spirituality. He is a figure who cannot experience the joy of life, so he dies at the end. On the other hand, Madeline's act takes place within the walls of the castle. Here, through superstitious rites, Madeline hopes to escape from the actual existence to her inner world that is made of visionary yearnings. Her isolation from "the argent revelry" (l. 37) suggests that she is not content with what is given in this realm. Likewise, Porphyro is a lonely, isolated man who ventures into the revels of the enemies of his family. The old "beldame" Angela, who also seems very lonely, takes him to her room so she helps him to see Madeline. Among these lonely figures, Madeline and Porphyro have an aim; they dare to exceed the limits and restrictions of the situation they live in. However, Angela and the Beadsman are passive, aimless and ghastly figures who do not have a dream to fulfill. It does not occur to them that there could be another life. In the following paragraphs, this characteristic of them will be discussed in relation to their imminent death.

Apart from this, Porphyro's courageous behaviour brings out another issue to consider. Through his action, violence becomes another theme in the poem that is closely related to Keats's use of a medieval setting. In order to achieve his aim, Porphyro threatens to get himself killed if Angela refuses to help him. As Watkins explains "the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century view that feudalism was characterised very largely by violence, physical power, and politically-interested religion is perfectly consistent with Keats's handling of feudalism in the *Eve*" (68). Porphyro is also ready for a combat with his foes. His determination to pursue Madeline after learning from Angela that the castle is full of those "whose very dogs would execrations howl / Against his lineage" (87-8) seems foolhardy. In accordance with this the code of feudal

times, there is a feeling of being on the verge of bloodshed, terror, murder that can be associated with the barbaric mentioned by Brennan.

In *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, colour imagery is also used in order to reinforce the ambiance and to make the picture, revived in the imagination of the reader, more vivid. The effects related to vividness are achieved by the use of a combination of colours like red, blue, purple, and amethyst. The contrasts between old and young, cold and warm, dream and reality serve to express Keats's vision of duality in life like he exemplifies in his odes. However, perfection is remote from reality. Since the society she lives in restricts her from expressing her desires, Madeline chooses to move to another realm. It is only when Madeline lives in a perfect universe in a world of dreams that she is protected from the sorrow of reality. But there is also joy in this life. If she dreams on she will be deprived of the joys of life. Thus, she must experience the strife of real existence in order to achieve its joy. She is "like a missioned spirit, unaware" (193) of the opportunities of the actual life that may actualise her dreams. Madeline hopes to see an image of her destined beloved in her dream that night. She is "St. Agnes' charmed maid" (192) who observes the rites rooted in folk superstition. There is music, dancing, food but Madeline cares for none of these things. She leaves the hall, the ceremonies for prayer and seclusion. Yearning for fulfilling her dream, she is oblivious to the looks of "love, defiance, hate, and scorn" (69) around her. She turns away from courtly festivities. Her eyes are "vague" (64) because she is absorbed in imagination:

'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amorn,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn. (69-72)

At this point the states of dreaming and the actual events merge into each other. After she goes to bed and while she is asleep, he climbs into her bed to make love to the still sleeping girl, and then sings his song "close to her ear" (292). Madeline, awakening to find real Porphyro in her bed, is astonished. She has difficulty in distinguishing her dream from reality:

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
 There was a painful change, that night expell'd
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly. (298-306)

The description of the dream and moving to reality become indistinguishable here. The ritual is considered by Angela as a foolish amusement; Porphyro sees it as the appropriate occasion for implementing his plan. Keats draws attention to the function of dreams in revealing truth. The narrator describes Madeline as hoodwinked with fancy, metaphorically both blind and dead. Her awakening from her dream into the reality could be simply a poetic version of that transition from dream to reality which Keats refers as Adam's dream in his letter. The gap between desires and the realisation can be bridged by imagination. Sperry draws the attention to power of the will. As he argues, the characters live in a world of make-believe that is turned into reality by the force of will. In other words, they shape a kind of reality from the stuff of illusion by an act of will (*Keats* 209-210). It is the Keatsian explanation of the power of imagination to create truth. In his study *John Keats's Dream of Truth*, Jones argues that for Keats the dream is "an instant of the purest naturalism" (239). It is a part of the natural course of things in life. Regarding Madeline's waking to truth he maintains that

[i]t appears a fact of life, no more but no less, and its firm fair basis — its beauty and truth — is Madeline's oscillation between sleep and wake. [...] [Porphyro] is her dream's unspeakable concrete filling, and she the longed-for repose of all his desire and admiration. (240)

The restriction of human feelings by the norms is also solved by the help of imagination. Sperry regards the poem as "a drama of wish-fulfillment" (*Keats* 205). He indicates that it is the power of human desire which actualises the dream. It is the imagination, activated in dream that creates truth. Therefore, it is the main factor which helps the couple overcome the repression of the actual realm. Madeline and Porphyro

are fulfilling their desires and the poem is a “testimony to the power of human desire to realize itself” (205).

On the other hand, Stillinger attaches great importance to Madeline’s being “Hoodwink’d with faery fancy” (70). He argues that she is deceived “by her own trust in the superstitious ritual” (*Reading* 53). In his essay “The Hoodwinking of Madeline” he further asserts that “[s]he is a victim of deception, to be sure, but of deception not so much by Porphyro as by herself and the superstition she trusts in.” (547). What Madeline dreams of and what she experiences are quite obscure as presented in her dreaming condition. She is totally separated from reality to perform the ritual:

Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
 Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
 Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again. (238-43)

When she wakes up, she cries: “No dream, alas! alas! And woe is mine!” (328) because what she experiences does not suit her romantic ideal. Her intention was to remain a virgin that night but her imagination deceives her. She knows that if Porphyro is found in her chamber, she will be severely punished by the cruel society. Upon her disappointment, Porphyro tries to soothe her saying that he has a home “o’er the southern moors.” (350). His intention is to make her his “lovely bride” (334). Madeline’s dream, which detaches her from joy and pain, comes true like Endymion’s. Although an alternative realm of imagination is experienced through dreams, she is confined to the concrete reality. Imagination should not be so distant from the actuality. It should be open to the pains and pleasures of life equally. Disappointments are also part of this life, so a unity must be provided. Being “blinded” from the realities of life brings nothing to Madeline; her belief turns out to be just an illusion. When she wakes up to the actuality in which she finds disappointment first, she begins to face pain and hope. In other words, Madeline becomes an active participant in the actual world.

