THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Dying Into Life: Keats's Apollonian Salvation

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Modern critical discussions of John Keats have largely ignored the theological aspects of his works, and only Robert Ryan has provided a full length analysis of Keats’s theological beliefs. However, Ryan provides little analysis of Keats’s Apollonian poems. The most influential recent critics, including Nicholas Roe, Jeffrey Cox, and Ronald Sharp, have focused on either the political or aesthetic aspects of Keats’s Apollo while only a few critics have discussed Apollo in theological terms. No study has traced the development of the Apollonian system within Keats’s poetry to provide a theological interpretation of the Apollonian poems.

**Methodology**

This dissertation will investigate Keats’s theological beliefs according to the terminology employed by Ryan and will explore the development of Apollo within Keats’s poetry according to the structure established by Walter Evert. The first chapter begins with a survey of scholarship on Keats’s use of Apollo and Greco-Roman mythology throughout his poetry. It will also explore Keats’s reputation as the most “Grecian” of the Romantic poets.

The second chapter will analyze Keats’s early use of mythology within his poetry written between 1815 and 1816. It will explore Keats’s exposure to Christianized Greco-Roman myth and Virgil as a schoolboy. Then it will discuss how the juvenile poems, “Ode to Apollo” and “I Stood Tip-Toe,” reveal Keats's understanding of Apollo and poetry.

The third chapter will analyze Keats’s chronologically development from an amateur poet in 1816 into a career poet following the publication of *Endymion* in 1817. It will first investigate the use of Apollo in “Sleep and Poetry” as it relates to the two juvenile poems then discuss the
penitent narrator of “Hymn to Apollo.” The chapter will conclude by examining how aspects of Keats’s earlier poems are integrated into Endymion.

The fourth chapter will analyze Keats’s first attempt to compose a long narrative poem about Apollo. It will then probe the role of Apollo within Keats’s Hyperion in the context of statements within Keats’s letters and the Apollo imagery of his early works. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of Keats’s odes as a possibly continuation of the themes of Hyperion.

The fifth chapter will investigate Fall of Hyperion as a summary of the themes and concepts developed within Keats’s earlier Apollo based poems. The chapter will begin with an exploration of Lamia and then explore how the imagery of Keats’s previous Apollonian poems are appropriated into Fall of Hyperion. Then, the chapter will explore the relationship between the Fall of Hyperion and Virgil’s Aeneid Book 6. The chapter will conclude by exploring Biblical echoes within the poem and how they are merged with Greco-Roman myth.

The sixth chapter will consider Fall of Hyperion and Hyperion as one narrative. It will first explore the influence of John Milton’s Paradise Lost and Virgil’s Aeneid in the development of Keats’s epic-like poem then discuss his inclusion of a pseudo-apocalyptic vision, the rebirth of a deity, and the abandonment of Eden. Having examined the development of Keats’s Apollo and the sources that influenced it, the sixth chapter will conclude with a focus on defining the type of theological system that Keats created with Apollo.

This study challenges the current critical consensus regarding how Keats employs an Apollonian theological system within his poems. The study also complements Ryan’s original analysis of Keats’s theological beliefs by pursuing a line of argument that Ryan did not pursue. Finally, this study provides grounds for a revised assessment of Keats’s Hyperion poems.
This dissertation by Jeffrey Peters fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in English Language and Literature approved by Virgil Nemoianu, PhD, as Director, and by Tobias Gregory, PhD and Joseph Sendry, PhD as Readers.

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Chapter 1

John Keats was baptized at an Anglican church in Bishopsgate and buried in the Protestant Cemetery, Rome, but most modern critics dismiss the possibility that he was a practitioner of the Anglican faith. Although biographers have provided background into the relationship between Keats's relatives and the Church of England, especially the possible influence Keats's devout but likely "dissenting" grandmother Alice Jennings, detailed accounts of what Keats may have learned and accepted of the Anglican faith are lacking. Much of our modern understanding of Keats was established by Walter Jackson Bate's dominating biography, and it diminished his theological views to "Agnostic." Bate admits that his view comes from "Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition," an early, minor poem: "Yet here we glimpse for the first time–at least in any real graphic way–the youthful, almost absent-minded agnosticism with which he began his adult life. 'Agnosticism' is the most positive word we can justifiably use."¹ In Bate's view, Keats's agnosticism, like tuberculosis, was a disease that slowly destroyed Keats, consuming his final moments with pain: "Then, after all this, condensed within so short a time, come the final months when, bewildered, ill, often helplessly delirious, and constantly questioning why everything should be torn from him, the early agnosticism–the product of sheer accident and environment–returns in the cruelest way."² With such a strong view of Keats's beliefs or lack thereof, Bate then pronounced what would stifle future investigation into any theological meaning behind Keats's poems: "that the poetry itself is so largely untouched by any direct interest in religion, either one way or another. Hence admirers of Keats's work, if they themselves were devout, could conscientiously leave the subject undisturbed. Others felt

² Bate p. 133
contented that the subject did not obtrude."\textsuperscript{3} With such conviction behind this pronouncement, it is no wonder that few critics have bothered to challenge Bate's assessment. Re-analysis of Keats's theological views, especially in Robert Ryan's study of Keats's letters, suggests that there are hints of a theological system within his works that cannot be ignored even though he was not an orthodox Christian. What Bate assumes is an attack on Christianity and organized religion, described as "superstition," is instead the beginning of Keats's search for a theology that more adequately reflects a non-dualistic view of morality. The rebellious essence of British Romanticism encompassed all aspects of life, and the Romantic poets envisioned idealistic political systems, purified philosophical and theological ideologies, and a transformation of the soul that would bring them closer to the sublime. As most second generation Romantic poets rejected mainstream political views, so too did they reject the religious orthodoxy and sought out ways to discuss their views of God, the universe, and salvation outside of traditional Anglican models. Mark Canuel explains that many works written during the Romantic period were marked by a desire for "toleration" and witnessed some of the most intense and creative challenges to the authority of the confessional state--the monopoly of the Anglican church, enforced through oaths, tests, and penal laws, over all regions of British civil and political life... But these works also revealed established religion to be a spectacular political failure: an attempt to produce order that resulted in chaos, an attempt to establish legal control over regions of consciousness which continually eluded all legislation.\textsuperscript{4}

As a response to the previous political, theological, and artistic ordering of the universe during the British Enlightenment, the fixation of Neoclassical hymns on Christian salvation was replaced by depictions of the psyche's operation, man's relationship to the universe, or a search

\textsuperscript{3} Bate p. 133
for the sublime within nature. The language of Christian dogma no longer served as an appropriate system to discuss the divine, and new models with pre-Christian origins were relied upon. Although pre-Christian deities or mythic creatures were used throughout Christian literature before the Romantic poets, the Romantic poets no longer treated them as mere poetic conceits or linguistic flourishes. Instead, the ancient gods were imbued with an essence that had either a theological component or represented aspects of the divine within nature. Even some of the early poems of the later turned orthodox William Wordsworth or Samuel Taylor Coleridge are read by critics as containing pantheistic elements that give nature qualities rarely seen within the previous Christian literary corpus. It is with little wonder that the poetry of the heterodox John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley are seen as lacking "Christianity."

It is far too simplistic to claim that the Romantics rebelled against the Christian religion and fled to a system of pantheism or deism, if not abandoning religion all together. Instead, orthodox Christian systems during the late 18th and early 19th century had little to do with either a modern or traditional understanding of religion. As Robert Ryan puts it: "if the historians of the Church of England were asked to name the period in modern times when that Church was spiritually, intellectually, and structurally in its worst condition, farthest from the ideas of its founders and reformers, and least deserving of the respect of an intelligent and suggestive man, they would be virtually unanimous in choosing a period that coincides exactly with the lifetime of John Keats."\(^5\) Instead of being religious, the Church leadership served as little more than a political mouth piece for anti-democratic policies, and Church leaders saw the revolutionary spirit present in Europe as a threat to their existence. To oppose the Anglican Church and there English use of the word "Christian" would not be a theological statement but a political one, and

the Romantic pursuit of a new understanding of the soul and man's place in the universe is not part of a theological debate because the Church lacked any rigorous theological stance to rebel against. To the 2nd generation Romantic poets, the devotees of 18th-century Anglicanism could barely be considered religious; they were not provided a spiritual sustenance by their ministers. Leigh Hunt, Keats's friend, describes the problem most poignantly: "Of all the respectable people who go to church on Sundays, and who have been in the habit from their infancy of taking their religion for granted, there are probably not a sufficient number out of ten parishes to fill a single pew, who are acquainted with the thirty-nine articles of their faith."  

Theological imagery or language cannot be disregarded when attempting to understand Romantic poetry because Romantic poetry seeks to capture the sublime, an idea closely connected to thousands of years of religious imagery, and seeks to answer metaphysical and ontological questions. The sublime's essential place within the method and pursuit of Romantic poetry compels a poet to seek out some system to help structure these complex ideas, and, more often than not, the Romantic poet turned to medieval or classical models. This is especially true of John Keats, who revitalizes classical mythology to create his own version of Virgilian system of poetic progress: a poet transitions from writing about his early experiences with nature to describing an ultimate realization of the universal truth that Apollo represents. Like other British Romantics, Keats explores how spiritual forces operate within the universe as traditional Christianity becomes increasingly less adequate, and the Greco-Roman deity who presides over both poetry and virtue was chosen as an appropriate substitute for representing Keats's beliefs. Although Keats's Apollo is linked to the divine through his status as a Classical god, most critics interpret him as only a metaphor representing a poet's development or historical/political

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revolution. Over the past 50 years, interpreters have identified the Romantic purpose as an internalization of nature in order to pursue only individual development that emphasizes the power of the human mind to structure experience. My reading of Keats's mythological sources and his early poems suggests that this interpretation is not Keats's motive, because he emphasizes the external nature of Apollo that exists beyond the physical and mortal realm. Mankind is further separated from Keats's Apollo when mankind is described in a subservient role whenever the god is mentioned. Keats's contemporary, Percy Shelley, incorporates mythology into his poetry in a similar manner but emphasizes the objective aspects of the gods that represent the relationship that humans have to justice, nature, and intellectual discovery. While both use their interpretations of classical mythology to organize their poetry, Keats focuses on the personal mythological relationship between man and immortal to explain the emotional and intellectual connection that develops through poetry.

The past fifty years of critical analysis do not adequately explain Keats's reliance on mythology to describe objective forces in the universe because early influential critics claim that Keats and the other Romantic poets internalized such objective concepts in mythopoetic ways. The intent of critics, such as Harold Bloom, in analyzing the mythopoetic nature of the Romantics is to "define our own relation to these poets" and not to analyze the poets in their original cultural context. To Bloom, their poetry was "an internalization of romance, particularly of the quest variety, an internalization made for more than therapeutic purposes, because made in the name of humanizing hope that approaches apocalyptic intensity." Bloom explains the origins of the quest that the Romantics internalized by claiming, "the movement of [medieval] quest-
romance… was from nature to redeemed nature" and "of some external spiritual authority" but
the Romantic movement is "from nature to the imagination's freedom". He claims further that
"Romantic nature poetry, despite a long critical history of misrepresentation, was an anti-nature
poetry," emphasizing the importance the Romantics placed on the human imagination. M. H.
Abrams, a contemporary of Harold Bloom, claims in *Natural Supernaturalism* that the
Romantics internalize the Christian metaphor of God's relation to His creation, symbolized as the
bridegroom to the bride, so that "subject, mind, or spirit which is primary and takes over the
initiative and the functions which had once been the prerogative of deity." The concept of an
external deity is then replaced by that of the creative imagination of poet: "the imagination plays
a role equivalent to that of the Redeemer," creating a new heaven and earth.

Mythology is no longer, according to the critics like Bloom, a religious construct that
defines external forces of the world; it represents aspects of the mind and of internal
development. Bloom claims that, for Keats, the "Romantic poet turned away, not from society to
nature, but from nature to what was more integral than nature, within himself." Thus, Keats's
color character Hyperion represents a completely external presence in the universe that is replaced by
Apollo, who represents personal truth and intellect, as man begins to focus on internal
development. The typical stages of the quest-romance, a stage of rebellion against traditional
ideas that still conceive of nature as external followed by a stage in which the imagination is
autonomous, become a template for reading Keats's poetry. These critics interpret the use of
classical mythology as a recasting of myths, those about objective realities and human

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9 Bloom p. 6
10 Bloom p. 9
12 Abrams p. 119
13 Bloom p. 15
relationship with the divine, into a quest that primarily deals with the power of imagination to create order and overcome the flaws in nature. This recasting begins when people discover that there is no knowable, much less sufficiently harmonious, order in the divine or in nature. The ramification of the "quest-romance" interpretation is that Grecian mythology is stripped of its original theological components and is transformed into a metaphor for psychological processes.

Of the successors to Bloom, Ronald Sharp transforms the personal and psychological interpretation of Keats's poetry into a humanistic system that Keats wanted to share with all of mankind. In stripping any divine transcendence from Apollo, Sharp transforms a deity's act of apotheosis in *Hyperion* into a complex metaphor for Keats's poetic career and argues that Keats replaces religion with his own humanistic philosophy:

> Poetry must answer the same need that all other types of beauty do: the need to find some means of endurance and afflation in a painful world devoid of the old gods. In answering that need poetry must assume the traditional religious function of consolation, and in administering that charge, in serving, as Keats says in *The Fall of Hyperion*, as 'a humanist, Physician to all men', the poet must take upon himself the neo-religious task of adding 'a mite to that mass of beauty which is harvested'.

Throughout his argument, Sharp does refer to theological and religious aspects of the poems. However, he consistently argues that they reinforce Keats's belief in a truly "human" view of religion in which Keats worships the human self since, "Like all gods, [Apollo] exists only in the human breast" and "Apollo does not transcend human history; he lives only within it, and serves only its needs. His immortality and divinity are thus metaphors for the intensity of his humanity and for the life-affirming power of beauty which that intensity reveals."

The various incarnations of the psychological and "human" interpretations of Keats's Apollo, of which Sharp's review is an example, have dominated post-Bate criticism. This influence is especially

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15 Sharp p. 143
telling in the works of critics like Leon Waldoff, who claimed that

> Although the fall is mythological and macrocosmic, dealing with gods rather than men, it reflects the human and microcosmic problems posed by a universe in which all experience is transient, all creatures mutable... The point is not simply that Keats could hardly avoid characterizing [Saturn] in human terms but that he, like Shelley, in *Prometheus Unbound*, has chosen to deal with human problems through an etiological myth, one that attempts to understand human experience... in terms of an archetypal and identity-making event.\(^{16}\)

Later critics, when disagreeing with the psychological or personal interpretation of Keats's works, tend not discuss a possible theological or spiritual significance of the Greco-Roman deities. Often, they assume Keats's uses the gods as complex metaphors chosen for convenience or added to the poems for decoration.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to challenge such limited interpretations of the Greco-Roman gods on basic philosophical grounds. Instead, this study will pursue an interpretation of Keats's poetry under the premise that Keats viewed mythology as representative of forces beyond the self, a view that was familiar to Keats as revealed by Hunt attributing such a belief to Shakespeare. Hunt, in the preface to *Foliage*, argues, "The truth is, [Shakespeare] felt the Grecian mythology not as a set of schoolboy common-places which it was thought wrong to give out, but as something which it requires more than mere scholarship to understand–as the elevation of the external world and of accomplished humanity to the highest pitch of the graceful, and as embodied essence of all the lovely qualities of nature" and the uses of classical imagery in Shakespeare's plays "show that all great poets look at themselves and the fine world about them in the same clear and ever-living fountains."\(^{17}\) The similarities between Keats's and Shakespeare's views on mythology were strong enough to confuse many of Keats's

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\(^{17}\) Quoted in Forman, Harry (Ed). *The Poetical Works and Other Writings of John Keats*. Vol IV. Reeves & Turner, 1883. pp. 337-338
contemporaries, including Charles Cowden Clarke, Keats's schoolboy friend, who believed that
Hunt was actually speaking of Keats: "But his steady friend, Leigh Hunt, has rendered the
amplest and truest record of [Keats's] mental accomplishments in the preface to his 'Foliage'."\(^{18}\)
This emphasis on mythology as embodying nature and its connection to the external world is
enough to interpret Keats's mythological figures as representing aspects of the world that, while
connected to humanity, exist beyond the self. To focus on mythology as only reflecting the inner
workings of the human psyche is to potentially ignore Keats's own understanding of his poems.

Following Bloom and Abrams, critics discussing the externality of Keats's mythological
figures, primarily Hyperion and Apollo in *Hyperion*, only describe the usage as a metaphor for
progress within the universe, be it political, historical, or artistic. Many critics, including
Nicholas Roe, Jerome McGann, and Andrew Bennet, link Keats's poems to various
contemporary political and historical events, while others, including Helen Vendler, address how
Keats's poems depict the evolution of poetic representation. Even Andrew Motion, who hints at
Bloom's view when he says "[Keats] shapes his two main figures to reflect elements of himself,"
identifies a possible external meaning to *Hyperion*: "He also combines the poem's self-
exploration with a more 'disinterested' political and historical theme. This has usually been
discussed simply in terms of the shift in power between generations."\(^{19}\) The focus on power,
generations, and politics soon became the dominant critical theme, and other critics treat
*Hyperion* as a poem that captures the Romantic poet's longing for political revolution. Jonathan
Bate characterizes the poem as a "progress poem" that is "concerned with the development of
enlightened political institutions,"\(^{20}\) and Morton Paley attributes the poem's fragmentary state to

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\(^{18}\) Forman 1883 p. 337
\(^{20}\) Bate, Jonathan. "Keats's Two *Hyperions* and the Problem of Milton" in *Romantic Revisions*. ed. Keith Hanley and
the incompatibility of classical form and 19th century politics: "The epic machinery could have been mobilized for a flashback war in heaven, but in the post-Waterloo world this would have presented even greater problems than it had for Milton."\textsuperscript{21} Even Michael O'Neill, who argues that Keats does more than "arrange a few beads" of notable events, transforms Hyperion into a "poem about the loss of authority… which seeks to assert the authority of a poet… a poem that rehearses one myth (that of evolutionary progress) only to find its imaginative sympathies engaged by an elegiac mood… a poem that withdraws from the contemporary but is responsive to Napoleon's dubious bequest, his legacy of paralysed aftermath."\textsuperscript{22} Hyperion is indisputably about "progress," but Keats could have described Napoleon or any other historical figure if he intended to compose a poem that "uses its story to explore Keats's view of the role of the poet in relation to history."\textsuperscript{23} Coleridge did just that in The Fall of Robespierre, Destiny of Nations, France: An Ode, or his many Sonnets on Eminent Characters, and Keats demonstrated many times his ability to mimic Coleridge's technique. In one instance, Keats and Hunt wrote competing poems modeled on Coleridge's "To Kosciusko," a sonnet about a Polish revolutionary figure. What is ignored by critics wishing to establish a purely political interpretation of Keats's poems is his use of Greco-Roman gods, especially ones dealing with knowledge, poetry, and virtue, and whether or not this choice plays an essential role in Keats's poetry.

The view of Apollo representing a force of political or historical change is common among critics because the concept of revolution is a key component to the premise of Hyperion. However, Apollo is neither a god of power or justice nor is he a force that challenges such a god, like the character Prometheus in Shelley's Prometheus Unbound. To compensate for what Apollo

\textsuperscript{23} O'Neill 1995 p. 153
lacks in political symbolism, a trend within current Keats criticism is to adapt the idea of revolution to Keats's views on art, poetry, and the poet's relationship to his craft. Marjorie Levinson, in focusing on the *Hyperion* poems as a fragments and how they relate to each other, argues, "the poems are, in practice, treated as two first drafts, each of which seeks to explain human suffering and to apply this analysis to the business of poetry." This understanding of the poems allows critics to view the characters of Apollo and the poet in the two poems as one, and Levinson merges the historical view on human suffering with Keats's own poetic career. As her argument progresses, she places more emphasis on Keats's relationship with previous writers, in that he is "no longer a protégé," and how the poems represent his own coming to terms with his poetic career. Ultimately, Levinson places the psychological ramifications of what is happening in the writing of the poem to Keats's view of writing in general: "What, then, is more natural than that its form should emphasize its dependence on an earlier and more derivative poem as a way of defending/dissembling/enabling a detachment from the past? Dying into life, or giving up a familiar mode of being, thereby and necessarily to enter upon an uncertain but presumably more challenging and rewarding existence, is Keats's metaphor for this psychic dilemma, one which is played out in his canon on many stages." Similarly, Susan Wolfson focuses on Apollo as "the Father of all verse" to argue that Keats uses Apollo to discuss a poet's attempt to search for a poetic voice. To her, Keats used Apollo as a subject to discuss "mists and mysteries," and "the story of Apollo's ascension to sovereignty offers itself as a figure for the growth of the imagination toward its creative ideal. And its implications hold a particular value for two Apollonian arts of special importance to Keats—healing and poetry." This interpretation is

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25 Levinson 1986 p. 181
26 Levinson 1986 p. 182
similar to Charles Rzepka's emphasis on Keats's poetic and mental development. Rzepka's work came out the same year as Levinson's and Wolfson's, and his emphasis is closely related to theirs: "The process of Apollo's deification in the earlier poem turns out to have been an allegory of the process of Keats's own awakening to the significance of the Titan's story, an awakening depicted in The Fall without the use of a surrogate." These interpretations of Apollo, though limited to his status as a poet, do recognize the constant development of Apollo as a character within Keats's poems as a whole and within Hyperion in particular. I cannot argue that it is incorrect for a critic to connect Apollo's development with Keats's, but it is my contention that claiming the god is only a proxy for Keats provides only a partial understanding of the relationship between author and character. After all, Apollo is a deity that represents more than just poetry and poets, and it would be vastly arrogant for Keats to believe that had the authority and power of a god.

Later critics who also emphasize Keats's developing status as a poet add additional aspects of Apollo's divinity into their interpretations. Hermoine de Almeida slightly deviates from the analysis of Apollo as representing Keats's development as a poet to focus on Apollo's role as both god of poetry and medicine: "All of the aesthetic concepts that Keats uses in his description of Apollo's nature and the poet's vital capacity... find corollary place and perhaps first source in Romantic medicine's reading of life." As a revolutionary force in this interpretation, "Apollo's fresh beauty must therefore constitute a greater physical and conceptual vitality than what it supplants; it must bear a sharper sensitivity to external stimuli, a deeper sense of internal sympathy, a greater vulnerability to pain, a more subtle power of perception, and, most of all, a heightened and healing receptivity to the beauty and pain of other life forms." Ultimately,

30 de Almeida 1991 pp. 286-287
Apollo is one piece of a greater formulation on what an artist's role is in the world: "Hyperion's Apollo and the mortal poet portrayed in *The Fall of Hyperion* must serve in tandem in any discussion of the evolution of artistic consciousness in Keats."³¹ The relationship between Apollo and suffering is also described by Lucy Newlyn when she argues, "'Hyperion' shows the alternative to this refusal [of a world of suffering and mortality], and suggests that by embracing suffering, as necessary aspect of experience, divine status can be achieved."³² Both Newlyn and de Almeida emphasize Keats's view of poets not only within a developing social condition in which they must aid others but also within the context of a poet trying to find his own place within the world. Karla Alwes, in her feminist interpretation of Keats's poems, further connects the poet's internal quest for identity with the obligations of a poet to serve mankind. She argues that the relationship between Apollo and Mnemosyne in *Hyperion* represents "Keats's search for a new female and poetic identity... Thus the female continues to serve as lover but, at the same time, acquires a new and secondary maternal role as well. This dual identity allows Mnemosyne to oversee the 'lovelines new born' of Apollo's godhood while remaining the source of the apotheosis."³³ In Alwes's interpretation, it is through Mnemosyne, and not Apollo, that "Keats comes the closest yet to finding the poetry that explores the 'human heart' that his poems of 1817 deemed necessary."³⁴ A flaw in adding aspects of Apollo's role as a god beyond those of poetry and virtue is that critics still focus only on aspects that they can connect to Keats while ignoring Apollo as a separate entity.

These personal/psychological or political/historical interpretations of Keats's poetry undermine the possibility that Keats consciously chose his subject matter to be something greater

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³¹ de Almeida 1991 p. 288
³⁴ Alwes 1993 pp. 96-97
than an arbitrary selected symbolic character that is merely superficially different from those relied upon by other Romantic poets. There is something "Greek" within Keats's poetry, recognized by most of Keats's contemporaries and early critics, that allows the Greco-Roman imagery to transcend the description of metaphor. George Mathew, poet and friend of Keats, revealed that Keats "invited comparisons with the Greeks in that one of the main endeavours of his poetic career was to grow more Grecian" and Reynolds agreed while Byron famously derided Keats for his early attempts at writing on Classical themes. There is no general agreement within Keats criticism on how to define the "Greek" label or how the label affects the interpretation of Keats. Turn-of-the century critic Ernest de Selincourt sparked a critical debate when he, in discussing Shelley's characterization of Keats as "Greek," argues,

Keats was no scholar, and of the literature in which the Greek spirit found true expression he could know nothing. But just as it was through his devotion to Spenser that he became a poet, so was it through his kinship, both in spirit and taste, with the Elizabethans, that he became the poet of ancient Greece. In his own day he was accused of versifying Lempriere, and the Dictionary is still regarded as the main source of his classical inspiration. Yet it is highly probable that if he had found the legends of ancient mythology in Lempriere alone he would have left them there, and it is certain that if he had never seen a dictionary his debt to the world of Greece would have been the same.

Selincourt's establishing of Keats as "Greek" in a manner similar to the Elizabethans dominated later criticism. This prompted Stephen Larrabee to write a few decades later that Keats was a focus of literary critics because of "the feeling that Keats is the most 'classical' and presumably the most 'Greek' of the English Romantic poets." In response, Diane Brotemarkle claims that such an approach is short sighted: "This would be a satisfactory conclusion were it not for Keats's experience with the Elgin Marbles, Greek urns and Homeric epic."

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35 Motion 1997. p. 151
36 de Selincourt 1905 p. xlv
purpose is to promote a comparison of Keats's poems with the Elgin Marbles. However, she lacked de Selincourt's full argument, which states that Keats did read Homer and that Keats's versions were translated by Alexander Pope and, more importantly, by Chapman. This is a key consideration because if one is to understand how Keats wrote poems, then they must focus on his poetic models, and Brotemarkle's focus on physical art ignores the poetic spirit that Keats sought to incorporate into his works. None of the critics, whether influenced by de Selincourt or rebelling against him, have provided an adequate explanation for what the Greek spirit, as the 19th century used the term, would mean for a poet. I believe that de Selincourt was correct to argue that it was an approach relied on by Early Modern English poets, but that it was Milton who developed and formulated it into a poetic type. Milton was the poet all Romantics wished to emulate yet overcome and transcend, and Keats followed Milton's model in trying to be Greek.

