CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

A SHADOW OF REALITY

THE CHARACTER AND SYMBOL TRANSFORMATIONS IN
THE POETRY OF JOHN KEATS

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
English

by

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ABSTRACT

A SHADOW OF REALITY

THE CHARACTER AND SYMBOL TRANSFORMATIONS IN
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by

Brigid Mary Fox

Master of Arts in English

This thesis will provide one explanation for the use of transformation in the poetry of John Keats. Transformation, as I will be using it in this thesis, occurs on two distinct levels affecting Keats' development of characters and symbols. On the first level transformation appears in Keats' longer poems, such as Endymion, "Lamia," "Hyperion," and "The Fall of Hyperion" and is utilized as a dramatic device indicating the character's growth and development. The second level involves the process by which Keats' poetic subjects acquire a symbolic significance, as demonstrated throughout the odes. The importance of these transformations is that they illustrate Keats' concern with change on both the structural and thematic levels. In the dramatic poetry these transformations indicate a final stage of growth and a level of maturity.
The longer poems disclose Keats' preoccupation with change as a means of exploring the transitions from innocence to experience and from mortality to immortality. The physical transformations parallel the character's changing values and convictions. The second level of transformation will involve an examination of Keats' odes and their symbolic structure. In the odes, autumn, the nightingale's song, the urn, Melancholy and Psyche are used to convey a particular meaning, a meaning that is developed through poetic devices and the creative imagination. Because of this development, these subjects are transformed by the intervention of the poet, who interprets, refines, and elevates their value to a higher level where they become symbols. Both the dramatic and symbolic transformations reflect Keats' technical skill and they contribute substantially to his achievement as a poet.
INTRODUCTION

The various transformations that recur throughout Keats' poetry reflect the major themes of his work. Throughout this thesis the transformations Keats used will be referred to as either character transformations which occur within the dramatic poetry or as symbol transformations which occur in the odes.

In Keats' major dramatic poems, such as Endymion, "Lamia," "Hyperion," and "The Fall of Hyperion" these transformations suggest the unity in both theme and structure necessary for his statement about growth and change of character. In the odes the transformations are central to the symbolic significance acquired by the song of the nightingale, the urn, Melancholy, Psyche, and autumn. The importance of the transformations is that they parallel Keats' theories concerning poetry which ultimately reveal his personal sense of "truth" and "beauty." It is through these various transformations that his personal statement about life and art surfaces in his characters and symbols. For the poet, these characters and symbols become a means of exploring life through the medium of art.

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, two of Keats' dramatic poems, Endymion and "Lamia," will be analyzed in terms of character transformations. In Endymion the quest/myth is structured to convey a level of maturity which is brought about by Endymion's deification and the physical trans-
formation of Cynthia. The archetypal patterning of the quest introduces one of Keats' major themes dealing with mortality and immortality. "Lamia" also deals with physical transformation. The conflict between Lamia and Apollonius revolves around the theme of illusion and reality, for Lamia, as a symbol of beauty and poetic truth, is destroyed by Apollonius who represents science or the indifferent voice of reason. Magic and anathematism pervade the plot structure which reflects Lamia's relinquishing her immortal status.

Chapter 3 will focus on Keats' odes and their structural and thematic composition as it relates to his evaluation of experience. The odes concentrate on questions and answers that examine art, nature, permanence, and immortality. They all demonstrate Keats' sense of "truth" and "beauty," a sense that is contained in each of the odes and their symbolic value. In the "Ode to Psyche" the goddess becomes a symbol of spirituality and poetic retreat. Psyche is associated not only with earthly beauty, but also with creativity and inspiration. The "Ode to a Nightingale" deals with mortality and the recognition of the transience of life where the intensity of the moment draws the poet back to himself. The personification of melancholy is essential to Keats' statement about pleasure and pain. All of these isolated poetic subjects are transformed into symbols; therefore, their symbolic value is developed or acquired as the poem gradually unfolds. For
Keats this meant the poetic evaluation and interpretation of his own experience. The best example of the transformation of a symbol is the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" where the urn itself represents truth, ideal beauty, and the paradoxical nature of life. It is Keats' final ode, however, that becomes a celebration to life. "To Autumn," which is as descriptive as it is symbolic, is Keats' means of presenting the beauty of the external world. As with Endymion and "Lamia," where the characters are transformed by their experiences in a dramatic way, so the odes represent the transformations of the nightingale's song, the urn, Melancholy, Psyche, and autumn into Keats' most effective symbols.

Perhaps Keats' most explicit example of this process is contained within "Hyperion" and "The Fall of Hyperion." Chapter 4 will consider these two poems in terms of Keats' ideology. In "Hyperion" the primary concern is that Apollo will not only replace Hyperion as the god of the sun but also as "the Father of all verse." His deification results from his consciousness of humanity and from his knowledge of creation and destruction. The transformation is a spiritual one resulting from his recognition of suffering. In "The Fall of Hyperion" the poet/dreamer can be related to Keats himself and his personal struggle with creativity. This final character transformation is also a spiritual one disclosing Keats' defense of poetry. Because of their thematic context, these two poems become statements about
spirituality. Apollo's deification involves a process of "dying into life" and it is precisely this theme that is extended to "The Fall of Hyperion" where the poet/dreamer realizes "What 'tis to die and live again before/ Thy fated hour." The poet here is challenged by his convictions and his ascension involves emerging not at the point of outset, but at a higher level. In both of these poems the transformations are of a spiritual nature.

In this sense the poetry is a reflection of Keats' life -- not as a strictly poetic development, although the poetry is his medium of expression; not as a collection of isolated, personal experiences, although his experiences are captured in his verse; but as his statement about life and art as he presents it in his choice of subject matter, in his characters and symbols introduced in poem after poem.

In order to define the character and symbol transformations, the dramatic as well as the symbolic structure of the individual poems will be examined. The physical transformations taking place within the dramatic structure of Keats' longer poems are complemented by the character's changing values and convictions. The symbolic transformations, on the other hand, take place within the context of the odes where Keats' early metaphors, myths, and personal experiences become his means of developing universal symbols. The following chart illustrates the nature of these transformations on both the dramatic and symbolic levels.
DRAMATIC POETRY (CHARACTER TRANSFORMATIONS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Transition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Endymion</td>
<td>deification</td>
<td>mortal to immortal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endymion is transformed into a god</td>
<td>deification</td>
<td>immortal to mortal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The indian maid is transformed into Cynthia</td>
<td>self-destruction</td>
<td>immortal to mortal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamia</td>
<td>self-destruction</td>
<td>immortal to mortal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The serpent is transformed into a woman (Lamia)</td>
<td>total destruction</td>
<td>immortal to mortal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The woman is transformed by Apollonius into nothing</td>
<td>total destruction</td>
<td>immortal to mortal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperion</td>
<td>deification</td>
<td>immortal to godhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apollo is transformed into a god</td>
<td>deification</td>
<td>immortal to godhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperion is transformed by the loss of power and status</td>
<td>self-destruction</td>
<td>immortal to obsolescence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Titans are transformed into mere remnants of the Saturnian golden age</td>
<td>total destruction</td>
<td>immortal to obsolescence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fall of Hyperion</td>
<td>self-assertion</td>
<td>poet to philosopher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keats becomes the poet/dreamer</td>
<td>self-assertion</td>
<td>poet to philosopher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dreamer is transformed into &quot;the poet&quot; by Moneta's challenge</td>
<td>self-affirmation</td>
<td>poet to philosopher</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(the mortal poet and the immortal work)</td>
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### THE ODES (SYMBOL TRANSFORMATIONS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Transition</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ode to Psyche</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Psyche is transformed</td>
<td>deification</td>
<td>mortal to immortal</td>
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<tr>
<td>by the poet into a symbol</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>of poetic isolation</td>
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<td>and retreat</td>
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<td><strong>Ode on Melancholy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Melancholy acquires</td>
<td>personification</td>
<td>image to symbol</td>
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<tr>
<td>a symbolic value</td>
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<td>through the application</td>
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<td>of poetic devices</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ode to a Nightingale</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The nightingale's song</td>
<td>poetic intervention</td>
<td>image to idea</td>
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<tr>
<td>is transformed from an</td>
<td></td>
<td>(idea to symbol)</td>
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<tr>
<td>isolated personal experience</td>
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<td>into a universal symbol</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ode on a Grecian Urn</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The urn is transformed</td>
<td>poetic intervention</td>
<td>image to symbol</td>
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<tr>
<td>into a symbol of artistic</td>
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<td>permanence</td>
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<td><strong>Ode to Autumn</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Autumn is used to convey</td>
<td>poetic intervention</td>
<td>image to symbol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keats' acceptance of life's</td>
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<td>transience. The transformation is from</td>
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<td>a season to a symbol of fulfillment</td>
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Since the transformations of characters and symbols contribute to Keats' overall poetic theories, they, like his other explanations of art and life, can be better understood through his letters. The letters indicate possible reasons for the changes affecting his characters as well as the poetic techniques used in the development of his symbols. All of Keats' theories concerning poetry, evaluations of his contemporaries and analyses of traditional verse forms are contained in his personal letters to friends and relatives. The letters complement his poetic achievement and help to explain the basis for much of his poetry, for it is through his personal correspondences that his own poetic techniques and themes are illuminated. The themes of the early poetry that concentrate on pleasure and perhaps entertainment, are modified in his later work exploring more vital concepts that deal exclusively with existence, the limits of the creative imagination, and truth. It is through the complex ideas of the later poetry that the transformations develop a more profound evaluation of life.
Chapter 1

KEATS' POETIC THEORIES AND THE ROMANTIC TRADITION

Throughout the Romantic period evaluations of poetic genius became the basis for establishing poetry as a means of determining truth and morality. The poet's unique perspective and individual identity were intrinsic to his work, increasing his understanding of life as it related to all levels of experience. The spiritual quality of the poet's perception indicated a higher level of understanding and insight. In the Romantic tradition man is inevitably seen as finite, earth-bound, individual, yet he is part of an integrated whole, spiritual, and capable of achieving, by degrees, perfection. As Northrop Frye states in his evaluation of Romanticism:

The thematic poet of this period is interested in himself, not necessarily out of egotism, but because the basis of his poetic skill is individual, and hence genetic and psychological. He uses biological metaphors; he contrasts the organic with the dead or mechanical; he thinks socially in terms of a biological difference between the genius and the ordinary man, and genius to him is a fertile seed among abortive ones. He confronts nature directly, as an individual, and, in contrast to most of his predecessors, is apt to think of literary tradition as a second-hand substitute for personal experience.1

Similarly, the reliance on instinct and intuition rather than on reason and analysis became a legitimate method of perceiving and interpreting reality.

John Ruskin's explanation of the "imaginative mind" qualifies the Romantic belief in the creative imagination. That aspect of the language which Ruskin had said contained
an "undercurrent of meaning" is, for the Romantics, part of the creative process.

There is in every word set down by the imaginative mind an awful undercurrent of meaning, and evidence and shadow upon it of the deep places out of which it has come. It is often obscure, often half-told; for he who wrote it, in his clear seeing of the things beneath, may have been impatient of detailed interpretation; for if we choose to dwell upon it and trace it, it will lead us always securely back to that metropolis of the soul's dominion from which we may follow out all the ways and tracks of its farthest coasts.2

Wordsworth, in defining the creative process, refers to an "organic sensibility" and the "comprehensive soul" whereby poetry provides a necessary insight into man's existence as perceived through spontaneous responses. As a projection of man and Nature, poetry is capable of disclosing truth.

...its object is truth, not individual or local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives strength and divinity to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature.3

A universal sense of life is described by the Romantic poets. Theoretically, they provided a comprehensive understanding of human nature contained within the poet's ability to perceive reality and to incorporate it into a universal theme. Their sense of life is derived from experience, their perception developed through the senses, and the "truth," so necessary to their knowledge of human nature, takes its form in poetry. For example, Wordsworth defined poetry in a moral context where the thoughts and
feelings of mankind could be truthfully expressed:

...the poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge - it is immortal as the heart of man.

In *A Defense of Poetry*, Shelley stated that poetry was the means by which life could be grasped by expanding the power of the imagination. The basis for his theory was that poetry is synonymous to "eternal truth." "A poem is the image of life expressed in its eternal truth." The imagination is the means by which the truth of human existence is disclosed through sensory impressions. The poet develops an empathetic identification with the suffering of humanity, "...he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own." The poet increases his responsibility for humanity through his poetry, through his moral convictions, and through his awareness of life. The imagination operates by means of the unconscious mind where thought patterns are organized into the themes and content of poetry. "It awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought."

Most of Romantic theory as expressed by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats is philosophical in nature. The poetry, constructed along their principles and de-
veloped from the assimilation of experience, has the precise blending of evocative image and idea, which is the first quality a conscientious artist will evince -- natural beauty emerging from proportion and balance. As Shelley had stated, "Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar." The power and profound influence of poetry is further explained in relationship to morality.