At the end of the poem, there is a storm blowing like a warning to the lovers. The moon has set and it is a magical “elfin storm from faery-land” (343). Porphyro calls Madeline his bride and they “glide like phantoms” (361) out of the castle and disappear into the icy storm:

The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.
And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm. (368-71)

The lovers seem to be in an enchanted state. In silence, they flee to an unknown realm. As Sandy explains,

Keats’s lovers do not retreat from dark reality into an illusory dream mode, even if their story is absorbed into legend's ideal and immutable realm. Instead Porphyro and Madeline flee from a magical castle — itself a product of ideal illusion — into a troubled ‘storm’ of tragic reality. (par. 14)

As fancy that is distant from actuality deceives the dreamer, she decides to face what is painful but real. In their current state, there seems to be nothing but death for them. Therefore, it can be said that they choose an unknown future.

In contrast to the lovers who “fled away” into another realm, Angela dies “palsy-twitched, with meagre face deformed” (376). Regarding Madeline’s act she declares “good angels her deceive! / But let me laugh awhile” (125-6). For her there is no possibility of liberating herself from the physical realm. Frightened by Porphyro’s threat to reveal himself to his enemies, Angela reveals herself as “A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing” (155). The tolling of the bells, corpses and the mysterious atmosphere used are all part of the obscurity of the gothic atmosphere. Accordingly, her chamber is described as “Pale, lattic’d, chill, and silent as a tomb” (113). It is a room of old age. Both Angela and the Beadsman die, as life does not mean anything for them. They are unable to experience transcendence because they are devoid of the imaginative faculty. Angela finds the superstitious rites absurd. As for the Beadsman, as mentioned before, he engages in nothing but his religious duties. Sperry highlights that “he

restrains his feeling, while his passion, channeled into the forms of religious worship, seems powerless to animate a host of images that are lifeless and unyielding” (*Keats* 206). The human feeling and warmth are under repression as shown in the sculptural imagery Keats uses while depicting the frozen images. The sculptural imagery is used also to depict Porphyro as “pale as smooth-sculptured stone” (297) when he kneels as if frozen by Madeline’s bedside. While human feelings are restrained inside the castle, the lovers are free in the arms of nature. As Foakes emphasises, “the consummation of their love confers a kind of immortality on Madeline and Porphyro, redeems them from their cold, death-like state, and spiritualizes them” (92). They vanish “like phantoms” (361):

The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns;
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans. (365-69)

On the other hand, nightmares of “witch and demon” (74) trouble the baron and his guests in the castle. Regarding the death of the two old figures in the end while the two lovers flee, Foakes further states that

[t]he completion of their love is also a fulfillment of the lives of the old people, who have been awaiting death; and their death, at a time of blessing, corresponds to the release from mortality of the lovers, who, as it were die into life by proxy, and achieve a spiritual state. (93)

In this respect, the situation of the lovers parallels that of Endymion who made a similar journey into the realm of dreams only to realise that he had to embrace the actual realm with its difficulties. As mentioned before, the coldness is associated with old age, death, holiness as suggested by the icy chapel. Warmth is conveyed by the festivity, dancers, bright lights, rich colours, and youth of the lovers. In a way, the death of the old order which is suppressive and consigned to cold gives way to freedom by the love of Madeline and Porphyro. In line with the mysterious escape of the characters to an unknown world Fausset indicates that

[t]his romantic suggestiveness, in which instinct takes wings and rises into the realm of pure imagination, will always remain inexplicable by the reason; for in that its whole power lies. It is a witchery of sense, which combines in one passionate moment a number of images calculated both by their sense and sound to suggest an infinite world by mingling the near and the distant, the definite and the indefinite, as in a blurred picture in which distances are confused, but which is yet distinct enough to provoke and tantalise the mind, to stimulate and leave unsatisfied the sense. (73)

With the hints of a world beyond the actual realm, the imagery suggests a freedom from limitations. In order to achieve their vision of love they have to transcend their mortality. They move to another realm which is a “faery-land” that functions as a home to all magical events but their act is also an expression of their will to face the reality and to abandon the mortal world, which is full of prohibitions, for the sake of the ideal world. Subjecting the ideal dreams of romance to the tragic realities of mortality, Keats praises the victory of Romantic imagination. As the plot-line of the poem develops, the main characters evolve spiritually from innocence to an awareness of experience as they attempt to conquer mortality through romance and imagination. In a way, they move towards the actualisation of the romance that they imagine.

The theme of hoodwinking can also be found in *The Eve of St. Mark*, which is a descriptive fragment. It is parallel to the popular belief about the eve of Saint Mark. The season seems to be early spring:

The chilly sunset faintly told
 Of unmatured green vallies cold,
 Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
 Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,
 Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
 And daisies on the aguish hills. (7-12)

Keats begins the poem with a physical description of the outdoors as he does in most of his other poems. It is a Sunday in early spring, church bell is ringing and townspeople are going to church. The description is given in detail with the flowers, streets, the whisperings of the people, and the music of the church organ. For Colvin, the interest of *The Eve of Saint Mark*

lies not in moving narrative or the promise of it, but in two things: first, its pictorial brilliance and charm of workmanship: and second, its relation to and influence on later English poetry. Keats in this piece anticipates in a remarkable degree the feeling and method of the modern pre-Raphaelite schools. (165)

There is not a clear plot; instead, Keats seems to be interested in creating atmosphere. Yet it is clear that through this atmosphere the character is detached from the actuality. The details of the indoor scenes and the colours of them provide a “picturesque” quality to the poem. The speaker presents further details of the indoor scene. A solitary woman, Bertha is reading about the life of Saint Mark by a window. It is a book decorated with pictures of angels, stars, and martyrs. She is so engrossed in the book that she is not aware of the people outside. As opposed to the crowd outside, Bertha is described as having an “aching neck and swimming eyes” (55) and as being “dazed with saintly imageries” (56). In his essay “Multiple Readers, Texts, Keats” Stillinger states that “grotesque images adorn both the ancient volume that Bertha reads and the fire screen across the room” (28). The lamp Bertha lighted creates a shadow of her body on the ceiling and on the walls. Her shadow fills the room “with wildest forms and shades, / As though some ghostly queen of spades / Had come to mock behind her back” (85-7). Apart from this, the details like shades in the room, aching neck of Bertha, dazzling, glowering, wild forms contribute to the grotesque atmosphere. Both physical and spiritual pain is implied in these lines. As Almeida argues,

[t]he ghostly deformities envisioned by Bertha’s imagination imprint a monstrous frightfulness on the already fanciful creations peopling St. Mark’s legend; they also make true and larger than life the decorative creatures borrowed from natural history that the artisan has pictured imaginatively upon the fire screen. (*Romantic* 268)

As in *The Eve of St Agnes*, in this poem there is a contrast between outdoors scene and indoors scene. As opposed to the social life outside, Bertha is alone and remote from others:

The bells had ceased, the prayers begun,

And Bertha had not yet half done
 A curious volume, patch'd and torn,
 That all day long, from earliest morn,
 Had taken captive her two eyes,
 Among its golden broideries; (23-8)
 [.....]
 All was silent, all was gloom,
 Abroad and in the homely room:
 Down she sat, poor cheated soul!
 And struck a lamp from the dismal coal; (67-70)

At this point, Keats repeats the same theme in *The Eve of Saint Agnes*. With regard to Bertha's cheating imagination, Stillinger states that, "[e]nwrapped in the legend of St. Mark, [...] she cuts herself off from reality" ("Hoodwinking" 552). Similar to Madeline, Bertha is detached from outside setting because her imagination overwhelms everything around her; she lives in her ideal world created by her imagination. The reader sees what Bertha bears in her imagination over the pages she reads. "[D]azed with saintly imag'ries" (56), she ignores the life around her. Therefore she is a poor cheated soul like Madeline the hoodwinked maiden. She puts a distance between reality and herself but, while doing this, she is not aware of the fact that she is devoid of the perfect unity of pain and joy in life. Madeline wakes up from dreaming and takes a step to actualise it. As for Bertha, her fate remains unknown because of the fragmentary quality of the poem.

Another poem with a woman as the central figure is *Lamia*, which tells the love affair of a snake-woman and a human being. In classical mythology, Lamia is a monstrous being with a woman's head and snake's body. As Anthon indicates, in ancient Greek culture, it is believed that these creatures

changed their forms at pleasure, and, when about to ensnare their prey, assumed such appearances as were most seductive and calculated to please. The blood of young persons was believed to possess peculiar attractions for them, and for the purpose of quaffing this they were wont to take the form of a beautiful female. (718)

In line with these aspects of Lamia, the poem is rich in mythological references but the focus will be on its gothic elements in this chapter. Regarding these two aspects of the poem, Colvin states that in the poem “Greek life and legend come nearest to the medieval, and give scope both for scenes of wonder and witchcraft, and for the stress and vehemence of passion” (167). A snake traditionally represents temptation and deceit. It is an image that unites figures like Satan and Eve, and stands for the power of temptation. When this figure is combined with a woman’s form it becomes grotesque. Almeida argues that the source of the poem is Lempriere’s dictionary (1788). As she maintains

Lamiae, Keats read in Lempriere, were monsters of Africa who had “the face and breast of a woman, and the rest of the body like that of a serpent.” Their hissings were “pleasing and agreeable,” and they “allured strangers to come to them, that they might devour them.” (*Romantic* 188)

They are deceitful and enticing creatures associated with wickedness. However, Keats depicts Lamia in a different way; she does not use her supernatural powers to cause pain or grief. On the contrary, it is she who is exposed to misery. Pettet indicates that “[w]e cannot forget that she is a cheat [...] but she is never evil in the sense of deliberately willing Lycius’ destruction” (232). She is “touch’d with miseries” (I.54), and her eyes do nothing “but weep and weep” (I. 62). In Blackstone’s words, “Lamia, from first to last, is beautiful; and Keats worships the principle of beauty in all things. Even in an evil beauty there is the seed of good” (308). In line with this view, Lamia is a creation of the imagination in Keats’s way to attain beauty. Similar to Madeline’s belief, Endymion’s lady in his dreams, Isabella’s dedication to the pot of basil, Lamia is something different from what is acceptable in the actual realm.

In the opening scene of the poem, while searching for the nymph he loves, Hermes comes across Lamia. She helps him find the nymph in exchange for his restoring her human form. Lamia is in love with a man named Lycius from Corinth. When Lycius sees her in human form, he falls in love with her. But their love does not last long because when Lycius wants to celebrate their wedding in public, his tutor Apollonius calls Lamia a “dream” and she disappears. Upon this, Lycius dies of grief. Within this

plot, Keats illustrates his concept of beauty and truth. Patterson regards *Lamia* as Keats's last treatment of the "daemonic" quest. It is a term he finds useful to describe Keats's poetry. It mainly refers to a focus on a non-human being and its union with a human being. As he observes, "*Lamia* presents the story of a young man who deliberately pursued daemonic experience beyond the point of no return and tried to make it a continuing thing, an entire way of life" (*The Daemonic* 189). Not all of the daemonic creatures are evil. The aura of evil connotations related to Lamia is removed from the character Keats created. Keats presents her as a neutral female who is delicate and with no malicious intent: "She seem'd, at once, some penance lady elf, / Some demon's mistress or the demon's self." (I. 55-56). Here Keats emphasizes that she belongs to another realm that is magical or supernatural. She is not a recognisable figure for human mind. The other supernatural beings are Hermes and the nymph. In Brotemarkle's interpretation, Hermes and the nymph are two characters who both function as mediators between alien worlds (87). Hermes, the messenger of Zeus, uses his staff to transform Lamia from serpent to woman. In return, Lamia reveals the nymph to Hermes. The relationship between the nymph and Hermes is not mentioned again in the poem but it can be taken as a contrast to the relationship of Lycius and Lamia.

Lycius never sees Lamia's actual, mysterious shape:

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
 Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and blue;
 Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
 Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd;
 And full of silver moons, that, as she breathed,
 Dissolv'd, or brighter shone, or interwreathed
 Their lustres with the gloomier tapestries -
 So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries, (I. 47-54)
 [.....]
 Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
 Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:
 Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!
 She had a woman's mouth with all its pearls complete:
 And for her eyes: what could such eyes do there
 But weep, and weep, that they were born so fair? (I. 57-62)

In these lines that are full of oxymoron, although Lamia is depicted as a serpent, she has the aura of a woman with certain details about her mouth, eyes, voice. The adjectives that connote beauty are used to indicate a grotesque figure. Accordingly, Bernard highlights that “[s]he is simultaneously attractive and threatening, and represents both the female principle, and the romance imagination” (120). With regard to creative imagination, in his letter to Woodhouse, Keats says: “What shocks the virtuous philosop[h]er, delights the camelion [sic] poet” (*Letters* 93, 228). This double nature of Lamia can be interpreted as a parallel to the Keatsian chameleon poet who can adopt multiple identities. Lamia’s strange combination of the womanly and beastly form makes it difficult to define if she is demonic or benignant. Similarly, her unfamiliar beauty bears natural and animal images which are quite grotesque. She declares she was once a woman and she wants Hermes to turn her into a woman:

I was a woman, let me have once more
 A woman’s shape, and charming as before.
 I love a youth of Corinth—O the bliss!
 Give me my woman’s form, and place me where he is. (I. 117-21)

She is complaining of being imprisoned in her serpent form. As Jackson argues, her “wish and her longing for the youth of Corinth seem natural enough and when she suffers during the transformation we feel sorry for her” (81). At this stage she appears as a sympathetic figure. She has womanly feelings, yearnings, so her human desires make her an individual to be pitied.