When William Hazlitt responded to Keats's *Endymion*, he did not find fault with the poem's "Grecian" character: "His Endymion is a very delightful description of the illusions of a youthful imagination, given up to airy dreams… but there is nothing tangible in it, nothing marked or palpable – we have none of the hardy spirit or rigid forms of antiquity. He painted his own thoughts and character; and did not transport himself into the fabulous and heroic ages." Hazlitt believed that Milton, unlike the writer of *Endymion*, was able to capture the power of the classical works: "he had the mighty models of antiquity always present to his thoughts, and determined to raise a monument of equal height and glory" and

His religious zeal infused its character into his imagination; so that he devotes himself with the same sense of duty to the cultivation of his genius, as he did to the exercise of virtue, or the good of his country. The spirit of the poet, the patriot, and the prophet, vied with each other in his breast. His mind appears to have held equal communion with the inspired writers, and with the bards and

Press, 1993. p. 25
sages of ancient Greece and Rome

To be "Grecian" would mean to rely on mythology as beyond metaphor, to infuse it with a spirit of religious fervor, of belief, and of truth that only one with the aspects of poet, patriot, and prophet would be able to do. The Romantic view of the "Grecian" poet, like Milton, is one that has three masters to follow, a point lost on later critics. Later critics challenge Hazlitt's argument, claiming that "Hazlitt's sense of a lack of 'strength and substance' in Keats's poetry might expose Hazlitt's own nostalgia for an impossibly adequate representation of the past, a return to the Golden Age without problem or anxiety." Hazlitt does not care for a representation of the past at all, but a representation of universal truth that is conveyed through the words of a prophet. Keats gained the title "most Grecian" because he, like Milton, was recognized as combining the roles of poet, patriot, and prophet in his greatest works while relying on Greco-Roman myth and forms.

Keats relied on many different symbols, topics, and philosophies beyond those associated with the Greco-Roman mythological subjects, in particular Apollo, that I will focus on. It is dangerous to generalize about Keats's understanding of poetry based on examining just the Greco-Roman mythology and not the many other systems within his poetry, for example, his uses of Christian imagery. Most important, a comprehensive work that fully analyzes and contextualizes Keats's use of classical mythology and other types of mythological systems, especially the references he makes to the female goddesses and figures such as Lamia, Hecate, and "Dian, Queen of Earth, and Heaven, and Hell," would deviate beyond the immediate scope of this dissertation. Instead, I will discuss Keats's other uses of mythological figures only when they serve as immediate context for Keats's Apollonian poetry and how the poems develop over

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time. Apollo is an important figure as he appears in poems spanning Keats's career with each incarnation becoming more complex and directly connected to Keats's concepts of morality and the soul: Keats's early Apollo is a god of delight in poetry and enjoyment while his final Apollo is a divine force who "dies into life" and takes on the mantle of a more "beautiful" presence within the universe.

By focusing on the development of Keats's Apollo in relationship to the development of Keats's theological ideas, I hope to show how many of Keats's poems take on new meanings and become examples of his desire to create a system of "soul saving" through a process that lacks the intellectual and political baggage of the religious systems of his day. To serve as a frame for analyzing and interpreting Keats's use of Apollo, this dissertation will rely on some key aspects of three studies of Keats's works: Robert Ryan's interpretation of theological statements in Keats's prose, Dorothy Van Ghent's description of the Hyperion poems as initiation rituals, and Walter Evert's analysis of the evolving depiction of Apollo within Keats's poems.

Although most critics ignore the theological ramifications of Keats's works or describe any religious impulse evident in his poetry as merely a "religion of beauty" or aestheticism, Robert Ryan provides a full length exploration of Keats's theological writings. Within the context of the late 18th-century and early 19th-century British Anglicanism, Ryan explains how Keats's writings reveal an exploration of a "Theist" system. Unlike Ryan's study, this dissertation will not argue that Keats was a follower of natural religion, but it will rely on the contextualization of Keats's writings provided by Ryan. It will also adopt some of his theologically based analysis of Keats's letters to create a frame for interpreting the theological language of the poems. Midway through his analysis, Ryan makes a curious statement: "In this easy shift we see an example of the ability of Keats's imagination to operate within two completely different mythic systems--
which I will call arbitrarily, Theist and Apollonian... As Keats grew older, he carefully withheld from his poetry all direct references to the first deity, and Apollo seemed to reign supreme.”\( ^{42} \) He elaborates in a footnote, explaining that such behavior was "a capability he would have noticed in his Renaissance and Elizabethan masters, who seemed equally at ease with Christian and Classical".\( ^{43} \) Ryan does not analyze the Apollonian system, spends limited time discussing Keats's poems, and does little to explore the possible similarity of intent among Keats and his "Renaissance and Elizabethan masters". In Milton, Keats witnessed the merging of classical and Christian elements for the purpose of serving as poet, prophet, and patriot for his people, yet none of this is explained in Ryan's analysis. To acknowledge such an important relationship and not pursue it is a severe oversight, especially when Ryan puts great emphasis on Keats's "Vale of Soul-Making" yet does not explore how *The Fall of Hyperion* discusses a poet/prophet's duty to mankind with similar language.

Ryan does acknowledge Keats's view of Milton, but in primarily theological, not poetic, terms. When interpreting the "March of Intellect" letter, Ryan argues that "Without a knowledge of contemporary religious vocabulary, one might easily make the mistake of interpreting this passage as an expression of a preference for a kind of secular humanism over religion. But Keats is actually comparing two approaches to religion, one of which rests content with 'Dogmas and superstitions' while the other 'thinks into the human heart.'"\( ^{44} \) Milton, the great model and rival who Keats constantly battled with while composing poetry, becomes merely the proponent of a superstitious system that is only one step in a greater progress. But there must have been something great in Milton that Wordsworth lacked, because Keats's great works were trapped in

\( ^{42} \) Ryan p. 103
\( ^{43} \) Ryan p. 103
\( ^{44} \) Ryan p. 171
Milton's shadow and not Wordsworth's. Wordsworth peers into the human heart, attempts to use a more natural form of language, and depicts the common man while Milton focused on God, Satan, and the origins of mankind. The two could not be further apart, yet Keats's *Hyperion* depicts divine beings caught in an epic struggle while *The Fall of Hyperion* depicts a poet struggling to peer into the very fabric of the universe with the aid of an immortal guide. Ryan ignores that Keats's focus on the "mist" and "mystery" and how they are an essential component to an evolved sense of morality. Milton's actions, his poetic form, and his prophetic style were not flawed. Instead, it can be argued that Keats believed that Milton embraced a black and white moral system while Wordsworth was able to accept uncertainty and mystery. If this is true, Keats's depiction of Greco-Roman Titans as friends to mankind without any clear presence of "evil" serves to remove the black and white moral system that characterizes *Paradise Lost*. Such an interpretation of the poem could make Hyperion indistinguishable from Shelley's Prometheus if not for the fact that Apollo embodies the opposite characteristics of Shelley's Jupiter. The new system established in Keats's letters and *Hyperion* poems is one of progression from one state of perception to the next without disparaging those in a lower state with labels of "sin." Sensual delight and desire are not "evil" but are described in an almost stoic manner as part of "suffering" since pleasure is temporary. Ryan's two systems, the Theist and Apollonian, are not separate theological systems. Instead, they are two related components of Keats's desire to replace the morality of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and other flawed black and white moral systems related to the "Christianity" of Keats's day with a philosophy more true to the "human heart."

Apollo is central to Keats's poems discussing the "human heart" because he serves as the model for a poet seeking to dedicate himself to humanity, an idea recognized by Dorothy Van Ghent. Although Van Ghent does not discuss the *Hyperion* poems as describing a theological
system or a divine presence within the universe, her work emphasizes the poems' return to traditional myths about knowledge, initiation, and poetry: "The correspondence between what happens to the god Apollo and what happens to the mortal Dreamer is emphasized by the access of godlike power in the dreamer's mind, a power of 'enormous ken, To see as a god sees'; This achievement is won at the cost of that dread initiation into the dark, the chaotic, the inhuman side of life, which, at the mythological level, is death and, at the psychological level, is the unconscious."\(^{45}\) The focus is similar to that of Harold Bloom and M. H. Abrams with the poems as a metaphor for poetic development, but Van Ghent extends Keats's actions to an older tradition that focuses on more than the psychology: "Keats's physical symbolization of the rebirth uses certain formal or ritual traditions. After Apollo has drunk in 'knowledge enormous'… he still has to go through terrible physical ordeal that is an ordeal of death and birth at once, before he is really the divine Apollo. Mere psychological acquisition of knowledge is not enough; there has to be a real physical change in his whole being."\(^{46}\) This physicality allows the character of Apollo, though still an archetype, to transcend the mere metaphorical status found within most interpretations. It also allows Apollo to stand as independent to the poet even though the two are deeply connected. Van Ghent does not pursue the ramifications of the character Apollo serving as more than a metaphor. Instead, she uses Apollo's actions to reinforce the symbolic meaning behind the rituals the poet must experience before receiving knowledge.

A secondary component of Van Ghent's argument is that Hyperion describes a myth of the Fall and uses it as context for the poet's need to experience a painful rebirth. The Fall, to Van Ghent, is "man's own loss of divine harmony with himself and with nature," something that the Titans share, and "As, in Christian mythology, the great cosmological change that came about

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\(^{46}\) Van Ghent p. 220
with the Fall was that human pain and death entered the universe, so, in this poem by a poet with
an essentially pre-Christian mentality, the great change in the Titan universe is that human pain
and death have entered it."\textsuperscript{47} The Titans suffer because they are connected to human suffering
stemming from a change within the universal order. Keats returns to the Christian myth, the myth
of \textit{Paradise Lost}, but disconnects death's origin from human sin. To help the "human heart",
Keats turns away from a system which casts moral blame to one which recognizes that all suffer,
even the once innocent Titans. Apollo, originally a "gifted youth with Dionysian temperament",
is able to "obtain the consciousness that will make him the divine Apollo."\textsuperscript{48} The poet, in
following the rebirth cycle of Apollo, would not gain the immortality of the godhead but would
"see as a god sees" and overcome feelings of suffering. Van Ghent does not take these arguments
to their fullest theological conclusion; she neither explains how Keats seeks to progress beyond
the morality of Milton, nor does she describe how Apollo represents a new theological system
that will save the people. Instead, she concludes only by emphasizing the personal development
that can be attained. An analysis of how Apollo developed as a character in Keats's poems would
reveal how Keats transforms Apollo from a traditional Greco-Roman god to Christ-like figure
used to promote a world view that transcends the limitations of both Miltonic and Anglican
Christianity.

Van Ghent's view of a relationship between Apollo and the poet as separate entities that
go through the same ritual provides a possible component of Keats's "Apollonian" mythic system
described by Ryan. Although Van Ghent does not explore the relationship in detail or discuss the
theological ramifications of Apollo as deity and poet as a follower of the deity, this dissertation
will apply Ryan's language as a framework to expand upon Van Ghent's conclusions. This

\textsuperscript{47} Van Ghent p. 218
\textsuperscript{48} Van Ghent pp. 219-220
dissertation will also go one step further by arguing that not only do Apollo and the poet follow the same ritual, but Apollo established that ritual to allow later poet briefly to see "as gods see." It is through Apollo's Christ-like sacrifice that he opens the gate not to heaven but to a place that contains the source of knowledge that allows one to overcome the suffering inherent in mortality. Van Ghent's analysis is limited in that it focuses on a mature Apollo found within *Hyperion*, and she does not provide an explanation as to why Apollo changes in Keats's poetry, why Apollo is different from Greco-Roman myth, or why he adopts Christ-like attributes. Instead, Apollo is "a gifted youth with a Dionysian temperament," a merging of two Greco-Roman myths without explanation. This dissertation will analyze how Keats started with an Apollo that was true to Greco-Roman myth but was transformed into a Christ-like figure in parallel to the appearance of the "Theist" arguments in Keats's letters and Keats's desire to overcome the limited morality of Milton.

Of all the critical works that attribute meaning to the character Apollo, only Walter Evert's study describes how the figure of Apollo developed in Keats's poems. Evert's intent is aesthetic and not theological, and he does not provide answers to the Apollonian system that Ryan describes, even though Evert argues, "I find myself directly opposed to the only scholar who has tried to evaluate Keats's work in the light of specific religious criteria." He goes on to acknowledge a general spirituality of Keats's words: "I submit that only a gross insensitivity to poetic tone could miss that abounding reverence which is almost the hallmark of Keats's poetry. Much of his aesthetic pleasure, indeed, even in paganism's artifacts, was rooted in this anterior disposition." Evert then declares that "most subsequent studies have agreed that the poet

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49 Van Ghent p. 219
51 Evert p. 10
succeeded in revivifying the old mythology through a natural sympathy with the spirit in which it originated."\(^{52}\) A reader would expect Evert to provide a work that explains the "Apollonian"

system and its theological ramifications. Curiously, Evert dismisses the need to do so and instead says, "the one fact that emerges from the whole survey, however, is that no one considers Keats's mythography, except in some of his apprentice poetry, as merely incidental, decorative, exotic, or imitative… I hope to confirm that general impression and to show in detail the place of this mythography in his aesthetic and its effects on the poems he left us."\(^{53}\) The analysis focuses on

the repetition of language and symbols within Keats's poetry, and the character Apollo becomes secondary to how he is described.

Evert's study does provide important questions about the ramifications of Apollo's ascension. After his analysis of \textit{Hyperion}, there are hints at the theological ramifications of the poem: "the first two books reiterate in a variety of ways the absolute distinction between the conditions of divinity and mortality… while the third book represents Apollo as passing from a condition like mortality to one of deity (i.e. performing the prototypal action which the poets, in Keats's old view, would imitate)."\(^{54}\) However, he drops any pursuit of the matter by saying, "As the poem developed, then, Keats's newer views had become predominant, and the demonstration of Apollo's ability to make the transition from phenomenal to ideal understanding, instead of establishing a pattern for man to follow, had been justified by an argument which excluded man from the possibility of doing so."\(^{55}\) Evert blames Keats's inability to merge harmoniously his old views with his new views for why \textit{Hyperion} was abandoned. He assumes that to follow in Apollo's path would necessitate godhead, which assumes a necessary merging of Apollo and

\(^{52}\) Evert p. 17
\(^{53}\) Evert p. 22
\(^{54}\) Evert p. 239
\(^{55}\) Evert pp. 239-240
poet, similar to the theories of Bloom. Instead, Anthony Harding points out that the poem separates the poet from the god by describing how Apollo operates at a level unachievable by humanity: "Precisely because Apollo is not a 'poet-surrogate' but a god, the patron, protector, and cynosure of the poet, the very source of human song, Keats can use him to interrogate successfully the mute image of Mnemosyne, memory".  

Furthermore, it seems more likely that one can follow a deity without seeking to become the essence of the deity or being a substitute for the deity. Harding explains that the "unrestrained and creative intercourse between memory and poesis shows Keats assuming the power to justify his own mythopoeic act by claiming the Apollonian precedent." Without Apollo, the god figure, conquering speech and language, neither Keats nor any other poet would be capable of poetic speech. Ultimately, Keats's inability to finish Hyperion was not a problem in his ability to describe a story that explains the divine aspects of his theory but connecting the origin of poetic language to the human experience of poetic inspiration. His reuse of the same divine story in The Fall of Hyperion with little change reinforces a view that Keats was satisfied with the second and third act of the poem. The frame provided by The Fall of Hyperion would serve to connect Apollo/divinity to mankind through a poet/prophet who bears witness to the divine message and is sent out to spread the word.

This dissertation will rely on Evert's method in tracing the evolution of symbols and language in the Apollo poems, combined with Van Ghent's focus on ritual and Ryan's identification of the "Theist" and "Apollonian" systems, to argue that the Hyperions were not incomplete poems in their theological/philosophical theory but contained the inevitable conclusion of Keats's Apollonian ideas as developed throughout his short career. By following

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57 Harding p. 222
how Evert traces the image of Apollo, this dissertation will re-analyze Keats's poems and explore how Apollo represents a young Keats's view of poetry as pleasure to a later Keats's view of a spiritual presence in the world that aids mankind in accepting life. Consideration of Keats's original mythological sources will provide insights that were previously lacking in Keats scholarship, and the frames provided by Ryan, Van Ghent, and Evert will serve as patterns to develop a new interpretation of Keats's work that attributes theological meaning to his poetry in contrast to the dominant view of the poems as metaphor for psychological, aesthetic, or political/historical evolution.

The second chapter will analyze Keats's early use of mythology within his poetry written between 1815 and 1816. Although critics have discussed "I Stood Tip-Toe," "Sleep and Poetry," and other juvenile poems, no one has explored the poems in the context of Keats's exposure to Christianized Greco-Roman myth and Virgil as a schoolboy. Of the mythological sources that Keats had, Virgil is essential to understanding many of Apollo's characteristics because it is Virgil who establishes Apollo as the god who guides an individual towards the founding of a civilization. Although we do not have surviving copies of Keats's translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, we know that he enthusiastically translated it himself and had multiple translations available to him as a boy. By comparing Keats's early mythographic sources to the description of Apollo within his juvenile works, it is obvious that Keats removes Apollo's sexual identity and accounts of physical interaction with the world for the view of a disembodied god that reveals knowledge to a virtuous individual through dreams, possession, and divine or semi-divine messengers. Virgil is an ignored influence on Keats's view of the relationship between dreams and truth, and Keats alludes to Virgilian ideas when describing Apollo and dreams in "Sleep and Poetry." The Virgilian influence is more fully realized in Keats's later concepts of Apollo relationship to
destiny and of the Sibyl in the form of Moneta revealing the secrets of the universe, but this neglected influence permeates Keats's early Apollonian poems. It is through a reconsideration of the sources that Keats is revealed not as a "Grecian" writer but as one who relied on a Roman understanding of myth and Apollonian virtue as filtered through a predominantly Christian view.

The second chapter will then analyze the key images found within the Apollonian poems, including Keats's depiction of a natural poetic progression from writing short, nature based poems to writing heroic poetry. An emphasis on heroic poetry representing the ultimate goal of a poem is related to Keats's desire in "Ode to Apollo" of joining with Virgil, Homer, Milton, and the other epic writers who are forever joined in song with Apollo.

The third chapter will analyze Keats's chronological development from an amateur poet in 1816 into a career poet following the publication of *Endymion* in 1817. This time period is essential to understanding how Keats viewed poetry because it marks his first time attempt at writing heroic verse, the ultimate form of poetry in his view, and his wrestling with what it meant to have the status of "poet." The chapter will first investigate why the joyful narrator of "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" is replaced by the penitent narrator of "Hymn to Apollo" in the context of Keats's biographical circumstances. This transition contains Keats's shifting view from reader to originator of poetry, and it also reveals a dark modesty that haunts Keats's later works. Then, the chapter will consider Keats's chronological development by analyzing "Hymn to Apollo" in the context of marking Keats's transition to writing long narrative poems, including *Endymion*. It will conclude by examining how aspects of Keats's earlier poems on Apollo are integrated into his long narrative poem, *Endymion*, as he prepares to write a lengthy poem on Apollo. The chapter will also conclude by discussing how Apollo has developed as a character in relationship to the mythological sources Keats had access too.
The fourth chapter will explore Keats's first attempt to compose a narrative poem on Apollo that incorporates many elements of the epic genre. Epic was an important genre for the Romantic poets, and Keats embraced epic as the ultimate incarnation of poetic achievement within his early poems. In struggling to write a poem worthy of Apollo and the great poets, Keats reveals what he considers as essential to writing poetry. The chapter will probe the role of Apollo within Keats's *Hyperion* in the context of statements within Keats's letters and the Apollonian imagery of his early works. This chapter places emphasis on how the poem characterizes Apollo in a different manner from Keats's previous works in relation to the addition of Biblical and Miltonic imagery, especially Apollo's Christ-like characteristics that are alluded to by critics but deemed ultimately insignificant. The chapter will then consider a relationship between Keats's incomplete philosophy of the "Mansion of Many Apartments" and the fragmentary nature of *Hyperion* with emphasis on the moral ramifications and Keats's understanding of intellectual progression as not the reasons why he had to abandon the narrative. The chapter will continue by examining the historical context of why Keats abandoned *Hyperion* to work on other poems and how outside pressures were a greater cause of the poem being placed aside than an inability to know what would come next in the story. Keats's odes and *Lamia* are analyzed, in this context, as a possible continuation of the themes of *Hyperion* to mentally prepare Keats for the completion of what he saw as his ultimate poem.

The fifth chapter will investigate *The Fall of Hyperion* as a summary of the themes and concepts developed within Keats's earlier Apollo-based poems. *The Fall of Hyperion* is Keats's greatest Apollonian poem, not in technique or style but in the poem's depiction of a poet confronting the divine source of inspiration and being initiated into the craft of poetry. The chapter will discuss how the imagery of Keats's previous Apollonian poems are appropriated into
The Fall of Hyperion, including the divine figure of inspiration, dying into life, humbleness before Apollo, the desire to join in Apollo's song, and the relationship between dreams and truth. Then, the chapter will explore the relationship between the poem's imagery and the initiation imagery of Virgil's Aeneid Book 6, with emphasis on the role of a divine messenger in guiding one towards a vision of metaphysical truth. There are distinct and ignored parallels between Aeneas's vision of the immortality of the soul and future glory with Keats's understanding of "soul-making" and the poet's duty to provide poetry that will help ease the world's suffering. The chapter will continue by exploring Biblical echoes within the poem and how they are merged with Greco-Roman myth and the ramifications the Christianized underworld has on the meaning and intent of the poem. The chapter will conclude by probing the possible relationship between final lines of The Fall of Hyperion and the beginning passages of Hyperion in the context of Keats trying to rewrite Hyperion, linking the two poems not as one rewriting the other but one providing only a new beginning for his previous work.

The sixth chapter will consider The Fall of Hyperion and Hyperion as one narrative that begins with a poet's initiation into the Apollonian mysteries and ends with a vision of Apollo attaining godhead. The chapter will explore the influence of John Milton's Paradise Lost and Virgil's Aeneid in the development of Keats's poem with emphasis on how Keats embraces the plot of Book 6 of the Roman epic while seeking to reverse the Fall and the origin of sin in the Christian epic. The chapter will then consider the ramifications of Keats writing a poem with Christian parallels, including a pseudo-apocalyptic vision, the rebirth of a deity, and the abandonment of Eden, and how these considerations are important in understanding his overall method in relying on Apollo. With these considerations in mind, Keats's poem no longer abandons Christianity but embraces important Christian elements to aid in a critique of what he
felt was a extreme moral-system of good and evil within *Paradise Lost*. The chapter will then explore the relationship between Apollo and Keats's concept of "soul-making" as an alternative to traditional, 18th-century religious systems.

Having examined the development of Keats's Apollo and the sources that influenced it, the sixth chapter will conclude by defining the type of theological system that Keats created with Apollo. The chapter will discuss Keats's use of Christian imagery when describing Apollo and "soul-making" to reconsider Ryan's separation of the Theism and Apollonian systems, and it will argue that Keats is not trying to depict a Natural Religion but is embracing an altered form of Christianity that is more universal and does not rely on the concept of Original Sin. Keats's Apollo is a Christ-like figure that does not die because man was sinful and needs to be saved. Instead, Apollo dies to guide mankind beyond physical pleasure to a higher level of intellectual understanding. The two systems, Christian and Apollonian, are purposefully compatible, and it is likely that Keats's friend Severn was correct to believe that Keats died as a true believer in Christianity, because Keats only softened the aspects of Christian morality that he felt caused undue harm instead of rejecting Christianity completely.
Chapter 2

Modern critics are correct in asserting that Keats's later poems emphasize a natural pattern of cosmic or historic revolution, where more advanced forms of governance replace primitive systems. However, they ignore the ramifications of mankind's role as subject and not ruler within this progression. Keats alludes to the classical evolution of divine powers in many of his poems, including his use of the Hesiodesque Titanomachy within *Hyperion* and his description of the late establishment of Psyche as a goddess in "Ode to Psyche." Similarly, Keats describes the development of mankind's understanding of morality within his "Grand March of Intellect," and many of his later poems emphasize how progress and evolution are common to all things. Keats's belief in a universal progression made him anxious over his development as a poet and over his poetic worth, which is revealed in the narrator's confrontation with Apollo in Keats's early poem "Hymn to Apollo." Within this pivotal poem, the narrator seeks out punishment for his donning of laurels before he had composed a poem worthy of such an honor. The poem is based on an actual event, which blurs the line between poet and narrator, and Keats recognizes that he had not yet earned the poetic glory he so desperately craved. The ramifications of his despair that he is unworthy will be further discussed in Chapter 3. However, hints to Keats's understanding of what it means to be a poet are found within two of his earlier poems, "Ode to Apollo" and "I Stood tiptoe," and are discussed later in this chapter.

Throughout Keats's poetry, Apollo the character serves as a tentative framework for Keats to explore how poets are inspired to create art after they are provided with a glimpse of spiritual truth. In his early poems, the relationship of the individual to the universe, to Apollo, and to the art of poetry are described in terms that are similar to the language that characterizes Keats's later
theories of personal, historical, and cosmic progress. Chapter 2 will focus on how Keats's juvenile poems demonstrate his early understanding of the poet's place within the universe, Apollo's role as god of poets, and Keats's belief that great poets progress from composing pastorals to composing heroic poetry. While a humble attitude, as demonstrated in "Hymn to Apollo," does show obeisance to the divine, the actual object of Keats's reverence can only be explained through examining Keats's source material for his version of Apollo. Thus, Keats's sources should be analyzed to determine how they may have influenced his understanding of Greco-Roman myth. These background sources provide clues to the symbolic meaning behind many of Keats's poems, and this chapter will first analyze his sources before tracing how the image of Apollo develops throughout Keats's juvenile poems. While relying on Keats's sources to form my understanding of his poetry, I will compare my own readings of Keats's early poems with those of Walter Evert, the only critic who describes how Apollo is related to an objective, spiritual presence within nature.