The great instrument of moral good is the imagination and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void for ever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens that faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man.

The similarities of the Romantics in regard to a theoretical explanation of human nature, in terms of the possibilities and the limitations, are examined by Coleridge in his distinctions between Fancy and Imagination. According to Coleridge, the function of the poet is in his ability to bring "the whole soul of man into activity." This he explains in a balance and reconciliation of opposites and in the poet's ability to perceive and interpret.

The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of each man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name imagination.
Poetic creativity is autonomous, influenced not by formulated rules or conventions, but by an organic form and unity. Poetry has a combination of intellectual and emotional components affecting the integrated composition of any given poem. "Finally, good sense is the body of poetic genius, fancy its drapery, motion its life, and imagination the soul that is everywhere, and in each; and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole."  

With the development of his technical skills and the application of his poetic theories, Keats began to experiment with the various dramatic and symbolic subjects that appear in his mature verse. For poetry, to Keats, despite the almost unprecedented pace of his poetic growth and maturity, a pace he had accelerated through numerous attempts at versification, still consisted above all else of "the truth of Imagination" and "the principle of beauty in all things" -- a sensual beauty preserved through the medium of poetry. The combination provided the poetical basis about which the poet could interpret experience, give it a concrete yet symbolic significance and, overall, transform it into a statement of his own "highest thoughts."

When he had written to John Taylor in April of 1818,

I find there is no worthy pursuit but in the idea of doing some good for the world - some do it with their society - some with wit - some with their benevolence - some with a sort of power of conferring pleasure and good humour on all they meet and in a thousand ways all equally dutiful to the command of Great Nature.  

it was to confirm his dedication to poetry, for he continued "there is but one way for me - the road lies through
application study and thought." His commitment to poetry was in the expression of these feelings, at once spontaneous and restrained, which had led him, by both intuition and intellectual evaluations, to develop the principles of his artistry and to focus them on one, isolated point, so that a seemingly uncomplicated image or detail could express a myriad of deeper, more effective emotional statements about life and art. It had led him to expand his technical approaches to poetry into a dynamic rather than static series of suggestive symbols; to reject conventional poetic forms when they proved inadequate or faulty and to acknowledge the strength inherent in his own techniques, their truth providing insights that were both relevant and profound. Or as Shelley stated:

A Poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician, who feel that they are moved and softened, yet know not whence or why.12

It had led him to create his own system of versification and principles to direct it; to rely almost instinctively on his own experience, unpredictable as it may have been, but rewarding in its application to art; to prepare with tactful precision the thematic level of his work in order to strengthen its integrity; to develop whatever poetic devices -- phonetic, metrical, pictorial, and connotative -- while allowing each line "to set soberly although in magnificence." And it led him finally, toward the end of his life, despite the suffering and lack of recognition, to
state his commitment in terms of an "immortal work" -- the work resulting from the conscientious struggle with his own convictions, but fully realized in the beauty and truth of the concrete world.

'If I should die' say I to myself, 'I have left no immortal work behind me - nothing to make my friends proud of my memory - but I have lov'd the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remembered.'

Because of this development, Keats' work acquires a sensitivity that reflects the quality of his life in general. As Ruskin later stated, "There is in every word set down by the imaginative mind an awful undercurrent of meaning, and evidence and shadow upon it of the deep places out of which it has come." By Keats' definition, these obscure imaginative processes represented "a shadow of reality to come" and in so doing they possessed not only an "awful undercurrent of meaning," but also the preliminary insight, the inspiration containing his most effective images and symbols as well as his metaphors for the creative imagination.
True art has for its object not merely to afford transient pleasure, to excite a momentary gleam of liberty. Her aim is to make us intrinsically free. And this she accomplishes by awakening, exercising, and perfecting in us a power to remove to an objective distance the world of the senses -- which otherwise only burdens us as a dead weight, as blind force -- to transform it into the free working of our spirit and thus to master matter by means of the idea.

Schiller, *The Use of the Chorus in Tragedy*

Before anything else, Keats' dramatic poetry is an expression of life's complexity emerging in the form of art. It is through this art form that the various themes of his work are given their symbolic meaning. The symbolism is often achieved by his innovative techniques which are conventional inasmuch as they emerge from a specific tradition. This is an obvious point, although its implications are varied and far reaching, extending the purpose or theme of the poem. Poetic structure may also carry a special, private meaning for the poet, the meaning and value that the poet attaches as a means of presenting his own experience; for example, the thematic structuring of two of Keats' dramatic poems, "Lamia" and *Endymion*, suggests several of Keats' theories or personal speculations concern life and art. Their poetic value, demonstrated by the technical structure, is both inherent and acquired when it is observed through specific dramatic devices. One such device is the use of character transformations. The value of this device is in its recurrence within the context of
Keats' other poems where it becomes relevant to the dramatic movement and to the theme.

More important, these character transformations incorporate the literal level into the symbolic and although the dramatic movement may vary, the transformations recur in such a way as to become significant. What personal reflections are to the structure of Wordsworth's Prelude, or the sense of "splendor" that informs Shelley's dramatic poetry, or even the recurrence of "gyres" in Yeats, these transformations are to the structure of Keats' work -- a dramatic device that ultimately develops the theme of his poetry.

As a dramatic device, then, these transformations are limited to one poem; they can be defined within the body of Keats' poetic achievement and in the way they perform an essentially Keatsian function. Read within the context of Keats' dramatic poetry, these transformations become not only central to the organic unity, but a reflection of Keats' ideology: they become truth and beauty in the Keatsian world of "sensation." Thus, the systematic appearance of these character transformations can offer a necessary insight into the entire thematic development of Keats' work.

Endymion and "Lamia" offer two examples of this dramatic device. They both involve transformations necessary to the poem's dramatic movement and both develop Keats' theories about artistic beauty. In Endymion these
transformations are incorporated into the relationship between Endymion and Cynthia. In "Lamia" the transformations serve quite a different function; they illustrate periods of transition, concentrating not only on Lamia's pursuit of Lycius, but also the conflict between Lamia and Apollonius.

ENDYMION

Specific symbols and metaphors are developed in Keats' early work, particularly Endymion, where the garden imagery, mythological context, and the sleep/dream/waking sequences become reflections of the creative imagination.

O Magic Sleep! O comfortable bird
That broodest o'er the troubled sea of mind
Till it is hush'd and smooth! O confin'd
Restraint! imprisoned liberty! 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...

(Endymion I, 453-462)

The symbols and metaphors that appear within the sleep/dream/waking sequences are associated with other specific processes of the mind. Sleep is the process of illumination or enlightenment and the dream itself represents the traditional Romantic "vision." In Keats' poetry reality is ironically associated with the "paleness," and "mortality" that accompany an awakening. The interrelationships developed through these devices form a larger pattern connecting myth to dream. It is through this connection that human experience is transferred from the unconscious
to the conscious level. Myth, as an imitation of human experience, expresses the rational and emotional levels of perceiving and interpreting behavior, in much the same way as dreams do.

In Keats' poetry these patterns are presented through his imaginative recreations of myth, legend, and romance. The symbols and metaphors used in the early poetry are relevant to the character and symbol transformations that occur in his later work, since they form a continuing structural basis for change and development.

Within the myths and romances the metaphors are often illustrated by a cyclical pattern which is divided by time frames: the four seasons, the transitions between morning, noon, evening, and night. This chronological progression also takes the form of youth, maturity, age, and death. These cyclical patterns are used by Keats to develop the contrasts in his work and to focus on his poetic ideals. It is the reality behind the "vision" of immortality that emerges from the poet's portrayal of myth and romance; it is introduced on the literal level of plot, setting, and characterization and repeated on the symbolic level revealing the poet's struggle with artistic permanence.

The plot development in Endymion, for example, takes the form of a gradual ascent, an elevation of consciousness, a union or integration that reconciles Endymion's internal conflict. For Keats the conflict was part of the poetic ideal and the quest for artistic permanence, exem-
plified by the cyclical myth. Relative to this development is the sense of poetic identity growing out of an elusive yet attainable reconciliation of values. In Endymion the theme of division and reintegration emerges from the inner struggle involving an identification between the poet and the character he has created. Endymion's progression can be interpreted as a cyclical myth, involving a spiral movement in which the main character experiences an ascent and also a descent, emerging not at the point of outset, but at a higher level.

In a letter to Benjamin Bailey of October 8, Keats stated his purpose with Endymion. Primarily it was to be a "test of invention," to challenge Keats' skill as a poet and to expand his knowledge of poetry in terms of thematic and structural precision.

[Endymion] will be a test, a trial of my Powers of Imagination and chiefly of my invention which is a rare thing indeed -- by which I must make 4000 Lines of one bare circumstance and fill them with Poetry; and when I consider that this is a great task, and that when done it will take me but a dozen paces towards the Temple of Fame -- it makes me say -- God forbid that I should be without such a task!... Besides a long Poem is a test of Invention which I take to be the Polar Star of Poetry, as Fancy its Sails, and Imagination the Rudder.14

In Endymion, the consciousness of description, narration, and poetic technique are suggested by the withdrawn or secluded quality of the Latmos environment, an environment that is characterized by mystery and contrast, "...it has gloomy shades, sequestered deep/ Where no man went." These natural limitations create the shepherds' suppli-
cation to the god Pan, for Pan represents the established order within the rural community. His absolute authority is acknowledged in the ritual celebration that defines his function in terms of fertility, protection, and "universal knowledge." The priest's invocation or "hymn to Pan" distinguishes between the earthbound existence of the Latmos shepherds and the "bourne of heaven." And it is from this definition that the essential premises of the quest develop. The contrasts in the hymn illustrate the limits of human experience, for Pan not only represents power and authority, but also universal truth.

Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,
That come swooning over hollow grounds,
And wither drearily on barren moors:
Dread opener of the mysterious doors,
Leading to universal knowledge.

(Endymion I, 285-289)

The access to universal knowledge that explains the unknown, identifies not only the natural human limitations that contrast to the gods, but it also implies the extremes of consciousness. In this respect, Pan's function is defined in terms of immortality and permanence.

Be still the unimaginable lodge
For solitary thinking, such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain: be still the leaven
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth
Given it touch ethereal -- a new birth:
Be still a symbol of immensity;
A firmament reflected in a sea;
An element filling the space between;
An unknown -- but no more...

(Endymion I, 293-302)

For Endymion, the transition is from the collective security of Latmos to the isolation of self-discovery that
are associated with change and growth. This transition is reinforced by the exigency of his vision of Cynthia. The "flowery spell" that leaves him "dizzy and distraught" reflects the nature of the quest in terms of the ascent, the challenge, and the attainment of immortality that are complemented by a sense of doubt and fear. Endymion's despondency at the ritual celebration of Pan's authority is the impetus behind the quest, for the contrast developed from these opening scenes is that of Endymion's finite universe compared to the infinite universe of Pan.

He [Pan] 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.' He remains the symbol of a source of speculation that can have no limit, that can never be finally grasped or formulated. He endures as a symbol of the ultimate mystery of life but considered positively, as a source of endless investigation and discovery.15

As the "vision" within the dream, Cynthia represents both the illusion and the reality. Her evasiveness and distance create an atmosphere of fantasy through the medium of the dream. She is a symbol of the ideals of love and beauty, the goals toward which Endymion aspires. The archetypal patterning of the cyclical myth characterizes her as both the enchantress and also as the guide. In each of these roles she motivates and threatens Endymion. Cynthia, like Pan, symbolizes the unknown which is as much a part of Endymion's internal struggle as it is a part of universal knowledge. Through her the myth and the dream represent reality, the reality that Endymion faces in his
pursuit of these ideals.

Whether dream or myth, in these adventures is an atmosphere of irresistible fascination about the figure that appears suddenly as guide, marking a new period, a new stage in the biography. That which has to be faced, and is somewhat profoundly familiar to the unconscious -- though unknown, surprising, and even frightening to the conscious personality -- makes itself known; and what formerly was meaningful may become strongly emptied of value.\(^\text{16}\)

Endymion's response to the enchantress is one of disillusionment and deception, while his reaction to the guide is one of caution, vulnerability, and insecurity that follow his justification:

My restless spirit never could endure
To brood so long upon one luxury,
Unless it did, though fearfully, espy
A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.

(Endymion I, 854-858)

The climax of Endymion occurs not in the fulfillment of the quest, but in the Cave of Quietude where death is suggested as a necessary requisite to rebirth. To Endymion the journey and the destination become essentially the same and the movement of the quest emphasizes a retreat before the final resolution. The Cave of Quietude is a common refuge in the development of the cyclical myth; in one sense it is the acceptance of death but only that sort of death which presupposes rebirth; in the evolution of total consciousness it is the realm of "dreamless sleep," beyond pain and pleasure alike. The cave is "beyond the seeming confines of space / Made for the soul to wander in and trace its own existence." The images are of "dark regions" and "tombs of buried griefs" where the spirit
wanders randomly until it is penetrated by "the pierce of new-born woe." Within this purgation, Endymion is "tortured with renewed life" and the cave itself is described in a series of oxymoronic contrasts:

Dark Paradise where pale becomes the bloom
Of health by due; where silence drearest
Is most articulate; where hopes infest;
Where eyes are the brightest far that keep
Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.