Brotemarkle considers Lamia as an allegory of the artistic process. In his interpretation, Lamia’s love for Lycius demonstrates an important step in the creative process. Keats believes that the only way to transform the imaginative power into knowledge or objective truth is to create a thing of beauty (90). In this sense, Lamia’s transformation can be a parallel to the poet figure that passes through a stage of pain in *The Fall of Hyperion*. Lamia is transformed into another version of beauty through a process of pain. It shows the versatility of the creative faculty. In Brotemarkle’s words, “[t]he imaginative material flows into the artist who transforms this into the art he creates. Keats dramatizes beauty’s power to move freely in spirit and merge with the human

world” (92). Lamia is a figure who has come into the world from a limitless realm. Keats’s notion that imagination operates in a free realm where it can move endlessly is apparent here:

[...] ‘tis fit to tell how she could muse
 And dream, when in the serpent prison-house,
 Of all she list, strange or imagination:
 How, ever, where she will’d, her spirit went; (I. 203-6)
 [.....]
 And sometime into cities she would send
 Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend;
 And once, while among mortals dreaming thus,
 She saw the young Corinthian Lycius. (I. 213-16)

The speaker also sympathises with her when Lamia reassures Lycius that she is merely of flesh and blood:

Then from amaze into delight he fell
 To hear her whisper woman’s lore so well;
 And every word she spoke entic’d him on
 To unperplex’d delight and pleasure known.
 Let the mad poets say whate’er they please
 Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
 There is not such a treat among them all, (I. 324-30)

In these lines she is like Eve offering the forbidden apple to Adam. However, she is not deceiving Lycius; her intentions are harmless. Lamia first sees him “Charioting foremost In the envious race, / Like a young Jove with calm uneager face” (I. 217-8). But Lamia claims to have seen Lycius musing beside the temple of Venus in order to be seen as a resident of Corinth. She lies to him because she is afraid of the reaction of the human society. She knows that if human beings realise that she is a supernatural creature, they will dismiss her. After the metamorphoses she becomes “a lady bright, / A full-born beauty new and exquisite” (I. 171-2). Yet she still possesses supernatural powers and qualities. Her beauty also has a supernatural charm as reflected in the lines:

And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,

Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
 And still the cup was full
 [.....]
 Her soft look growing coy, she saw his chain so sure. (I. 251-56)

Now she is beautiful and possesses a luxurious palace. Even if she becomes a woman she is still supernatural in that she will not be identified; she is elusive. By the help of her powers, she creates a palace of sensual delight. Similarly, the banquet scene shows Lamia's powers of enchantment. When in the second part of the poem her world of love is threatened by the results of Lycius's desire to display her, which is "passion's passing bell," (II. 39) she attempts to defend herself against the intruders, the people of Corinth, by overpowering them with music and wine.

In Lamia's illusory palace on a hill near Corinth, they begin to live happily without the public gaze of Corinthians. They are in a state of ultimate happiness which is to be envied:

Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
 Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful roar,
 Above the lintel of their chamber door,
 And down the passage cast a glow upon the floor. (II.12-15)

Lamia takes Lycius from the world of reality to her fairy palace and the first part of the poem concludes with the promise of a "long immortal dream" (I. 128). Their arrival in Corinth is also a mysterious journey: "They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how, / So noiseless, and he never thought to know" (I. 348-9). It is "a place unknown / Some time to any, but those two alone, / And a few Persian mutes" (I. 388-90). This mysterious situation of Lamia and her palace attracts the attention of the Corinthians. In the second part, when Lycius wants to have a wedding feast she attempts to dissuade him from rejoining society as she desires to avoid detection to preserve their love. She has no one to invite to their wedding:

"I have no friends," said Lamia, "no, not one;
 My presence in wide Corinth hardly known:

My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
 Sepulchred, where no kindled incense burns,
 Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me, (II. 92-96)

She knows that there will be no one like her at the wedding; she will be under inquisitive gaze of the people. Lycius insists on making their love public as he desires to carry his love into actual life. As Patterson also emphasises, this “attempt is doomed to failure and death” (*The Daemonic* 203). To carry the dream of the ideal world into the actual world is impossible as he is a mortal. Martin Aske also draws attention to Lycius’s mistake: “Lycius’s error manifests itself in a fatal desire to legalize and validate the enchantment (and so naturalize its potential demonry) by subjecting Lamia to marriage” (134). As an embodiment of beauty or imagination, Lamia gives a sense of reality in the human world. However, under the doubtful eyes she is in danger. The lovers are depicted with “eyelids closed” (II. 24); separated from the actual world which will cause disappointment. The world of dreams they built in the palace is vulnerable to the harsh facts of the actual realm. Therefore, the joy and beauty Lycius has attained in privacy with Lamia, will lead to his doom. The figure of Apollonius symbolises analytical intelligence that is the opposite of the essence of imaginary world. When Lamia sees him, she shudders: “Who / is that old man?” (I. 371-2) and Lycius replies: “’Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide / And good instructor; but to-night he seems / The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams” (I. 375-77). Then she pleads:

Even as you list invite your many guests;
 But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
 With any pleasure on me, do not bid
 Old Apollonius - from him keep me hid. (II. 99-101)

Yet Apollonius comes uninvited to rest his eyes upon her. As he stares at her, Lamia grows pale. He will be the reason why the beauty dies:

[...] Do not all charms fly
 At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
 There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
 We know her woof, her texture; she is given
 In the dull catalogue of common things.

Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
 Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
 Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine —
 Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
 The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade. (II. 229-38)

Lamia is associated with angels and a rainbow in heaven. In other words, presenting her in such forms, Keats emphasises her good will and beauty. Regarding Lamia as an embodiment of imagination, Evert states that “[n]ot only does she represent the effects of the poetic imagination on Lycius, but she is herself a victim of imagination. Only brief participation in the world is possible before she is destroyed by reality” (qtd. in Barnard 122). Lamia’s supernatural longings and Apollonius’s realistic philosophy are irreconcilable. Apollonius and Lycius have different conceptions about the existence of Lamia. Apollonius’s “cold philosophy” and modern rationalism denies the truth of poetic imagination represented by Lamia. Although he is right in his judgment of the deceptive nature of Lamia, his attitude removes the joy and pleasure from life. Her beauty is meaningless for Apollonius because his only intention is to see her through his realistic vision. While Lamia is the truth for Lycius, she is just an illusion, a dream that cannot deserve to exist among them for Apollonius. Therefore, Lamia and Lycius’s love can only exist as long as it is private. When displayed in public, it turns to bitterness:

[...] but too short was their bliss
 To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss (II. 9-10)
 [.....]
 [...] the sophist's eye,
 Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
 Keen, cruel, perçant, stinging: she, as well
 As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
 Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,
 He look'd and look'd again a level - No!
 "A Serpent!" echoed he; no sooner said,
 Than with a frightful scream she vanished: (II. 300-6)

Apollonius represents intelligence, reason and as Patterson argues he is not an evil or malicious figure (*The Daemonic* 212). He is just devoid of imaginative faculty that enables man to experience the things he accepts unreasonable. Lycius is on the verge of

making a great mistake and Apollonius desires to bring him to the actual life. He is called “blinded Lycius” (I. 347) by the speaker. Apollonius is one of the characters that Keats creates to help the protagonist return to the actual realm. He is a figure who bears close resemblance to Peona, the one who warns Endymion of the dangers of his dreamy pursuit. In a similar manner, the same issue will be dealt with in “La Belle Dame Sans Merci,” in which the speaker highlights the value of ordinary life and tries to save the main character. These figures urge the protagonist to accept the human condition, find pleasure within it (Patterson, *The Daemonic* 212-13).