Keats scholars often ignore Keats's earliest poems because of the poems' perceived lack of quality and achievement. Many of Keats's juvenile poems are bad imitations, contain sloppy rhymes, or rely on images that lack the complexity found within the metaphors of his mature poems. However, two critics, Walter Evert and Jeffrey Cox, rely on the early poems not as proof of Keats's poetic ability but as examples of Keats's imagery from the beginning of his career. Cox's focus is on the "Cockney School" set of images that Keats borrowed from Leigh Hunt and his circle, which depict an almost libertine view of sexuality. As Cox explains, "While the Hunt circle's engagement with myth is sometimes dismissed as a kind of aesthetic rococo embellishment, they too found in paganism an ideology of sexual liberation."58 If a reader

assumes that Keats was beholden to Hunt for his moral and political philosophy, then Cox's comparison of Keats's and Hunt's poems provides strong evidence that Keats also viewed pleasure as the solution to humanity's social and political problems. In such a view, mythology is only a means to identify a poem as harkening back to the libertine ways of a past culture and to describe the current social system as a deviation from previous cultural norms that have hindered society. However, Evert takes a different approach and analyzes Keats's early poems as part of a greater, personal philosophy that was developed throughout his career. Evert's analysis of Apollo as a central theme to many of Keats's poems considers a generic view of the Greco-Roman deity without relying on a specific source, emphasizing Apollo "as god of song and poetry" and his connection to "the process of intellectual ripening." The early poems establish a closed system of Apollonian imagery that is developed to suit Keats's needs. Particularly, Evert focuses on the images surrounding Keats's early use of Apollo to define an aesthetic that characterizes Keats's later ideas on poetry and the "grand march of intellect." Although both critics provide important insights into Keats's early poems, they fail to discuss the mythological sources for the topics of Keats's early poems or explain how he abruptly transforms Apollo into a Christ-like figure in his later works.

Keats lacked a classical education that would have taught him Greek; the extent of his primary knowledge and experience with classical myth came from Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary*, a popular 18th-century dictionary, and from two mythographic compilations, Tooke's *Pantheon* and Spence's *Polymetis*. All three of these texts cite individual classical myths, although not in their original form, and Keats had access to many of these myths through translated versions of Hesiod, Homer, and Ovid later in life. Charles Cowden Clark, who knew

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Keats as a schoolboy from Clark's position as his educator, recalls Keats having four major sources of mythology interpretation during his school years. The four sources are the three mythographies previously named and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Because Keats was not versed in Greek, as many of his contemporaries were, his only early exposure to Greco-Roman mythology was through these sources, which are, except for Virgil, English texts that had been filtered through centuries of Christianity and intellectual revolutions. Keats's lack of Greek was well-known and prompted Byron's sneering comment in a letter to John Murray, "I think he took the wrong line as a poet… versifying Tooke's Pantheon and Lemprière's Dictionary." Byron's claims influenced later generations of readers and critics, and most modern critics ignore the full extent of Keats's mythological background.

Keats was exposed first-hand to Virgil and Roman mythology through his knowledge of Latin, giving him valuable insights that the mythographic books never could. According to Charles Cowden Clark, Keats translated parts of the *Aeneid* as a school requirement and later finished the translation during his free time. Although no copy of Keats's translation remains, a translation of Virgil would represent Keats's primary direct experience with mythology in a classical context, and Virgil's interpretation of Roman gods, especially Apollo, is both different from and more comprehensive than the interpretation of Apollo presented in Keats's other sources. Highlighting Virgil's use of mythology redefines Keats's knowledge, removing him from a strictly 18th-century intellectual context that looks down on mythology and classical tradition as an old and dead pre-Christian system. The addition of Virgil as one of Keats's sources allows a reader to see in detail how Keats could have understood the original conceptions of the classical

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63 Bate p. 26
deities in a manner that secondary descriptions of myth cannot provide.

Mythological characters and allusions to mythology appear more consistently throughout Keats's poetic career than any other subject or theme. I have found that most critics who analyze Keats's use of classical mythology, especially Cox and Evert, fail to examine Keats's early poems in the context of his mythological sources. Evert ignores Keats's source material, and it is not clear why he chooses to do so. Instead, Evert relies on a generic understanding of Apollo. Cox does focus on Keats's understanding of mythology but attributes Leigh Hunt as Keats's classical source. In particular, Cox argues that Keats's reliance on mythology serves only as a metaphor for a Huntian pleasure-promoting system of poetics. However, Cox fails to consider if Keats's choice of mythological stories and characters adds layers of irony or ambiguity to his early pastoral poems, especially in "I Stood Tip-Toe." Cox assumes a dichotomy exists in Keats's mind between narcissistic poetry, as characterized by Wordsworth's poems on the self, and socially liberating poetry, as characterized by Hunt's poems on pleasure and sexual liberation as a way to effect social revolution. Cox then relies on Keats's February 3, 1818 letter to Reynolds, where Keats condemns the egotistical sublime of Wordsworth's *Excursion*, to verify that Keats's poetry contains a philosophical belief system derived from Hunt and favors the "poet of pleasure" in "I Stood Tip-Toe." Ultimately, Cox declares that the description of Cupid and Psyche "is close to the Hunt of 'Hero and Leander' and 'Bacchus and Ariadne' in its embrace of the 'cult of sexuality'" and "is simply presented as an opportunity to celebrate their erotic union." Cox's argument attributes a political agenda to Keats's poetry, and, Cox claims that "Ode to Psyche" contains "the central myth behind Keats's commitment to the cult of sexuality and to a rejuvenated sense of social man" that "turns out from the self to engage the world in love.

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64 Cox pp. 114-116
65 Cox p. 118
producing pleasure." However, there is little evidence that this pursuit of pleasure is not narcissistic. The only difference between the Wordsworthian and the Huntian philosophies, in Cox's argument, is the desire for personal, intellectual pleasure derived from understanding nature in the former and the desire for personal, physical pleasure derived from sexual freedom in the latter. If Cox had focused more on how Keats relies on and deviates from myth, then he would have realized that "I stood tip-tie," along with other uses of myth within Keats's poetry, is more concerned with mankind's relationship with the divine as revealed through descriptions of the poetic process and the creation of myth.

Cox is correct to link Keats's early mythological scenes to Hunt and the "Cockney School" because there are many similarities in the subject material that the poets share, especially with their reliance on Greco-Roman myth. This does not mean that Hunt was Keats's primary source for an understanding of mythology or that Keats was limited by a Huntian understanding of mythology. Instead, it is possible that the similarities between both poets are the result of their mutual reliance on the same source material. As Ayumi Mizukoshi points out, "By the early nineteenth century, even undereducated clerks and young apprentices could easily become acquainted with the Greek myths by thumbing through such mythological handbooks" that Keats and the others had available to them. Keats, Hunt, and many like them were "self-taught classicists," different from those academics who had a traditional background in literature. It is possible that similarities between Keats's poems and Hunt's poems are not proof that Keats was following Hunt's views on pleasure but that the two poets merely shared source material and a common use of diction. Robert Gittings points out that Calidore, a poem composed a month before Keats was inspired to write "I Stood Tip-Toe," has many connections to Hunt but is also

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66 Cox p. 119
similar to passages from Spenser in addition to descriptions of nature that are "Keats's own, the climate of many more mature poems than [Calidore]." Calidore was abandoned with a few lines transformed into a sonnet, and that sonnet, discussing nature, was one of many "offshoots" of "I Stood Tip-Toe," on which Keats was "brooding." Furthermore, Gittings points out that the premise of "I Stood Tip-Toe" is Wordsworthian by describing "the internal drama of the progress of his own poet's mind" that relied on "The Wordsworthian transition, from his own feelings to the apparent mood of nature objects and then back again... This form left him free from the temptations of Huntian dialogue and bathos, and in all the sixty lines there are only two Rimini phrases."

By analyzing Keats's original sources and how he incorporates or deviates from them, this chapter provides an alternative to Cox's claim that Keats was fully aligned with the "Cockney School." It is likely that Keats had his own agenda or reasons for creating poetry beyond promoting the benefits of sexual pleasure to the self or to mankind, but such an argument can only be made plausible by finding an alternative source of influence that was not connected to Leigh Hunt. The three mythographies Keats owned would have provided him with a concept of classical mythology transfused through hundreds of years of thought and intellectual revolutions and finally transformed during the 18th century into a deistic system. In Polymetis, Keats's most complex mythographic source, the Roman gods were depicted like saints or apparitions of Mary: metaphorical and approximate references to a single divine principle of order in the universe. Keats's one major direct source for classical mythology, Virgil's Aeneid, shows how this divine principle of order, in its many specific forms, can be sufficiently

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69 Gittings p. 69
70 Gittings pp. 70-71
understood and acted on by a human hero to found a civilization mandated and supported by the gods.

When describing the divine principle of order within the universe, it is likely that the *Aeneid* played a major role in Keats's choice of the god Apollo to represent the most complete and ideal concept humans can grasp of universal truth and beauty, while Jupiter, Apollo's father, represents the principles of justice and rule. Apollo is the source of an objective principle of Truth in the universe and is the oracular means by which the poet and dreamer can create art based on access to such truth. Although Jupiter may be the underlying principle of cosmic justice and order who decrees that the Trojans will find a new homeland, it is Apollo through whom Aeneas actually comprehends what this principle means in relation to his own actions and his obligation to his people. Apollo's role as a guide in the *Aeneid* resonates throughout Keats's poetry, as many scenes directly correspond to the interactions between Apollo and Aeneas. For example, in Book VI of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas is lead by Apollo's Sybil into the underworld as part of Aeneas's question for a greater understanding of his destiny. Although ignored by critics, Virgil's description of the Sybil is the most likely source for the poet's initiation in Keats's *The Fall of Hyperion* because both Keats's poet and Aeneas suffer a symbolic death in pursuit of a vision that will allow them to fulfill their duty as guides to society. Virgil could have presented Keats with the idea that the classical gods can be used to discuss spiritual forces in the universe as an alternative to dogmatic Christianity. On the contrary, Keats could have believed that Virgil's *Eclogues* predicted the coming of Christ, a view held by many Christian poets. By applying the *Eclogues's* messianic prophecy to the *Aeneid*, the system of gods replacing gods ultimately ends in Christianity replacing Greco-Roman mythology, and Aeneas's founding of Rome would not only bring about the glory of the Roman Empire but a future reign of Christianity.
Although the *Aeneid* likely influenced Keats's understanding of Greco-Roman mythology more than any other source, Virgil's epic poem is rarely mentioned in Keats's letters or in discussions of his life by his friends. Without any definitive statements on the subject, it is difficult to analyze Keats's possible interpretation of the *Aeneid*. Fortunately, the three mythographies available during his school years can be used to provide clues to his understanding of the *Aeneid* and Greco-Roman myth.

The most accessible and least conceptually complex of Keats's mythographic texts, Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary*, works as a lexicon of Greek and Roman names and important locations, providing the student of classical languages with a comprehensive guide to figures of mythology and classical history. Lemprière is straightforward about his description of mythology and his intent in the preface:

> It has been the wish of the Author to give the most accurate and satisfactory account of all the proper names which occur in reading the classics, and by a judicious collection of anecdotes and historical facts to draw a picture of ancient times, not less instructive than entertaining.\(^{71}\)

Lemprière's interests lie in background information about classical civilization and not in exploring what certain customs or deities symbolically represent, so the pages lack details beyond a literal description of famous tales and events. Such an approach allows for misconstrued interpretations and symbolic deviations from the primary author's intent in mythological works because this approach ignores the tone and portrayal of the original stories. However, the text compiles research on mythology, using many different sources for the origin of the stories that the author cites. In citing the multiple sources per entry, Lemprière often provides many important variations and contradictions in the characterization of classical characters and

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gods, which allows a reader to separate different characteristics or aspects of figures according to their sources. Lemprière intended that the *Dictionary* serve as a collection of short descriptions of myths and factual information rather than interpretations of classical texts. Although the work conveys the general scheme of events between gods and mortals in classical mythology, Lemprière does little to discuss the significance of individual myths or characters to their original audience, and a reader of the *Dictionary* would find it difficult to determine the canonical interpretation of a particular myth.

Individual mythological entries itemized in the *Classical Dictionary* combine many different accounts into one comprehensive description, citing the individual sources but not giving preferential treatment to any particular interpretation. While it is noble to discuss a topic without bias, Lemprière's technique has limited use for a novice in the field, because a reader is unable to discern the significance of a character or event to the original audience. There is no distinction between Homer's, Aeschylus's, and Virgil's versions of what Apollo represented in their individual works, nor is it possible to determine the god's relative importance and relationship among the rest of the Greco-Roman pantheon. Additionally, the *Dictionary* relies on sources connected to religious worship but fails to discuss the gods beyond an indifferent, historical perspective. For example, Apollo's lineage is stated factually, along with all of Apollo's names, mythological references, and the different entities/individuals who share his name.\(^\text{72}\)

Apollo, like the other gods, is anthropomorphized, and his entry is biographical. He is described in the same terms as a historical figure, which can lead the reader to interpret the gods as literal and secularized beings. This limits a reader's ability to understand any metaphorical or spiritual interpretation that would be held by a Greco-Roman audience. In the occasional moment

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\(^{72}\) Lemprière p. 76-77
Lemprière attributes temples or statues to various gods, or in portrayals of the gods' interactions with humans, the *Dictionary* provides only a secularized description of events. This leaves the reader without an understanding of the Greco-Roman gods' spiritual power or the sense that the gods were ever considered divine. The *Dictionary* reflects the fact that, after 1700 years, Greek and Roman heroes and culture may have been taken seriously, but the complexities of their religion had long been suppressed beneath Christianity. It is probable that a poet wishing to describe an Apollo based only on Lemprière's depiction would create a character who would be alien to a Greco-Roman audience.

Tooke's *Pantheon*, a translation of the French *Pantheum Mysticum*, does offer an interpretation of what the gods represent. However, it overtly interprets mythology through the lens of Christian philosophy and claims that classical gods were simply false idols. Like the *Classical Dictionary*, the *Pantheon* functions as an educational text for students to use when identifying classical figures who resonated with Europe's Enlightenment culture. Tooke's work differs from the *Dictionary* in acknowledging that myth implies some interpretation of the cosmos, and his preface attempts to explain to the reader the idolatrous nature of myth by comparing the Greco-Roman gods to the truth of Christianity. Tooke claims that the myths come from "the extreme folly, and vain glory of men, who have denied to Him who is the inexhausted fountain of all good, the honours which they have attributed to muddy streams." As an English Protestant, Keats would likely have been taught that mythology lacks spiritual truth, and Tooke exhibits many of the prejudices that were common in early 19th-century England. To undermine any legitimacy that myth may once have had as honest religious belief, Tooke argues that mythology originates in the Greco-Roman people's desire to create a fictitious history that would

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73 Tooke p. 16
glorify their origins. Going further, Tooke claims that Greco-Roman mythology has no real implication for the good Christian because mythology collects idolatrous practices that would lead one away from the true faith. This idolatry, according to Tooke's preface, inspired him to work on the Pantheon because "the ancient Romans, who were so superior in arms, in arts, in eloquence, and in almost everything that can adorn human nature, were plunged into the grossest idolatry."\textsuperscript{74} The mythological texts and stories, in so far as they represent the religion of Rome, were a bane that Tooke believes to have corrupted the civilization.

Although any belief in the gods as spiritual concepts is idolatrous, Tooke considers Greco-Roman deities as a metaphor for the secular aspects of the universe that influence the daily lives of mortals. In the actual text of the Pantheon, he divides the gods into categories based on their symbolic characteristics, providing a level of insight into mythological symbolism that Lemprière fails to provide. Tooke attempts to provide the reader with the Greco-Roman interpretation of the myths, explaining many variations of myth and how each variation symbolizes an aspect of the particular god. For example, Tooke describes Apollo in terms of iconographic interpretation, devoting much of the entry to how Apollo is normally depicted and what each item of clothing or accessory represents in terms of heavenly harmony, "health and safety" and "authority in hell."\textsuperscript{75} To Tooke, Apollo represents "the invention of physic, music, poetry and rhetoric," his rule over the Muses, and the arts of "foretelling events, and shooting with arrows," and "when therefore he had benefited mankind infinitely by these favours, they worshipped him as a god."\textsuperscript{76} Even though Tooke portrays the interactions between the Greco-Roman gods and mortals as idolatrous and immoral, he acknowledges the relationship in a

\textsuperscript{74} Tooke p. 19
\textsuperscript{75} Tooke p. 39
\textsuperscript{76} Tooke p. 41
manner that allows a discerning reader to pull from the text a sense of what classical mythology meant to the Greco-Roman audience without the constraint of Christian understanding. However, there is no description of actual worship or religious rite in the *Pantheon*; Tooke only emphasizes *Metamorphoses* inspired interactions between the gods. Many of the stories are traditional retellings similar to Lemprière's text; key insights are made into culture and metaphorical meaning behind mythology. Although the religious aspects are dismissed as being idolatrous, which deviates from an objective understanding of the intellectual possibilities of mythology, Tooke's text would have allowed Keats to gain a sense that this mythological system has the potential to represent a credible, complex system of understanding the universe.

It is significant that Byron fails to mention Keats's third source, Spence's *Polymetis*, because this is the most intellectually sophisticated of the mythographies. *Polymetis* provides a unique perspective on mythological texts by analyzing Roman mythology in terms of a deistic system in which artists rely on iconography to express how the universe functions and how humans interact with the divine. One of the key concerns among 18th-century readers of the work is that Spence ignores Greek mythology, but, as Timothy Webb explains, "the first extract reveals that this weighting was deliberate; Spence is not concerned with those Greek deities who were not 'naturalized in Rome', just as he excludes the gods of the underworld from the calm precincts of the garden in which Polymetis is set." 77 Another concern, as Webb continues, is that "Spence was misled by the Horatian adage *ut pictura poesis* into the false assumption that there was little essential difference between the modes of poetry and plastic arts." 78 This is an important distinction because, as Webb points out, "Keats certainly made use of Polymetis and it may have encouraged him to conceive his mythological scenes in terms which were influenced...

78 Webb p. 81
by painting and sculpture.”\textsuperscript{79} It is possible that Keats relied heavily on \textit{Polymetis} for not only its substance but also for its style.

In \textit{Polymetis}, the classical gods are not anthropomorphic beings or a plenitude of pagan individual creations. Instead, they are all rooted in one god

where according to their own notion, there was no manner of difference in the [gods]. The thinking part of them believed that there was but one great Being, that made, and preserved, and actuated all things: which is just as much as to say that they believed there was but one God, in our sense of the word.\textsuperscript{80}

This interpretation of the Greco-Roman gods undermines the dismissal of myth as heretical and pagan by those like Tooke, and Spence provides an argument that Roman mythology is relevant to the 18th-century readers. Although the various gods were inherently part of one greater divinity, the individual members of the Greco-Roman pantheon served as ideals of human achievement. The creators of myth, the artists, are described by the character Polymetis as the ethical backbone of Roman civilization. In Dialogues Two and Three, the importance of Roman art correlated to the importance and greatness of the Roman civilization, and the qualities of Roman art reflected the quality of the society. \textit{Polymetis} claims that the poets, for instance, were able to write their best poetry when Rome was at the height of its power, and Virgil's poetry was used to enhance the might of the first two Caesars.\textsuperscript{81} Additionally, Virgil's works reflect the virtues of the empire, and his use of religion and the gods represents how the Romans sought to embody the ideals of the Greco-Roman gods. In a more specific example the work, Spence describes in Dialogue 8 how Augustus pretended to be Apollo.\textsuperscript{82} The Romans saw the gods not only as objective forces in the universe but as representing ideal attributes and traits that are

\textsuperscript{79} Webb p. 81
\textsuperscript{80} Spence p. 47
\textsuperscript{81} Spence p. 18
\textsuperscript{82} Spence p. 86
directly linked to both personal and political greatness.

In Dialogue Eight, Spence emphasizes that the Greco-Roman Apollo is an objective, superhuman ideal of beauty and grace, more than just representation of human virtues. When compared to the beauty of Venus and the strength of Hercules, embodiments of the Greco-Roman ideal of physical beauty and strength, the statue of Apollo "gives us an idea of something above human; more strongly than any figure among the great numbers that remain to us." The character Polymetis explains, "whereas the rest [of the gods] excel only in things that are common to men; this statue may… claim the preference, even in this distinguished class of the best remains of all antiquity." Apollo is not only a god, but also an ideal that can only be formed in humans with morals as well as physical beauty:

It is remarkable, by the way, that the Roman poets, when they are speaking of the softer beauties or fine air of any prince, or hero, generally compare them to one or other of these three gods; and oftner to Apollo, than to either of the other.85

The works of Roman poets contrast Apollo's appearance with those of the physically "inferior" Mercury and the "effeminate" Bacchus, who, in a similar way to Hercules and Venus, represent only physical characteristics. The character Polymetis argues that "this most usual compliment of [the poets] is a very high one; for indeed nothing can be conceived finer than the face of Apollo." Apollo represents beauty through a "certain brightness beaming from his eyes" that reinforces his "illumination." That illumination is "something like a divine irradiation" not found in the statues or images of any other god. Apollo, as crafted by man, represents something beyond a physical ideal, and that "illumination" is a sublime characteristic that hints at

83 Spence p. 83
84 Spence p. 83
85 Spence p. 83
86 Spence p. 83
87 Spence p. 85
88 Spence p. 86
spiritual beauty. Another aspect of Apollo described in Polymetis is the god's role in poetry and as head of the Muses, which serves as a bridge between the physical and spiritual world. The poets, inspired by Apollo, describe his "illumination" because they long to share in the divine light. Apollo's role in oracles and prophecy is ignored by Spence; the oracles are supplanted by artists and poets that serve to connect their audiences to the divine.

In Keats's three mythographic sources, one text organizes mythology through an academic approach and logs individual stories, another examines mythology through the filter of 18th-century Christianity, and the last examines the importance of the mythology to Roman artists. All three texts provide a unique portrayal of myth, and each work adds to the possible insights Keats may have had. All three are indirect connections to the original works of classical mythology, but refer to specific passages and ideas that Keats could examine later when he was provided greater access to the original mythological works, including those of Homer (through George Chapman) and Ovid (through George Sandys). Regardless of his lack of understanding the Greek language, Keats did have experience with the classics, even though the myths may have been filtered through second-hand accounts and years of cultural tradition imposing anachronistic values upon the myths. These three mythographic works, however, are only a portion of Keats's early sources and served as a starting point in his exploration of mythology, and critics have failed to account for the possible impact the Aeneid had upon his early poetry.

The Latin Aeneid is a preeminent source of direct exposure to how a classical poet depicts the Greco-Roman gods and religion. Although Keats's use of mythographies is well-known, Keats's lost translation of Virgil is an overlooked but essential source for his understanding of classical mythology. Keats's translation of the Aeneid was a fundamental component of his education, and any discussion of Keats's poetry is incomplete without acknowledging Virgil's
potential influence. The Polymetis pays particular attention to Virgil's status among poets: "[Virgil's] Aeneid must be the sacred writ in this sort of enquiries. His taste, and judgment, and exactness, give him this pre-eminence over all the poets of the happy age he lived in."\(^{89}\) Furthermore, the Aeneid, with its strong emphasis on Apollo's interaction with mankind, appears as a likely model for Keats's version of Apollo and how the poetic narrators of his later works attempt to serve the god.

The absence of Keats's translation of Virgil limits any discussion of Virgil's influence on Keats's poetry to general terms. Keats's translation of the epic, during his schoolboy years, would have revealed aspects of Greco-Roman myth that are lacking in the works of Lemprière, Tooke, and Spence. Similarly, the mythographies, with particular emphasis on Spence's Polymetis, can serve to reveal aspects of Keats's interpretation of the Aeneid. Charles Cowden Clarke recounts that Keats was devoted to translating works of French and Latin as part of his desire to win school prizes, and Keats devoted much of his efforts to the Aeneid. The mythographies aided Keats in his translating of the Aeneid, and Robert Gittings emphasizes this point when he says, "the needs of classical translation led [Keats] to classical reference books in which the Greek myths took their place among their Latin cousins."\(^{90}\) If the mythographies possibly served to help Keats translate the epic, then commentary on Virgil within the mythographies could provide clues to how Keats interpreted the poem.

Virgil is held by Keats's sources as both the master of Latin poetry and the preserver of Roman religious tradition. Lemprière acknowledges Virgil's reputation as "the prince of the Latin poets" before he claims, "In the works of Virgil we can find a more perfect and satisfactory account of the religious ceremonies and customs of the Romans, than in all the other Latin poets,\(^{89,90}\)
Ovid excepted.\textsuperscript{91} Virgil and the \textit{Aeneid} play an important role in \textit{Polymetis}, and Spence makes similar claims to those of Lemprière when he argues that the poem "preserves more to us of the religion of the Romans, than all the other Latin poets (excepting only Ovid) put together."\textsuperscript{92} Additionally, Spence claims that Apollo exemplified an ideal of beauty that was of primary importance to classical poets, and that poets would seek to imitate Apollo to the point of dressing as the god.\textsuperscript{93} Virgil's depiction of Apollo and Apollo's interaction with mankind could be used to establish a system of virtues and values essential for a poet wishing to imitate the Roman religion.

Virgil's purpose in writing the \textit{Aeneid} is unique among the classical poets, especially those of the epic tradition, with his emphasis on a divine destiny and virtuous ways of living. Not only is Virgil describing a heroic journey, he also tells the story of the Trojan people in their quest to recreate their civilization and lay the foundation for the glorious Roman Empire.

Lemprière explains further: "\textit{Aeneid} was begun, as some suppose, at the particular request of Augustus, and the poet, while he attempted to prove that the Julian family was lineally descended from the founder of Lavinium, visibly described in the pious and benevolent character of his hero, the amiable qualities of his imperial patron."\textsuperscript{94} By connecting Augustus to Aeneas, the virtues described within the poem become the virtues embodied by the emperor. Similarly, the virtues that characterize the Trojan people are those of the Romans, and Virgil places great emphasis on the need for Roman citizens to selflessly dedicate themselves to a greater national cause. The cause, as the \textit{Aeneid} reveals, can only be achieved through virtuous actions and following a way of life that was ordained by the gods. As Spence claims, "Virgil in his Aeneid

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{91} Lemprière pp. 814, 816
\item \textsuperscript{92} Spence p. 20
\item \textsuperscript{93} Spence pp. 87-88, 92-93
\item \textsuperscript{94} Lemprière p. 815
\end{itemize}
shews that Aeneas was called into their country by the express order of the gods" and "he was made king of [Latium] by the will of heaven; and by all the human rights that could be." The *Aeneid* is not only an epic but also a guide on how to attain the Roman ideal through following the guidance provided by Apollo.

Virgil frequently alludes to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to contrast Aeneas's fate with Achilleus's fate and the Trojans' journey with Odysseus's journey. Virgil's argument is that a virtuous man, who puts the gods and his fellow citizens before himself, can avoid both individual and cultural tragedy. Aeneas is characterized as pious, or *pius Aeneas*, throughout the story due to his faithful dedication to preserving the Trojan people, to honoring the penates, and to helping others at the cost of his independence or self gain. Aeneas is not Achilleus, a seeker of a personal justice and glory whom Homer describes as "doomed and ruinous." Neither is Aeneas like Odysseus, who shares in the desecration of the gods at Troy and is punished to wander the Mediterranean far from his homeland. The Greek heroes, while great and legendary, cannot avoid corruption because their personal hybris prevents them from devoting their life to a cause that is greater than material benefit or personal glory. Furthermore, Achilleus and Odysseus are not virtuous characters in the Roman sense because they do little to benefit their fellow man, and they, like the other Greek leaders, are responsible for the deaths of thousands during the ten years of fighting the Trojans. Virgil, unlike Homer, creates a model human that strives for cultural greatness by describing how Aeneas makes sure to save his household gods along with his friends and family from Troy, abandons his love Dido to find a home for his people, and even descends into the underworld in search of truth. In Virgil's epic, a hero is one that, through staying virtuous, embodies the will to achieve something greater than personal fame.