(Endymion IV, 536-540)

The final transition directing the journey "homeward to habitual self" is completed when Endymion is confronted by his own mortality. Underlying the quest is the realization that self-affirmation is achieved only when the self-imposed limitations are transcended, for "...the man is yet to come / Who hath not journeyed in this native hell." The process of self-annihilation and rebirth appears in a series of illusions where Endymion's experiences force him to come to terms with "the monstrous swell of visionary seas" infested with "cloudy phantasms."

Endymion concludes, "...No, never more / Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore / Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast" (IV, 655). The immortality Endymion pursues involves not only self-affirmation, but the rejection of the convictions he once believed to be true; in other words, the limitations to achievement are self-imposed and, therefore, Endymion contends: "There never liv'd a mortal man, who bent / His appetite beyond his natural sphere / But starved and died" (IV, 646).

An essential part of Endymion's "awakening" is
realized through the evolution of consciousness; it is a character transformation that allows him to accept reality. In the fantasy atmosphere of sleep and dreams he passes through a relevant sequence of realistic events, leading to an understanding of life. This atavistic element of his nature manifests itself in the Cave of Quietude, for it is the foundation upon which the higher sense of life is developed and continues to develop.

The quest brings to the surface a consciousness of life evolving from experience and this becomes a recurring theme of Keats' work, a theme that embodies his own sense of poetic truth. The principles of consciousness that he found so relevant in Endymion define his own quest for these poetic ideals. It is revealed in the conflict between "joy and sorrow" and in the inevitability of change.

The passage he added to Endymion that evening describes a curious psychological experience which marks a turning point in Endymion's progress and, perhaps, in Keats's own life. Endymion, faced with seeming failure in his quest, enters the 'Cave of Quietude,' a retreat of 'remotest glooms' in the dark depths of consciousness. Here the spirit that has moved beyond all hope of happiness, beyond even the sensation of despair, falls into a dreamless sleep and awakens mysteriously renewed, the fever of self-absorption past, to find the world full of blessing.17

Keats defined the passions as "they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty." This essential Beauty could only be perceived through suffering and struggle or the sense of sorrow from which the imagination perceived and absorbed a real sense of beauty. The con-
trasts reflected the struggle to create and within that struggle the higher reality was revealed. "What he had discovered between writing the first and the last books of *Endymion* was a whole new dimension of experience, to be grasped only by surrendering to the wayward and endless richness of the immediate moment." 18

The use of myth and its effect on the imagination provided a realistic examination of human interaction. The context was one of growth, change, development exemplified by the transition from innocence to experience. *Endymion's* quest illustrated this transition by means of his relationship to Cynthia, the Indian Maid and the final character transformation, the transformation from the mortal to the immortal. The significance of this transformation is that it explicitly marked the end of *Endymion's* struggle, and the attainment of the ideals. The change involved the acceptance of Cynthia's dual nature which is a combination of light and darkness, truth and deception.

In romantic fiction, it has been pointed out, the polarities of sexual experience — lawful and lustful, tender and sensual, familial and alien — were usually represented by two heroines, a fair and a dark lady; and the hero, when forced to choose between them, invariably renounced his dark and passionate mistress for this innocent fair-haired love. 19

Within this mythological structure, Keats presented an emotional reconciliation projected through *Endymion's* acceptance of the Indian Maid and his resolution "I have clung to nothing." The transition from innocence to experience is completed with the final confrontation, where
the character transformations imply Endymion's acceptance of both Cynthia and the Indian Maid. It is significant that they become one and the same.

Keats from the beginning blends these opposites: the bright-haired goddess appears to Endymion by night, the dark maiden by day; and in the end, by ambiguously wedding himself 'to things of light' Endymion chooses both women, as one is transformed into the other, he becomes 'whole in love' and finds the object of his love has become whole for him.20

The thematic structure of Endymion provides an idealistic illustration of consciousness in a context where change is completed only when the quest is realized and has come full circle; in other words, the journey and the destination reveal the same reality. Through Endymion, Keats stated his conviction that growth involved sorrow and sorrow ultimately manifested maturity and progress. Endymion illustrated, "...his belief in the necessity of growth, the value of the progression into experience, the impossibility of regression into innocence, the goal of a more complex harmony of being."21

The transition that awakens the "thinking principle" is manifested by Endymion's fascination with Cynthia. The elements of fantasy that create his doubt and uncertainty also accentuate her function in terms of the quest. "What such a figure represents is the benign, protecting power of destiny. The fantasy is a reassurance -- a promise that the peace of Paradise... is not to be lost; that it supports the present and stands in the future as well as the past."22 Cynthia's preternatural appearance and
disappearance manifest Endymion's unconscious, for she emerges as a symbol of transformation that is revealed through fantasy and dream. This myth is a generalized or universal dream which uses the same symbols for the same ends. Throughout the quest there exists an almost archetypal correlation between Keats' personalized symbols in Endymion and the generalized, unspecified symbols of mythology.

The themes introduced in Endymion were to recur throughout Keats' poetic career. These themes encompassed a consciousness of humanity that is dramatically presented through plot, setting, and characterization; or, as Keats had stated: "In Endymion I leapt headlong into the Sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the Soundings, the quicksands, & the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea & comfortable advice."23

The thematic content of Endymion also suggests two aspects of artistic creation. First, the extended metaphors for the poetic imagination are all there in essence and, secondly, the symbolic nature of Cynthia becomes, for Keats, the spiritual guide of his later works — a guide in the sense that Moneta and Mnemosyne are guides offering direction and counsel.

Let it be borne in mind, then, that besides the fundamental idea of treating the passion of Endymion for Cynthia as a type of passion of the poet's soul for essential Beauty, Keats wrote under the influence of two secondary moral ideas or convictions, inchoate
probably in his mind when he began but gaining definiteness as he went on. One was that the soul enamoured of and pursuing Beauty cannot achieve its quest in selfishness and isolation, but to succeed must first be taken out of itself and purified by active sympathy with the lives and sufferings of others; the other that a passion for the manifold separate and individual beauties of things and beings upon earth is in its nature identical with passion for the transcendental and essential beauty.  

The various interpretations of "Lamia" extend our understanding of Keats' statements about creativity and the function of poetry. On the one hand, it has been interpreted in terms of an allegorical parallel of science, "cold philosophy," and poetic truth, where Lamia, Lycius and Apollonius represent beauty, the poet, and the cold, distant, factual voice of reason.

Lamia herself was almost regarded as representing whatever was beautiful or poetically desirable; Lycius, her lover, was understood to represent the poet; and the grave and sinister philosopher, Apollonius, who dispels the enchantment which Lamia has thrown over Lycius, was taken to be the cold and unnecessary voice of reason.

Another interpretation argues for an alternate theory equally as symbolic. Essentially, Lamia, however beautiful and convincing, is merely a serpent, an illusion; Apollonius, who reveals her "serpent nature" and ultimately destroys her, possesses at least a plausible sense of reality; Lycius, according to this interpretation, is a kind of romantic who must be freed from the illusion and enchantment, even if it means his death.

If Keats had indeed extended the significance of
these characters in terms of their symbolic value, then
evidence would exist in favor of one interpretation or the
other. Whatever the exact or direct correspondence between
Lamia, Lycius, and Apollonius, it is evident that Keats'
basic theme is the conflict between poetry and philosophi-
cal reasoning. This tripartite structure is also a means
of determining whether or not a reconciliation could be
achieved between the two points of truth.

In spite of the controversial nature of "Lamia,"
it is my contention that Keats intended it to be a mixture
of dramatic movement, developed through character trans-
formations, as well as a poetic statement, developed in
terms of its theme and compactness. This poem, to Keats,
contained a statement about poetry and the artist. Poetic
skills are continually developed in the symbolic struggle
between Lamia, Lycius, and Apollonius, which require a
dramatic form. "Lamia" possesses not only the conflict
between science and poetry, but also the conflict between
illusion and reality which are for the poet influences that
affect the "truth" of poetic expression. Keats himself had
stated that "Lamia" contained none of "the inexperience of
life."

"I have been reading over a short poem I have com-
posed," Keats had written to George and Georgiana in
September 1819, "and I am certain there is that sort of
fire in it which must take hold of people in some way --
give them either pleasant or unpleasant sensation."26
The dramatic and poetic elements that he emphasized, that he hoped would increase the thematic integrity of the work through style and structure, and which would "take hold of people in some way," came in the familiar form of myth -- in the reliable, if imaginative, recreation of Burton's tale of intrigue and deception; and this recreation of Lamia and Apollonius reaffirmed Keats' commitment to the necessity of truth and experience surfacing through confrontation.

From this realization it is a natural step to re-observe that Keats had been more satisfied with 'Lamia' than with any of the other poems he had lately done, and quite probably because he recognized that his absorption in dramatic technique that summer had worked out well on one thing, at least. 'Lamia' had given him great hopes of success...27

"Lamia" is a dramatic enactment of Keats' basic themes concerning artistic limitations and the nature of poetry. Like Endymion, the drama, its structure, action, and oppositions develop the theme of the poem and eventually its statement about truth and life. To illustrate these distinctions, the circular movement that is shown in "Lamia" is used to emphasize a new, more dramatic approach to an old theme. The difficulties that have been found in the precise "meaning" of the poem and in Keats' personal intentions in developing the conflict can be explained in terms of his attitudes toward his poetic subjects, particularly in the symbolic nature of his characters and their roles. They communicate, in an essentially dramatic way, the opposition between illusion and reality. "Lamia" is a
dramatic statement in which every element possesses both light and shade, in which no one statement emerges as completely right, "true" or successful. The dramatic distance maintained by Keats points to no definitive view; he neither completely supports nor rejects any action developed within the behavior of Lamia, Lycius, or Apollonius. In short, the drama itself reveals, first, the essential conflict; and, second, a symbolic statement about poetry which is demonstrated by the characters and their actions. The characters act as if they have individual destinies to fulfill, predetermined paths that influence the direction of their lives.

The most specific dramatic opposition in the poem is the quarrel between Lamia and Apollonius. Pitted against the lovely but unreal Lamia who knows her weakness is the analytical, coldly just, and eminently actual Apollonius who knows his strength. She is mingled serpent and woman, given relief from enchantment by Hermes but never discarding her whole nature.28

Lamia's basic weakness is that she, in many respects, is an illusion and no matter how beautiful her appearance and convincing her arguments, she deceives Lycius through spells, lies, and intrigue. To define the Lamia-Apollonius confrontation as simply emotion versus reason, however, is to disregard Lamia's function which is revealed in a series of transformations involving a progressive decline from the immortal to the mortal. The initial transformation, focusing on her manipulation of Hermes, emphasizes her preternatural power.

'Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is. 'Stoop Hermes, let me breathe upon thy brow,
'And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even now.'
The God on half-shut feathers stood serene,
She breath'd 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.
("Lamia," I, 120-126)

By relinquishing her serpent beauty she loses her immortal
status and is therefore subjected to Apollonius' magic and
anathematism, for he not only represents Lycius' teacher
and guardian, but also another source of power. "He is
himself a magician, not simply the wise, contemplative,
Platonic teacher of youth but a force of demonic power who
can counter Lamia on even terms. But he, at least, is no
illusion."29

The events leading to the Lamia-Apollonius conflict
are produced through dramatic devices involving Lamia's
physical transformations. The exchange between Hermes and
Lamia that results in her initial transformation, esta-
blishes her power and also her vulnerability. These
transformations are accentuated by the tension between
illusion and reality.

For one thing, constant movement and flow inform the
action. It is the fluidity of transformation, of one
state blending into another and these are metamor-
phoses which swing between the opposition of joy and
sorrow, delight and melancholy. In the first episode,
the invisible nymph is made visible by the Lamia-
serpent, and the serpent is transformed to woman by
Hermes. In the last episodes, Lamia creates illusion
by transforming air and nothing into palace and feast,
Apollonius destroys the illusion by transforming Lamia
as woman to nothing, a change which parallels her loss
of serpent-beauty in the first part and contrasts with
the nymph's release to visibility.30

In "Lamia" Keats had chosen to portray these conflicts
by means of a contrast between the ideal, immortal world
and the real, mortal context of decay and mutability. The consequences of these conflicts resulted in the dissociation of precise thematic direction; Hermes and the nymph compose the idealistic backdrop to Lamia and Lycius. When Lamia rejects her serpent form Hermes and the nymph become irrelevant to the action that follows; however, they do provide one of the basic contrasts between ideal yet isolated passion and the level of human emotion.