Lycius’s love is supported by the supernatural events created by man’s imaginative capacity. Like Endymion and the knight in “La Belle Dame Sans Merci,” Lycius is a human being striving to attain the ideal. They are all yearning for experience beyond the limits of actual life. Although the others turn away from this path, Lycius reaches the point of no return and loses his life. According to Ford, Keats “is indirectly warning his readers of the fate that awaits any mortal who trusts to wishful dreams” (*The Prefigurative* 142). Lycius seems to follow Endymion’s path in running after a dream but there is a great difference between their experiences. Endymion’s adventure teaches him that the actual realm is full of opportunities to attain beauty. Faced with disappointments, Endymion changes his ideal and learns to see the beauty of human life. His story leads him to discover that the ideal and the actual supplement each other. His love for the Indian maid makes him see the truth. However, Lamia cannot live among men: “finer spirits cannot breathe below / in human climes, and live” (I. 280-1). Lycius is under the influence of what Lamia makes him experience. As Reiman suggests, “Apollonius responds at first with the single word, ‘Fool!’ For he knows that the gods, like love, the palace, and the magic of the rainbow are merely constructs of the human imagination” (668). Thus, Lamia cannot withstand the scrutiny of philosophy, which has no place in supernatural events; consequently Lycius cannot bear her absence. Similarly, Thorpe claims that Keats learned

to qualify specifically that the imagination should be trained and disciplined by close contact with the world of men. [...] In other words, beauty is truth arrived at through the intuitive perception of an intellectualized imagination

— an imagination weighted with experience, with thought, with judgment.
(*The Mind* 128)

As mentioned before, with the poetic maturity towards the end of his life, Keats's ideas developed and this poem exemplifies his poetic growth. Gittings relates this situation to Keats's choice of the subject. As he puts it, "[t]he surface attraction of the story was irresistible for Keats, though in working it out he delved perhaps deeper into human life than anywhere else in his poems; superficially, he too was a young man who had recently set philosophy above all else, and who was also deeply in love." (327). He concentrated on bringing about something closer to the facts of human life. In other words, he was more fond of emphasising the reality of human life rather than drawing an idealised supernatural realm. In this sense it can be said that Keats accepts the strong influence and dominance of reason or cold philosophy personified by Apollonius. The destruction of the rainbow is inevitable. As it is a part of experience in life, Keats tries to show that "[l]ove is full of destruction, and yet one pities and loves the destroyer; truth can be a murderer, and yet the truth must be spoken" (Gittings 338). In this sense, he unites joy and grief in human experience. Regarding his maturity, in one of his letters Keats indicates: "I have great hopes of success, because I make use of my judgment more deliberately than I yet have done" (*Letters* 137, 358). He believes that the materials of poetry exist in human life; these materials are used through the operation of reason and imagination. The imagination must contact with misery of the world and reflect the experiences in human life; it is the duty of a poet to heal the heart of man. Therefore, imagination must be in harmony with the actual world; otherwise, it is bound to vanish.

In Bush's interpretation, the poem embodies the inward struggle between the claims of self and the claims of the world and philosophy. For Bush, Keats, through Lycius, displays the dilemma of the artist between the senses, represented by Lamia, and the intellect, represented by Apollonius (*Mythology* 110-112). Accordingly, it can be said that if Lamia is associated with creative imagination, Lycius is an embodiment of poetical character who dies upon beauty's vanishing. This idea can be associated with Keats's concept of soul-making which is mentioned in the previous chapter.

Brotemarkle considers Keatsian soul-making as “a way of wringing art out of life’s pathos without being simplistically pathetic regarding the tragic side of life” (105). Here Lycius’s suffering refers to Keats’s letter of soul-making. By experiencing the strife of life the artist finds a way to bridge the gap between the ideal and the concrete world he lives in. In this way Keats places human experience at the centre of his art. However, at first Lycius lives detached from what is real, and then expects to make his belief accepted by the public. The sufferings in life contribute to the art of the poet but here Lycius fails to merge the mundane and the magic.

In order to emphasise Lycius’s mistake, he can be contrasted to Hermes at the beginning of the story. Dream and awakening from a dream, such moment of uncertainty, the “in-betweenness” among illusion and reality is a subject which attracts the poet who treats the same subject in poems like *The Eve of Saint Agnes* and “Ode to a Nightingale.” Hermes exists in a realm where he is subject to none of the limitations of the real world. In this respect the poet says:

The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
 She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was seen
 Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling on the green.
 It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
 Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
 Their pleasures in a long immortal dream. (l. 123-28)

Keats shows two kinds of dream that come true but only gods enjoy their dreams. The beautiful moments in life do not last long for the mortal. The path of ideal necessitates some supernatural elements like immortality or magical powers. Therefore, Hermes easily “flew” (l. 144) with the nymph and they will never grow “pale, as mortal lovers do” (l.145). To gods like Hermes and other supernatural creatures, problems in life are transitory. Existing in an imaginary realm, he is subject to none of the limitations of the real world. Unlike Hermes who succeeds in making his dream real, Lycius the mortal fails to actualise his dreams. At first, the poem bears the possibility of reconciliation between the actual realm and the ideal one, then it shows that such union is not

attainable. In the daemonic or supernatural realm everything is possible. However, the actual world does not show mercy to the needs of the individual.

“La Belle Dame Sans Merci” is another poem with gothic and supernatural elements. The title is taken from a fifteenth-century French poem by Alain Chartier. The poem is in ballad form and there are two versions of it with minor differences between them. Agrawal states that “the most typical kind of the English medieval literature [...] was the popular or folk ballad. [...] The supernatural, along with magic and enchantment, plays an important role in most of them” (21). Similarly Stevens highlights that “the form of the ballad, with straightforward rhyme schemes and rhythmic structure, lent itself admirably to gothic purposes” (47). In medieval times magic was a part of everyday life, so it had a significant role in romances and in oral tradition. Therefore, beside condescending ladies, quest of the lovers and knights, this tradition has a vivid supernatural dimension.