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95 Spence p. 20
It is in Virgil's use of Apollo that an altruistic and feasible human ideal is most effectively represented. Although Jupiter represents the underlying order that sanctions the Trojans' destiny to recreate their civilization, it is Apollo who guides Aeneas on his journey to become a hero that can fulfill such a task. In a dream vision, Aeneas is tasked with descending into the underworld to meet with his father and learn of Rome's future glory. He travels to the Sibyl, the priestess of Apollo who guards the entrance to Erebus. After Aeneas arrives, Apollo possesses the Sibyl, which is described as a heavy burden, and commands Aeneas to show obeisance. This command is an example of Apollo interacting with Aeneas, and the god is capable of direct interaction with humanity through the possession of his servants. The possession is similar to an experience of inspiration or revelation, and the Sibyl, like an Old Testament prophet, provides a message for the benefit of the people. The Sibyl orders Aeneas to purify his people and himself, through ceremony and sacrifice, before he can be allowed to venture into Erebus and be provided with divine knowledge. Symbolically, Aeneas can only reach his father and gain the knowledge and truth he seeks if he is of virtuous character. Thus, the moment of direct interaction between Apollo and Aeneas represents the great responsibility of truth and knowledge. In suffering like Aeneas when attempting to guide others, the devoted follower of Apollo attains an ideal way of life and transcends the traditional fate of tragic destruction of a classical hero.

Aeneas, embodying the Roman ideals of patriotic self-sacrifice, becomes a model for Keats on his quest to becoming a poet. Unlike the three mythographic texts, Virgil directly exposes Keats to the Roman religious belief and its emphasis on virtuous living and patriotic duty. In worshiping and praising Apollo, an Apollonian follower receives Apollo's truth in the form of guidance towards a divine ideal that combines virtue, knowledge, and beauty. Virgil's

96 Virgil. Book VI, lines 35-75
97 Virgil. Book VI, lines 120-160
emphasis on Apollo and the glory that results from a virtuous life is an influence on Keats that is overlooked by Byron and others when they tried to discredit or ignore Keats's mythological sources.

Each of the four major sources discussed has its own interpretation or depiction of Apollo as a deity and how men, either as readers or characters, should interact with him. The most thorough study of Keats's use of Apollo, Walter Evert's analysis of aesthetic imagery related to the sun god found throughout Keats's poems, is fundamental to understanding how images from a substantial portion of Keats's poetry developed over time. Evert goes so far as to devote an entire chapter to how Apollo represents a parallel principle of maturing in nature and in the human creativity, with emphasis on Apollo's role in the making of poetry. Although I agree with Evert that Keats uses Apollo to represent an objective ideal existing in both nature and in human mind, Evert ignores Keats's four mythological sources, and he only describes the representation of Apollo in terms of isolated pieces of harvest imagery scattered throughout Keats's work. Evert does emphasize the importance of Keats's early poems in identifying the imagery that fully developed in later works, but he identifies the early poems as incomplete works that have not captured the Apollonian image. Evert's interpretation of Keats's Apollo does not consider traditional uses of mythology, and he risks identifying the character Apollo as a creation of Keats's imagination.

Evert's focus in *Aesthetic and Myth in the Poems of Keats* is not on classical mythology, or specific texts that Keats used to form his concept of Apollo, but on the analysis of Keats's word choice and on how Keats's language establishes the character of Apollo. To Evert, Apollo is an external, masculine presence in the universe that represents the cycle of nature and of the harvest through his role as sun god. Regarding poetry, Apollo is the force that allows Keats to
mature as a poet, and great poems are the symbolic crop that is harvested. Thus, Apollo embodies a force of external development that becomes the subject matter of great poetry and serves an internal force that helps the poet discover truth and develop the skill to most adequately represent Apollo's truth. Most critics ignore those early poems because the "misleading factor in assessing Keats's intellectual development is the superb rhetoric, or diction, of the later poems."98 Too many critics have ignored the early stages of development because the poems, as he quotes Keats, "had been 'dash'd off... in a hurry'."99 Evert reveals that the early poems are essential in understanding the later poems in that they allow a critic to follow Keats's poetic development and experimentation with language.

Like Evert, I identify Apollo in Keats's early poem "Ode to Apollo" as an objective presence that manifests itself to the passive narrator through nature and the works of great poets. Unlike Evert, I argue further that in subsequent poems, such as "I Stood Tip-Toe" and "Sleep and Poetry," Keats is struggling to determine how he can interact with this force more directly while incorporating ideas from his mythological sources. The narrator of each poem discovers that he needs more in life than natural sensations and pleasure, and he seeks the appropriate subject matter that would allow him to unite with Apollo and his truth. In these two poems, Keats struggles to describe how Apollo represents the sum total of positive and negative experiences such as those of Psyche with Cupid, Narcissus with Echo, Syrinx with Pan, and Endymion with Cynthia. All are encounters through nature with some higher presence which imply some truths about how humans should interact appropriately with the divine. These encounters are developed further in "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." Discussed in the third chapter, "Chapman's Homer" provides additional insight into what Apollo represents to Keats; the metaphors of

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98 Evert p. 26
99 Evert p. 28
scientific and geographical discovery imply that beauty is a quality of celestial cycles and of the physical universe. Thus, the narrator's quest for universal truth and an understanding of the inherent objective order that Apollo represents ultimately fills the narrator with the awe that comes from realizing the overwhelming power of truth and beauty.

Some of Keats's early poems show his budding recognition of Apollo as a figure linked to poetic achievement and his reliance on Apollo when discussing the purpose and intent of poetry. The first important poem where Keats recognizes the greatness of Apollo and his presence in nature is "Ode to Apollo." Evert emphasizes that each master poet in the ode "is supreme for composition in his own kind, but none is universal" before claiming that "the song of each is a partial representation, a facet merely, of the total beauty that poetry comprehends" and "the whole beauty of poetry is possible only to its god." 100 Thus, Keats has established the primary role of Apollo as the master of the poets, and Apollo's own song comes "not directly as from an anthropomorphic being, but in all the natural sounds of earth, mingled and combined" emphasizing his greater role in nature. 101 It is in "Ode to Apollo" that "[Keats] did not merely accept Apollo as the nominal god of poetry... But rather that he made the god functionally representative of his own experience and reflection." 102 If Evert is correct, the personalized understanding of Apollo that is evident in "Ode to Apollo," while motivating the poet towards the correct poetic path, is inadequate for expressing the god's full meaning to humanity. "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" marks the transition of Keats's poetry from focusing on the self to focusing on the political and historic by linking poetry, and Apollo, to the Age of Exploration. Evert points out that Keats's emphasis on "western" and "gold" imagery in "Chapman's Homer"
connects the poet's search for the Apollonian to the conquistador's search for new land and conquests, and both are motivated by their desire to follow the divine will. This "advance in Keats's poetic maturity" establishes that "the power of the poets is inferior to and dependent upon that of Apollo" as in "Ode to Apollo," but Keats "succeeded in translating his private symbolism into the more public historical metaphor of the gold-seeking conquistador."\footnote{Evert pp. 43, 44-45} As Keats realizes Apollo's greater role in motivating the poet towards maturation, he comes closer to achieving his poetic maturation.

Keats expands Apollo's role from representation of the sun to a figure of the harvest that presides over all types of development and maturation. Upon realizing that the god of poetry and virtue is also the god of leading all of nature towards maturation, a poet can finally achieve the mastery over his craft by joining with Apollo through writing poetry that guides others towards maturation. As Keats's poetic development progresses, the image of nature becomes "the metaphor of poetry as harvested grain, but a harvest that depends upon the grain's being 'full-ripen'd' in the course of the poet's sufficiently long life."\footnote{Evert p. 74} This growth, as Evert continues, "consolidates the two spheres of Apollo's 'ripening' influence." To Evert, Endymion becomes one of many attempts for Keats in attaining the "harvested grain," as were Hyperion and the Odes. It was not until after these attempts to reach poetic maturity, as Evert claims, that Keats writes "To Autumn" and "achieved a resolution in practice of the problems he had been unable to reconcile in theory."\footnote{Evert p. 297} Apollo in "To Autumn," as Evert continues, has no visible image but is "kept out of sight" and seen "entirely in terms of his beneficent effects." This leads Evert to conclude that Keats finally wrote "the only perfect poem," a poem that shows how he was finally able to
understand that Apollo was not just a process but the best subject matter to explain that process. Thus, Evert's argument is that Keats's poem incorporates the process that brought him from his early stages of recognition to his final moments of poetic maturation.

In opposition to Evert, I feel that Keats does not place emphasis in his poetry on his personal development as a poet but on what he believed was the traditional development of poets that pursue the Apollonian ideal. Keats did not desire to improve as a poet for monetary gain or recognition, and any hint at those feelings were quickly overcome following the events surrounding the composition of "Hymn to Apollo." Instead, he worked at his craft so that he could better praise the divine forces represented by Apollo and to guide others towards a better way of life. Unlike what some critics may suggest, Keats does not transform Apollo into a character that serves as a stand-in for himself; the Apollo of Keats's poems incorporates traits and attributes derived from Keats's early understanding of what the god represents. Keats derives Apollo and the Apollonian ideal from classical belief-systems where Apollo represents a concept of truth and beauty built into the structure of the universe, and Keats incorporates Apollo into the greater framework of his poetry. Even when the character of Apollo does not appear in a physical form, what Apollo represents is used as a backdrop for the portrayal of mythological relationships between lovers that appears in many of Keats's poems. Even in the early poems, Apollo's status as a god of virtue and dedication to humanity establishes a framework in which to interpret the relationships of Psyche, Syrinx, Narcissus, and Endymion. Humans, as Keats's early poems suggest, can interact with the universe as a lover does, but this sort of relationship requires sacrifice of the desire to know too much (Psyche), which in turn requires active transcending of one's own narcissism (Narcissus and Echo) and giving up the active life in order

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106 Evert p. 298
to fulfill the submissive role to the natural order (Endymion and Syrinx). I disagree with Evert's portrayal of Apollo's role of guiding humans to poetic success and ultimately guiding Keats to personal success. Instead, Keats's believed that the sacrifice of the self and of personal glory is necessary to establish a connection with the divine, which is represented early on by the narrator's humbleness and confusion in "Hymn to Apollo." In the hymn, Apollo's intervention spares the narrator from Jupiter's justice, and the poem marks a transition in Keats's understanding on how best to serve as a servant of Apollo and will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Before a reader can understand the ramifications of the narrator submitting himself to the mercy of the gods, Keats's early poems must be analyzed to reveal his understanding of poetic success.

"Ode to Apollo"

One of Keats's earliest poems, "Ode to Apollo," focuses on poetic immortality, represented by the master poets singing praise to Apollo and then later joined by Apollo and his Muses to form the harmony of nature. Apollo's realm is one above earth in "western halls of gold," where poets from every age live on and inspire "us" who are yet on earth:

Bards, that erst sublimely told  
Heroic deeds, and sung of fate  
With fervour seize their adamantine lyres,  
Whose chords are solid rays, and twinkle radiant fires. (lines 3-6)

Their song is patriotic and, according to Andrew Motion, Keats "associates 'Heroic deeds' done in the name of Liberty with the work of particular ancient and Renaissance poets... As the title implies, patriotic actions and patriotic writings are fused in the figure of Apollo."\(^{107}\) The poem depicts the worship of Apollo positively, which shows the influence of Virgil's reverent spirit.

\(^{107}\) Motion p. 67
Great poetry can grant immortality to the works of poets, and also to the poets, by harmonizing with Apollo's song:

But when Thou joinest with the Nine,
And all the powers of song combine,
We listen here on earth:
Thy dying tones that fill the air,
And charm the ear of evening fair,
From thee, great God of Bards, receive their heavenly birth. (lines 43-48)

Those unable or not yet able to sing can appreciate the symphony of poetry that lasts throughout time. However, neither the immortal poets nor the listeners can ever equal Apollo. Evert acknowledges Apollo's majesty in how "the italicized 'Thou' further separates this singer and his song from the others. Finally, the statement that all the powers of song are combined when Apollo sings leaves no doubt that they were not all combined before." ¹⁰⁸ He goes on to argue that Apollo's song is part of the natural sounds of nature, and that

If all natural sounds are perceived as components of an harmonious orchestration of nature, then their combined effect is not unreasonably attributable to the god whose special province it is to regulate the universal harmony. And further, if the divine harmony to which the individual poet tunes his song, and of which his song is a fragmentary echo, is expressed through external nature, then external nature must be the authentic source and standard of all true poetry and the medium through which the god of poetry reveals himself to his servants.¹⁰⁹

Then, Evert argues that Apollo is the embodiment of the "harmonic principle working through all things and accessible to human perceptions," but he ignores the human relationship with Apollo as embodied by the poets.¹¹⁰ If the song is merely the sounds of nature, then there would be no reason to focus on six poets who sing of war and heroic action and whose works primarily focused on a complex understanding human nature and the workings of society. The narrator describes how Homer sings of war, Virgil tells of grief, Milton shakes the heavens, Shakespeare

¹⁰⁸ Evert p. 36
¹⁰⁹ Evert p. 38
¹¹⁰ Evert p. 39
depicts human passion, Spenser sings of Chastity, and Tasso calls people away from pleasure. Each subject is an aspect of human experience, but the stanzas of each individual song describe moments of greatness where each poet is both invigorated by their song and able to invigorate others. Furthermore, the songs call the listeners to greatness and inspire both patriotism and, in describing "grief" and "Chastity," virtue. To be immortal in Apollo's hall requires more than just harmony with nature; it requires one to sing about the truth of life itself and inspire men to great deeds, and only Apollo can complete the song. The narrator does not ask for the poetic immortality but only recognizes that it exists somewhere beyond his tangible reality, placing him among the "we" that "listen here on earth." This characterizes the narrator as a humble observer who can only sensually experience the beauty of poetry and can only experience, not explain, the truth and godlines connected to great poetry. At this point, the conflicting truths or subject matters of these master poets and their poems are barely alluded to—and they aren't even given historically-appropriate instruments from which to compose their song. Their individual reasons for being in the halls of Apollo are not explained nor does the narrator seek to do anything beyond enjoying the music that they create.

While the background of the poets is not fully explored within the poem, their devotion to Apollo is realized through their devotion to poetry. The character Apollo exists within the poem as lord of a heavenly realm filled with the master poets who spend eternity playing music. As "great God of Bards," he serves as the force of poetic inspiration and it is through his effort that the "powers of song" can be heard on earth (lines 48, 44). Unlike a mythopoetic representation of human psychology as described by Harold Bloom,111 the Apollo of "Ode to Apollo" exists independently of human poets and their poems in that he is both greater than all of the poets and

is the object of their praise. To Evert, who describes the poem as existing in a "mythopoetic setting," Apollo's appearance is greater than man's existence because "the voice of nature is the voice of God." Apollo is not a tangible poet nor is he only inspiration for poetry, but he is a greater voice that works as the major factor in the "powers of song." Apollo represents the immortal essence that great poets tap into, allowing those master poets to gain immortality, even though they could never match his song. The individual religion of each poet does not matter within the ode, but all of the poets mentioned, at least in Keats's mind, worked towards what Apollo represents. Thus, Apollo transcends the limits of paganism and is able to be universally "worshiped" in a Christian world in a similar manner to how Polymetis describes the ability of 18th-century Europeans to appreciate Roman iconography. Though similar, Apollo is more than simple iconography and represents an immortal presence alive in the universe. This is most evident in the last stanza when Apollo sings and "we listen here on earth"; for it takes Apollo's added voice for the people of earth to even hear the poets and understand the beauty of their poetry. Thus, Apollo does exist, but in the world beyond the common man, in a place that we can hear, but never grasp, for Apollo's home exists only for the Muses and the master poets.

For all of the praise within the ode, Apollo is seemingly too remote for the narrator to have a direct interaction with the god beyond listening. However, there is a sense of solemnity within the poem that comes from Keats's use of "thou," which was commonly used by 18th-century Christians when referring to God. By using "thou," Apollo is distinguished from all others mentioned in the poem through the creation of a hierarchical system with Apollo serving in a similar capacity to the Christian God. Additionally, the saint-like great poets and the angelic Muses are allowed to be in the god's realm and form the middle of the hierarchy. At the bottom

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112 Evert p. 36
of the hierarchy are the common people, those who lack any direct involvement or participation in the creation of Apollo's song and are resigned to serving as mere listeners. Keats further separates the master poets from the rest of humanity, including himself, through the use of "we" to describe the listeners on Earth. Poetic immortality as depicted in the ode is a rare and difficult achievement, more so than Christian sainthood in that there are only a few named individuals. Additionally, Keats does not define a process from which the immortal poets are chosen by Apollo, and it is possible that the lack of specific qualifications reflects Keats's ability to recognize great poetry only in general terms. The mysteries of Apollo and the process of becoming the god's servant is a subject for a more experienced and confident poet, and Keats was unwilling to take up the subject with a definitive answer until he composed *The Fall of Hyperion*.

"**I stood Tip-Toe upon a little hill**"

After Keats's early "Ode" and encouragement from friends, he began to spend more time working on his poetry and, in doing so, moved from the status of one who modestly confined his ambitions to reading poetry to one searching to join the great poets and reach their immortal state. Composed throughout 1816, the poem is, according to Walter Jackson Bate, "one description after another, a sort of breathless catalogue of rural sights. Much comes from memory. The Enfield years return, the walks with Cowden Clarke, the streams near his grandmother's house in Edmonton". The description, as Bate argues, exists because "he lacked a subject", but this ignores the importance of a young Keats's comments on the art of writing poetry that is contained within the poem. After the narrator immerses himself in the sensual

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113 Bate p. 123
114 Bate p. 124
blisses of nature for two stanzas, he moves on to discussing the functions and importance of Apollo to poets. The narrator, at line 46, actively calls on various flowers to respond to his poetry by "open[ing] afresh," because "Apollo bids" many new poets to sing the praises of nature. The flowers, by Apollo's will, become the poetic subject matter, for Apollo has commissioned the poets to capture the sensory beauty of nature. No longer is the narrator "listener" but one who is bidden to actively sing. In order to sing, he lets nature affect him, then turns it into the subject matter for poetry. The narrator, like other "lately strung" poets following in Wordsworthian footsteps, hopes the result of singing praises to flowers is further inspiration via Apollo's "mighty voice" from some "far vale." Through the first 56 lines of "Tip-Toe," Keats portrays the origins of poetic inspiration and describes a hierarchy of poetic genres, culminating in the heroic poetry that granted the six poets in "Ode to Apollo" their Apollonian immortality.

Before discussing the myths that represent aspects of the truth Apollo allows poets to turn into myth, the narrator describes Apollo as the principle that allows humans to understand the underlying cause and essence of the beauty and truth found in nature. The poet invokes Apollo as the "stringer" of poets but goes on to say that the moon is the "maker of sweet poets!" The moon is the aspect of nature that provides "sweet" subject matter to an individual who is given the "string" to write. Apollo is the presence underlying the ability to describe specific sensory beauties ("halo of crystal rivers, / Mingler with leaves"), and he is the presence that allows a poet to interact with the world's "gentle livers" that stimulate "delight" in people when they are alone, pondering, or in dreams. Jeffrey Cox relies on this description of Apollo and nature to compare the works of Keats and Wordsworth:

Like Wordsworth, Keats finds this turn to nature a relief from the despondency.

115 Lines 116-119
that can claim us when we are beset by the world... However, where Wordsworth finds a conservative and stoic message in nature... Keats discovers 'luxuries,' 'pleasures,' a 'world of blisses'... until 'The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings'... Wordsworth wants to bind the imagination to nature to prevent it from creating dangerous abstract visions of social life: if we tie ourselves to nature, we will never try the social experiments that lead to despair when they fail. Keats finds a surfeit of pleasure in nature... that 'charms' away despair and links us back to life... Keats offers earthly pleasure that in fulfilling the imagination's dreams bind it back to nature in spite of despondency.116

Cox's interpretation suggests that Keats embraces nature's pleasures as the material of his poetry in opposition to Wordsworth's "egotistical sublime." A reader of "Tip-Toe" is not bound by this interpretation because Keats could be referring to the process of inspiration that begins with a discussion of pleasurable and fleeting topics before turning to more serious matters. To emphasize that interactions with Apollo are more than just wallowing in sensations, the narrator claims that the ultimate source of inspiration that "has made the sage or poet write" is "the fair paradise of Nature's light." The "paradise" is more similar to the language describing the scene of the distant temple in "Ode to Apollo" than any particular sensory experience discussed in "I Stood Tip-Toe." Additionally, the line marks the transition between the poem discussing nature to discussing poets and their poems, which is the same general subject of the ode. However, the subject matter of the four, unnamed poets in "Tip-Toe" is pastoral and not the heroic content that granted immortality in "Ode to Apollo".

The subject of "I Stood Tip-Toe" is the interaction between poets and the floral aspects of nature, and the poem describes how poetic achievement is the result of communicating truths about humanity's relationship with nature. Midway through the poem, the narrator abruptly shifts from describing flowers and a pastoral scene to discussing the origins of four myths that portray interactions between individuals: Cupid and Psyche, Pan and Syrinx, Echo and Narcissus, and

116 Cox p. 113
Cynthia and Endymion. The shift suggests that mythic relationships, especially those filled with passion and desire, are related to nature's beauty, and that the myths are a poet's way of discussing natural truths. It is through analyzing the subject matter of the four myths that a reader can determine how myth describes a harmony within nature that can be found even in scenes of destruction and loss. Brotemarkle claims that Wordsworth's *Excursion*, Book IV provides an origin of mythology that is similar to Keats's in *Endymion*: "An imaginative power in nature and in man collaborates toward forming a more idealized concept, a progress of beauty. Having heard a better song, the herdsman mythologizes—i.e., he is inspired to create a fictional character, Apollo of the golden harp and of the sun."117 Her argument is not about *Endymion* but instead focuses on "I Stood Tip-toe," and she reinforces a connection between Wordsworth's and Keats's view with the testimony of Leigh Hunt, who "mentioned that Wordsworth had provided the grounds for Keats's own recounting of the origin of mythology."118 Similarly, Ian Jack connects Keats with Wordsworth to Hazlitt, who described in an 1814 Examiner article how those reclining near a stream "can easily form a mystic personification of the friendly power that inhabits them, Dryad or Naiad, offering its cool fountain or its tempting shade. Hence the origin of Grecian mythology."119 Brotemarkle's argument, and thus Jack's, is reinforced by a statement by Hunt in response to Keats's 1817 collection of poetry. In Hunt's analysis, he discusses Keats's depiction of a poet watching a pond before he was inspired to write of Narcissus and Echo. Brotemarkle's argument is that Keats's statement that poetry is inspired by "the fair paradise of Nature's light" is "not just any Nature, but Nature spiritualized as Wordsworth thought of it, and Nature framed like an art work, embowered, as Keats thought of it."120

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117 Brotemarkle p. 114
118 Brotemarkle p. 115
120 Brotemarkle p. 115
Brotemarkle's argument is missing an important consideration: Keats does not include any of the myths dealing with Apollo. Instead, Apollo is described as the force that seems distinct from nature that prompts humanity to create poetry:

For great Apollo bids
That in these days your praises should be sung
On many harps, which he has lately strung;
And when again your dewiness he kisses,
Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses:
So haply when I rove in some far vale,
His mighty voice may come upon the gale. (lines 50-56)

Also, Aske points out that it is the moon, and not Apollo, that is described as related to "Nature's light:

Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
Coming into the blue with all her light.
O Maker of sweet poets, dear delight
Of this fair world, and all its gentle livers;
Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,
Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling streams,
Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams,
Lover of lonelines, and wandering,
Of upcast eye, and tender pondering!
Thee must I praise above all other glories
That smile us on to tell delightful stories.
For what has made the sage or poets write
But the fair paradise of Nature's light? (lines 113-126)

By linking the moon, a non-anthropomorphic entity distinct from Apollo or the Cynthia described later, to nature, Apollo is disconnected from Wordsworth's interpretation of myth and the Greco-Roman gods. Additionally, it is the moon, and not Apollo, that more accurately fits Brotemarkle's claim of a "spiritualized nature" being present within the poem. Based on the strong similarities between Wordsworth's view on mythology and Keats's depiction of the origin of the myths within "I Stood Tip-Toe," the figures of Cupid and Psyche, Pan and Syrinx,
Narcissus and Echo, and Endymion and Cynthia can be seen as aspects of nature transformed by a poet's imagination into characters. However, Apollo is provided with a privileged place within the poem as the "stringer" of poets, and he is described as the force that allows mankind to witness "Nature's light." Jack goes on to explain that Hazlitt's discussion of mythology was actually a "partly satirical account of the Lake Poets" and "Hazlitt points out that in their work 'all was to be natural and new', and that this involved the banishment of 'the whole heathen mythology'." If Keats was influenced by Hazlitt in addition to Wordsworth, it is possible that Keats is capable of distinguishing the Wordsworthian descriptions of myth, as found in the four myths of "I Stood Tip-Toe," from his account of Apollo's relationship to poets.