The contrasts between the mortal and immortal provide the only stable consistent vision of reality. Mortal men can only conceive of the ideal in isolated instances which ultimately return them to the harsher realities. The fleeting glimpses of immortality acquire the mysticism of a dream that is both real and surreal. This is why Hermes and the nymph are protected in a realm of perfect, immortal love.

Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
Their pleasure in a long immortal dream.
("Lamia," I, 127-128)

Like the knight-at-arms whose vision of the ideal, the Belle Dame and her elfin grot, dissolve into the cold hillside, the relationship between Hermes and the nymph paralleling Lamia and Lycius, focuses on the illusion of immortal permanence and intensity contrasting to the reality of mortal men. Hermes and the nymph are constant and remain unaffected by decay.

Into the green-recessed woods they flew;
Nor grew pale, as mortal lovers do.
("Lamia," I, 144-145)
Beneath the description of Lamia's serpent-beauty there exists the dual nature of her existence and in a predictable way she possesses an earthly and vulnerable appeal.

She is both beauty and ugliness, both goddess and mortal. The miracle of her metamorphosis is that from the beauty-ugliness which characterizes all earth beauty, the pain and ugliness are magically wiped away, the serpent vanishes and the beauty of her womanliness is fulfilled. This duality is evident in her possession of Lycius. Her ideal beauty is real inasmuch as it reflects her mortality. Only when she rejects her serpent-beauty and her immortal context is she subjected to Apollonius.

For that she was a woman and without
Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains
Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
("Lamia," I, 306-309)

The interpretations of "Lamia" that allow for the various conclusions are based on Keats' theories concerning the influence of philosophical reasoning on poetic truth. The central theme is that poetry expresses not only Keats' questioning:

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
but also his inability to completely reject Apollonius' exposure of Lamia's serpent nature. The outcome is therefore inconclusive. The dramatic movement, suggested by the Lamia-Apollonius encounter, encompasses Keats' changing attitudes where -- no matter how isolated the poetic retreat and no matter how exclusive the poet's interpre-
..."cold philosophy" undeniably influences the overall experience. Lamia's ultimate destruction or disappearance illustrates the fact that she is an illusion and Apollonius' exposure of her is justified in the sense that she does not represent truth but deception by transgressing the mortal boundaries that have defined her status and her function.

'Fool! Fool!' repeated he, while his eyes still Relented not, nor mov'd; 'from every ill 'Of life have I preserv'd thee to this day, 'And shall I see thee made a serpent's prey?! Then Lamia breath'd death breath; the sophist's eye, Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly, Keen, cruel, perceant, 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

("Lamia," II, 295-305)

With this final transformation comes the final irony in that Apollonius, in disclosing Lamia's serpent nature, has succeeded in destroying Lycius, the one thing he had hoped to save.

This poem demonstrates Keats' interest in dramatizing the relationship between beauty and science. If Lamia represents a deceptive kind of beauty and Lycius the "enticed" and gullible romantic, then Apollonius' actions represent Keats' changing attitudes concerning the nature of life and art. And in this respect, Lycius is not only responsible for his actions, as Lamia is for hers, but he is "the dreamer" so condemned by Keats in "The Fall of Hyperion." This is perhaps why Keats himself had such a high regard for "Lamia" as an artistic achievement, stating
that it possessed a sort of "fire."

But by the time he came to write 'Lamia' he was finished with such evasions; he had turned to face things as he saw them, and the prospect was a pretty daunting one. But just because he knew that at last he turned, and knew that in 'Lamia' for all that had gone before, he rated 'Lamia' as he did.32
Chapter 3
SYMBOLS OF TRUTH AND LIFE

The ideals which Keats sought to express and preserve in the odes are developed in the concrete imagery, the systematic versification, and the euphony, which ultimately contained their beauty and their truth. Whether his intent was to retain the physical beauty and significance of the tangible, inanimate world or to describe a fragmentary glimpse of perfection, that which sustained his concentration, which demanded self-absorption or "self-annihilation" and which undeniably became the essence of his poetry, was the transition between the concrete image and its symbolic value. From this need to make a complete distinction or transition between poetic subject and its symbolic value, arises the most effective technical discoveries of his mature verse and particularly his concentrated effort in securing a polished, compact means of expression. It is hardly an exaggeration to contend that it was this same sense of transition which gave impetus and completeness not only to a directed though spontaneous development of epithet, image, and symbol, but also to his need, as his skill emerged, for utilizing with increasing efficiency, whatever metrical, phonetic, and conventional poetic devices might simultaneously improve and strengthen the texture of the odal lines.

In order to understand the odes, we must note Keats' development of merely suggestive images, as in "Sleep and
Poetry" and *Endymion*, which differ from the deliberately constructed symbols that appear throughout his later poetry. In order to describe the process attention must first be given, however, to the initial transition or symbolic transformation where Keats, after constructing several miscellaneous sonnets and basic lyrical forms in the established conventions of the previous century, acquired his own metrical and phonetic devices for creating the weight and freedom of his odes -- a conscious form that he associated, at least in his mature poetic practice, with beauty and truth, with an intense and compact statement, which were always for Keats the objective of his poetic achievement. The technical character of these transformations has some intrinsic significance. Despite the distinctions between image and symbol, Keats' stylistic assimilation of one into the other is one of his most direct and reliable poetic devices. With the completion of the odes, ending with "To Autumn" in September of 1819, he did venture beyond his conventional, eclectic imitations of earlier poets in his attempt at poetic discipline, for the odes represented his most effective stylistic achievement. Analysis of Keats' stylistic progression reveals a technical ability which, in its most disciplined application in the odes, contains his most direct and sensitive statements about life. It is also relevant to point out the extent to which Keats applied the traditional sonnet forms to the structure of the odes and
the manner in which he developed and perfected them as elements of style that fit his immediate purpose.

His progress is one composed of meticulous organization, experimentation, and assimilation of influences that affected both his intellectual and his emotional perception. "By the time of the composition of the odes, Keats had already attained such rare mastery of phrase, and so mature a craftsmanship, that it hardly seems conceivable that he could have advanced much further."\textsuperscript{33}

The three ideals that predominate in Keats' letters -- truth, beauty, and immortality -- are associated with his use of sensation and are part of the symbol transformations, since they are repeatedly introduced as poetic subjects. The recurrence of these ideals as goals toward which the poet aspires, is intended to define the act of creation and the nature of art in terms of a "prefigurative imagination"; prefigurative in the sense that it expresses truth and beauty as a means of interpreting and perceiving life. "...Keats's ostensibly transcendental phrases were but loose labels for his collective notion of the manifold concrete beauties of the finite world -- existing either as objects of perception or as images in the imagination."\textsuperscript{34}

As the creative power of the imagination increases, the ability to perceive life becomes a means of assimilating beauty and truth or as Keats had stated, "What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth -- whether it existed before or not."\textsuperscript{35}
Throughout the poetry and the letters truth and beauty are related to the immortal in the sense that immortality is synonymous with artistic permanence. These ideals are also part of defining the function of poetry and the character of the poet which emerge from Keats' essentially philosophical way of evaluating experience. Immortality and artistic permanence become influences affecting the symbolic level of his poetry. The sources and influences are a combination of philosophical statements and Keats' own evaluation of the tradition of English literature. Keats' motivation is revealed through his commitment to poetry and his estimations of life and art. His evaluations of life are presented through an idealistic context where truth and beauty become accessible and yet his idealism also provides the basis for much of the questioning that surfaces with the inevitable conflict between the harsh realities of life and the symbolic distance of art.

Human nature is not capable of assimilating truth through abstractions; therefore, Keats' symbols are developed from impressions made by the immediate environment; the seasons, the song of the nightingale, the urn, as well as by his mythological subjects such as Psyche and Hyperion and by his purely imaginative creations like Melancholy. Truth is achieved through experience and is assimilated only when it becomes a part of identity, an identity that is acquired through diversified experiences.
"O for a life of sensations rather than of Thoughts," Keats had stated in an examination of the "authenticity of Imagination." The process of perception is a reliance on the spontaneity of these sensations.

Sensations are the means by which truth is conducted. This "truth" is indigenous to the development of the passive and receptive mind and it is followed by an increased or intense level of awareness emerging not from examination and analysis but from the "silent working" of the mind. The passive quality of perception is the means by which the experience is brought to a conscious level; conversely, the receptive quality is the immediate impression made by the experience where, "...the simple imaginative Mind may have its reward in the repetition of its own silent working coming continually on the spirit with a fine suddenness."  

The "silent working" of the mind can be explained in terms of instinctive or intuitive act of perception, where the senses unconsciously assimilate and interpret experience. The impressions made are then transformed into a rational explanation of the experience. What appears to be irrelevant to the conscious mind may be absorbed by the unconscious, stored and later recalled. This assimilation, both conscious and unconscious, provides a repository for the images and symbols that emerge from a given experience. William Hazlitt, in his essay "Lectures on the Comic Writers," described the movement of the mind from intuition
to "intellection" by evaluating this process as an unconscious one.

This intuitive perception of the hidden analogies of things, or as it may be called, this instinct of the imagination, is, perhaps, what stamps the character of genius on the productions of art more than any other circumstance; for it works unconsciously like nature, and receives its impressions from a kind of inspiration.38

Therefore, poetic achievement and its impressions and inspiration come upon the mind with "a fine suddenness," like a revelation which Keats later expressed as: "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."39

The mind which is enlightened by experience and strengthened by its impact, increases the revelatory aspect of perception. This Keats had labeled the "silent working" of the mind where these experiences are interpreted through inner or emotional responses that "tip the fine Web of his Soul, and weave a tapestry empyrean full of symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wandering, of distinctness for his luxury." Experience, fostering all the distinct levels of perception, flourishes into a consciousness of life's diversity which ultimately becomes part of its wholeness and unity.

But the Minds of Mortals are so different: and bent on such diverse journeys that it may at first appear impossible for any common taste and fellowship to exist between two or three under these suppositions. It is however quite the contrary. Minds would leave
each other in contrary directions traverse each other in numberless points, and at last greet each other at the journey's end.40

Keats' theories about life and art revolve around experience, for it is experience that influences the creative process, becoming poetry. "Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced," Keats had written to John Reynolds, "Even a Proverb is not a proverb to you till your life has illustrated it."41

These preliminary evaluations of creativity, concerning the passive and receptive mind, "the Life of Sensations," and Keats' ideals, are developed extensively through experimentation with various verse forms. Throughout the poetry these techniques emphasize a thematic development as well. The precision of Keats' structural ability, in terms of rhyme scheme, imagery, and symbolism, is influenced by earlier developments in English literature, specifically, those of Shakespeare and Milton. Conflicting points of view emerge from this tradition and Keats examines them in relation to poetic style. This examination of conventional poetic structure and technique becomes, for Keats, the tension that promotes his own verse forms: "...on the one hand, the epic achievement of Milton and the character of his and Shakespeare's era, and on the other hand, Wordsworth and all that Wordsworth suggested of another kind of poetry."42 In a letter to John Reynolds Keats explained the conflicting points of view and concluded that Milton's genius was a reflection of the age
in which he lived, of the moral and social limitations of the Reformation. To Keats, Milton's approach established not progression, but "certain points and resting places in reasoning" that made the Reformation an age of moral security; a sense of security that contrasted to the complexity and uncertainty of Keats' own age.

From the Paradise Lost and the other Works of Milton, I hope it is not too presuming, even between ourselves to say, his Philosophy, human and divine, may be tolerably understood by one not much advanced in years. In his time Englishmen were just emancipated from a great superstition—and Men had got hold of certain points and resting places in reasoning which were too newly born to be doubted, and too much opposed by the Mass of Europe not to be thought ethereal and authentically divine...43

The differences between Wordsworth and Milton are important to an understanding of human motivation and historical progression. "...Milton, whatever he may have thought in the sequel, appears to have been content with these by his writings—He did not think into the human heart, as Wordsworth has done."44 Milton, as far as Keats could determine, was the representative and spokesman for his age and the truth he expresses could be limited to the changes, struggles, and suffering of that point in time. While Milton finds and is satisfied with these "resting places," Wordsworth "martyrs himself to the human heart." Both illustrate genius in varying stages of growth and development. Milton's concept of truth is not lesser than Wordsworth's; it is, rather, exemplary of a different stage of human progression. These stages of development, whether
reflected in individual or social progress, unified all that could be thought and felt in regard to human experience. It is through literature that these essential experiences are preserved and from this Keats' interpretations of both Milton and Wordsworth helped to determine his own truth from what he termed the "larger experience."