The opening line presents a knight-at-arms who is “alone and palely loitering” (2). The knight narrates his story in which he meets a lady in the meadow. She is “a faery’s child” (14) and he follows the lady to her “elfin grot” (29) where she makes him sleep. In his dream, deathly pale warriors and kings come to him to warn him about the lady without mercy. She is a seductive woman who leads men away from the actual world then leaves them frustrated. Then he wakes up to find himself alone on the hillside. The common pattern which is used in earlier poems can be found here: the confusion experienced between waking up and dreaming. This process parallels the events in *The Eve of Saint Agnes* in which Porphyro sings the ballad of “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” to the sleeping Madeline.

There is nothing in the poem to indicate that the lady is well-intentioned. However, she is not presented as an evil creature either. The knight says:

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery’s child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,

And her eyes were wild. (13-16)

The lady is a creature far beyond the human realm and she speaks “in language strange” (27). She lives in an “elfin grot” beneath a “cold hill side” (36). In addition to all these supernatural attributes, she is endowed with sexuality and charm. She “look’d” with her “wild wild eyes” (31) and “made sweet moan” (20). Furthermore, she says “I love thee true” (28) and she takes the knight to her elfin grot and there they have sexual union. But she has to leave and finally lulls him to sleep. In his sleep the terror and beauty of his love is revealed as he follows the lady into another realm:

The latest dream I ever dreamed
 On the cold hill's side.
 I saw pale kings and princes too,
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
 They cried –‘La Belle Dame sans Merci
 Hath thee in thrall!’ (35-40)

The knight has become one of those ghostly appearances in his dream. The setting is apparently in line with the loneliness and exhaustion of the knight. Beside this cold hillside, the surroundings like the “sedge” (3) where “no birds sing” (4) suggest the idea of death. It is the “song” (25) and gifts of the belle dame that keeps him there. These details verify that the knight is seduced and deserted by a cruel lady. However, it cannot be said that she aims to harm the knight. In Patterson’s words,

[i]n creating her, Keats either refined away from one traditional image all traits of deceit, sorcery, and trickery, which sometimes in the romances and folk tales she possessed, or else he shaped her from the other mode of the traditional figure that had none of these traits but only beneficent and positive qualities. [...] Keats endowed his ‘Belle Dame’ with mystery, glamour, delicacy, femininity, high sexuality, and haunting appeal; but not the good, spiritual, or evil. She is nonmortal, [...] and she is neutral as to good and evil because she is outside the human pale and all its restrictions. (*The Daemonic* 137-138)

The lady does not have a sinister nature; she never directly harms the knight. She is from another world yet she accompanies the knight.

Patterson considers the knight's dream very functional in giving the meaning very clearly. In his interpretation the dream puts the knight's subconscious in visual images. The dreamer passes beyond his mortal limitations (*The Daemonic* 130). Sperry sees the poem as an expression of poetic development for Keats. As he puts, the poem is

about the essence of poetry itself, the gift of that 'natural magic' that transforms common experience into enchantment and later vision. It is a miniature allegory of the growth and development of the poetic consciousness dramatized through the details of the knight's relation and the great central themes of love, death, and immortality. (*Keats* 240)

In this sense, it is clear that just like he does in other works, here Keats chooses the experiences of a character to symbolise the development of poetic awareness.

In Patterson's interpretation the poem is "presenting a daemonic experience beyond and divorced from the ordinary human world of actuality" (*The Daemonic* 128). Although the knight lives in an actual mortal plane, he dreams of another realm; his mind and soul are enslaved in another realm. The actual world is insufficient to make him happy. On the other hand, the other realm, which is supernatural, is veiled to him, indicating that he is bound to one particular realm. Consequently, the mysterious woman disappears leaving him stricken by grief. The lady is an embodiment of beauty but here this beauty is presented as illusory just like Madeline's dream and Lamia's palace. The knight comes to realise that his love-dream is just a delusion. The appearance and warnings of ghosts of older knights shows the knight that a mortal man's love for a supernatural female brings no good. The dream of the supposed ideal realm does not reflect a perfect affinity of actual realm but deception.

Realising his kinship with their mortality, the knight expels himself from this paradise and finds himself in the mundane world of death and decay. As Wasserman expresses "[t]he knight's inherent weakness is being unable to exclude from his visions the self-contained and world-bound mortality dissipates the ideal into which he has entered momentarily" (373). His vision creates an ethereal thing. By means of dreams, the gates of imaginary realms are open and the ideal beauty is attained. However, love and songs

fade, and he returns to normal human weakness. This is his mortality shown itself through other sufferers that awake him from the dream. He is after the ideal but he comes to understand that a permanent union with the ideal is not possible. Therefore, his dream moves him from the enchantment of elfin grot to the actual world on the cold hillside. Expressly, it is the dream that brings him back to actual world.

Like Endymion, the knight seems to be detached from the human world by dreams. In Patterson's words, the knight is "cut off from humanity by his daemonic preoccupation" (*The Daemonic* 134). Furthermore, the description of nature is strange as befitting the supernatural atmosphere of the poem. The representation of nature as eerie and withered is a characteristic of such narratives in which landscape hosts elves, hags or demons. It is in harmony with the quest of the knight searching for his immortal lady. Considering the atmosphere, the knight's dream can be taken as a warning against the imprisoning intentions of the woman. He is about to be seized by unfamiliar forces in a totally visionary realm. Like Endymion's experience, the knight has supernatural experiences that set him apart from the natural processes of human life. Finlayson evaluates this situation in terms of the deceiving quality of fancy. As she observes, the poem "repeatedly returns the reader to images of living death, and the final warning or moral of the poem crystallises the link between love and death, imagination and its failure" (239). He is warned by the others about his fate that he will be victimised by his love, yet he ignores their warning.

The portrayal of women, who put men in danger and cause suffering, is common in Keats's poetry. In this poem, critics see the story as Keats's own despair of resolving his feelings for Fanny Brawne (Murry 124). In Blade's interpretation, the poem reshapes a great amount of material from Keats's own experiences and reading. For him, "the poem importantly draws together Keats's complex ideas on the nature of woman in terms of love, death and art" (164). The lady in the poem has a kind of dual nature because Keats describes her as "wild" referring to her passionate character, and as "sweet" indicating her reserved nature. This dual nature of the obscure situations in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" and in other poems express a sense of contradiction in the

perception of truth and beauty, which necessitates various points of views. He brings together various qualities of reality to create a whole. In other words, Keats's description of woman of dual nature can be associated with his aim to reconcile the opposing values in human life.