Keats continues his poem with examples of how other poets writing on mythological topics use nature to derive moral lessons about higher kinds of universal truth. The narrator alludes to poets that use myths to describe mortals, or characters bound by mortal emotions, interacting with a spiritual embodiment of nature in the form of a god in both a positive and negative manner. Unfortunately, the portrayal of the four myths within "Tip-Toe" lack most of the key attributes of each myth, including important plot details, and the poem assumes the myths are known by the reader. A critic could easily impose his own versions of the myths or what the myths mean onto the poem, which could create a dramatically different interpretation from Keats's intended interpretation. By comparing the depiction of the mythic figures within Keats's sources to his abridged descriptions of the figures within "Tip-Toe," it is evident that Keats relies on the mythic figures as a means to discuss mankind's relationship with nature. Instead of wallowing in floral subject matter, Keats describes mythic poets who are inspired by nature as a way for him to define how poets in general may connect directly to nature, through

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121 Jack p. 74
Apollo, and gain part of the immortality emphasized in the "Ode." The poets that originate the four mythological stories in "Tip-Toe" are assumed but never named, and the myths have attained an immortal status in their being preserved until Keats's day. Their identities are meaningless because they are transformed into generic examples of the "sweet poets" given the tools by Apollo that allow them to tell "delightful stories," ones that are "beautifully staid" and move "on luxurious wings," and their reader's "soul is lost in pleasant smotherings" because their poetry "Charms us at once away from all our troubles" (Lines 116, 124, 129, 131, 132, 138). Martin Aske explains, "it is not the stories themselves but the very possibility of their telling which becomes crucial to the poet."\(^{122}\) By the end of the poem, Keats wishes to become one of the poets as he describes how he will tell the tale of Endymion and Cynthia. Fundamentally, the Apollo of Keats is the one who grants a poet the ability to compose poetry, which in turn can lead to immortality. This is no different from the most basic descriptions of Apollo within his mythographic sources. Likewise, it is possible that "Tip-Toe" is the first stage of poetic development with its ultimate goal to join with the six poets in "Ode to Apollo" because, as Aske argues, "Keats might not consider himself truly born, as a poet, until he has told a story. A threshold has been reached, which has yet to be crossed."\(^{123}\)

The myths that Keats evokes are all poems that deal with the interaction between nature, the divine, and man. No longer is the subject matter the sensory experience of nature, but of characters that reveal aspects of what the sensory world means to man and what lessons experience can teach. The narrator selects specific examples of those that pursue or are pursued by anthropomorphized aspects of nature in a symbolic relationship that ends with a uniting or destruction of the mortal individual. The first example explains Psyche's loves for Cupid, and

\(^{123}\) Aske p. 52
how they were received "before Jove's throne." Leprière reveals that Psyche "signifies the soul" but provides little detail of her background beyond the general story: "Psyche, a nymph whom Cupid married and carried into a place of bliss, where he long enjoyed her company. Venus put her to death because she had robbed the world of her son; but Jupiter at the request of Cupid granted immortality to Psyche." Tooke fails to discuss Psyche in any form, and Spence ignores the original myth of Cupid and Psyche to focus on the general representation of Psyche in art: "for the butterfly is generally used by the Greek artists as an emblem of the human soul; and a Cupid fondling or burning a butterfly, is just the same with them as a Cupid caressing or tormenting the goddess Psyche, or the soul. It is remarkable enough that in the Greek language, the same word is used indifferently, for this little fluttering insect, and the soul". With such a direct parallel between the soul and Psyche in the sources, it seems unlikely that Cox is correct to identify the use of the passage to describe Keats's belief in promoting a liberated sexuality. Instead, it is more likely that any description of romance is the metaphor for the soul's desire. This view is directly supported by the context of the Cupid and Psyche myth:

While at our feet the voice of crystal bubbles
Charmes us at once away from all our troubles,
So that we feel uplifted from the world,
Walking upon the white clouds wreathed and curled.
So felt he who first told how Psyche went
On the smooth wind to realms of wonderment; (lines 138-142)

To Keats, it is possible that this mythic relationship focuses on how the soul can actively pursue the divine within nature and can attain a loving relationship through personal sacrifice of Psyche's own desires for knowledge to understand the greater role of love. The allusion to Jove suggests that Keats has in mind Leprière's description that Psyche was killed by Venus and

124 Leprière p. 645
125 Spence. 71
restored to life by Jupiter/Jove. The lesson of the myth within "Tip-Toe" is that transcendence is necessary for the soul/Psyche to be allowed to experience the satisfaction that comes from a relationship with the aspects of nature represented by Cupid. When compared to the first half of the poem, another layer of Keats's depiction of the myth is that a poet who is charmed by the beauty of nature is similar to the psyche/soul being charmed by love, and both poet and lover must lose part of their self to receive the object of their desire.

The next myth in "I Stood Tip-Toe," Pan and Syrinx, directly contradicts the use of Cupid and Psyche as a metaphor for the happiness that can be found in experiencing nature. Pan, a force of natural sexual urges, could not find the one he pursues. Just as with the Psyche myth, Lemprière provides only a general background to what Syrinx represents: "Syrinx, a nymph of Arcadia, daughter of the river Ladon. Pan became enamoured of her, and attempted to offer her violence; but Syrinx escaped, and at her own request was changed by the gods into a reed called Syrinx by the Greeks. The god made himself a pipe with the reeds, into which his favorite nymph had been changed." The "violence" described by Lemprière is toned down in Tooke: "But [Pan] did not court the nymph Syrinx with so much success: for she ran away to avoid her lover; till coming to a river... she prayed the Naiades... because she could not escape her pursuer, to change her into a bundle of reeds, just as Pan was laying hold of her, who therefore caught the reeds in his arms instead of her." Tooke also describes how the reeds were turned into a pipe, but he also adds that "Lucretius ascribes the invention of these pipes not to Pan, but to some countrymen." Spence ignores Syrinx but explains that "One of the chief characters of the Satyrs, or Pans... is their lasciviousness: which is but too strongly expressed in the famous Satyr"

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126 Lemprière p. 745
127 Tooke pp. 169-170
128 Tooke p. 170
and that "The chief passion, both of the Fauns and Satyrs, seems to have been for nymphs... I have often wondered how it comes about, that these Nymphs and Fauns should be so common a subject with the antient artists, and so very uncommon in the poets. However it happened, the latter have very few passages that are descriptive either of the personage or attributes of these deities". Combining the mythographic sources together, they describe Syrinx consciously trying to escape the active pursuit of the lustful god and her hiding in nature. However, she becomes a reluctant conduit of artistic beauty and is the opposite of the willing Psyche. Keats' reliance on the story is also linked to the same witnessing of nature's beauty that Cupid and Psyche serve as metaphor for, and the context sets up a contradiction for the previous myth:

So did he feel, who pulled the boughs aside
That we might look into a forest wide
Coming with softest rustle through the trees,
And garlands woven of flowers wild and sweet,
Upheld on ivory wrists or sporting feet:
Telling us how fair trembling Syrinx fled
Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread. (lines 151-158)

In Psyche's case, the metaphor is the human form curiously trying to understand the divine, which leads only to immortality. In Syrinx's case, the sacrifice of one pursued by the divine becomes a source of great artistic opportunity, and Cox says that the myth represents the "sublimation of erotic pleasure: out of the loss of the woman Pan creates song. The story as it is found in Ovid is one of the sacrifice of the object to art, the woman for the pan pipe. Reality is frustrating, but art claims to heal the loss." However, Syrinx is not like the other nymphs that are comfortable in the sexual relationships, and the pursuit is more akin to rape than to a gentle relationship with nature.

If these four myths were solely about sexual relationships, then the pursuit of Syrinx by

129 Spence p. 254
130 Cox p. 116
Pan is little more than rape. By depicting a scene of sexual violence, "Tip-Toe" is either condemning or promoting acceptance of the domination of women. There is nothing within Keats's background to suggest such misogynistic inclinations, and there is little to verify that Pan sublimates his desire because he does not take up the reeds as in the original myths but only hears their song "Full of sweet desolation, balmy pain" (line 162). Syrinx can represent either the poet who flees from whatever power is within nature and, in his destruction, become a source of natural beauty, or Syrinx can represent the force of nature that man is trying to pursue intellectually, to "know" nature in the way sex is used in the Cupid and Psyche myth. In the latter interpretation, nature cannot be known to one who "pulled the boughs aside" except to hear the music of "sweet desolation."

The third mythic couple, Narcissus and Echo, represents the destruction that follows from passively interacting with the world and serves as a metaphor for poetic inspiration. Keats spends the majority of the stanza questioning the Narcissus myth originating from a flower wrapped up eternally gazing upon its own reflection in a pool of water:

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What first inspired a bard of old to sing
Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring?
In some delicious ramble he had found
A little space, with boughs all woven round,
And in the midst of all a clearer pool
Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool (lines 163-168)
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Only Lemprière describes the background of Narcissus:

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a beautiful youth, son of Cephasus and the nymph Liriope... He saw his image reflected in a fountain, and became enamoured of it, thinking it to be the nymph of the place. His fruitless attempts to approach this beautiful object so provoked him, that he grew desperate and killed himself. His blood was changed into a flower, which still bears his name.131
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131 Lemprière p. 486
Curiously, Keats's poem portrays a poet wrapped up in describing Narcissus, but he leaves out an explanation for Echo:

A meek and forlorn flower, with naught of pride,
Drooping its beauty o'er the water clearness
To woo its own sad image into nearness.

* * *

So while the poet stood in this sweet spot,
Some fainter gleaming o'er his fancy shot,
Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale. (lines 172-174, 178-180)

Echo is an afterthought within Keats's poems, and Lemprière's entry on Narcissus completely ignores her. It is only in Echo's entry that her desire for Narcissus is discussed, and her lack of care for her own self is symbolically manifested in her being ignored by those who are focused on Narcissus. Her myth, as described by Tooke, explains how she lost all ability to talk in anything other than a response, forcing her into a semi-passive state when communicating with others. When she met with Narcissus, according to Tooke, she

embraced him, but he broke from her embraces, and hastily fled from her sight: upon which the despised nymph hid herself in the woods, and pined away with grief, so that every part of her but her voice was consumed... Narcissus met with as bad a fate; for though he would neither love others, nor admit of their love, yet he fell so deeply in love with his own beauty, that the love of himself proved his ruin... In a word, his passion conquered him, and the power of love was greater than he could resist, so that, by degrees, he wasted way and consumed, and at last, by the favour of the gods, was turned into a daffodil.\textsuperscript{132}

Narcissus and Echo lose their form with their inability to interact with nature as a whole because they are blinded by their single-minded desire or passion. They are transformed into physical representations of their passivity, and their immortal essences are always present but rarely of importance. Keats, by pairing the two and then ignoring Echo as Narcissus did, is possibly describing the problem of how much a poet should include his own self within poetry. By

\textsuperscript{132} Tooke pp. 189-191
focusing too much on his own poetic self, the poet will become like a shriveled flower. It is possible that the passage contains a critique of the Wordsworth's "egotistical sublime" and the dangers of excessive self-analysis. But Keats also briefly mentions Echo, and it is possible that she represents how a poet could completely lose his identity to his subject matter. If Echo represents the loss of the self within poetry, then Keats could be targeting poets that merely describe nature's beauty without establishing some truth or philosophy for the reader. The nameless poet that created the myth ignores Echo because he is like Echo, and his identity is lost forever like hers. As such, Keats may have abandoned the need for balance in "I Stood Tip-Toe" when he later argues in his letters and poems that a poet must abandon a focus of the self for the subject matter of the poem.

The last couple that dominates the remainder of the poem is Endymion and Cynthia. "I Stood Tip-Toe" was originally referred to by Keats as "Endymion," as can be seen in a December 17, 1816 letter to Charles Cowden Clarke, which stresses the importance of the couple to the poem within Keats's mind. The well-known narrative poem of the same name, which would describe in detail the relationship between Endymion and Cynthia, was not composed until months after the letter was written. By saving the long, detailed narrative about their relationship for a later poem, "I Stood Tip-Toe" uses the myth as a fourth example of how individuals, especially poets, interact with nature. Lemprière describes Endymion as, "a shepherd... It is said that he required of Jupiter to grant to him to be always young, and to sleep as much as he would... Diana saw him naked as he slept on mount Latmos, and was so struck with his beauty that she came down from heaven every night to enjoy his company." Lemprière then explains the myth as a metaphor for admiring nature: "The fable of Endymion's

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133 Bate p. 123
134 Lemprière pp. 275-276
amours with Diana, or the moon, arises from his knowledge of astronomy, and as he passed the
night on some high mountain, to observe the heavenly bodies, it has been reported that he was
courted by the moon."\textsuperscript{135} The entry for "Cynthia" merely explains the word as a surname for
Diana derived from Mount Cynthus. By using the name Cynthia instead of Diana, Keats's
version of the goddess is connected both to the moon and to a mountain, but not to the hunt or
the more aggressive aspects of her character. Spence's account is more direct when connecting
the two lovers, but his focus is on Diana:

It was this Diana, (or the intelligence, that was supposed to preside over the
moon,) who was fabled to fall in love with Endymion; and if we consider the
occasion of her love for him, according to the accounts the antients give of that
fable, it may appear perhaps to have been only a philosophical amour, or what
we call Platonic love; and so may not interfere with this goddess's general
character of chastity. However that be, the story is very common, in particular
on old Sarcophagus's; and we see her on them, descending to a shepherd asleep,
with a veil over her head... There is some reason to think, that this fable might
have been meant originally of the eclipses of the moon...\textsuperscript{136}

Lempière's version of the myth, and Spence's description of "a shepherd asleep," represents an
inactive pursuit by Endymion of Cynthia that is similar to Echo with Narcissus, but this
particular inactivity emphasizes a reliance on the imagination and dreams instead of desire or
lust. The active participant, Cynthia, is not a mysterious god of love, a violent satyr, or a
narcissistic lover. Instead, she is described as a gentle admirer that could represent how nature, or
a force in nature, is able to form a peaceful relationship with a dreamer.

Keats adds another layer to the myth by describing how the poet climbs Mount Latmos in
his pursuit of the moon/Cynthia just like Endymion:

\begin{verbatim}
Ah, surely he had burst our mortal bars,
Into some wond'rous region he had gone
To search for thee, divine Endymion!
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{135} Lempière pp. 275-276
\textsuperscript{136} Spence p. 184
He was a poet, sure a lover too,
Who stood on Latmos' top, what time there blew

*   *   *

The poet wept at her so piteous fate,
Wept that such beauty should be desolate.
So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,
And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion. (lines 190-194, 201-204)

Ian Jack declares "it is clear that Endymion is the Poet and Cynthia... his Muse." However, the "he" of line 190 refers to the poet who composes the myth about Endymion and Cynthia, and it is unlikely that the poem was composed by Endymion. In the poet's version of the myth described in "Tip-Toe," Cynthia can never physically possess her Endymion because it is his unconscious, dreaming state that she loves. The lovers can only be united through the efforts of the myth poet who has the power to reform reality into something better. By having a poet directly interact with his subject matter in a divine form, and not as mere nature that is later transformed into divinity through myth, the concluding lines of "I Stood Tip-Toe" are Keats's boldest metaphor for a poet's relationship to nature within the poem.

The coupling of Endymion and Cynthia describes how Endymion is able to connect to the divine through sleep, an image that Keats picks up on later. However, Endymion loses his identity and ability to live a normal life in the process. Keats begins by asking about the origins of the myth:

Where had he been, from whose warm head out-flew
That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,
That aye, refreshing pure deliciousness,
Coming ever to bless
The wanderer by moonlight? (lines 181-185)

The poet the narrator describes is one who searched for "divine Endymion," and, in doing so watches the moon and hears "soft breezes from the myrtle vale below" (line 195). The scene

137 Jack p. 145
causes the poet to weep at "her so piteous fate/Wept that such beauty should be desolate" (line 201-202). In the Greco-Roman myth, Cynthia, the moon, admired Endymion, who is fond of relaxation and enjoying sleep above all, each night as he dreams. The goddess admires the shepherd and comes to join him every night, but he cannot be with her because he is lost in sleep. It is nature that is unable to pursue the mortal, but can only keep him in a perfect state, ensuring the passivity of both. On the symbolic level, the connection between man's dreaming and the divine is a passive relationship that requires man to give up living a normal life to dwell within the imagination inspired by dreams. Endymion, and all men like him, do not ascend beyond traditional mortality but live forever in that state disconnected from their surroundings. Evert claims that in the passage "our attention has just been called to a poet on the top of Mount Latmus who is about to be inspired, by the natural beauty around him, to invent the myth of Endymion and Cynthia. The function is, clearly, to illustrate a prior argument that such natural inspiration was the ancient source of poetic myths." Evert is mistaken in his reading of the passage because he fails to acknowledge Keats's shift between describing the moon in the first half of the poem to describing Diana and then to describing Cynthia. Though the three may be the same, they should not be taken as interchangeable terms especially when they are referred to in a different context. The moon is discussed when describing nature and "Nature's light", whereas Diana is discussed only when Keats alludes to a poet seeking the "divine Endymion". The poet is inspired to write of Cynthia after smelling the incense dedicated to Diana, and he creates a new myth that is not present within any of his source material. The walls between the myths and poet are broken, and it is difficult to distinguish between which part exists within the narrator's story and which part exists within the poet's myth. Evert fails to acknowledge the

138 Evert p. 102
interaction between the poet and his mythic subject because Evert did not compare Keats's source with the use of myth within Keats's poetry.

Unlike the previous three myth poets described in "Tip Toe," the Cynthia and Endymion myth poet is described as capable of direct interaction with his subject, and the lines are blurred between the narrator's tale and the myth poet's tale. Keats describes how the poet on Mount Latmos was filled by inspiration and able to create a song that brought together Cynthia and Endymion. The narrator then addresses Cynthia not as a mythic figure or as a character within another poet's myth. Instead, she has a presence within "Tip Toe" that is similar to Keats's use of Apollo:

Queen of the wide air! Thou most lovely queen
Of all the brightness that mine eyes have seen!
As thou exceeded all things in thy shine,
So every tale does this sweet tale of thine.
Oh, for three words of honey, that I might
Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night! (lines 205-210)

By describing how a poet gives Cynthia her Endymion, Keats reverses Cynthia's role from active to passive. The myth poet is given power that is beyond anything previously described within the poem, and his poetry becomes a creative force unto itself. It is unclear if the anonymous poet is the creator of the Endymion myth or if he forms his own, new myth, but he has an active power over nature which is described in very human terms. Evert claims that within "I Stood Tip-Toe," "Cynthia here receives the sort of paean elsewhere reserved for Apollo, that she assumes his function of inspiring poets, that the inspiration she furnishes is manifested, like Apollo's, in the natural world... She has, in other words, for all practical poetic purposes, become identical with [Apollo]."139 However, the myth poet is the one who is "giving" Cynthia something, and it is

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139 Evert p. 93
possible that Apollo is still the only source of the poet's power. "Nature's light" and
Cynthia/Diana/the moon are only accessible to poets because Apollo has granted them the ability
to use nature as inspiration for song. The descriptions of love and passion within the myths are
metaphors for the act of creation, and the final lines of the poem describe how poetry is able to
affect the world; the narrator relates how Phoebus "delay'd his mighty wheels," how "men of
health were of unusual cheer," and "lovely women were as fair and warm /As Venus looking
sideways in alarm" (Lines 212, 216, 219-220). The "sweet songs" of the poets spread across the
world and improve the mood of the people "until their tongues were loosed in Poesy" (line 235).
It is at that moment, that the narrator's "spirit must no farther soar" (line 242), unable to tell of
the "greater blisses" (line 239) that were experienced between the Cynthia and Endymion.

What the "blisses" entail has prompted critics to focus on sexual aspects related to the
coupling of Endymion and Cynthia. To Ian Jack, Keats's "Cynthia is not a virgin: on the contrary
he proceeds to describe some of the wonders that took place on the bridal-night of the two
lovers" but he goes on to say that "there can be no doubt that at one level it portrays the poet's
quest for inspiration as an aspect of the soul's search for beauty. Every poet may be described, in
Ronsard's words, as '[Un] Second Endymion, amoureux de la Lune'."140 Cox goes on further to
argue,

Pursuing his notion that pleasure can revitalize and thus reform the social
world, Keats explores the beneficent influence their coupling has upon their
society. In a scene that parallels Shelley's vision of a world reformed through
the union of Prometheus and Asia... Keats imagines a world transformed by
love and poetry as the healthy are filled with joy, the women are revealed as
fully beautiful, and the sick are healed... The union of Cynthia and Endymion
generates universal love and poetry... Importantly, it is through poetry that love
is guaranteed, and reciprocally it is through the love of Cynthia and Endymion
that a poet is created, the birth of the poet from this union of goddess and

140 Jack pp. 145-146
mortal paralleling the birth of Pleasure from the marriage of Cupid and Psyche. Unfortunately, "I Stood Tip-Toe" does not clearly define the distinction between the world of the poem, the world of the myth poet, and the world within the myth poet's myth. However, it is clear that the poet is creating a myth that is separated from the actuality of Endymion and Cynthia's relationship. It is uncertain if Keats is merely being modest when he says "I cannot tell the greater blisses" (line 239), but it is possible that the reason why Keats cannot continue the story is that his subject is divine in nature and does not involve a physical union or the subject is within a portion of the myth poet's work that Keats does not know. Furthermore, Cox focuses on aspects of pleasure within a union between a shepherd and the moon and ignores that the union could be between gentle aspects of nature and a passive dreamer. Cox argues that the poem creates an "opposition" between Keats and Wordsworth and also "between an orientation towards this world and a turn from the world to the self." However, it is possible that Endymion's passive interaction with nature is similar to the passive, observational role the narrator performs in many of Wordsworth's poems, especially those within Lyrical Ballads. Additionally, the relationship of the moon/Cynthia to "Nature's light" is very similar to imagery in Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," where nature is the source of spiritual truth. Also, the idea of "wedding" nature in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" is similar to the union of Cynthia and Endymion. Any sexual union that can be derived from Keats's lines are more likely a metaphor for an intellectual or spiritual union with nature, or Keats would not have described four relationships in which the lovers either can't have each other or an outside force (Jove, a poet) has to dramatically alter the situation to join them in a union.

Examining "I Stood Tip-Toe" as a whole, the active role Apollo takes in guiding poets or

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141 Cox pp. 120-121
granting their commission distinguishes him from the characters described in the four discussed myths. While the four couples are stated by Keats as originating in a poet's conception, Apollo is the conceiving of the poets. The exact identity of Apollo and his role within the universe is uncertain within the poet, but Keats's description of a "divine light" implies that there exists a spiritual presence of which Apollo could be one aspect. The three mythographers discuss Apollo's relationship to knowledge, and Virgil describes Apollo as Aeneas’s primary guide. It is not implausible that Keats's Apollo retains these aspects and serves as a guide for poets who seek the "divine light" while not being the divine light itself. As such, Apollo is the charioteer and ruler over the domain of the sun (used as a possible metaphor for divine light), and not the sun itself. Furthermore, the moon, the "maker of sweet poets," reflects the harsh light of the sun in a more gentle way. It is possible that Apollo is the force that allows the poets to understand the "divine light"/sun, and some poets are only able to receive this truth once it is filtered again through a more gentle aspect of nature. If Keats's reliance on Apollo and the moon fit this model, then the poem incorporates a hierarchy of poets based on their ability to comprehend the raw, and sometimes painful, truth that is central to his later poems.

Keats abruptly ends "Tip-Toe" after he says that he cannot discuss the "blisses" of Endymion and Cynthia's union, which emphasizes the limits of the narrator's own poetic inspiration. None of those poems describes Apollo or his many interactions with mortals according to myth, and the tales are all inspired by nature. Additionally, all of them are offered to Apollo as a sacrifice since the individual poets lose their own identity but are still able to join in the process of creation. Keats implies, regardless of the factual nature of the stories, that they were written for Apollo and by Apollo's will in order to express a greater universal truth connected to "Nature's light." "I stood Tip-Toe" is about seeking Apollo and finding an
appropriate subject matter to sing the praises Apollo demands. Keats's interpretation of Apollo in
the poem is as a being that exists beyond human understanding and is well founded in
mythology. The *Aeneid*, Keats's first hand experience with mythology, describes how Apollo
leads a virtuous individual on the path to fulfilling his destiny, normally coming through dreams
(visions), through spiritual stories (the lessons on the temple) and through those who have a
divine connection (the Sybil). In "I Stood Tip-Toe," the narrator is actively searching for Apollo
and, through discussing the myths he reads, is able to intellectually participate in the original
moments of inspiration that brought about classical myths. In the final mythic pairing of
Endymion with Cynthia, Keats emphasizes above all poetic lessons how dreams and
imagination, though passive, connect man to a divine joy that causes the spirit to "soar" and do
Apollo's bidding by filling the world with happiness. The problem with Endymion is in his
relationship, because Cynthia the moon, who is reflective of divine truth, loves him but she lacks
power over the forces of the universe and is unable to join her love. However, the power that is
given to the poet through Apollo creates a new world in which the two are joined.

The very end of "I Stood Tip-Toe" unites a dreamer with nature, but Keats has not yet
explained how this would be possible. The poem cuts off abruptly, and the narrator admits that "I
cannot tell the greater blisses" and that "My wandering spirit must no further soar" (lines 139,
242) Continuing the subject would be a return to the wallowing in natural pleasure that was
abandoned midway into the poem. Instead, Keats recognizes that poetry should discuss nature
and spiritual truths and that he could not yet describe the relationship between the dreamer and
the divine within the poem. Thus, the next chapter discusses how "Sleep and Poetry" contains
Keats's argument that dreams allow an individual to transcend the material world and connect to
a higher spirituality. In essence, Keats uses the narrator of "I Stood Tip-Toe" to describe his
search for poetic inspiration while "Sleep and Poetry" focuses on the appropriate conduct
necessary for poets. Taken together, the poems are two halves of Keats's attempt to define an
Apollonian ideal and explain the process to become a true poet.
Chapter 3

Keats's first collection, *Poems* (1817), begins with "I Stood Tip-Toe" and ends with "Sleep and Poetry," two poems that reveal Keats's early understanding of poetics. "I Stood Tip-Toe" discusses the origin of myth after the narrator is overwhelmed by the pastoral simplicity of his environment, and "Sleep and Poetry" declares the failures of other poets while serving as a meditation on the imagination. Both poems set the tone for the collection, and both describe a poet's development, progressing from enjoying a sensory experience of nature to seeking a higher, spiritual connection to the universe. In this system of poetic development, a poet can only reach the pinnacle of his craft after he has obtained an understanding of natural truth regarding the human condition and mankind's role within nature. Just as in "Ode to Apollo," Keats's Apollo appears whenever Keats discusses the immortal poets who have attained greatness, but the god of poets does not serve as a mere character within one of Keats's narratives. Instead, he is a manifestation of an active force within nature that guides poets and encourages them to rely on their imagination to craft poetry that contains hints of the sublime. However, the Keats of 1817 is still an immature poet who is guided more by his desire to enjoy poetry than to spread the light of Apollo. Although there are hints of his later philosophical theories within the early poems, the young Keats embodies many qualities of a dreamer, e.g. the Endymion of "I Stood Tip-Toe" who seeks a passive, pleasurable relationship with nature.

Following the publication of *Poems*, Keats returned to the Endymion myth started in "I Stood Tip-Toe" when he composed the epic poem *Endymion*. No longer a passive character, Endymion quests after his beloved and risks his life for the opportunity of a permanent union with nature. Although Cynthia is the primary motivating force within the poem, she exists as a
passive force of nature, and Apollo represents an active, poetic force within the universe.

Ultimately, *Endymion* embodies the juvenile desire of being overwhelmed by nature's pleasures instead of embracing suffering and more difficult truths, and the poem was unable to satisfy either Keats or his audience. To overcome the deficiencies within the poem, Keats would return to Apollo for his subject in his follow-up attempt at epic poetry, *Hyperion*.