...one of them is the consideration of Wordsworth's genius and as a help, in the manner of gold being the meridian Line of worldly wealth, - how he differs from Milton. - And here I have nothing but surmises, from an uncertainty whether Milton's apparently less anxiety for Humanity proceeds from his seeing further or not than Wordsworth: And whether Wordsworth has, in truth, epic passion and martyrs himself to the human heart, the main region of his song. In regard to this genius alone - we find what he says true as far as we have experiences and we can judge, not further but by larger experience.45

The literary development through emulation of men of genius embodies Keats' own struggle with originality in expression and in versification. It is not so much to create an innovative structural device as it is to express the truth of his own convictions; the structural devices are merely vehicles for this expression. For Keats' poetic development was an attempt to give his speculations a concrete medium of expression, a medium that was capable of sustaining the tension and complexity of human existence. Keats' concept of Negative Capability was an attempt to distance himself from his subject with the intention of objectively assimilating its significance, and, in turn, translating the experience into poetry devoid of an egocentric bias.
Keats' development of and insistence on the ideals of truth, beauty, and immortality are part of his evaluations of great poets. To determine his relationship to them he made several distinctions concerning poetry as cultivated through the literary traditions, distinguishing it from poetry created from personal experience. From this evaluation, Keats developed a synthesis between the two, between the abstract leanings of the imagination and the reality of experience. The self-affirmation that ultimately caused him to utilize as well as challenge the established poetic techniques, invariably improved his poetic techniques.

"One cannot go back and write exactly as Milton or Shakespeare did. Out of all this comes a new realization of crucial importance. Keats saw, in effect, that he was and could only be a modern poet; that he could hardly escape a poetry that was turned more to the inner life."46

In order to understand the literary tradition and to assert himself, Keats had to challenge the great poets of the past and their tradition.

"For it would ultimately involve, if not surrender, at least the thorough modification of something very precious to him; his consuming ideal of the great poets of the past that had proved so formative in his own development."47

The ideal of greatness caused Keats to compare himself to Wordsworth in order to determine the limits of his own ability, to challenge his own convictions concerning the nature and purpose of poetry and, overall, to firmly establish himself as a creditable poet. In essence,
Keats attributes Wordsworth's insight to "the general and gregarious advance of intellect," as opposed to "individual greatness of mind."

I will return to Wordsworth - whether or not he has an extended vision or a circumscribed grandeur - whether he is an eagle in his nest, or on the wing - And to be more explicit and to show you how tall I stand by the giant, I will put down a simile of human life as far as I now perceive it: that is, to the point to which I say we both have arrived at.48

Experience necessary to achieving these ideals emerges from uninhibited perception. Essential to Keats' evaluation of truth and beauty is the self-negation, self-absorption or Negative Capability that manifests the "camelion" character of the poet. This identity, diffused through an unbiased participation in life, is not distorted by an egotistical involvement. To create, the poet must be both passive and receptive for the experience to be fully understood and absorbed. The poet's distance from the subject and from his work allows the poetry to flow, standing alone as a work of art; and yet the poem itself is an expression of life itself affected by the emotional intervention of the poet.

"In terms of a dramatic principle, it is clear that the Keatsian kind of poetic nature is suited to create that poetry in which the poet retreats, as does the writer of a play, letting other figures and other voices carry act and meaning. He is both receptive and chameleon."49
THE ODES

The essence of this Keatsian kind of poetry and his ideals of truth, beauty, and immortality lies partly in the number of different ways in which they are expressed; if one form emerges in the dramatic poetry then quite another seems to emerge in the odes. But they all emerge from the same source; that is, from Keats' need to transform experience into poetry. One way to approach these ideals, for Keats, was to develop dramatic characters whose struggles were specifically with immortality and then to have them act out their situations at a symbolic level where the poet could voice his own theories concerning art. Psyche, Endymion, Lamia, and Hyperion all contend with their immortality. In one way or another, they are all characterized by human weaknesses and vulnerability. Another way in which Keats developed his sense of truth, beauty, and immortality was by the refined imagery and phrasing so intrinsic to the structuring of the odes which were written primarily in April and May of 1819. It has been said that, "No interpretation of any of the odes - still less of the odes as a group - satisfies anyone except the interpreter." This is why I have chosen to evaluate the odes in terms of the symbol transformations which correspond to Keats' ideals of truth, beauty, and immortality - immortality in the sense of artistic permanence. The structuring of the odes in terms of poetic form, meter, rhyme scheme, imagery, and symbolism permits a myriad of varied
interpretations -- which inadvertently suggests, of course, one reason for their continued success.

The thematic unity of the odes is Keats' means of moving away from reality in order to grasp a higher "ethereal" sense of life. The visual and emotional reality compressed through successive images of the transitory, indicates an integration of sound and sense. The odes, as an odal sequence, present one theme and its variations. The imaginative perception of reality is confined to and yet freed from the earthly limitations, suspended between the abstract, "ethereal" context of immortality, truth, and beauty, but also subjected to the destruction and decay inherent in change and flux. The truth is in the synthesis of concrete and abstract, and from this synthesis the images become symbols. The alterations made before the odes were published in 1820 become significant, not only to demonstrate Keats' confidence as a poet, but also to illustrate his awareness in determining which odes were appropriate.

In his volume, Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems, published at the end of June 1820, John Keats included, among these other poems, five odes. Four of these had been written the previous summer, together with a fifth, "On Indolence"; but when preparing his poems to show his publishers in autumn 1819, he had rejected Indolence, and, the mood of the summer revived by rereading the others, he had composed and substituted the supreme "To Autumn."51

The odes are a means of describing levels of involvement or emotional intensity where the literal level, the external forms, or images contain the truth of the experi-
ence. This statement of truth is not limited to the poet's personal rendering of reality, but the poet's perception is a vehicle by which the experience is created and transmitted. The conceptualization of truth is relative to the poet's experience, and it evolves from what the poet brings to the formulation of the work. In the odes, the specific details capture both the subjective, immediate sensation of the poet's involvement with the subject, and the objective distance necessary for the poem to take shape and the truth to emerge. The formality of their thematic structure implies a unified and integrated whole, in that the concrete level is absorbed into the abstract one. And it is this process of absorption that invariably elevates the images to the level of symbols.

The originality in both form and content proceeds from the assimilation of conventional poetic practices. The rhyme scheme, imagery, and symbolism project Keats' refinement and modification of techniques acquired from his apprenticeship to Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth. Only after Keats had developed an idea which becomes the unity in his work, does he attempt to vary his poetic structure and raise the level of image to the level of symbol.

The thematic context for the odes becomes a statement of Keats' understanding of the physical world, which is in one sense the admonition of sensual beauty and in another is the acceptance of mortality and a statement about the
spiritual, which is often in the periphery of Keats' thought. The reality of physical beauty is directly applicable to Keats' presentation of truth, for it contains the spiritual nature of existence. In essence, the physical and spiritual are interrelated and transformed. An example of this symbol transformation occurs in the "Ode to Psyche" where the idea of worship becomes a focal point of Keats' unique spirituality. Keats transcends the sensual level by incorporating it into a precise rendering of external forms or images into symbols that indicate a higher sense of poetic creativity within the context of the myth. "Keats seldom if ever worshipped spiritual beauty in the accepted meaning of that term, but he worshipped sensuous beauty so intensely that it acquired quasi-spiritual values in his mind."52 In the "Ode to Psyche," the symbolic significance is produced by the garden imagery as well as by the ideas of salvation and worship evoked by the completed garden metaphor.

A rosy sanctuary will I dress
With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
   With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same.

This suggestive metaphor elevates the fane, the sanctuary to symbolically represent a level of illusion and poetic isolation in that the experience is a personal retreat. Not only is this retreat developed through the first person point of view, "I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly, / And, on the sudden, fainting with sur-
prise / Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side" but it is accentuated by the modified Shakespearean sonnet form rhyming ababcdcdefgeeg, followed by a quatrain, two couplets, and a miscellaneous line that ends with a question. The isolation is developed in the actual appearance of the lovers, Cupid and Psyche, who are "calm breathing on the bedded grass / Their arms embraced, and their pinions too / Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu." Like the figures on the Grecian Urn they are suspended in time, preserved, and therefore suggest immortality. The twelve lines that follow are composed of a normal Shakespearean sonnet minus the closing couplet. The third stanza, composed of two quatrains and two miscellaneous lines, is then an amended version of the previous one with, "No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet" replaced by, "Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet" indicating that the poet's distance from the subject, his solitary observation is not altered by a sense of participation until the end of the poem. The transformation is completed by the garden metaphor fading into the poet's experience, therefore, becoming a symbol for poetic creativity. The poet's sense of worship is increased by the distance he maintains as the poem opens and is heightened by the end.

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
The sense of poetic retreat and isolation is further developed by Keats' manipulation of phonetic devices. In the last stanza, the repetition of "f," "d," and "z" can be attributed to the poet's contentment and sense of fulfillment. The repetition produces a subtle effect demonstrating the correspondence between Psyche's sanctuary and the creative imagination. The sound patterns, the assonance and alliteration, emphasize the poet's relationship to Psyche which in this context connotes not only the myth, but also "psyche" in the sense of the soul or spirit.

Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lulled to sleep

An evaluation of Keats' poetry on the level of phonetics becomes relevant when the sound patterns establish a connection between theme and content. The assonance and alliteration are poetic devices used to create and enhance the theme. It is a method Keats often used to complement his metrical unity in an intricate combination of sound and sense.

Another device utilized in the "Ode to Psyche" is that the iambic pentameter and iambic trimeter lines are altered by the use of the spondaic foot. The strategically placed spondee introduces pauses, emphasizes pictorial images, and even increases the impact of the sentence structure. On the thematic level, the spondee has almost a heavy effect,
since the repetition in this ode is primarily of accented syllables.

No voice / no lute / no pipe, / no in / sence sweet

From chain / swung cens / er teeming;

No shrine, / no grove, / no or / acle / no heat

From pale / mouth'd proph / et dreaming

The symbol transformation is produced by Keats' awareness of form that is developed through his use of sound and rhythmic structure. The phonetic and metrical devices, as well as the varied sonnet form structuring the ode, create the texture of the odal lines whereby the image of Psyche is raised to the level of symbol.

This completed symbol transformation suggests a combination of thematic devices as well as the need to escape, to withdraw from a world of difficult experiences. The context for the "Ode to Psyche" is a refuge, a consciousness of suffering which transforms the essence of this isolated vision into "the shrine" that symbolizes the imagination. It is also a spiritual exploration of the "untrodden regions" of the mind. What Psyche invariably symbolizes is the consciousness of life evolving from experience.

Psyche symbolizes, of course, the soul in the old sense of the word, the sum total of the human consciousness. For Keats, we may be sure a most important component of that consciousness was the imagination. In promising to worship Psyche, he was announcing his intention allegorically of becoming a psychological poet, of analyzing the human soul, of glorifying the imagination, of studying the human mind
in order to show how an awareness of its complexity could enrich human experience...\(^{53}\)

Also within this version of \textit{Psyche} is the seclusion and withdrawl necessary for poetic creation, the poetic distance from which the subjects are observed and act independent of the poet's intervention. The vision is sequestered from the real world of corruption and decadence, only to be transformed into an imaginary extension of the poet's perception of life. "Psyche was an excellent symbol for the imagination, as an instrument to bridge the gap between the mortal and immortal because she stood between both worlds; she had been mortal and became a goddess."\(^{54}\) The isolated observation combined with the poet's distance implies that the worship is defined in terms of inspiration where the ideals of truth and beauty come to fruition.

But most of all one wonders about the frank recognition that the visionary poet must work subjectively, that because the poet worships \textit{Psyche} in an unbelieving world, the worship must be private. It can exist only in the mind, and even in 'some untrodden region' of the mind, a place set apart and secluded where other processes of cognition will not intrude.\(^{55}\)

The "Ode to \textit{Psyche}" is one of the most prominent examples of Keats' development of metaphor. Cupid and \textit{Psyche} are extensions of the creative imagination as well as purely poetic subjects. The metaphoric comparisons introduced throughout the poem affect both the literal and symbolic levels of interpretation, since \textit{Psyche} acquires a realistic realm that inevitably emphasizes the realm of
the imagination.

The recurrent metaphors of sexual passion, sleep, the bower, the fountain stream, and generative light clustering in the introductory stanzas should suggest the meaning of this initial vision; for they figure ideal, unending, imaginative fulfillment. Withdrawn into their bower, so often identified in other poems as the place of poetic inspiration, these lovers have lapsed into that twilight area between sleep and waking where fancy is most active...56

Part of the structural and thematic significance of this ode is that it begins the odal sequence. In a letter to George and Georgiana of April 30, 1819, Keats explained his interest in Psyche as a subject for poetry. He says that the ode has been written "leisurely" and contends, "I think it reads the more richly for it."

The following Poem - the last I have written and the first and the only one with which I have taken even moderate pains - I have for the most part dash'd off my lines in a hurry - This I have done leisurely - I think it reads the more richly for it and will I hope encourage me to write other things in even a more peacable and healthy spirit. You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apulieus the Platonist who lived after the Augustan 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 than to let a heathen Goddess be so neglected.57

Meter and the increased use of the spondaic foot are developed throughout the odes. Through these devices the themes are enhanced. In the "Ode to a Nightingale" the spondaic foot is again introduced to suggest the spontaneity of the nightingale's movement as well as the poet's
response. The nightingale becomes a symbol for the height, the distance and also the truth that can be expressed through poetry. The symbolic level, caught instantaneously, preserved and assimilated in what Keats considered "the larger experience" is sustained by the sense of freedom, the intensity of theme, and the deliberate compactness of the poetic experience.