According to the concept of negative capability, imaginative receptivity to the mysteries and obscurities is an inseparable aspect of life itself. In order to achieve this openness, one should annihilate his own ideas, established beliefs, certainties, and preconceptions; mind should be open to all possibilities. Uncertainty revealed by horrific events, Madeline's dream, Lamia's disappearance, Isabella's suffering represent this belief. Through these supernatural occurrences Keats highlights the fact that life is full of uncertainties that cannot be explained by the faculty of reason. While the chameleon poet enjoys the obscure aspect of human experience, the philosopher rejects it. It is this discrepancy between the philosopher and the poet, clearly displayed in *Lamia*. With the use of the gothic and supernatural elements, Keats shows what reason cannot behold. Especially in his period of poetic maturity, he tries to show that imagination alone is not enough either. One should embrace the reality and dreams together. When kept separate from reality and strife of life, imagination may be deceiving. Likewise, truth, attained through reason alone, is incomplete. The uncertain aspect of life, displayed through the supernatural and the gothic, is also a part of truth. Therefore, as it is observed in Keats's poems of maturity, the products of imagination can be considered in harmony with the actuality.

CONCLUSION

Rid of the world's injustice, and his pain,
 He rests at last beneath God's veil of blue:
 Taken from life when life and love were new
 The youngest of the martyrs here is lain,
 Fair as Sebastian, and as early slain.
 No cypress shades his grave, no funeral yew,
 But gentle violets weeping with the dew
 Weave on his bones an ever-blossoming chain.
 O proudest heart that broke for misery!
 O sweetest lips since those of Mitylene!
 O poet-painter of our English Land!
 Thy name was writ in water--it shall stand:
 And tears like mine will keep thy memory green,
 As Isabella did her Basil-tree.
 Rome.

(Wilde, 23)

On the 23rd of February 1821, at the age of twenty-five, John Keats died of tuberculosis but his name has lived to become one of the prominent poets of the Romantic age, the revolutionary period of English literature. As mentioned in the Introduction, during his short life, his works were not well received by the critics, but in the following generations they became a source of inspiration for artists and men of letters. As Bloom suggests, Keats “fostered [...] Tennyson and the pre-Raphaelites, [and] fathered Wilfred Owen, the great poet of World War I, while in Ireland his effect lingered always upon William Butler Yeats” (*John Keats* 250). For ages the pictorial quality of his works, his poems with imaginary realms, characters who are after beauty and truth, and his yearnings for the permanency of joy have been enjoyed and honoured. After his death, for Keats's remembrance, a number of elegies were written by poets like Percy Bysshe Shelley, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Robert Browning.

This thesis has examined John Keats's concept of imagination as he reveals it in his poems, and illustrated how he deals with this concept through his use of mythology, supernatural and gothic elements which are his means to capture beauty and truth. John Keats, as a Romantic poet who celebrates man's creative imagination, through his poetry, depicts an imaginary realm dominated by art and beauty. Imaginative faculty, which turns the ordinary into beautiful to make man more sensitive, receptive and versatile to experience life, is derived both from the visible material from nature and common life, and the hidden aspects of them, which are the unknown or "ethereal" in Keatsian terms. For Keats, as a result of this process of creativity, shaped by such an operation of imagination, the ideal is attained. During this process, faculty of imagination is inspired by some elements, which let man see the world of observable reality from a different point of view. Therefore, in his poetry Keats makes use of mythological characters, supernatural and gothic figures and incidents to attain beauty.

At the centre of Keats's poetry lies his disappointment with life and the transience of joy. Since Keats experienced the loss of the people he loved at a very early age, he always envisioned realms in which happy moments of life are permanent. The imaginary realms he creates express his yearning to flee from the disease, decay and misery brought about by mortality. Accordingly, aspirations towards transcendence of the restrictions, and liberation from suffering **are** major themes of his poetry. He chooses art against the destructive effects of time. It is his means of creating such realms free from weariness and pain. This is another reason why imagination is indispensable for attaining beauty and truth.

As demonstrated in this study, Keats's questionings of his art, human life, and the relationship between them are mirrored in his poetry. In myths, he finds an antique culture embellished with a multitude of stories which could be used in retelling human experience and beauty of nature that is untouched by the chaos of the present century. Besides, while human beings try to escape the bounds of mortality, the mythological figures are all immortal. In a way, they stand for the ideas of permanence and beauty. First, in terms of his use of these elements, he was a dreamer who was inspired by the

joyful aspects of life and nature. Then he turned to the other aspect of earthly existence: pain. Thus, Keats interprets the well-known mythological characters and stories according to his concept of poetic identity that requires a process of suffering to attain the ideal. As for the supernatural and gothic elements in Keats's poetry, they stand for the mysterious, less known aspects of nature that are parallel to human life as well. By means of the gothic and the supernatural reality is presented from another point of view. In other words, Keats employs these elements to fully represent his concept of truth and beauty. In his use of this "other side" of reality, supernatural features are united with the gothic. This usage is particularly manifested in mysterious occurrences and gruesome details like metamorphosis and disappearance of characters, ghosts in nightmares, digging of graves, and unknown curses. Although these elements are employed along with gloomy and dark aspects that are expected to evoke terror in real life, in Keatsian realms they are essential parts of truth and beauty, which can be illustrated in various forms. Consequently all these elements serve to represent his ideas on human life and also on poetry. When Keats's illustration of the joy and pain, united in human life, is taken into consideration, it is clear that Keats explains different types of human experience many of which end up with a bitter wisdom or maturity.

According to Keats, the true aim of poetry is to make the transient immortal. In order to achieve his aim, Keats, as a poet, believes that one must have an objective vision in a realm that is free from the limitations of the visual world, preconceptions, and personal prejudices. He defines this state as "negative capability," which is being able to be free from restrictions of one's own thoughts and feelings. He believes that a poet should assume the identity of various characters in his poetry. In order to do this, the poet should transcend the visual world. It is only by negating his self that the true poet assumes multiple roles and points of view and he can explore other realms created by imagination which cannot be limited with by earthly bonds. Accordingly, Keats's poetry presents mysterious and ambivalent occurrences to represent the ideal in all aspects. As negative capability suggests, unlike those who lack imagination and have a strong belief in the supremacy of reason, a poet should try to perceive life without intending to put it in precise concepts. Keats does not attempt to use his own "knowledge" to explain

human experience because he believes that, by putting all the experience into certain categories, it prevents to be in mysteries and uncertainties. Yet when he negates his own consciousness he can embrace the ideal by transcending restrictions. In short, negative capability provides the poet with a power that enables him to be receptive and consequently to attain beauty and truth.