This chapter will continue the previous chapter's discussion of natural inspiration in "I Stood Tip-Toe," focusing on Keats's understanding of poetic development and his struggle to adopt the characteristics he attributed to great poets. "Sleep and Poetry," the final poem of his first collection, portrays the ideal poetic spirit and the characteristics that separate the mundane impostors from immortal poets who are able to capture the sublime within their works. Taken together, the poems reveal Keats's attempt to define a path towards poetic greatness. Then, I will analyze the transitional poem, "Hymn to Apollo," and focus on how the poem reveals Keats's anxiety as he abandons his childish indulgence in nature for the Apollonian poetic path. The chapter will end with a discussion of Keats's attempt at epic poetry, *Endymion*, and how the poem became the catalyst for his greatest poems. In analyzing each of these poems, I will describe how Keats deviates from his mythographic source material to form his own philosophical system in response to Wordsworth's understanding of nature and the sublime.

"Sleep and Poetry"

As I discussed in the prior chapter, "I Stood Tip-Toe" begins with the narrator feeling overwhelmed by nature's pleasures, which provokes a meditation on the origin of poets and myths. While the first half is primarily a discussion on poetics and inspiration, the second half of the poem summarizes famous myths and discusses their possible origins. Only the *Endymion*
myth is presented at length, and the story is abruptly ended:

I cannot tell the greater blisses,
That follow'd thine, and thy dear shepherd's kisses:
Was there a Poet born?—but now no more,
My wand'ring spirit must no further soar.— (lines 239-242)

There is no reason provided as to why he "cannot tell" or why he "must no further soar," but it is possible that the narrator realizes he has abandoned his earlier theme of explaining the origin of myth. In focusing on the Endymion and Cynthia myth, the narrator devolves into a discussion of passion between two characters and loses any sense of objectivity. The narrator describes the previous myth subjects, Psyche with Cupid, Narcissus with Echo, and Syrinx with Pan, as written by ancient, anonymous poets ("he, who first told" line 141, "he... who pull'd the boughs aside" line 151, and "a bard of old" line 163). However, the description of Endymion and Cynthia allows for the myth maker and the narrator to be the same individual ("O for three words of honey, that I might / Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night!" lines 209-210). The Endymion/Cynthia pairing is personal, and any discussion within the poem on the couple could reveal more about the narrator and his philosophy. By cutting the story short, Keats denies the reader a chance to understand the narrator's relationship with nature as revealed through moon imagery. We are left with only the Apollo that dominates the first half of the poem but quickly vanishes.

It is odd, but characteristic, of Keats's juvenile poems that he hints at a lofty discussion of poetics but quickly returns to descriptions of delighting in nature's joys. Apollo, god of poets, seems to have no direct role in the Endymion/Cynthia section. The god who "bids" songs praising nature is soon transformed into Phoebus, who guides the sun across the sky (line 212), and a piece of art in the form of a statue (line 218). He becomes secondary to Cynthia/the moon,
and it is she who makes the "sweet poets" (line 116) who are capable of describing her relationship with Endymion. The narrator further reinforces Cynthia's status by invoking her as "thou," a term with heavy religious overtones, who "exceedest all things in thy shine" (line 207). By "exceeding all things," she would necessarily exceed Apollo, the source of her shine. There is little in Keats's mythographic sources that would identify Cynthia with such poetic power beyond hints that Endymion could be symbolic of a poet. It is possible that Keats abandons the story because he overextended his own thoughts on religion/mythology and could not come to terms with Cynthia serving at the top of a poetic mythic hierarchy.

Before trying to create his own myth, the narrator declares in the next line that Endymion and Cynthia's tale exceeds all other tales. Symbolically, the narrator has exchanged Apollo for Cynthia as his subject matter, but Cynthia serves not as a god of poets but only as a muse. The actual subject matter the narrator picks, the delightful effects of Endymion and Cynthia's marriage, or, more subtly, the delightful effects of the poet's efforts at describing their union, is ultimately an indulgence in the beauty of nature rather than a serious attempt to engage with some principle underlying nature that will require sacrifice or suffering, as described in the myth of Cupid and Psyche or Pan and Syrinx. In effect, the narrator is acting like the mythical Endymion who chooses to overwhelm himself in thoughts of the moon and wallow in delightful dreams rather than act like one of the other myth poets who reveal truth through myths of hardship. Later, Keats would reverse this action by abandoning Cynthia by his renunciation of Endymion and pursuing an epic that describes Apollo's origins, Hyperion.

"Sleep and Poetry" continues the theme of the narrator's internal dispute between his desire to indulge in nature and his ambition to craft sublime poetry that would draw him closer to the great poets. Instead of seeking to attain Cynthia's love, which would mean indulging in the
lovely and seductive sensations of poetic and natural beauty, Keats tries to distinguish more clearly between such sensory indulgence and a more serious engagement in Apollonian poetry. The lower forms of poetry, including the pastoral, are dominated by the passions while the higher forms, including the epic, deal with more philosophical or metaphysical subject matter. To follow the Apollonian path and become one of the poets in "Ode to Apollo" would require poetic achievement that is held almost exclusively by epic poets. Ayumi Mizukoshi describes the transition from composing pastorals to epic poetry as the "Virgilian poetic programme" and explains, "Twentieth-century Keatsians consider 'Sleep and Poetry' as the young poet's first 'serious' attempt to outline his poetic aspiration for a 'higher' species of poetry." In an attempt to align Keats with Hunt's view on pleasure and not with Virgil, Mizukoshi argues, "Hunt correctly concluded that Keats preferred cheerful and happy poetry to the Virgilian style with which modern Keatsians attempt to align him. Indeed, 'Sleep and Poetry' is composed of a series of youthful invocations to a pastoral muse, and these amount to the main substance of the poem." 

There is little evidence for Mizukoshi's argument within Hunt's review of Keats's poem beyond Hunt titling lines 230 to 247 as "Happy Poetry Preferred." Hunt's title could lead a reader to conclude that Hunt interpreted lines 245 to 247 ("forgetting the great end / Of poesy, that it should be a friend / To sooth the cares, and lift the thoughts of man.") as a suggestion that pleasure is the only way poetry could "sooth" mankind. Additionally, Hunt argues that the poem condemns the lack of solutions to life's problems within the poetry of the earlier Romantic poets.

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142 Mizukoshi p. 120
143 Mizukoshi p. 122
when he contrasts Keats with the "morbidity that taints the productions of the Lake Poet." However, Hunt reveals that he finds Keats lacking; Keats "wants age for a greater knowledge of humanity, but evidences of this also bud forth here and there," which suggests that Keats's views were uncertain and not aligned with any other individual. This consideration is ignored by Mizukoshi, who interprets the narrator's desire to enjoy life's pleasures as the dominant focus of the poem when she argues, "Later in the poem, Keats reiterates that the end and aim of poetry is to 'simply tell the most heart-easing thing' (268). Hence it is likely that what the charioteer writes is not 'the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts', but the pleasures of the pastoral world." Unfortunately, Mizukoshi neglects much of the poem's imagery and abridges her selected quotations too narrowly. When she claims, "Moreover, Keats criticised some other contemporary poets for feeding 'upon the burrs, / And thorns of life; forgetting the great end / Of poesy, that it should be a friend / To soothe the cares' (244-7)," she leaves off "and lift the thoughts of man" (line 247). To "soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of man" does not necessarily imply a euphoric state of pleasure but can be interpreted as lifting mankind to a spiritual enlightenment that would help them ease the burden of this world. Additionally, Jeffrey Cox, a critic with similar views regarding Hunt's influence on "Sleep and Poetry," argues that Keats "embraces a Huntian program" but emphasizes that the poem:

is a response to the worries about Keats's status as a poet voiced in the epistles... This poetic project, which voices Keats's desire to overwhelm himself in poetry so that he can produce first erotic pastoral romances and then a poetry of the "nobler life, / Where I may find the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts," is a Cockney version of the Virgilian progress from pastoral to didactic to epic poetry.

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145 Hunt p. 62  
146 Hunt p. 59  
147 Mizukoshi p. 123  
148 Mizukoshi p. 121 Mizukoshi changes "sooth" to "soothe"  
149 Cox pp. 102-103
Even if we are bound by this interpretation of Keats that poetry must induce euphoric feelings within its audience, Keats still views epic poetry as the ultimate goal of a poet.

It is most likely that epic poetry, not pastoral, is most connected to the "human heart" and is the type of poetry that uplifts the "thoughts of man." This interpretation would transform lines 244 to 247 into a precursor of Keats's idea of the "Vale of Soul-Making" discussed in an 1819 letter to his brother. In the letter, Keats critiques the Christian idea of the world as a "'vale of tears' from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven." In its place, he posits a "Vale of Soul-Making" in which "There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions--but they are not Souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself... I will call the world a School instituted for the purpose of teaching little children to read--I will call the human heart the horn Book read in that School." A fuller discussion of the "Vale of Soul-Making" and the implications the concept has for interpreting Keats's depiction of religion and spirituality will take place in Chapter 5. However, the letter's emphasis on the "human heart" is directly connected to the ideas first described in "Sleep and Poetry." The concept of the "human heart" is connected to education, not pleasure. Keats does not dismiss pleasure's role in education or claim that pleasure cannot educate. Instead, a full understanding of emotions, including those caused by "strife," are necessary for a complete education of the human heart, which is only a primer for later lessons, and there is a parallel between the emphasis in "Sleep and Poetry" on "strife" with the letter's question, "Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways." By linking the poem

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151 Keats 1899 p. 370
152 Keats 1899 p. 370
and letter together, poetry is a tool that would allow an individual to develop his soul, and the poet is given the role of spiritual educator to mankind. In "Sleep and Poetry," Keats has not yet arrived at the same ideological mindset that he held in 1819, but there are enough consistencies in thought to undermine any idea that Keats viewed physical pleasure as the ultimate end of poetry.

By Keats's own poetic admission, it would take him ten years of developing his craft before he could compose epic poetry. This delay of entry into epic poetry can be interpreted as Keats embracing the "Virgilian poetic programme" of progressing from different types of poetry, or it could reinforce Mizukoshi's argument that Keats wished to dwell in the poetry of pleasure. E. C. Pettet explores this issue further: "[Keats] hopes that for some considerable time yet he may continue writing poetry of the sort that he had been steadily composing for a year or more, that poetry of 'luxuries' of which 'I Stood Tip-Toe' is perhaps the best example." He continues:

No one would wish to pin Keats down to a literal meaning in his ten years of 'poesy'. But he obviously had in mind some considerable period of time, and it is not easy to believe that, having indulged in this aspiration during the later part of 1816, he would embark, only four or five months later, on the elaborate metaphysical allegory with which he is now commonly credited. Had he undergone some profoundly transforming experience during the early months of 1817, we could conceive of such a rapid and drastic change in his poetic intentions: his later history as a poet reveals just this phenomenon.... none of these experiences.... appears to be of such intensity and profundity that he would abruptly turn from one kind of poetry to another.

Pettet continues by arguing that Keats's Endymion does not fit a consistent evolution of Keats's poetry, and the length of the poem and the substantial effort necessary for Keats to compose the poem is evidence that Keats abandoned the Virgilian poetic programme and the poetry of pleasure. However, most critics read "Sleep and Poetry" as Keats wallowing in sensuous pleasure,

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154 Pettet p. 129
and they, like Pettet, are unable to explain how Keats transitions into the mindset that led to the composition of *Endymion*.

Analyzing "Sleep and Poetry" together with "I Stood Tip-Toe," in the context of Keats's mythological background and his use of Apollo, provides an explanation as to why Keats "would abruptly turn from one kind of poetry to another."\(^{155}\) "I Stood Tip-Toe" explains how inspiration leads to poetry that teaches truth to mankind while "Sleep and Poetry" defines how poets can serve Apollo. Ultimately, they are two halves of the same whole, with one focusing on the emotional aspects of a poet interacting with the world and the other focusing on the intellectual development of a poet discovering his craft. Although the poems are discussed as individuals, rarely are they ever presented together by critics or discussed in terms of each other. Together, the poems present a struggle between the narrator's desire to write great poetry (represented by Apollo) and his desire to experience the pleasure found in nature (represented by the Endymion/Cynthia coupling). The two poems neither defend the pursuit of pleasure nor embody the Huntian philosophy of poetry for pleasure's sake. Instead, they serve as an attempt by an immature poet to define how he can transition from his juvenile feelings to the characteristics embodied by the great poets. "Sleep and Poetry" is Keats's third attempt to define what it means to follow Apollo and, when viewed in the context of "Ode to Apollo" and "I Stood Tip-Toe," serves to establish the philosophy contained in his later works.

Before discussing the plot and imagery of "Sleep and Poetry," I will first discuss the subject of the work, the combination of "sleep" and "poetry," to provide context for interpreting the poem. As in the introduction of "I Stood Tip-Toe," the poet narrator of "Sleep and Poetry" begins by immersing himself in a sensual world of natural delights. However, this beauty is not

\(^{155}\) Pettet p. 129
found specifically in the real world but through a meditation on the imaginative journeys of sleep, and the narrator is quick to abandon the topic of sleep to discuss poetry/Apollo. To begin the meditation, the narrator posits sleep as greater than both nature ("is more gentle than a wind in summer" line 1) and artifice ("More full of visions than a high romance" line 10). It is a peaceful force ("soft closer of our eyes" line 11) that frees the imagination by allowing the mind to clear itself of all unnecessary thoughts and attune to something higher, which is later revealed as being connected to poetry. Walter Jackson Bate points out that, in "Sleep and Poetry," Keats is "beginning to grope towards a general premise that becomes prominent in the final year of his writing: the Januslike character of the human imagination," and that the beginning section of the poem contains "suggestions leading to the thought of what, following Wordsworth, he later called 'the burden of the mystery.'" Additionally, Bate, like most critics, focuses only on the imagination and dismisses the role of sleep in awakening it within "Sleep and Poetry" ("But the attempt to make 'sleep' an integral part of the poem does not go very far." Instead of treating the act of "sleep" as the common act, Bate posits that Keats is focusing on "what can only be called 'revery'" and then "after only eighteen lines Keats quickly drops all thought of mere revery." Before I am able to continue on with why "sleep" and "poetry" are linked by Keats, it will be necessary to first explore Bate's argument to determine if this nuanced definition affects a reader's understanding of the poem.

Although the term "reverie" is commonly used to denote the act of day dreaming, Bate does not define his usage. Douglas Wilson, in his analysis of dream theory used by Romantic poets, provides a possible explanation: "In the historical climate of Wordsworth's time, dreams

156 Bate pp. 125, 126
157 Bate p. 125
158 Bate pp. 125, 126
were intimately connected to psychological associationism, particularly in the philosophy of John Locke, Dugald Steward, and David Hartley" and then quotes Hartley as saying, "Dreams are nothing but the Imaginations, Fancies, or Reveries of a sleeping Man." Furthermore, Wilson points out that "the presence or absence of will governs the distinction between dreams and reveries" and that Keats uses the term as "preserving a governing trace of the will" that is lacking in a dream. Defining Keats's action as a reverie is not important to understanding "Sleep and Poetry" on its own, but it does allow a critic to define the type of sleep act that the narrator is experiencing in a manner distinct from later uses of sleep within Keats's poetry. Returning to Bate's claim that the poem starts with and then abandons a form of reverie, Bate allows for the poem to "anticipate" Keats's later poems where dreams or dream-like states play an important role, especially in "Ode to a Nightingale," "Lamia," "Eve of St. Agnes," and The Fall of Hyperion, but only in terms of Keats questioning if the event experienced was either a "vision" or a "dream." What Bate ignores is the possibility that dreams, whether reverie or vision, allow Keats's characters to understand and appreciate the universe in a different manner than in their waking state. The dreams in all forms are fundamentally connected to the imagination, and, as Wilson explains:

The close connection between imagination as a creative faculty and as a fabricator of dreams stems from this eighteenth-century psychology of the mind. Wordsworth, Coleridge, De Quincey, and Keats, in various degrees, share this tendency to include in their poetics an analogy between the creative imagination and the power of dreaming.

The use of sleep is not, as Bate suggests, abandoned at the beginning of the poem; the discussion on sleep serves to introduce the audience to the mechanisms of the imagination and influences

160 Wilson pp. 14, 15
161 Wilson p. 13
the poem whenever the imagination is discussed. Additionally, Keats returns to the relationship of sleep and poetry in his conclusion:

The very sense of where I was might well
Keep Sleep aloof: but more than that there came
Thought after thought to nourish up the flame
Within my breast; so that the morning light
Surprised me even from a sleepless night; (lines 396-370)

By beginning and ending with statements on how poetry is analogous yet superior to sleep, Keats provides his readers with a familiar process to contextualize his discussion on poetry. Ultimately, the concept of sleep is the primer to the reader of "Sleep and Poetry," and every later statement is thus defined by the original comparison to sleep.

Taking a cue from Walter Evert's analysis of the Apollonian aesthetic in Keats's poetry, the mythic imagery of Apollo and Cynthia can be associated with the two topics of the poem. Bate does not relate "Sleep and Poetry" to Keats's heavy reliance on the Endymion myth within the early poems, and he fails to acknowledge the echo of the myth within the poem:

Should I rather kneel
Upon some mountain-top until I feel
A glowing splendour round about me hung, (lines 49-51)

These lines return the reader to the description of the poet being inspired by the moon in "I Stood Tip-Toe" as he "stood on Latmus' top" (line 194). By connecting the end of "I Stood Tip-Toe" with the beginning of "Sleep and Poetry" and the original interpretation of Endymion as an immortal dreamer, the reader would come away with the sense that dreams allow one to connect with the Cynthia/moon/nature in a manner similar to how poetry allows one to connect with the Apollo/sun/nature. The superiority of poetry over sleep as described in the poem's introduction and conclusion establishes Apollo and the epic poetic spirit as superior to the dreamer who chases after Cynthia (the "Maker of sweet poets," “Tip Toe” line 116). Keats does not mention
the "dreaming" aspect of Endymion within "I Stood Tip-Toe," and the moon does not appear in "Sleep and Poetry," but both poems take place at night and it can be assumed that Keats's audience would understand night's association with sleep. Additionally, many Romantic poems describe the possibility of wedding, or uniting with, nature to attain a higher sense of the sublime, which is similar to the original Endymion myth. Although Keats's Endymion in "I Stood Tip-Toe" does not join with nature via the act of dreaming, the character's desire to unite with nature is an important theme in Endymion, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Returning to Bate's argument, Keats does not abandon the concept of sleep; it is essential to the argument that Keats is making within the poem. Also, it does not matter to the poem if "sleep" really provides dreams or reverie because poetry is the force that takes on all benefits that can be attributed to sleep without any of the negative qualities.

The use of "Sleep and Poetry" as a title announces Keats's intent to contribute to an already well discussed topic within Romantic, and English, poetry. The idea of dreaming is especially important to Romantic poetry, and dreams or dream-like states are often used to discuss higher truths regarding nature and human psychology. Both Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge make heavy use of dream-like states within their poems, although sometimes to depict the danger of dreaming. In analyzing Wordsworth's use of dreams in particular, Wilson tries to separate "dreams" from "reverie" in terms of Wordsworth's poetry when he points out that "A reverie–a state of mind frequently deployed by Wordsworth in his poetry–differs from a dream by more or less active presence of the will in guiding its train of thought. The dream, in contrast, seems to come from elsewhere, as in classical prophetic dreams, as if from some other will."162 This is an important, yet complicating, distinction to make when discussing Keats

162 Wilson p. 14
because the act of "dream" is often accompanied by an external power, be it benevolent or
demonic, that is guiding or affecting what the dreamer experiences. Within "Sleep and Poetry,"
there is no actual dream, but the introduction and conclusion of the poem describe dreams and
poetry as analogous, and it is possible that poetry can create a dreamlike state that could possibly
be defined in the same manner. Although it doesn't affect my interpretation of the poem, it is hard
for me to accept Bate's labeling of "Sleep and Poetry" as a "reverie" when Apollo seemingly
appears as an external force. In my interpretation, Apollo serves the role of the "will," as
described by Wilson, when the deity creates a pageant containing "Shapes of delight, of mystery,
and fear" (line 138). Also, Apollo is both a presence that seemingly alters the reality of the poem
and the force in nature that guides the poet narrator from topic to topic in "I Stood Tip-Toe" and
"Sleep and Poetry." Even if "Sleep and Poetry" does not describe a true moment of reverie, its
use of political discourse while describing a dreamlike state of mind is similar to Percy Bysshe
Shelley's Queen Mab. With Shelley's use of sleep as a frame, the narrator of Queen Mab enters
into long discourses on a variety of political and religious topics. It is beyond the scope of this
analysis to describe the similarities between the two poems, but one reason why both Keats and
Shelley use sleep to introduce their discourse is that sleep allows an individual to enter fully into
a world of his imagination and transcend the limitations of the physical world. Additionally,
sleep frees Shelley's narrator from his social and moral influences and allows him to travel to a
new world, an ideal world, for a short time. Sleep allows an individual the a chance to reshape
his own universe as Keats and Shelley hoped that their poetry could reshape the waking universe.
Keats would later question the benefits of mere dreaming in The Fall of Hyperion because the
dreamers have little impact on this world, but, at this point in Keats's life, sleep is a boon to
mankind.
Beyond the similarity between the poet's and the dreamer's desire to improve society, both "sleep" and "poetry" have a similar, physical effect on mankind. As Ronald Sharp argues, "Like sleep, poetry has performed its symbolic function of restoration... [Keats] has spent the night contemplating poetry and as a result his strength has been renewed." However, Keats places a greater emphasis on poetry ("But what is higher beyond thought than thee?" and "It has a glory, and nought else can share it" lines 19 and 24) because poetry is able to provide, to a greater extent, all of the benefits of sleep. The ability of both sleep and poetry to free the imagination ("full of visions" line 10) is the source of their restorative benefits that comfort humanity ("Chacing away all worldlines and folly" line 26). Keats is repeating Wordsworth's argument in "Personal Talk" that poetry is able to unleash the reader's imagination in a greater way than sleep:

Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,  
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:  
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,  
Our pastime and our happiness will grow. ("Personal Talk" lines 33-36)

Keats was not yet skeptical of dreamers, a skepticism hinted in "Lamia" and revealed in The Fall of Hyperion, but he does reveal his struggle to reconcile a poet's duty to mankind with the pleasure that can come from dreaming within "Sleep and Poetry." Two decades before, Coleridge asks in his "Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement,"

Was it right,  
While my unnumber'd brethren toil'd and bled,  
That I should dream away the entrusted hours  
On rose-leaf beds, pampering the coward heart  
With feelings all too delicate for use? ("Reflections" lines 44-48)

There are no blatant allusions to Coleridge's argument within "Sleep and Poetry," but Keats

163 Sharp p. 72
makes claims similar to Coleridge when the narrator points out that it is poetry, not sleep, that chases "away all worldlines and folly" (line 26). The need to abandon dreams and help mankind is further reinforced when Apollo, god of the sun and poetry, comes down in his chariot to guide the narrator out of the garden of pleasure. But when Keats asks for ten more years to dwell in pleasure ("O for ten years, that I may overwhelm / Myself in poesy" lines 96-97), he is asking for more time to dream/dwell in personal pleasure before he is forced to improve the world. He wishes to enjoy poetry, and the poetic spirit, before he becomes bound by duty and obligation to serve mankind. The narrator is possibly concerned that he could become like the narrator of *Intimations of Immortality*, who, in his old age and having lost his ability to see the sublime in nature, asks,

A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream? (*Intimations* lines 52–57)

Within Wordsworth's ode, the narrator describes how in his younger years he could experience the sublime within nature, but he becomes further incapable of witnessing the divine light as he ages. It is likely that a young poet anxious over the transient ability to experience the sublime (e.g. the young Wordsworth or young Keats) would devote his youth to experiencing nature. *Intimations* held great influence over the young Keats, and, as David Rannie pointed out a century ago, Keats "was never wearing of repeating the *Intimations of Immortality* Ode." 164

Ultimately, either Wordsworth is correct that pleasure from nature may be unattainable in old age

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or Coleridge is right to argue that poets choose to abandon personal pleasure to fulfill their moral obligation to mankind. The two philosophies are competing in "Sleep and Poetry," and the youthful poet narrator is unable to adopt one over the other. Returning to my previous associations of sleep and pleasant poetry with Cynthia and duty to humanity and epic poetry with Apollo, the narrator of "I Stood Tip-Toe" embraces the pleasurable side of poetry only to reject it in "Sleep and Poetry." The narrator in the latter poem desires more than anything to follow Apollo and become immortal, "That is to crown our name when life is ended" (line 36). However, the narrator's anxiety over losing the joy that he finds in composing poetry is present throughout the poem.

At this point in "Sleep and Poetry," the narrator is struggling to understand his motivation in writing poetry, but throughout the poem there is a sense that the narrator desires more than anything to achieve a connection to the immortal world. Although the narrator holds his pen for "Poesy" (line 47) and he seeks its "wide heaven" (line 49), poesy is either the material or metaphysical substance for Keats's heaven instead of the ruler over such a location. Later lines attribute Apollo as the ruler when the narrator asks for Poesy to "yield... some clear air" so he "may die a death of luxury" and "follow the morning sunbeams to the great Apollo" (lines 58-60). There is nothing in Keats's mythographic sources that attributes to Apollo dominion over a heavenly afterlife, and, as with "Ode to Apollo," the setting is more likely influenced by a Christian understanding of Heaven than by a Greco-Roman depiction of the afterlife if "heaven" is to be taken as a location instead of representing the pseudo-immortality that comes from being famous throughout history. Furthermore, it is curious that the narrator suggests that he could enter Apollo's heaven without a great poetic achievement implicitly required to be one of the immortal poets in "Ode to Apollo." The Apollo of "Sleep and Poetry" cannot be interpreted as a
metaphor for poetry, or the heaven of poetry. Instead, the character is the god and master of the immortal poetic domain. He is effectively the guide and inspiration of those poets who seek out the heaven of poetry that, while having characteristics of other theological systems, appears to be Keats's own creation. The heaven Keats describes is an "eternal book whence I may copy many a love saying / about the leaves and flowers" (lines 65-66) and all the other natural interactions, which provides a loose connection to the immortal world described in "Ode to Apollo" where the poets and Apollo join in the song of nature. What is important in these lines is that the narrator imagines himself as the direct author of his subject matter, not merely repeating what he saw in nature or talking about the subject matter of other poets, and that subject matter is used as some kind of sacrifice to Apollo; he is trying to become the poet of Endymion's tale rather than becoming Endymion, which will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

Then, for the first time in the poem, Keats tries directly to imagine what his own Apollonian content could be. The narrator diverges from the dreams into a discussion about the worth of life, abandoning the parallel with the Endymion myth to focus on the real world that dreams can never truly replace. "Life is but a day," but the poet is searching for "wings to find out an immortality" (lines 85, 84). The key to the immortality is overwhelming "myself in poesy" and the moments that inspire it to "do the deed that my own soul has to itself decreed" (line 97). Keats recognizes that he can't help himself at this stage or avoid indulgence in the garden of "Flora, and old Pan" (line 102). Ian Jack, trying to identify a source for the garden, argues,

Keats must first have come on the Realm of Flora in Ovid, or in some guidebook of mythology such as Spence's Polymetis... The subject of the painting was suggested by the passage in the Fasti where Ovid apostrophizes Flora and describes the origin of the flowers in her garden. On the left of the painting, in which details from the Metamorphoses are also introduced, we see a statue of Pan, Ajax committing suicide, Clytia gazing in the sun, and Narcissus admiring himself in the water, with Echo besides him... Such is the origin of the different
kinds of flowers. The charioteer is Apollo, god of the sun... While it is probable that Keats would have understood the allusion to the *Fasti*, it is on the other aspect of the garden that he concentrates, the aspect that led Spence to describe the garden of Flora as 'the paradise in the Roman mythology'. Keats follows Poussin, but he follows him freely and without constraint. He is only interested in the walled garden, the nymphs, Flora, and Apollo with his steeds and his chariot.  