Away! / Away! / for I / will fly / to thee,
Not char / ioted / by Bacch / us and / his pards
But on / the view / less wings / of Po / esy

In the final stanza, the dispersion of spondees which accentuate the adjective and noun clusters indicates the distance from which the poet perceives the song of the nightingale. No matter how spontaneous the moment and intense the experience within the poet's perception, and no matter how effectively "the truth of Imagination" is conveyed, the sense of freedom dissipates almost in the moment it is attained. Thus, the experience, with its resultant creativity, ultimately dissolves, lessens, and finally fades.

Adieu! / Adieu! / thy plain / tive an / them fades
Past the / near mead / ows, ov / er the / still stream,
Up the / hill-side / and now / 'tis bur / ied deep
In the / next vall / ey glades.

The use of compound adjectives ending with "ed," such as "light-winged," "deep-delved," "full-throated," "purple-
stained," and "leaden-eyed," which Keats uses continuously through the odes, sustain the weight of the lines, emphasizing the contrast between the poet's mortality, his earth-bound limitations and the nightingale's ethereal distance. Mortality becomes the theme whereby the nightingale's immortality provides not only a contrast but also a sense of loss. The nightingale is a symbol for the height of poetic creativity contrasting to the poet's mortality.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!

The ode revolves around two distinct views of life; one is the recognition of mortality, while the other concentrates on the beauty of the external world. Intrinsic to this contrast is the inevitability of decay, the realization of change, and the sense of being "forlorn." That the intensity of the experience draws the poet back into himself, is essential to this realization.

The 'Ode to a Nightingale' opposes the wish to escape and the knowledge of its impossibility. Involved here are the contrasts between the fever of mortality with its inexorable movement toward decay, and the high perpetual beauty of inalterable song... To think of death as an easeful balance to a fevered life is both escape and acceptance. But escape is denied, and the final stanza of the Ode returns the speaker to the stark reality of the self, the fading song, and even the half-knowledge implied in, 'Do I wake or sleep?'
Balance and euphony emerging from the phonetic texture are evident in all of Keats' odes, but perhaps the best examples of this type of symmetry occur in the "Ode on Melancholy" as well as the "Ode on a Grecian Urn." In terms of balance both odes display a phonetic and metrical concentration, which are the first devices utilized to create a specific impression, raising the thematic level from image or series of images to the level of symbol. It has been pointed out in the "Ode to a Nightingale" that the balance is achieved by metrical variations and phonetic distribution focusing on the song of the nightingale as a symbol for the poet's struggle with mortality. The theme is created not only by the rhythmic patterns and line organization, but also from the distribution of sound balanced within the individual lines. For example:

To toll me back from thee to my sole self

In the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" the balance is more deliberate, controlled and evenly distributed as if Keats were trying to separate the line in terms of sound and yet unify it in terms of content.

Not to the sensual ear, but more endear'd

The purpose of this type of technical variation is to integrate the thematic and the metrical devices so that they come together in a thoroughly coordinated structure—a structure that brings together the literal and symbolic levels.

The most complex example of this type of balance is
achieved in the "Ode on Melancholy" where both vowels and consonants are repeatedly incorporated into the structure of the line. The vowels are softened by the heavy emphasis on assonance which is inseparable from its thematic intention, emerging from the complicated interrelationship between sound and sense.

Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be

Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl

A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;

Beginning with a protest or argument, the ode then focuses on the experience of melancholy. With the transient beauty of the "morning rose," "the rainbow of the salt sand-wave," and the "globed peonies" contrasting to the images of poison and forgetfulness alluded to in the use of "Lethe," "Wolf's bane," "Nightshade," and "yew-berries" of the first stanza, Keats extends a sense of brevity and acceptance. But this same experience in which happiness is implicit also fosters the inevitability of loss and despair. The "April shroud" is both pleasure and pain. In the "Ode on Melancholy" there is the contention that if mortal existence were fixed and permanent, not subjected to flux or mutability, then life itself would be motionless, stagnant and unproductive. The experience of melancholy leads to an awareness and recognition of the struggle inherent in personal fulfillment; therefore, Keats concentrates on Beauty as well as Joy.
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

The recognition of life's impermanence and of the impermanence of all we hope to attain, according to Keats', "awakens the thinking principle within us" and heightens the spontaneity of the moment that is contained within the immediate impressions - impressions preserved by the poet's choice of subject and made viable by the structure he imposes. But it is not simply choice of subject and poetic structure. In a well constructed poem - a poem that is both complex and yet direct - the full impact demands an emotional as well as an intellectual response. In the "Ode on Melancholy" beauty is closely aligned to the "wakeful anguish of the soul," moving systematically and even organically through each other until in the final stanza the images of pain and "aching pleasure" are combined. For the acceptance is not in either the extremes of pleasure or pain, but in the recognition of both. The emotional and intellectual development and intention in this ode acquires an allegorical significance in that "the temple," "Veil'd Melancholy" and her "sovran shrine" are part of poetic seclusion and isolation. And in spite of the varying approaches to the experience of melancholy, the conflict introduced is necessary to emotional growth and maturity. On the one hand, it is poetry itself and all that can be
expressed in terms of its truth and beauty; on the other hand, the theme is one of pleasure and pain so necessary to the acceptance of mortality. The thematic consistency then is that truth and beauty are relative to the poet's experience of them, since in order to perceive truth he must distinguish it from illusion and in order to fully appreciate pleasure he must first experience the opposite. These paradoxes or contrasts are so characteristic of Keats' life and work that they naturally make a substantial contribution to his philosophy. But perhaps the most enduring and impressive summation of this world view can be demonstrated by the "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

It is through the urn that Keats articulates the conflict between the transience of life and the permanence of art, the antithesis between his ideals of immortality, truth, and beauty, and the acceptance of life as a constant flux. When the paradox of these figures, described in terms of sight, sound, and touch, is disclosed through the poet's distance then the pleasure and pain so inseparable from mortality are fully realized.

This philosophy had a single, coherent, and eternal theme. The poet sees the world as a vale of tears ... in which all human activities are subject to decay and death. He only finds certainty and survival, or indeed truth, in ideal beauty - in the one ode, the beauty of nature, exemplified by the nightingale's song, in the other the eternal beauty of art, transfixed, and transfigured for ever in the Grecian Urn.59

It seems as though these figures, the symbols of Keats' philosophy, are the basis for Keats' own dilemma,
the questioning and search, which in his own words, made poetry "great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject." Not until Keats establishes these symbols of truth and life does he become a mature poet, a poet in the sense that Shelley and Wordsworth are mature poets, and by focusing on the urn he managed to bring these ideals to fruition. The images and symbols, the poetry and the philosophy, indicate a concise integration of technique and theme. They reflect at once art's distance in a silent world "Of marble men and maidens overwrought," but it is a world of sensual beauty and it contains the truth of man's existence. With this assimilation of theme and content, as illustrated by the urn, Keats becomes a great poet, a poet so intense and sensitive to his literary purpose that his epitaph in the Protestant cemetery near the pyramid of Caius Cestius in Italy might well have emphatically stated, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

The urn is indeed a "silent form" devoid of life, yet the structuring of this popular ode suggests so much of life itself; the static, external images are not only preserved by the poet, but they are ultimately interpreted, modified, and transformed into a universal symbol of existence. And here again the metrical devices contribute to the overall thematic impression. The use of spondees, so characteristic of the other odes, and the heavy emphasis
on consonantal repetition, particularly "b," "v," and "p" established in the first stanza, introduce the theme as well as the poet's distance. This impression is also enhanced by the use of active rather than passive verbs.

What mad / pursuit? / What strugg / le to / escape?
What pipes / and timb / rels? What / wild ecs / tasy?

For the Grecian Urn possesses a quiet and constrained composure hardly equalled by the other odes of this month and perhaps even unsurpassed by the ode 'To Autumn' of the following September. . . . Yet there is a severe repose about the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'; it is both 'interwoven' and 'complete'; and within its tensely braced stanzas is a potential energy momentarily stilled and imprisoned.61

It is significant that the composition of the odes during April and May was primarily an intellectual and emotional rather than a purely technical assimilation of what had been a successful though experimental struggle with theme and content. By the time "To Autumn" was written, Keats had already achieved such complete control of technical devices, and so precise an odal form, that it seems likely he would have expanded these techniques in some other larger work. This brief, concise struggle to create, thus, made itself manifest through the odes; and through his personal commitment to poetry. In short, Keats, who possessed so much poetic energy accompanied by such rapid progress, was becoming a poet whose experience would inevitably surface in his work. In this sense, it is important to note that these poems form an odal sequence.

In a letter to John Reynolds of September 21, 1819,
Keats stated:

How beautiful the season is now - How fine the air
...I never lik'd stubble-fields so much as now -
Aye better than the chilly green of the Spring.
Somehow a stubble-plain looks warm - in the same way
that some pictures look warm - This struck me so much
that I composed upon it.62

The need to capture the moment is a compelling thematic
aspect of Keats' last ode "To Autumn," for it was a
preservation that attained a sense of natural peace,
contentment and undisturbed beauty. The structure is
fundamentally a state of appreciation and complete accept-
ance. Autumn, as the subject, elicited the sensuality that
inevitably followed Keats' response to the season itself;
without introducing the transience and questioning of the
earlier odes, this ode contained a positive reconciliation,
an objective, gentle, almost pastoral description of
seasonal transition. Literally, the poem appeals to the
senses of sight, sound, and touch in soft tonal patterns,
movement, and interaction that accentuate the fullness and
"ripeness" of the successive scenes.

To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
    And to fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
    To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
    With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
    And still more, later flowers for the bees,
    Until they think warm days will never cease,
    For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

The careful, rhythmic series of natural images that
appear throughout "To Autumn" possesses simultaneously a
level of description and a symbolic level. Such relation-
ships between images and ideas as Keats had used in the
earlier odes in order to develop the theme and textural coherence that so completely dominated their structure, were once again utilized in this final ode. But the aesthetic principles which had created them were somehow altered in this final attempt. Every poetic device was incorporated, but where the earlier odes were heavy and intense in their thematic approaches, Keats here carefully manipulated the language, softening the overall impact. While he sought structural and thematic unity in his approach, he simultaneously began to emphasize the fertility of the garden imagery to further the "ripeness" which is conveyed throughout.

When Keats came to write 'To Autumn' he seems to have wished to give an even greater authority, a sense of solidarity and judgement to the stanzas of a poem which, unlike the other odes, is a work of statement rather than of questioning. Probably at first unconsciously, though with deliberate intent he added an extra line to the sestet, which became a septet, and created a stanza of eleven lines. The clinching weight of the conclusion of this poem is largely due to this simple variation on the scheme used for the earlier odes.63

The symbol transformations, which develop from the elementary level of meter, rhyme scheme, assonance and alliteration, are in themselves important to Keats' repeated use of the heavily weighted line and the unified stanza form which characterize the odes and it is only through such a conscientious development that Keats hoped to integrate sound and image with the possibilities inherent in their symbolic value. This integration was the ultimate goal of his poetic achievement. For Keats'
natural ability and even innate skill for sound and sense led him to explore the sonnet forms and to draw from them not only the phonetic richness of his work, but also to see them as a plausible means of realizing his ideals in the beauty and truth of the physical, sensual world immortalized through the medium of art. In spite of the Romantic reliance on spontaneity, Keats' odes have that precise and deliberate structure that utilizes metrical devices increasing their meaning and their intensity.

Of course, these metrical and phonetic combinations that are recognized as conventional poetic devices, contrasting to the careful preservation of experience through sensory impressions, can become an emphasis on mechanics rather than on emotions. Yet at the same time the inevitable process of connecting image to idea in a reordering of thought is by definition the means by which Keats fulfilled his ideals - the means by which he achieved and sustained an emotional intensity in his attempt to explore "the dark passages," "the silent working" of the mind, and yet they also suggest "the Holiness of the Hearts affection and the Truth of Imagination." To be sure, poetry emerges from this combination of image and idea. To attain a symbolic level, the image and the idea are selected, combined, and subtly transformed by the poet from their static, external form into dynamic, viable symbols. In terms of understanding and interpreting symbols, we all perceive things abstractly and contend with them on an emotional as well as
intellectual level. The real synthesis or poetic resolution comes to fruition on the emotional level, in the concrete images that affect our sense of reality, the vivid, sensual images that make intense and indelible impressions.

In whatever way this emotional level affected Keats' poetry, the very act of his poetic creation increased his sense of truth and beauty. The thought naturally made an impression on his early work, especially when these ideals applied to art, art preserving and intensifying the collective impact of his images (hence he had remarked, "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"). Considering all of this, the most intriguing aspect of Keats' poetry becomes its symbolic level and the degree to which he repeatedly strengthened his lines with the quality of his poetic devices.