The mythological aspect of the poems studied is important in terms of explaining the fact that Keats unites the visionary and the real. With the help of the mythological beings, which display accounts of human life, Keats emphasises the existence of the ideal in human life in the present world. During the process of attaining beauty and truth, the characters move away from the disruptive events of the actual world. Nevertheless, then they realise that when the harsh facts of life are denied, their imaginative realm is nothing but fancy, which is deceiving. At the beginning of his poetic career Keats's primary concerns are observation of nature and the sensations it brings about. In the earlier years, in minor poems like "Sleep and Poetry," he finds the ideal beauty in the sensuous delight derived from the natural beauties. He depicts beauty with sensory images and always uses the pleasant side of nature for the ideal, but then he understands the fact that fancy is deceitful. In other words, Keats comes to realise that his conception of beauty or the ideal in his early poetry is immature in that it ignores the painful realities of life.

Gradually, accepting that sorrow and darkness are also present in life, Keats finally grows open to all kinds of experiences. Especially during his most productive years of 1818 and 1819, he contemplates this aspect of his poetry. His longing for an unknown, supernatural realm free from human strife is replaced by the unity of the reality and the ideal. As a result of this, he begins to use realistic experiences from the actual life as source of his poetry. As expressed in his poems like "Ode to a Nightingale," Keats prefers intellectual imagination to fancy. Similarly, in *Endymion*, by means of experiencing imaginary flights to unknown realms and meeting higher beings, the poet learns the mysteries of human heart and nature. Endymion's sympathy with various beings leads him to attain truth and beauty that is the ideal unity. He has to face

disappointment and feel sympathy to be united with his beloved. In a similar way, in his poems *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*, the immortal characters are depicted with human qualities; they are anxious and fearful. Apollo is not just a god but a poet who must learn the secret of the universe; he achieves supremacy through knowledge and pain. In this way, Keats both depicts the characteristics of a poet and the importance of human experience in shaping the ideal. In short, for Keats, myths indicate beauty which is the ideal value embracing the good and the bad. Through myths, he demonstrates the importance of the integration of imagination with actual human life in the formation of reality.

In relation to his attempts to explain the poet's role, in *Hyperion* fragments, Keats ascribes to the poet a duty which is to deal with the questions raised by his awareness of the transience of human life. The true poet should appeal to human heart that requires knowledge of actual life. Likewise, in his letter he writes to Bailey: "Scenery is fine but human nature is finer" (*Letters* 53, 111). Such poetry enables the reader to see the different aspects of life through intuition, sympathy and awareness. Since the deepest human experience lies in the suffering of man, understanding of humanity and the misery of the world must be the concern of the poet. In this respect, as Thorpe indicates, Keats "has simply found that philosophy and reason have a place in poetry, and that, so far from being antagonistic to the imagination, they are really adjuncts to it" (*The Mind* 67). The true poet, according to Keats, should go through a process of soul-making which receives its strength from the misery and heartbreak of the world. The idea of soul-making gives evidence to the effect that poetry should contain the discordant elements and embrace them all. This idea is best expressed in *The Fall of Hyperion* that makes a distinction between the true poet and the dreamer. Accordingly, struggling with hardships is the only way to enable the heart and mind to have a distinctive identity. Moreover, the true poet is the one who educates himself on some levels of thought as he expresses in his metaphor of mansions of apartments. In this respect, Keats's earlier poetry can be associated with his first two apartments of human life: thoughtless chamber and chamber of maiden thought. In order to deal with the human experience and have a mature view of poetry, the poet has to live through these chambers. Only

after he himself goes through the process of soul-making and chambers, he accepts that reconciliation with the oppression, transience of happiness, pain and all the unpleasant sides of life are parts of beauty and truth.

In his poems dealing with supernatural and gothic figures, Keats refers to the unknown or mostly unacceptable aspects of reality that cannot be seen by those who lack imagination. The miraculous characters and events that are artifacts of imaginative faculty are presented in an incomprehensible way. Isabella's affection for the head in the basil pot and the ghosts in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" seem horrific but Keats uses these unearthly components to emphasise the manifold interpretations of reality. In creating Lamia, who is a figure with a dual nature, the poet negates his stance and adopts an ambivalent and pluralistic attitude in relation to the paradoxical sides of human life. Additionally, poems with supernatural and gothic elements illustrate the illusion of imagination without an earthly basis. If imaginary elements cannot be reconciled with reality, they are delusive. Therefore, the dreams, visions, all the other struggles of imagination may be evasive. In "Ode on a Grecian Urn," Keats states that the idealised figures are lifeless as they are free from the decay and pain. In his later poem *Lamia*, the disappearance of Lamia expresses the futility of imagination which lacks reason and relation with human realm. Likewise, the product of imagination cannot survive the actual life because it is just an illusion like the lady in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." In this way, Keats completes his vision of truth through a unity of the real and the imaginary.

To conclude, in Keats's poetry, imagination, the essential element in the formation of poetry and the supreme way to attain beauty and truth, links man to an alternative world that hosts what is more than meets the eye. It is a world that welcomes the painful aspects of life and the moments of happiness in order to reconcile the contradictory aspects inherent in human life. The mythological, supernatural and gothic elements, which are expressions of imagination, compensate for the visible reality which lacks what is imaginary. Thus, the strife of real life becomes bearable by the mediation of imagination. Poetry is an agent which makes beauty immortal and holds up a mirror to human life with its joy and pain. Accordingly, it seems that Keats has two aspirations

reflected in his poems. On the one hand, he yearns for transcending the limitations of the existence, which makes him an escapist poet. On the other hand, he is aware of the duty to focus on pains and troubles of humanity. Then he unites these two sides through the acceptance that imagination and reason have an equal share of truth. The reconciliation of these factors is the major pursuit in his career. Considering Keats's progress towards the reconciliation, Thorpe states:

I doubt if he ever felt fully satisfied in his own mind as to how the adjustment could take place; in some of his utterances we see that which points to a near solution, but probably it was never complete, for it would seem from his poems that the conflict between the half of him that longed to luxuriate in Fancy's pleasant realms and the sterner philosophic half that demanded a curb and bridle for the prancing steeds of his imagination, continued to the end. (*The Mind* 33)

From beginning to the end of his life, Keats never ceases striving towards the ideal poetic identity to present the complexity of human experience. His poetry serves to express that beauty and truth dwell in this world, not in dreams. All man has to do is to realise its existence and embrace truth. Keats shows the readers that they might get away from the tensions of the age they live in by experiencing the various realms he introduces in his poetry. He never quits demonstrating the usefulness of poetry throughout his poetic life. His poetry has always been "an aspiration towards the deliciousness of life, towards the restfulness of beauty, towards the delightful sharpness of sensations not too sharp to be painful" (Symons 303). He remains a dreamer but one who is in touch with the complexity of life that includes both pain and pleasure.

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