Jack does not look to another of Keats's sources, Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary*, which emphasizes that Flora was possibly a prostitute and deeply connected to physical pleasure, and he does not connect the images of Pan, Narcissus, or Echo to their inclusion in "I Stood Tip-Toe." In another passage, Jack explains that the myths mentioned in "I Stood Tip-Toe" "can be used to describe the origin of poetry" but he does not acknowledge the pain and suffering described within the original myths. It is possible that there is pain and suffering even in Keats's version of the Realm of Flora, but there is also overwhelming beauty. Later, Keats explains that a world filled with sensory delights is replaced with pain in his conception of a "Mansion of Many Apartments," but the narrators of Keats's early poems do not experience the next stage of development that follows the loss of sensory delight and the associated suffering. He is still the juvenile poet who is allowed to enjoy life's pleasures and not submit to duty.  

After dwelling in a world of floral bliss, the narrator declares that "ten years" later he will "bid these joys farewell" for "a nobler life," in which he could experience and write about "the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts" (lines 122-125). He will be able to write about painfully true emotions because he witnesses a Charioteer who "with wondrous gestures talks / To the trees and mountains" and creates "shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear," all concepts derived from sensual experience but not bound to the limitations of the material world (lines 136-137).

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165 Jack pp. 136-137  
166 Lemprière p. 301  
167 Jack p. 144
Many critics have difficulty in attributing an identity to the Charioteer, but the image matches the iconography of Apollo found within Keats's mythographic sources. In particular, Tooke explains that "Apollo (who is the sun), by his light, makes all things manifest," and Lempière attributes to Apollo control over plagues, reinforcing the god's ability to instill fear in addition to delight. The "Sleep and Poetry" version of Apollo is able to reveal knowledge of more difficult truths about human life than those Keats has previously managed to encompass in his poems. This point is briefly taken up by Jack to argue that Keats, the poet, was able to free himself from the world of natural pleasure described earlier in the poem: "While Apollo in 'The Realm of Flora' is primarily if not exclusively the god of the sun, in 'Sleep and Poetry' he is the god of poetry, who is directing Keats away from the enchanted garden and towards the world of men and of suffering." Jack then relies on Keats's characterization of Milton to describe Keats's own symbolic abandonment of the pleasure garden: "If Keats had not, like Milton, 'broken through the clouds which envelope so deliciously the Elysian field of verse' and followed Apollo on his adventurous course, we should never have seen Saturn 'Deep in the shady sadness of a vale.' Ultimately, if the narrator is describing the pleasure garden as an optimal way of living, or if he is agreeing with a libertine philosophy that some critics have attributed to Leigh Hunt, then the early poems provide little explanation for why Keats turns to the darker truths in his later narrative poem, Hyperion, or why he set a deadline for abandoning the garden to attempt to compose a poem with elements of heroic or epic poetry. Furthermore, Apollo's appearance suggests that Keats already feels the urge to transition beyond a world of pleasure immediately. This is especially true when a reader considers what Ryan Sharp points out, "That poetry now

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168 Tooke p. 46
169 Jack p. 138
170 Jack p. 139
replaces religion as a vital and significant means of consolation is emphasized by Keats in the extravagantly elaborate religious imagery which pervades the poem."¹⁷¹ Although Sharp describes how religious language is used by Keats to describe poetry, he fails to discuss Apollo's role within the poem or how the god enlightens the narrator. Before continuing to describe the progress of the poem, I will focus on Apollo's appearance at the garden in theological and metaphysical terms to explain the importance of Apollo's role within the poem.

Curiously, Sharp fails to discuss the ramifications of Apollo's creation of the shapes or how the narrator's imagination is touched by Apollo's creations. If poetry is a replacement for religion, then a pagan deity who goes about creating new life would have a vital role in this new religion. The narrator asks and answers:

> And can I ever bid these joys farewell?  
> Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,  
> Where I may find the agonies, the strife  
> Of human hearts: for lo! I see afar  
> O'er sailing the blue cragginess, a car  
> And steeds with streamy manes—the charioteer (lines 124-126)

The use of "I must" suggests that Keats is obligated to transition beyond a life of pleasure, and the use of religious language combined with Apollo's appearance suggests that this transition is a moral imperative. The god that appears is the ultimate poet, one who creates images of human life in all of its forms: the "Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear... murmur, laugh, and smile, and weep" (lines 138, 142). These lines recall a similar passage in "I Stood Tip-Toe" where other shapes are called into existence:

> Where had he been, from whose warm head out-flew  
> That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,  
> That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,  
> Coming ever to bless

¹⁷¹ Sharp p. 73
The wanderer by moonlight? to him bringing
Shapes from the invisible world ("Tip Toe" lines 181-186)

In these lines, the song springs forth from the lips of the poet, but, when combined with Apollo's description as a creator above, it is likely that the poet is merely sharing in the creative force that Apollo first provided to him. Although a reader could interpret Apollo as a metaphor for a poet within "Sleep and Poetry," the description of Apollo as the "great God of Bards" in "Ode to Apollo" suggests that he is a metaphysical force. Apollo's role as god of virtue and knowledge within Keats's mythographic sources is often overlooked by critics. Common to all of Keats's sources, the god of poetry and knowledge shares his divine will by inspiring art, possessing prophets/oracles, or appearing in dreams. Apollo's gifts touch heroes, statesmen, philosophers, and poets, driving them all towards helping mankind and bettering civilizations. He promotes virtue and punishes those who succumb to vice, which is most thoroughly dramatized in *The Aeneid*. Although Apollo does not issue laws or commandments within any of Keats's early poems, the images that fill the narrator's sight inspire a thirst for knowledge beyond that which he can gleam from the sight: "O that I might know / All that he writes with such a hurrying glow" (lines 153-154). The narrator is inspired to write his own poetry, and it is implied that the poetry he would seek to write, most likely a long narrative incorporating elements of epic poetry, would be of a kind that is pleasing to Apollo because it serves mankind.

This moment of inspiration is especially important because it is fleeting ("The visions all are fled—the car is fled / Into the light of heaven" lines 155-156), which creates a parallel to Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*. Both poets describe their experience as sublime visions, and Wordsworth's narrator's faith and hope derived from his experience:

What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind; (Intimations Stanza X, lines 168-173)

These lines are comparable to the confidence of Keats's narrator:

The visions all are fled—the car is fled
Into the light of heaven, and in their stead
A sense of real things comes doubly strong,
And, like a muddy stream, would bear along
My soul to nothingness: but I will strive
Against all doubtings, and will keep alive
The thought of that same chariot, and the strange
Journey it went. (lines 155-162)

While both passages fixate on the memory of the experience, the sublime experience of "Sleep and Poetry" is the narrator's exposure to an active, divine force of creativity. Another difference between the two poems is that the narrator of "Sleep and Poetry" attributes the loss of Apollo's presence to the degradation of mankind and not the aging of an individual:

Is there so small a range
In the present strength of manhood, that the high
Imagination cannot freely fly
As she was wont of old? (lines 162-165)

The narrator is surrounded by evidence that the sublime still exists in both nature ("new buds unfolding" line 169) and art ("Jove's large eye-brow" line 170), yet there is no one "who could paragon / The fervid choir" (lines 172-173). Mankind is blind to the glory of Apollo because the great poets found within Keats's "Ode to Apollo" are no more. The poem breaks off from the narrative and begins a discourse on the problems that plague society and contemporary poetry, and I will break down Keats's argument to define what Keats establishes as criteria for the poems that would best serve Apollo and mankind.

The second half of "Sleep and Poetry" contains Keats's critique of English poetry and
poets. Keats frames his critique with a claim that certain schools of poets have transgressed against Apollo, and the narrator promises a discussion on what attributes a poet must exhibit to please the god. The Elizabethan muses were "nigh cloy'd / With honors" while the 18th century was filled with the "foppery and barbarism" (lines 178-179, 182). The Neoclassical poets "were thought wise," but they "could not understand [Apollo's] glories" because they transformed poetry into a mechanical act that served as a poor imitator of the sublime—a "rocking horse" instead of a Pegasus (lines 184-185). Keats makes his contempt of bad poets clear when he claims that these lesser poets have "blasphemed the bright Lyrist to his face / And did not know it" (lines 202-203). From the accounts of his contemporaries and admission in his letters, Keats's view on poetics was heavily influenced by the writing of Leigh Hunt and William Hazlitt. Matthew Bevis points out that the "rocking horse" line is an allusion to Hazlitt's claim that "Dr Johnson and Pope would have converted his vaulting Pegasus into a rock-horse." The line is from Hazlitt's essay "On Milton's Versification," and the surrounding passage provides insight into Keats's possible targets:

The verse in this exquisitely modulated passage floats up and down as if it had itself wings Milton has himself given us the theory of his versification. "In many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out."
Dr Johnson and Pope would have converted his vaulting Pegasus into a rocking-horse. Read any other blank verse but Milton's, --Thomson's, Young's, Cowper's, Wordsworth's, --and it will found from the want of the same insight "the hidden soul of harmony," to be mere lumbering prose. 

Although the subjects would have been the same, Milton's language and presentation could not be imitated by the Neoclassical poets.

Keats does not condemn any of the men mentioned by Hazlitt, as a reader of "Sleep and

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Poetry" might expect. Instead, Keats targets Boileau, a foreigner, and he avoids directly insulting any British poet. The lesser poets, as "Sleep and Poetry" describes,

    went about,
    Holding a poor, decrepit standard out
    Mark'd with most flimsy mottos, and in large
    The name of one Boileau! (lines 203-206)

Alexander Clark provides background on Boileau: "by his references to 'must laws', 'wretched rule', and 'compass vile', Keats obviously means to identify Boileau with the narrowest school of Aristotelian formalists... and to throw upon him full responsibility for its dominance in England." Clark continues his defense of Boileau by asking, "The question arises, was Keats competent to give a judgment on Boileau? Had he even read him? There is no evidence on this point, but this is the only place where he ever mentions him." Walter Jackson Bate sides with Clark and argues that "Within two and a half years he was to think far differently, and to begin his poem Lamia only after a respectful study of Dryden's versification." There is no evidence within the poem, or from the Hazlitt source, that Dryden is an implied target of the poem or representative of the poetry that Keats sought to condemn. Porscha Fermanis connects this reference to Boileau to a broader critique of socio-political history: "Britain's poetry, like its politics, has fallen into a 'wretched rule' from which it may be rescued by 'a fairer season'. The reference to the curtailment of the imagination in lines 163-5 is therefore as much political as it is literary." However, it seems that the poetic rot that created "this unholy place" stems from decadent foreigners who have no influence in the current "fairer season" (lines 210, 221).

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175 Clark p. 94
176 Bate 1963 p. 128
Furthermore, there is no mockery of contemporary poets as found in Hunt's "The Feast of the Poets," the source for "Ode to Apollo." This suggests that Britain, even in its lowest moment, would always offer "some lone spirits who could proudly sing / Their youth away, and die" (lines 218-219), establishing a sort of British poetic-exceptionalism not accounted for by critics of Keats's poetry.

"Sleep and Poetry" transitions at this point from a condemnation of blasphemy to an expression of hope. There is a revitalization of poetry taking place in early 19th-century Britain, the "sweet music" that represents the appearance of the Romantic school of poets (line 223). Although the poets' "themes / Are ugly clubs," their "strange thunders" have the "potency of song" and combine "what is sweet and strong" (lines 231, 232, 234). The new poetry is beautiful but sad, and it forces the audience to focus on the painful aspects of life. In order to fulfill the true function of poetry, to "be a friend / To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of man," Keats implies that poetry should fully return to the more natural and emotionally attractive images of Shakespeare (lines 246-247). The narrator alludes to this revitalization when he points out that

a myrtle fairer than
E'er grew in Paphos, from the bitter weeds
lifts its sweet head into the air, and feeds
A silent space with ever sprouting green. (lines 248-251)

Both the myrtle and Paphos are connected to the Greco-Roman goddess Aphrodite/Venus, and the connecting of the goddess with a natural object is reminiscent of the relationships between Cylene and the moon in "I Stood Tip-Toe." The narrator in both poems has the power to reform the world and create a better result through their poetry, but the narrator of "Sleep and Poetry" calls upon others to join him: "Then let us clear away the choaking thorns / From round its gentle stem" (lines 255-256).
Keats recognizes that he is obligated to serve mankind, but his inability to establish the method of his service leads him to the frustration similar to that found at the end of "Tip-toe" and almost to the resignation to a life as mere listener described at the end of the "Ode to Apollo."

The narrator, in seeking punishment for pursuit beyond his limits, describes "Dedalian wings" melting, the very warning to Aeneas on the frieze of Apollo's temple when he seeks the Sybil's help in the *Aeneid*. Traditionally, the story describes Icarus as flying too close to the sun and punished for challenging nature. The story also warns that those who stray from their destined path, whether Aeneas from Italy or Icarus from Crete, will only face ruin. By diverging into a criticism of 18th-century poets, the narrator has again dodged the issue of what the true subject and purpose of his own poetry should be. The narrator asks for "sweet relief" in exchange for dwelling "on humbler thoughts," and gets it—about 92 lines of indulgence in some more delicious natural imagery. For the third time, the narrator slips back into the sensory, abandoning an in-depth discussion on how poets should serve Apollo. The narrator eventually awakens after concluding his meditation with images of nature and of human interactions, which represents how the imagination in states such as sleep and contemplation of poetry only repeats the cycle between sensory bliss and longing for something higher. The progression towards discussing a poetic ideal has stalled because the sleep-like meditation on the pleasures of poetry, Keats's immediate source of inspiration, provides only a sense of longing and non-fulfillment. As at the end of "I Stood Tip-Toe," the narrator is ultimately more similar to the mythic Endymion and the gentle poets who are under the influence of the moon/sensory pleasure than to the immortal, epic poets of "Ode to Apollo." Keats focuses on the enjoyment of poetry and not on the spreading of truth, but the early poems reveal his desire to composing a poem worthy of the immortal poets that will serve a higher purpose.
From *Poems to Endymion*

Before analyzing the use of myth in *Endymion*, I will briefly discuss the transitional period of Keats's life that followed the publication of *Poems* to provide context for my analysis of the later poem. In "Sleep and Poetry," Keats describes how poets naturally progress from writing simple poetry to poetry of a greater complexity until they reach the pinnacle stage of composing what Mizukoshi refers to as a “‘higher' species of poetry," which includes epic poetry.\(^{178}\) Although he did not immediately know how to craft a “‘higher” poem, he had many examples to follow as revealed in his choice of the immortal poets in "Ode to Apollo."

Additionally, "I Stood Tip-Toe" was originally titled "Endymion" and planned to be longer, which reveals Keats's early desire to compose a lengthy narrative poem. Keats originally asked for ten years ("O for ten years, that I may overwhelm / Myself in poesy" lines 96-97), but an overwhelming fixation on poetic immortality combined with personal circumstances encouraged him to pursue immediately the crafting of a long, narrative poem.

Following the completion of *Poems*, Keats experienced three events that were essential to his transition into a mature poet. During the first event, Shelley proposed to Keats that, in the words of Andrew Motion, "they should both write a long poem to silence their enemies, and regard the enterprise as a form of friendly competition."\(^{179}\) During the second event, Haydon convinced Keats to view the Elgin Marbles, and their friendship grew stronger at the expense of Keats's other relationships. During the third event, Hunt crowned Keats with laurels, and Keats was later filled with shame when others witnessed the laurels upon his head and his pretentious behavior while wearing them.

\(^{178}\) Mizukoshi p. 120

\(^{179}\) Motion p. 145
Of the three events, the donning of the laurels is the most significant because it provoked a sudden transition from Keats's youthful use of Apollo as god of poetry to the use of Apollo as the god of truth, especially harsh truth. Although a crowning of laurels upon the head of a young poet was a traditional act that marked their entrance into the profession, Walter Jackson Bate points out that the event "disturbed Keats."\(^\text{180}\) The laurels, as Keats's poetic imagery suggests, represent the crowning achievement of attaining the Apollonian ideal. Thus, for Keats to be awarded laurels would show that he, like the master poets, was worthy of fame and immortality. However, he foolishly showed off to multiple guests, acting in a manner he considered inappropriate. As a result, he was filled with self-loathing and shame, and these feelings were deepened following Hunt's publicizing the event in poetic form. According to Motion, "Keats was troubled by Hunt's indiscretion; he also felt that by fooling with the paraphernalia of poetry he had betrayed the calling he had embraced in 'Sleep and Poetry.'"\(^\text{181}\) Ultimately, the event, as Bate points out, "led to a penitent, half-playful ‘Ode to Apollo' [Hymn to Apollo]."\(^\text{182}\)

"Hymn to Apollo" serves as a transitional poem between *Poems* and *Endymion*, and the hymn reveals why Keats attempted to compose “higher” poetry as promised in "Sleep and Poetry." As a response to the laurel incident, the hymn captures Keats's anxiety over straying from the path of Apollo by composing unworthy poetry. Although many critics, including Bate, view the poem as playful or semi-playful, I agree with Walter Evert when he says, "I would yet affirm that the supposition of its playfulness finds no confirmation in the uniformly contrite and reverent diction of the poem."\(^\text{183}\) In Keats's Apollonian poems, the great poets were like saints, Apollo's realm was the poetic Heaven, and poems were an act of creation that joined with the

\(^{180}\) Bate 1963 p. 138  
\(^{181}\) Motion p. 148  
\(^{182}\) Bate 1963 p. 138  
\(^{183}\) Evert pp. 180-181
natural song. However, Keats's poems lacked serious subject matter, and he could do little until this point but comment on the works of other poets and attempt to mimic them. To write a poem of repentance for a blasphemous act, especially one with the same title as a previous devotional poem, reveals a serious desire to abandon his juvenile ways.

Keats mirrors his early poems acknowledging Apollo's glory and the immortality of poetry within "Hymn to Apollo," but the tone substitutes the glorious moment of recognition with feelings of despair. The hymn transforms into a lament for the transgressions of the laurels, emphasizing the moment that the narrator reevaluates his role with Apollo and tries to grasp the true purpose that Apollo has for the budding poet. The narrator invokes Apollo using the iconographic terms traditional to classical mythology within the first five lines, and he only deviates from Keats's source material by substituting Apollo's silver bow for a golden bow. The use of "charioteer" repeats the appearance of Apollo within "Sleep and Poetry," which transforms the hymn into a commentary on Keats's actions regarding the path of poetic progress described at the beginning of "Sleep and Poetry." Although the poem relies on religious terms and phrases, there is neither a temple as found in "Ode to Apollo" nor a witnessing of Apollo and his glory as found in "I Stood Tip-Toe" or "Sleep and Poetry." Instead, he invokes Apollo as "O Delphic Apollo!" (line 12), which establishes the god's relationship to prophecy and the tragic fate of those who ignore the warnings of the oracles. The narrator is disconnected from the beautiful aspects of Apollo because he, "like a blank idiot," tried to write poetry and, pretending to be a master poet, "put on [Apollo's] wreath" (line 8). However, the oracles, especially the Sibyl of the Aeneid, serve as a medium between man and god, which is a new aspect of connecting to the divine that Keats had not yet described until now. Within Keats's mythographic sources and the Aeneid, Apollo is described as directly possessing his oracles, twisting and turning the bodies
with his impressive power and using them as conduits to the masses to reveal raw truth.

Although oracles play an important role later in *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*, the narrator of "Hymn to Apollo" expects to be destroyed, not transformed into a conduit for Apollo's truth. Neither happen, and the narrator is left confused and filled with shame ("was I a worm – too low-creeping, for death?" line 11).

The narrator then turns his attention to the "Thunderer," invoking Jupiter and his retributive punishment for blasphemy. Although Apollo in Keats's sources is able to punish others, it is Jupiter who is used as a figure of destruction. It is imperative that Jupiter becomes filled with wrath over such an incident; the narrator is unable to comprehend the universe without divine justice "muttering to be unbound" (line 19) and punishing blasphemers. As Keats wrote these lines, Shelley was composing *Prometheus Unbound*, which depicted Jupiter as a rigid god of justice. There is little evidence to show that the use of "unbound" in relation to Jupiter is more than coincidental, but it is important to note that Keats's Jupiter differs from Shelley's in that his does not act to "crush" the "pitiful germ" of the narrator (line 23). The narrator believes himself a sinner, but he was saved when Apollo played his "soft lute/ till the thunder was mute" (line 21-22). The mercy shown towards the narrator, not explained or justified within the poem, could be the result of the "Delphic" Apollo foreseeing the narrator's desire to transform from a blasphemer into one who composes poetry that inspires mankind. If Keats's Apollo is showing compassion towards a sinner, then the god is more Christ-like and less Greco-Roman. Ultimately, Apollo's form of divine justice is not manifested in plagues or wrath but the light of revelation that exposes the flaws of the narrator. With this knowledge, the narrator can then learn and develop an understanding of the Apollonian ideal necessary to becoming a great poet.
The narrator's confusion over a lack of divine punishment coincides with humility, and the moment of arrogance (donning the laurels) leads to an Apollonian lesson that poets must abandon personal pursuits and serve mankind. The last stanza introduces the image of the Pleiades, who are dually described in Lemprière's dictionary as seven Egyptian poets and seven stars. This duality, combined with their true name, the Vergille or spring, provides Keats with an image that combines nature with immortal poets and serves as an extension of Keats's themes in "Sleep and Poetry" and "I Stood Tiptoe." Furthermore, the biographical events of the laurels took place when the Pleiades were visible in the night sky, which serves to further identify Keats with the hymn's subject, and their appearance is symbolic of the immortality that he wishes to obtain if he is able to move beyond his transgression against Apollo. As the poem describes, the time of the Pleiades is one of new beginnings, and "the seeds and roots in Earth/were swelling for summer fare" (lines 27-28). The narrator, the "germ," is transformed from a minute creation into a seed from which new life can spring. The narrator recognizes that Apollo calls for a new beginning, a poetic life that leads not to immortality but only to understanding natural truth and capturing it in poetic form for future readers. The narrator is given a second chance because he has humbled himself before the mighty Apollo. The narrator, like Aeneas before him, has strayed briefly from the path that Apollo had laid before him but is brought back so that he may serve the divine will. However, Keats is a poet, not a warrior like Aeneas, and he must follow Virgil's by producing an epic that can guide future generations in virtue.

"Hymn to Apollo" marks Keats's personal transition from the light of "maiden thought," as found in "Tip-Toe" and "Sleep and Poetry," to the thoughts of misery and pain that he described in a May 1818 letter. This letter, describing the "Mansion of Many Apartments" with its "Chamber of Maiden-Thought," will be discussed in the next chapter because it provides
structure for Keats's later narrative poems. However, the letter is useful in discussing his earlier poems because it provides a psychological explanation for why Keats's poems move from pleasure-seeking narrators to those who search for truth and a higher power within the universe. Keats's personal view of life became more cynical and his narrators, who often serve as a mouthpiece for the author, were no longer satisfied by escaping into nature's beauties. Keats's early pastoral narrators wallow in the pleasures of the natural world, which places them in the "Chamber of Maiden-Thought" where "we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight." The pleasures lead to "sharpening one's vision into the nature and heart of Man," which causes pain and anguish similar to that expressed by the narrator in "Hymn to Apollo." These dark thoughts lead to another state of being, the "burden of mystery" that could eventually lead one to truth. Keats, when writing the letter, did not know what lay beyond the "burden of mystery stage." However, he did know that poetic immortality was linked to epic poetry ("Ode to Apollo"), and that pastoral must lead to epic as pleasure must lead to suffering.

Keats's embarrassment over prematurely donning laurels cannot be proven to be the catalyst for his transition into more serious poetry, but it coincides with a general shift away from the self-indulgent and often hedonistic world of Leigh Hunt. After the publication of *Poems*, Hunt's affection shifted to Percy Bysshe Shelley just as Keats was growing dissatisfied with the behavior of his former mentor. By July, Keats's friendship with Hunt could no longer last, and, as Andrew Motion claims, "he was repelled by Hunt's domestic difficulties, and saddened by their differences. He could no longer 'talk about Poetry [to Hunt] in the way I should have liked.'" Distance grew between Keats and the newly developed Hunt/Shelley circle following an

184 Keats 1899 p. 302
185 Motion p. 155
argument between Shelley and Haydon over Shelley's insults against Christianity. Keats's silence during the fight "suggests a certain sympathy with Shelley's views," but Motion also points out that "Haydon had good reason for believing that [Keats's] silence was supportive." Regardless of Keats's personal opinion on the argument, the hostility exhibited by Hunt's new circle alienated Keats at the same time he was becoming critical of his earlier views. As long as he stayed with Hunt, he was drawn into the poetry of pleasure, youthful radicalism, and an emphasis on the pastoral. However, Keats was maturing in both form and ideology, and he had to move on in a physical and symbolic manner. By the time he started composing his first attempt at epic *Endymion*, Keats surrounded himself with more moderate and traditionally-minded friends, especially Haydon, John Reynolds, and Richard Woodhouse. He also turned to the moderate John Taylor and James Hessey for publishing after being dropped by the radical publishers, Charles and James Ollier, who were closely connected to Shelley. This new group was supportive in a way that Hunt was not; they encouraged artistic achievement without pushing a political agenda. They also, according to Motion, "demonstrated how lyric descriptiveness could be allied to 'knowledge'." For a poet who is seeking to embrace the "burden of mystery," the company of Haydon, Reynolds, and Woodhouse were very supportive. Any influence that Hunt held over Keats's poetic style would have surely been diminished after Hunt's callous response to Book I of *Endymion*, and there was no going back for Keats.