The devices used in the odes were to test Keats' theories about poetic structure. Although they were experimental, these odes contained his most effective and profound statements about the imagination, about poetry and creativity, synthesizing the world of poetry with the "World of Circumstances." It is curious that the last of these odes written in September, was to replace the previous one "On Indolence." As Robert Gittings points out, with Keats' publication of Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St.
The poems all start with the same questions that had prompted this search for a satisfactory doctrine. The odes all seek for evidence of a permanence which they cannot always reach. The beauty of Nature, typified by the song of the nightingale, may seem immortal; but is it truly? The poem ends with a question, 'Fled is that music: - do I wake or sleep?' The immortality of Art promised by the Grecian Urn, may be itself only the coldness of another kind of death. The acceptance of the world's transitoriness, counselled in the 'Ode on Melancholy' has some, but by no means all, of the positive hope of the doctrine of Soul Making. The soul may end only as a lifeless trophy of the world's battlefield. In the 'Ode to Psyche,' the divinity of the soul, or psyche, is celebrated; the human trials and pains of Psyche are left unrecorded. Only in 'To Autumn' written later in the year, Keats seems to realize in poetry the full implication of his philosophy. By accepting the signs of decay and disappearance in all its surrounding world, the soul matures itself to a final completion.
Chapter 4
THE GENIUS OF POETRY

"The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man: It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself."

(Letter to Hessey, October 9, 1818)

Few of Keats' poems have elicited more analysis and discussion since the early critical evaluations of the odes than "Hyperion" and "The Fall of Hyperion." These two poems have been subjected to various interpretations; they have been analyzed biographically and philosophically and, as a result, have been placed in a more obscure context, separated from the rest of Keats' work. There has been no proportionate examination, however, of the character transformations and their development as a stylistic variation of Keats' work. It may be assumed that such an examination would prove rewarding in light of the other examples of dramatic transformations. For during Keats' poetic career he attained a level of maturity and a penetrating awareness of the potential contained within his artistic development which few poets have achieved, while at the same time he cultivated an epic style in a manner that was both effective and premature. The thematic progress as well as the ultimate rejection of both poems is closely related to Keats' struggle as an artist; however, their structure reveals a sensitive poetic mind having to contend with life and art.
The unique structuring of both poems - the use of Hyperion, Apollo, Mnemosyne and Moneta and the subsequent confrontations established by each - provides a necessary insight into Keats' purpose. He is at once intense and restrained. With the thematic unity of these two works, Keats' concept of life and art underwent a progressive change, but it was not a change associated with his earlier artistic insecurity. Throughout "Hyperion" it is emphasized that cyclical destruction must be accepted as the only means of progression and with the poet/dreamer in "The Fall of Hyperion" there is an insistence that change is brought about not at once, but in successive stages. It is also suggested that these are stages through which the poet must pass in his attainment of truth and beauty. "Sure the poet is a sage;/A humanist, physician to all men." The truth is in the experience to be translated into verse. It is by the experience itself, not by the expansion of abstract theories, that the truth is subtly incorporated into the poetry, emanating from the imagination but emerging in the form of art. The stylistic manipulation of concrete images and Keats' personal experience are clear in "Hyperion" and "The Fall of Hyperion": these two dramatic works disclose all we need to know about Keats' attitudes concerning his own potential as an artist.

HYPERION

Keats' axioms explaining the effects of poetry introduce structural elements essential to the composition of
drama. These elements emerge from poetry as an imitation of life, illustrating the contradictory nature of human interaction. The dramatic action influences or expresses a precise view of reality and this explicit view is expressed through poetry by means of dramatic movement. As illustrated by Keats' thematic development, "reality" consists of opposition and interaction, conflict and reconciliation, culminating in a sympathetic identification with the human condition. The thematic unity of "Hyperion" and "The Fall of Hyperion" is a means of developing an epic dealing with change as necessary to growth, development and progression. The mythological orientation of both fragments becomes a statement concerning not only the limits of poetic capability, in terms of a Miltonic epic, but also the basis for examining imaginative processes in the contrasting of natural law and human destiny. In "The Fall of Hyperion" the mysticism of the poet/dreamer and the nature of his quest constitute Keats' speculations exploring poetry: they are Keats' statements about poetic truth.

The literal as well as the symbolic meaning displayed by Keats' subjects demonstrates a transitional period in his life that substantially increases the thematic implications of his epic poems. The value that the poet places on his subject requires us to focus on its significance, and on the poet's perception of reality and truth. This sense of reality and truth as well as poetic value is contained in the creation of a "poetic world," a world
in which the experience is preserved and isolated, for the poet, "...had to make his poetic world before he could make his poems, because first he had to work out the functional relations of his experiences." 65

Within the development of dramatic devices and thematic statements, the poet's symbols are gradually disclosed. Keats' thematic focus in "Hyperion" and "The Fall of Hyperion" demonstrates his preoccupation with opposition and reconciliation whereby the characters experience physical or spiritual transformations. The "truth" of both poems is inevitably depicted in the action and dramatic movement. These transformations, as they apply to Keats' theories concerning poetry, indicate a philosophical approach to the problem of inevitable change. For Keats this involved a mythological background and a realistic conflict, a conflict that could relate a paradoxical shift in human circumstance. In "Hyperion" the Titans themselves become the symbols of this change or shift, with Hyperion representing a source of salvation. However, in "The Fall of Hyperion" the dreamer and the poet illustrate, symbolically, distinct points of contention. They each become symbols for poetry in the sense that poetry captures both illusion and reality.

The dramatic aspect of Keats's whole view of poetry is that, although it is philosophical, it is not concerned with a philosophical structure, or a didactic imposition of personal bias (as in Wordsworth or Byron), but in the passionate involvement with life in all its grotesque, bitter-sweet anomalies. 66
The thematic content is presented through the cyclical movement or transition necessary for progress, where the justification is stated: "We fall by course of Nature's law." The process of evolution emerges from the truth and "eternal law" that relegate progress within the principles of universal order. The transition is affected by the conflict between a purely objective process that demands change and the subjective, almost humanized sense of loss expressed by the Titans. It is the submission of one and the dominance of the other that creates two diverse ideological positions: the Titans who represent the abolition of the Saturnian Golden Age and the Olympians who present a different type of universal truth and order.

The dramatic movement in "Hyperion" is an extension of cosmic or universal changes that necessitate the destruction of the primitive order: The Titans become inferior, vulnerable and are lost to the "power more strong in beauty." The effects produced by the dramatic movement elicit a sympathetic identification with the process of change, a process that affects all life forms in a progressive evolution. Keats' purpose in "Hyperion" was to enlighten by means of a moral statement that focuses on loss and suffering as integral parts of growth. The drama has a centrifugal movement, implying that change itself contains a paradox of eternal flux and eternal constancy.

It is extended outward, that is, away from self-centered absorption. This enlarging of the soul
through sympathy, this lifting of one above the egocentric, is itself desirable and operates to the advantage of one's psychological and moral health; it joins emotion to awareness, directing it outward to what is being conceived.67

In order to demonstrate this paradox, Keats concentrates on the whole context, the Titans in relation to historical progression; therefore, Hyperion's desperation is paralleled by Apollo's self affirmation. Keats uses the situation to establish "the fall" - the acquisition of power and a period of transition manifesting various stages of consciousness. "The subject, if imaginatively approached, seemed to have several diverse possibilities; an exploration of the development of consciousness, epic grandeur, and possibly even something of drama were all potentially there in solution."68 The structure and dramatic complexity of a Miltonic epic were factors affecting Keats' composition.

One problem with "Hyperion" was the precise focus. To concentrate solely on Saturn or Hyperion would have been to negate the natural progression--that is, the higher level of awareness extracted from the primary level. Another problem was presenting the fall as potential progress, for the dramatic movement is an expansion of consciousness that encompasses the totality of the experience and the necessity of the transition. The theme is complicated by the dissonance inherent in the conflict. "For, to begin with, each group could be used to represent
a different stage of consciousness. That theme of unfolding awareness... had become more keenly felt and yet, in its 'branchings out' less clear and simple." 69

One effective theme developed in "Hyperion" is the process of destruction and transition necessary for creation which is disclosed through the poem's dramatic movement. The conflict is illustrated through an objective presentation of events from which an elevated consciousness of reality emerges. Within this destruction is the truth evolving from the dissipation of the established order; in short, the conflict manifests the nature of change relative to eternal law. The unity and order of the Titan hierarchy is destroyed only to perpetuate a new form. Through this destruction, Keats presents a plausible and sympathetic identification with the process of creation in the inevitable changes that project the individual and the universal. The dramatic setting is heightened by the individual reactions to change and by the objectivity of the poet who allows the action to be more a part of destiny than a part of dramatic contrivance.

The very use of a greater dramatic quality, an emphasis on the poem for itself and not for the one who creates it, may also be a characteristic of a particular poet, though as a way of creative life it may be obscured by the more immediate and apparently identifiable figure of the poet-hero with his direct transfer of experience to expression. 70

In "Hyperion" the setting presents an objective imitation of reality, in that the main focus is on the paradoxical nature of existence. It is a paradox that
contains both creation and destruction. Keats enhances the conflict through a philosophical approach to creation revealing, on the one hand, the transitions necessary for progress, a process of integration and a more complex realization of life, and, on the other hand, the destruction of an order that was once believed to be true.

Throughout "Hyperion" the action is advanced by a conflict which involves relinquishing power. The theme of power and destruction is impressive, and the Titan's denial more a tragic counterbalance to their destiny. This destruction of the established order, developed through Keats' focus on Saturn, Oceanus, and Hyperion, is an integral part of progress and must be interpreted as a positive statement. The Titans are confronted not by an internal conflict, but by an external threat that determines their existence. Within the struggle to reinstate their power and authority the Titans must face their loss. Keats uses this theme to develop the opposition in his work - opposition in terms of "dramatic principles" that influence the action.

The poems of Keats - the life and the writing - are both mingled and separate. And it is pertinent to both the study of Keats and the study of poetry to observe how their natures are defined, and how they are informed by the dramatic principles: that is, act by imaginative identities, the objective playing-out of the clash of opposites.71

The ineffectuality of the Titans and their inevitable fall are abstract themes explaining human nature. They project life as a constant flux. Through Hyperion, Keats illus-
trated a conflict that would demand the transition from
dramatic action to a more complex ideological statement
concerning life, for Hyperion has not only relinquished his
power, but also his identity, and it is this sense of loss
that is captured by Keats' use of dramatic principles.

The meaning of what has occurred - its inevitability,
the various respects in which it is applicable to
human life and destiny - is caught with a full and
vivid awareness. Moreover, it is reduced to a clarity
of outline, and transmuted - purified and heightened -
into a harmonious form created through the medium of
poetic language.72

The inevitable transformation of experience into
artistic creativity progresses in what Keats recognized as
"the grand march of the Intellect." Through the dramatic
medium Keats objectively defines the limits of creativity.
The dramatic structure is an extension of Keats' attempt to
explain the poetic imagination and the dissolution of the
established order, justified by "the signs of purer life"
that emphasis the difference between chaos and order.

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: nor are we
Thereby more conquered, that by us the rule
Of shapeless Chaos

("Hyperion," II, 212-217)

It is significant that Apollo supplants Hyperion to
become "the Father of all verse." "...Apollo was to
emerge as the new god of poetry in Hyperion's place. This
brought Keats up against the central question of his life -
the making of a poet - at a time when he felt his greatest
doubts about his own purposes."73 Since the last part of
the fragment concentrates on Apollo's deification and his asking "What had the power"? it parallels Saturn's anguish "Who had the power / To make me desolate? / Whence came the strength"? and it also introduces Hyperion's vision of destruction, "I cannot see - but darkness, death and darkness."

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?

("Hyperion," I, 228-235)

To Keats this represented an essential problem facing the artist. Apollo was to present a resolution whereby change was justified by progression. As a symbol of artistic creativity, Apollo represents the transformation of poetic ideals into a more deliberate, more accessible conceptualization of life. Because of this the theme of "Hyperion" becomes increasingly tragic in its orientation, though the poem was to present an optimistic theme dealing with consciousness and growth. "By now it seems he clearly saw that the conflict between his first optimistic theme and his increasingly tragic view of the individual's destiny could no longer be resolved in the character of Apollo."74 This resolution makes Apollo's deification both positive and negative.

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...

("Hyperion," III, 126-130)

As with Endymion's retreat to the Cave of Quietude, the "struggle at the gate of death" signifies the transformation and the ascension to the "bourne of heaven." This theme reappears as the central focus in "The Fall of Hyperion"; it is the struggle to achieve immortality and artistic permanence that is expressed by Moneta's challenge, "If thou canst not ascent / These steps, die on the marble where thou art." The recurrence of this theme was Keats' attempt to define the function of the poet and the transformation ultimately forced him to defend his concept of poetry and to give his convictions about the artist and the work a more precise, direct context. In "The Fall of Hyperion" the context is that of the "dream" and it signifies the transformation of personal experience into poetic truth.

His theme is one of the largest he could have set himself, and one that since his time has become a central preoccupation of literature: the nature of the artist, the validity of his insight, and the purpose his art serves in society. In English poetry of his time it was only beginning to emerge as a theme for the poet himself to explore; yet it is characteristic of Keats to have sensed immediately the central problem of his age and attempt to solve it in his work even as he was grappling with it in his own experience.75

In essence, "Hyperion" is Keats' attempt to pass beyond Milton. In his evaluations of Wordsworth's genius in relation to Milton's, Keats posed several questions in
order to explore "those dark passages." The process was to emulate and then to pass beyond Milton in his development of "the fall" as a means of examining "the ballance of good and evil." The theological system of salvation representing Milton's "loss of Eden" is recreated by Keats as the loss of the Saturnian Golden Age; the fall is in the transition of power and progress rather than divine ordinance. The resolution proffered by Oceanus is "to bear all naked truths ... all calm / That is the top of sovereignty." This resolution offers an explanation of their fall, but fails as a consolation to the Titans who are described as "solemn, undisturb'd / Unruffled, like high Gods." "This answer, however, though not invalid, is insufficient, and the narrative moves toward the revelation that suffering even when undeserved, is explicable not merely by the natural law, but by a moral principle as well."76

THE FALL OF HYPERION

In "The Fall of Hyperion" the complexity of Keats' artistic ability comes to fruition in the poet/dreamer confrontation with Moneta. In questioning the poet/dreamer Keats is coming to terms with the vastness of his poetic aspirations, the ideals of truth, beauty, and artistic immortality, the ascension or what he considered "the height" of poetic achievement. "Since every man whose soul is not a clod / Hath visions, and would speak, if he
had lov'd / And been well nurtured in his mother tongue."
(The Fall of Hyperion I, 13-15.) The mythological context
provided Keats with the basis to bring the dream into the
reality and to focus on a particular experience that
associated the poetic ideals with their significance in the
real world. The dream, appearing so often throughout the
poetry as a metaphor for poetic retreat and inspiration,
becomes in "The Fall of Hyperion" a means of challenge and
confrontation. Here, the garden imagery, the temple, the
altar, and the sacrificial fire represent the traditional
archetypes for worship and supplication. Keats uses them,
however, to illustrate the distance between what he was and
what he hoped to become, how far he stood from his poetic
ideals. The confrontation was partly to dispel the in-
security that he was more the "dreamer," who "venoms all
his days" rather than the poet.

What the dreamer sees in the temple of Saturn are,
literally, the relics of the wars of the Titans, but
in their vastness and antiquity they suggest the whole
sum of human experience environing his span of years.
His journey through this temple of consciousness is
also symbolic; for he moves not from west to east, as
through a Christian cathedral, but from east to west,
in the direction of earthly time itself.77

As in the "Ode to Psyche" the garden imagery here
establishes the poetic retreat in complete isolation. The
immensity before which the poet stands challenges his
ability to determine the truth. The elaborate garden
imagery suggests fertility and salvation.
Methought I stood where trees of every clime,
Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech,
With plantain, and spice-blossoms, made a screen;
In neighbourhood of fountains (by the noise
Soft-showering in my ears), and (by the touch
Of scent) not far from roses. Turning round
I saw an arbour with a drooping roof
Of trellis vines, and bells, and larger blooms,
Like floral censers, swinging light in air;
Before its wreathed doorway, on a mound
Of moss, was spread a feast of summer fruits.
("The Fall of Hyperion," I, 19-29)

The life/death challenges to poetic creativity so necessary to Keats' thematic direction, evoke a sense of redemption and salvation to be attained only when the false, misleading insights are replaced by truth. The poet's salvation is in the realization of suffering, struggle and empathy.

His salvation is never possible until he has 'mounted up' a second time: his swoon and starting up from the garden and his ascent of the stairs before Moneta's altar are central and contrasting movements. Clearly Keats' meaning is that the luxury and ease of imaginative enjoyment can obscure the hardship of the struggle for vision into the tragic nature of human existence that is required of the poet who would live.

Moneta's challenge, "If thou canst not ascend / These steps, die on that marble where thou art" reinforces the poet's struggle. Like Pan as "the strange ministrant" in Endymion, Moneta becomes a symbol for the extremes of consciousness and for the creative imagination. And as a symbol for creativity, she represents the challenge inherent in the struggle to determine truth as well as the fear of failure and self-deception. As with the other guides, the poet/dreamer's response to Moneta is one of
both fear and attraction.

And yet I had a terror of her robes,
And chiefly of the veils, that from her brow
Hung pale, and curtained her in mysteries,
That made my heart too small to hold its blood.

("The Fall of Hyperion," I, 251-254)

The intensity of her challenge manifests the poet's insecurity and also his determination, for he is destined to experience the final transformation that "works a constant change." It is through Moneta that these extremes of consciousness can be seen:

...Then saw I a wan face,
Not pin'd by human sorrows, but bright Blanch'd
By an immortal sickness which kills not;
It works a constant change, which happy death
Can put no end to; deathwards progressing
To no death was that visage; it had past
The lily and the snow; and beyond these
I must not think now, though I saw that face -
But for her eyes I should have fled away.

("The Fall of Hyperion," I, 256-264)

Moneta presents what the poet himself experiences, the act of purgation that is inherent in the struggle to create and in the life or death consequences that accompany transgressing the mortal boundaries. With his ascension, the poet achieves the immortality that is both elusive and yet fully realized in the poetic retreat, in the isolation, in the abstract context of the garden and in the temple that symbolizes imaginative fertility and salvation. The experience removes him from the real world only to make the suffering and pain a more necessary part of his existence.

To begin with, the intimidation of twentieth-century man before the vast spaces of possibility (in the
physical universe or even in the swarm of man's own limited past on this planet) is here in solution: the Egyptian and Druidic - the line of columns 'ending in mist,' and the black gates that shut behind one, forbidding all return to the first garden, the first promise - illustrate the pull toward the abstract, the formal, the remote, and away from the warmly human.79

The thematic direction also suggests Keats' poetic development and quite possibly his future intentions. The poet/dreamer, the vision, the metaphors for the poetic imagination, the conflict between the ideal and the real, and the archetypal patterning of the confrontation, are all combined to produce his defense of poetry, to give direction to what Keats believed was the essence of his achievement. The dream itself contains a full realization of life, the past as well as the future.

Like so much of his earlier verse from Endymion onward, but in a way that is more urgent, moving, and humane, 'The Fall' represents his last effort to spiritualize the dreamer into visionary. It embraces the attempt to achieve the clarity of vision - in the full sense that Keats intended - through entire fidelity to the imagination and its processes, to the creative potential of the dream.80

"The Fall of Hyperion" illustrates the nature of Keats' commitment to poetry. It reveals a careful employment, however indirect and diverse the mythological context, of dramatic, rhetorical, and poetic devices skillfully utilized by a gifted poet. The symbolic level of the work is created, not only by the altar and garden imagery with their archetypal significance, but also by Moneta's spiritual influence challenging the poet/dreamer to respond. For there exists in Moneta, as in the whole
tenor of the poem itself, a deliberate and almost nostalgic need to justify the artist and his commitment to poetry, which was for Keats a quest after the limits of creativity - a desire, indeed, from which his conception of poetic identity was finally realized. Nowhere in his verse is this conflict given more attention than in the concept of the "fall" from immortality in the loss of artistic permanence.

It is important to emphasize Moneta and her relationship to the poet/dreamer: she exemplifies the consistency with which Keats utilized a feminine guide to develop the character and symbol transformations. She is the impetus behind the poet's ascension, for she challenges his convictions. Keats' attention is directed less to Saturn and Hyperion and their recognition of suffering than to Moneta's power in the solemnity of her immortal context, in the temple, the altar, the sacrificial fire, and in the dream itself; for she admits "My power, which to me is still a curse / Shall be to thee a wonder." Moneta actively participates in the transformation of the poet/dreamer and his ascent. "Thou hast felt / What 'tis to die and live again before / Thy fated hour, that thou hadst power to do so / Is thy own safety." (The Fall of Hyperion I, 142-145.) But Moneta can only be a "Shade of Memory" and her distance is the distance between the mortal poet and the immortality of his work. The paradoxical nature of her existence, the light and shadow of her appearance, suggest
that she is part of Keats' conscience, part of a personal
dialectic that satisfied the conflict between life and art
and helped to resolve the conflicts of his own existence in
the formulation of the "immortal work." The initial
stipulation that life is a process of change, growth, and
progression brought about by an empathetic understanding
of life, is central to Keats' view of his purpose, in
ascending "the height" of creativity in his attainment of
immortality; for, as Moneta had stated:

'None can usurp this height,' [returned that shade]
'But those to whom the miseries of the world
'Are misery, and will not let them rest.
("The Fall of Hyperion," I, 148-150)
The intention of this thesis has been twofold: it has attempted to give the character and symbol transformations a more precise context and it has also attempted to relate these stylistic devices to Keats' poetic theories and analyses.

The poetic and dramatic transformations are stylistic variations of Keats' overall development rather than isolated phenomena unrelated to a developmental process. Since Keats' poetry is presented as more of a promise than an accomplishment - as Keats had stated in the preliminary Preface to *Endymion*, "So this Poem must rather be considered as an endeavor rather than a thing accomplished" - so these transformations have been examined as structural devices related to different influences and traditions that become the poetry that is now considered uniquely Keatsian. With his early poetry, the epistolaries, "Sleep and Poetry," and *Endymion*, comprising his initial approaches to theme and context, it is easy to mark the periods of transition where these early themes and devices are refined, modified, and reintegrated until they become the basis for the odes, "Hyperion," and "The Fall of Hyperion."

Finally, a word must be said about the artist in relationship to the work he has created. A conscious purpose and intention may have existed in the mind of John
Keats; but, technical developments stand on the author's merit as it appears in any given work and not on his presumed intentions. In this thesis, I have made an analysis of Keats' poetry, attributing to him a conscious effort and deliberate style as if he composed with a specific thematic intention. For it appears that Keats was striving for a concise means of expression with a direct purpose in his mind; otherwise he would not have established axioms for poetry, and analyses of Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth as well as his evaluations of art. If his development were not to some extent conscious and carefully thought out he would not have come to one of his most accurate conclusions - a conclusion that ranks Keats with many great authors who have suffered from the creative dilemma.

One of the great reasons that the English have produced the finest writers in the world; is, that the English world has ill-treated them during their lives and foster'd them after their deaths. They have in general been trampled aside into the bye paths of life and seen the festerings of Society. They have not been treated like the Raphael's of Italy.

Keats' theoretical framework is built on his commitment to poetry and on his understanding of the creative process. This process, as Keats examined it, became readily accessible the more his thematic direction emerged and the more his skill improved. These ameliorations were rapidly assimilated, for they contained as well as reaffirmed the principles of truth and beauty. Poetry was a means of coming to terms with the real world, where life
and art are seen as succinct and integral parts of a moral order.

I am the more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how anything 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! It is 'a Vision in the form of Youth' a Shadow of Reality to come...
FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1


4 Ibid., p. 456.


6 Ibid., p. 282.

7 Ibid., p. 282.

8 Ibid., p. 283.


10 Ibid., p. 13.


12 Shelley, p. 282.

13 Letter to Fanny Brawne, February 1820, p. 468.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2

14 Letter of Benjamin Bailey, October 8, 1817, p. 52.


18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 145.
20 Ibid., p. 145.
21 Ibid., p. 144.
22 Campbell, pp 71-72.
23 Letter to James Bessey, October 9, 1818, p. 221.
26 Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, September 18, 1819, p. 402.
28 Ibid., p. 146.
29 Ibid., p. 147.
30 Ibid., p. 149.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 3

33 Bate, *The Stylistic Development of Keats*, p. 185.
35 Letter to Benjamin Bailey, November 22, 1817, p. 67.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.


41 Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, February 14 through May 3, 1819, p. 316.


44 Ibid.


46 Bate, John Keats, p. 322.

47 Bate, John Keats, p. 323.

48 Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, May 3, 1818, p. 142

49 Slate, p. 13.

50 Bate, John Keats, p. 487.


54 Ibid.


57 Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, April 30, 1819, p. 338.

58 Slote, p. 39.


60 Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, February 3, 1818, p. 95.


63 Gittings, *The Odes of Keats and Their Earliest Known Manuscripts in Facsimile*, p. 15.

64 Ibid., p. 13.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 4

65 Wasserman, p. 228.

66 Slote, p. 31.


70 Slote, p. 5.

71 Slote, p. 9.


73 Ward, p. 260.

74 Ward, p. 322.

75 Ward, p. 260.

77 Ward, p. 326.

78 Sperry, p. 324.


80 Sperry, p. 334.
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