*Endymion*

*Endymion* is Keats's first attempt at composing a poem similar to those written by the

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186 Motion p. 142
187 Motion p. 160
immortal poets within "Ode to Apollo, and the poem describes a man's question to unite with a divine force of nature. In his letters, Keats originally referred to "I Stood Tip-Toe" as "Endymion," and it seems that he always wanted to expand the earlier subject into a much longer work. Ultimately, Endymion is that expansion, and Keats's statement on the origin of myth and poetic inspiration from that earlier poem are present in the later work. Additionally, Endymion is of such length and quality to cast it in the same line of "higher" poetry as discussed in "Sleep and Poetry," cutting short the "ten years" the younger Keats sought to "overwhelm" himself in joyful poetry.

Through early attempts to describe a poet's interaction with nature and the divine, the narrators of "I Stood Tip-Toe" and "Sleep and Poetry" attempt to attain a state of poetic immortality that is connected to Apollo. However, these poems are unsatisfactory to Keats, as his behavior following the donning of the laurels incident reveals. It is possible that he felt his early poems lack in poetic grandeur because they focus too much on the pleasures of the world and the glory of personal recognition. However, it could be that Keats felt that the poems were limited by the pastoral form and therefore could never be "great." If the latter is true, then Endymion can be seen as the first true attempt to write a poem worthy of immortality. As for the former, Endymion has been traditionally characterized as embracing a Huntian pursuit of pleasure. The poem does contain an understanding of nature that is more mature and akin to the "burden of mystery," which is revealed through analyzing how Keats uses Apollo and Greek myth to form his narrative. Thus, I will argue that Endymion is both an attempt at greatness through form and a message that encourages people to seek the divine instead of the material world.

Apollonian imagery permeates Endymion, and there are many critical studies that reveal certain phrases or images that may relate to Greco-Roman mythology. However, I will limit my
focus to the relationship between Endymion and the god Apollo and how it differs from the
relationship between Endymion and the goddess Cynthia, which requires defining Endymion's
relationship with the goddess. Within *Endymion*, a poet named Endymion travels the world in
romantic pursuit of Cynthia, the goddess of the moon, in a similar manner to the story described
in Shelley's *Alastor*. Post-Freudian critics spend a great deal of time highlighting the sexual
innuendo and courtship techniques described within the poem, and many of these critics
mistakenly assume that Cynthia's role is that of a sex object. One of the most egregious examples
of this type of analysis can be found in Richard Turley's *Keats's Boyish Imagination*: "By
focusing on Diana's feet, a fetishized substitute for the missing phallus, Keats hopes to avoid
unpleasant thoughts of castration."\(^{188}\) This strong claim refers to this passage in Book I:

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yet she had,
Indeed, locks bright enough to make me mad;
And they were simply gordian'd up and braided,
Leaving, in naked comelines, unshaded,
Her pearl round ears, white neck, and orbed brow;
The which were blended in, I know not how,
With such a paradise of lips and eyes,
Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faintest sighs,
That, when I think thereon, my spirit clings
And plays about its fancy, till the stings
Of human neighbourhood envenom all.
Unto what awful power shall I call?
To what high fane?—Ah! see her hovering feet,
More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely sweet
Than those of sea-born Venus, when she rose
From out her cradle shell. (Book I, lines 612-627)
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There is no reason to discuss "phalluses" or sex in general because Endymion is describing the
goddess to his sister ("thy soft hand, fair sister! let me shun/Such follying before thee," lines 611-
612). Instead, her feet are one of many aspects of her form that are described, and there is no

fetishizing of any body part because they are equally treated. Keith White follows Turley's mistake and devotes three pages to the line "Ah! See her hovering feet," yet he fails to recognize that the emphasis in the line, "hovering," is used to denote Cynthia as a goddess. A less sexualized interpretation of the 15 line description is that Keats's constant highlighting of the "white" or "blue" aspects of her complexion and "round" or "orbed" nature of her body is merely an unsubtle way to describe Cynthia as the moon.

It is likely that Endymion's pursuit of the goddess Cynthia represents more than sexual desire. To desire a union with the moon, to "know" her, can be a metaphor for wanting knowledge of nature. In the 18th century and early 19th century, marriage still granted legal authority over another, and for Endymion to be united with Cynthia would imply his domination or control over her. Attaining power through secret knowledge is a common trope in Gothic novels and poems of Keats's time, but it is more likely that the passive nature of Endymion combined with the necessity of Cynthia's chastity would produce a more innocent result. Instead of domination over nature, Endymion seeking Cynthia would be a pursuit of knowledge or pleasure that she alone could provide. Keith White argues that the poem "is a struggle to explain the nature of beauty" and that "for this reason Keats chooses a goddess to represent beauty." By identifying Cynthia with "beauty," White is able to describe the poem as a quest for both poetic inspiration and personal gratification, and there is much that I agree with in his argument. However, there is little within the poem that supports a claim that Cynthia represents ideal physical/human beauty, and Keats's sources did not attribute physical lovelines to her figure. Both Spence and Lemprière emphasize Cynthia's height and "manly" features while they focus on her role within nature, which suggests that Venus would have been a more appropriate choice.

White p. 21
for Keats's subject if he wished to only discuss beauty.\textsuperscript{191}

In essence, the general character of Endymion and Cynthia in \textit{Endymion} differs little from their portrayal in Keats's mythographic source material and his additional readings of mythology. Dorothy Van Ghent points out how Lemprière's \textit{Classical Dictionary} can account for many of the variations of Cynthia found within the poem, and that "An account of [Cynthia] that [Keats] had read in The Golden Ass of Apuleius describes her very much as she is described in Endymion."\textsuperscript{192} Additionally, Keats stays true to the source material when he "preserves [Cynthia's] threefold character in \textit{Endymion} by having her appear as Moon, as golden-haired maiden, and as the dark-haired Indian maid."\textsuperscript{193} Of Keats's additions to the traditional tale, the greatest is Endymion's journey into the underworld, which is a merging of Aeneas's and Orpheus's journeys. In borrowing from other stories, Keats is, according to Van Ghent, able "to preserve the ritual form of the ancient mystery initiations, where the candidate for immortality had to go symbolically through all the spheres of nature, earth, water, and air; for his hero is obliged to seek the goddess in all the realms she rules."\textsuperscript{194} Keats does differ in his conclusion of the poem; Endymion, like "I Stood Tip-Toe," ends with a scene of love regenerating nature and society in a similar manner to that found in the conclusion of Shelley's \textit{Prometheus Unbound}. Van Ghent argues that such a scene is similar to earlier myths and that Keats is justified in incorporating it into his Endymion myth, but it is more likely that the conclusion embodies the optimistic view of revolutions common among Romantic poets instead of a conscious attempt by Keats to rework ancient fertility rituals.

With the poem's heavy reliance on nature imagery, Cynthia represents either the beauty

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{191} Spence p. 100, Lemprière p. 251
\textsuperscript{192} Van Ghent 1983 p. 25
\textsuperscript{193} Van Ghent 1983 p. 27
\textsuperscript{194} Van Ghent 1983 pp. 27-28}
found within nature or the passive, sweet aspect of nature that can provide pleasing thoughts. In Book II, Cynthia alludes to the knowledge that she can provide Endymion, "I will tell thee stories of the sky, / And breathe thee whispers of its ministrelsy" (Book II 812-813). By providing Endymion this knowledge, she is sharing her divine connection to nature with a mortal. She is, after all, the moon, and the implication in her statement is that Endymion will become her prophet or oracle with the knowledge of the divine mysteries. However, Keats could be alluding to Lemprière's claim that Endymion was an astronomer by trade, transforming the relationship into a metaphor for the pursuit of science. Regardless of the knowledge being divine or scientific, the union between Endymion and Cynthia is that of an aspect of nature inviting a mortal to share in her secrets and not that of a mortal forcing his way to attaining divine knowledge. Van Ghent understands this passage to mean that Endymion will "become an immortal poet, and in her heavenly capacity [Cynthia] will be his Muse, teaching him cosmic poetry." Van Ghent's argument combines the astronomic and poetic origins of Endymion's character in a thematically appropriate manner. However, the role of Cynthia must be more limited than that which Van Ghent attributes to her. Consider how the narrator prefaces the meeting of Endymion and Cynthia in Book II:

Aye, the count
Of mighty Poets is made up; the scroll
Is folded by the Muses; the bright roll
Is in Apollo's hand: our dazed eyes
Have seen a new tinge in the western skies:
The world has done its duty. Yet, oh yet,
Although the sun of poesy is set,
These lovers did embrace, and we must weep
That there is no old power left to steep
A quill immortal in their joyous tears. (Book II, lines 723-732)

Apollo is supreme over poets, and it is through him that poetry is accomplished. Cynthia is not a true muse but only an aspect of nature, merely a topic. Additionally, it is only through the poet that Endymion and Cynthia's tale is told, and the lack of the "old power" to tell of their story ultimately reveals that the union did not grant Endymion the power to compose and preserve his own story. The role of the two deities is further separated at the beginning of Book III:

And, by the feud
'Twixt Nothing and Creation, I here swear,
Eterne Apollo! that thy Sister fair
Is of all these the gentlier-mightiest.
When thy gold breath is misting in the west,
She unobserved steals unto her throne,
And there she sits most meek and most alone;
As if she had not pomp subservient;
As if thine eye, high Poet! was not bent
Towards her with the Muses in thine heart;
As if the ministering stars kept not apart,
Waiting for silver-footed messages. (Book III, lines 40-51)

By alluding to myth making, poets, and Apollo at the end of Book II and the beginning of Book III, Keats once again gives Apollo the privileged role of existing both inside and outside of a narrative. Likewise, Cynthia is confined within the narrative and never interacts with the author/narrator. She, as the moon, can only be the soft light that provides pleasant thoughts but cannot exude the light of truth that is the source of poetic writing. She cannot make great poets, and she cannot lead one to poetic immortality.

Furthermore, Keats's earlier version of Endymion's union with Cynthia in "I Stood Tip-Toe" is the result of a poet crafting his own version of the tale, not the result of the natural processes. In the earlier poem, a poet is granted the power to create his own version of history that can soothe mankind, and, in Endymion, the myth writer has the power to craft the story as he pleases. The anonymous poet who unites Endymion with Cynthia in "I Stood Tip-Toe" acts in a
similar manner to Leigh Hunt, who radically rewrites one of Dante's stories in "The Story of Rimini." Hunt incorporates into his plot a corrupted version of "universal restoration" that stripped out the Catholic morality present in Dante's original tale and granted the adulterous lovers (Paolo and Francesca) a pardon from Hell. This complete reversal of the story, according to Nicholas Roe, led to the poem being "attacked for 'extreme moral depravity'." The ultimate downfall of the poem is in Hunt's attempt to excuse the sinful act of lovers who violate the societal laws that prohibit them from being together. Hunt concludes his poems with the lovers together in death, and, as Rodney Edgecombe argues, "the lovers rest because their sorrows have made sufficient atonement." Keats avoids many of the problems associated with "The Story of Rimini" while preserving the general theme. His lovers are not kept separate by social mores or a jealous husband but through the natural division between mortal and immortal, man and nature. By uniting Endymion and Cynthia, Keats extends Hunt's "love conquers all" to a universal scale and recreates reality. The poet, therefore, is the one with the power to fix mankind's ills, and he is given this power by Apollo. In revising "I Stood Tip-Toe" into Endymion, Apollo primarily serves as a god of nature in the background of the story, but he is also the primary force in the story's narrative framework as god of poets.

In Endymion, Apollo is the god of poetic language and the sun, whereas Cynthia is limited to the moon and to the subject matter of poetry. She is very much a goddess of "nature" as many critics point out, but she represents only one aspect of nature and has many male counterparts within the poem: Apollo (sun), Pan (wildlife), and Neptune (water) among others. Further separating her from her male counterparts, she is a passive force ("most meek and most alone") and is capable of very few actions on her own. As the moon, she has far more sway over

the hearts of mortals and immortals than plants or animals, but she is limited like Echo and Narcissus, as described in Book II, lines 828-838. Retelling the story in "I Stood Tip-Toe," Keats alludes to Echo as "a cavern wind" and to Narcissus as "a sleeping lake" that are transformed by a poet traveling to "Phoebus's shrine" and given "universal freedom." So too is the moon transformed by the narrator who uses the poetic power granted to him, and Keats is ultimately embracing Wordsworth's explanation for the origin of mythology that formed the central concept of "I Stood Tip-Toe." However, Keats distinguishes Apollo from all other aspects of nature because he is the origin of the poet's transformative power.

In terms of subject matter, Keats also relies on the Endymion and Cynthia pairing to continue many themes found within the poems of his Romantic predecessors. In Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," the narrator reflects on how he once connected to nature before saying:

Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies
* * *

and that I, so long
A worshiper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love-oh! With far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake. (lines 135-143, 152-160)

Wandering beneath the moon establishes a relationship between the "worshiper" and "Nature," providing soft light and sweet memories in later years. We can see the influence of these lines on
Keats's characterization of the original Endymion-myth poet as the "wanderer by moonlight" (line 185) in "I Stood Tip-Toe" and the obsession of Endymion with the moon in Endymion. However, the raw joy found in nature as a youth is replaced in "Tintern Abbey" by a sense of awe in the sublime, and there are hints that even a sense of awe will eventually fade away when the narrator hopes that nature will not betray his sister like it implicitly betrayed him. By the time the Immortality Ode was written, the author/narrator has lost both the joy found in nature and a sense of the sublime:

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more. (lines 1-9)

The relationship between man and nature has become one sided, but the narrator ends the ode with his profession of undying love:

Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway. (lines 192-194)

The narrator, though optimistic, is forever a wanderer who chases after his love (Nature), but he is ultimately unable to hold onto her. By expanding on "I Stood Tip-Toe," Keats casts the character Endymion in the Wordsworthian role of a youthful wanderer who has not yet lost the joy that comes from experiencing nature. Furthermore, Endymion preempts Wordsworth's loss of vision and corrects the narrator's flaw in the Immortality Ode by granting Endymion a joyful relationship with Cynthia that would never transform into "sober pleasure."

In attempting to imitate the type of poetry of the anonymous myth poets of "I Stood Tip-
To avoid a Wordsworthian loss of nature's joy, Keats creates a story that contradicts the pessimism common to many of his fellow Romantic poets. Well before *Endymion*, Percy Shelley expanded on Wordsworth's sentiments within the poem "Alastor." The poem begins with the narrator invoking the "Mother of this unfathomable world" (line 18), identifying himself as a "worshiper of nature" who seeks not an experience with nature but to learn of "Of what we are" (line 29). The main character of the narrator's tale is a poet who was reared under nature's "silver dream" (line 68), which is similar to how Coleridge's son is soothed by moonlight and bonded with nature in "The Nightingale." Having exhausted his intellectual pursuits at home, Shelley's poet journeys in search of "Nature's most secret steps" (line 81) Ultimately, the poet abandons any chance he has at a normal relationship with another human being before he receives a vision of a veiled maid. The maid is "The spirit of sweet human love" who “has sent / A vision to the sleep of him who spurned / Her choicest gifts" (lines 203-205), the punishment for seeking a union with nature instead of his fellow man. She represents either an ideal love that can never be attained or the desire to control and completely understand nature. The main character's inability to possess the veiled maid furthers his mad wanderings until his final breath:

And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain
To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.
It is a woe "too deep for tears," when all
Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
Birth and the grave, that are not as they were. (lines 710-720)

The main character is never able to appreciate the beauty of nature, and Shelley captures the painful loss that comes when an individual is unable to experience the sublime. Martin Danahay
argues that "the poem operates in a world in which the self is potentially all there is, so that any meeting with nature or any other natural phenomenon is a meeting with an image of the self."\(^{198}\)

In essence, there can never be a satisfying conclusion for "Alastor," and "His Poet doesn't so much die as disappear off the human map in his ultimate unfulfillable quest."\(^{199}\) In the end, the "Alastor" character is left only with a fading moon:

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till he lay breathing there
  At peace, and faintly smiling:—his last sight
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line
  Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,
  With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed
To mingle. (lines 644-649)
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Keats reverses Shelley's poem by transforming the object of the quest into the moon herself, and Endymion ventures into the underworld/death to claim her, and it is through his sacrifice that he is able to obtain an immortal union with the divine. By portraying a wanderer chasing after the moon and obtaining an eternal union with nature, Keats's poem intentionally contradicts, or corrects, the sentiments of both Wordsworth and Shelley.

There are further problems with Endymion's romantic pursuits if the poem serves as a metaphor for a poet desiring to be inspired by nature. The Indian maid that Endymion pursues fulfills a similar role to the veiled maiden of Shelley's "Alastor" or the Abyssinian maid of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" by filling the poet with a sense of longing. But Endymion is able to unite with her when she is revealed as the moon, and he is able obtain a source of inspiration that is not transitory. Even to the most optimistic of minds, poetic inspiration is at best fleeting, and a permanent union with the divine, be it in a dream state or through use of the imagination, was unrealistic. Keats's later works, including *Lamia* and "La Belle Dame sans Merci," depict the

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\(^{199}\) Danahay p. 103
perils in pursuing immortal romance, which casts doubts on the validity of *Endymion's* conclusion. If a reader or critic only focuses on Endymion's relationship with Cynthia, then the poem must be deemed a failure because the story contradicts experience. Instead, the union of Endymion and Cynthia should be understood as the power of a poet to re-imagine the universe and create a message of hope.

The few critics who embrace the narrative of *Endymion* as a success are those who describe the poem as a Huntian defense of sexual liberation or as a metaphor for Keats's internal struggle to become a poet. Leon Waldoff summarizes the various arguments that promote the poem as a psychological allegory:

> For the traditional allegorists, [Endymion] represents the mind of Keats as a young poet consumed with thoughts of ideal beauty, humanizing sympathy and love, and the visionary imagination. For many opponents of the traditional interpretation, he represents the poet as a young man filled with thoughts of physical beauty and sexual passion. For others, he represents still different aspects of Keats's mind... In these and other approaches the poem is in effect read as a form of psychological allegory reflecting one or more important aspect of Keats's mind and development.²⁰⁰

Although there are dozens of variations on the theme, the argument receives much of its foundation in Harold Bloom's essay, "The Internalization of Quest-Romance." Bloom's argument builds on Frye's connecting "quest-romance" with the act of dreaming, and Bloom claims that the Romantic poet takes "the pattern of quest-romance and transposes them into his own imaginative life, so that the entire rhythm of the quest is heard again in the movement of the poet himself from poem to poem."²⁰¹ Elaborating on this idea, Bloom argues that "The hero of the internalized quest is the poet himself, the antagonists of quest are everything in the self that blocks imaginative work, and the fulfillment is never the poem itself, but the poem beyond that is made

possible by the apocalypse of imagination." Bloom concludes that the ultimate purpose of the Romantic poet's internalized quest cannot be therapy. It must make all things new, and then marry what it has made... The man prophesied by the Romantics is a central man who is always in the process of becoming his own begetter, and through his major poems perhaps have been written, he has not as yet fleshed out his prophecy, nor proved the final form of his love.

Although Bloom speaks in general terms and there are many counter examples, I agree with most of his argument, especially with his description of how a poem can reveal its creator's desire to become a great poet. Much of the critical identification of the character Endymion as Keats can be attributed to Bloom's declaration that "the fullest development of the Romantic quest, after Blake's mythology and Wordsworth's exemplary refusal of mythology, is in Keats's Endymion and Shelley's Prometheus Unbound." However, the claims that the whole of Keats's poetry is symbolic of an ultimate quest to liberate the self and the imagination goes too far. Instead of analyzing individual poems in terms of characteristics of poems or discussing how one poem may comment on another poem, the works become mere components of the poet's psychological development and are stripped of anything "poetic." They are transformed by critics into pieces of self-analysis that are more akin to diaries and journals than to poetry.

Essentially, my concern with Bloom's technique, and the technique of many modern critics, is that he ignores the purpose that poetry has beyond reflecting personal aspects of the poet. Ideally, a poet's biography should inform one's reading of a poem, and details within a poem should inform one's understanding of a poet's biography. Endymion, as admitted by Keats,
was a failed attempt at epic poetry, and it is hard to come to terms with Keats's rejection of the poem if Bloom's attribution of Endymion as "the fullest development of the Romantic quest" is correct. Additionally, the anonymity of the myth poets in "I Stood Tip-Toe" suggests that the Endymion myth will outlast its composer and that the story, not the poet, will be the only one remembered.

While *Endymion* contains an expression of a young Keats's views on how the imagination can join a dreamer with the divine in nature, it is inappropriate to characterize the poem as an extended metaphor or an allegory regarding an aspect of Keats's self. The Endymion myth serves as a framework for Keats's interpretation of Wordsworth's "wedding of man and nature," and Keats devotes substantial effort into developing Endymion as a character that is distinct from the author. Instead, Endymion exhibits all of the traits that the young Keats attributed to the ideal "soft poet," and, in describing such a figure in poetic form, Keats hoped to become like the anonymous myth makers from "I Stood Tip-Toe." Keats cannot be fully blamed for the failure of *Endymion*'s conclusion because it is true to his mythographic source, and Keats would return his primary focus to Apollo in his *Hyperion* poems as a result. He learned that a flawed story, even one born from youthful optimism, could have horrible ramifications, and his later poems focused on the darker, more painful aspects of life as a result.
Chapter 4

Few critics suggest that *Endymion*, Keats's first attempt at writing an epic, represents anything more than a failure that can safely be ignored, and none is willing to claim that the attempted epic was a literary success. Ultimately, Keats was able to move on to what is one of his greatest poems, *Hyperion*. Although *Hyperion* remains as a fragment, it holds a more complete and organized representation of Keats's understanding of the divine and its role in the creation of poetry. First, this chapter will explain how *Hyperion* was created and abandoned before discussing the meaning of the poem. Then I will explore how *Hyperion* reveals a mature understanding of the divine only hinted at in previous works. Finally, I will analyze how Keats's struggle to define the concepts introduced within the epic forced him to abandon the project, which leads into a discussion on how Keats expanded on his earlier themes in the great odes that followed. The great odes, therefore, are discussed as Keats's symbolic attempt to complete *Hyperion* (in terms of philosophy, not form) in preparation for his return to the subject in *The Fall of Hyperion*.

The germ for an epic devoted to Apollo took root in Keats's mind before the publication of *Endymion*, in which Keats promised to Cynthia: "Thy lute-voic'd brother will I sing ere long" (Book IV, line 773). By then, Keats recognized that Apollo would serve as a greater subject than that of *Endymion* when he refused the offer from his publisher, John Taylor, to commission a frontispiece for the publication of *Endymion*. In a letter to Benjamin Robert Haydon, the artist who would be commissioned, Keats explains this decision:

I have a complete fellow-feeling with you in this business—so much so that it would be as well to wait for a choice out of *Hyperion*—when that Poem is done there will be a wide range for you—in *Endymion* I think you may have many bits of the deep and sentimental cast the nature of *Hyperion* will lead me to treat it in a more naked and grecian Manner—and the march of passion and endeavour will be undeviating—one great contrast between them will be—that the Hero of the written tale [i.e. *Endymion*] being mortal is led on, like Buonaparte, by
circumstance; whereas the Apollo in Hyperion being a fore-seeing God will shape his actions like one.\textsuperscript{205}

The Apollo described in this letter would be different from Keats's previous heroes, with power that allows the deity to transcend the role of mere character. However, Robert Gittings argues that this version of Apollo would clearly be a manifestation of Keats himself, but on a divine scale: "Yet it is also clear that in this 'fore-seeing' God of healing and poetry, Keats, himself a doctor and poet, will record his own experience and undergo the pains of Apollo himself in becoming a god."\textsuperscript{206} Setting aside the debate over Apollo serving as a representation of Keats, Hyperion embodies his philosophical system and his budding understanding of the divine.

The process through which Keats completed \textit{Hyperion} was drawn out, which revealed his inability to fully grasp the ideas he wished to describe. Critics, like Martin Aske, attribute the failure of completing \textit{Hyperion} to the form of the poem: "It may be that the sense of error out of which \textit{Endymion} is born anticipates the failure of narrative to represent its founding fiction... the necessary failure of belated narrative to frame coherently its representation of the past."\textsuperscript{207} In such a view, failure to complete \textit{Hyperion} was inevitable, but there seems little foundation to such a claim beyond Keats abandoning the poem as a fragment. Instead, it seems more likely that emotional complications and an inability to work out his complex philosophical system forced Keats to set aside the poem until both struggles could be resolved. Keats struggled to work on the poem throughout the year, and the substance of what would become \textit{Hyperion} wasn't begun until autumn 1818. Gittings attributed this struggle to his lack of mental preparation for the task: "He was not yet ready for his epic, though he was sure of its general style and scope. There must be a

\textsuperscript{205} To Benjamin Robert Haydon, 23 January 1818
\textsuperscript{207} Aske, Martin. \textit{Keats and Hellenism}. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. pp. 73-74
long period of probation before he physically put pen to paper." To overcome this problem, Keats spent the year studying many different works, especially those of Shakespeare, as he searched for ideas. By December, his confidence was broken following the death of his brother, Tom, and he wrote, in a letter to his brother George, "I think you knew before you left England that my next subject would be 'the fall of Hyperion.' I went on a little with it last night, but it will take some time to get into the vein again. I will not give you any extracts because I wish the whole to make an impression. I have however a few Poems which you will like, and I will copy out on the next sheet." Two months later, he practically abandoned the poem, which he explained in another letter: "I have not gone on with Hyperion — for to tell the truth I have not been in great cue for writing lately — I must wait for the spring to rouse me up a little." In April 1819, Keats provided Richard Woodhouse with a copy of the poem and stated that he could not complete it. Woodhouse later describes how Keats attributed the completion of the epic to a force beyond himself:

He has said that he has often not been aware of the beauty of some thought or expression until after he has composed and written it down. It has then struck him with astonishment—and seemed rather the production of another person than his own. He has wondered how he came to hit upon it. This was the case with the description of Apollo in the third book of Hyperion... It seemed to come by chance or magic—to be as it were something given to him.

Many critics seize on this sentiment to attribute Keats's difficulty in composing Hyperion to the limits of Apollo as a character for the failure. However, Diane Brotemarkle argues that it was Keats's understanding of the universe as a whole that was incomplete:

Bernard Blackstone claims that Keats gave up on the poem because he found Apollo an inadequate symbol for the far-seeing god he has written to Haydon

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208 Gittings p. 186
209 To George Keats, 18 December 1818
210 To George Keats, 14 February 1819
about... Ian Jack agrees. None of these arguments are altogether persuasive. When one notes that Keats broke off both fragments at the same point in the narrative, the point where Apollo enters the action, one may suppose has became dissatisfied with the aesthetic program he had intended Apollo to express... But above it all, it was not external circumstance, but philosophic indecisiveness that caused Keats to abandon the epic. Until Keats's own poetic mission was really firmly in his mind, he could not dramatize it through his Apollo.212

Keats's philosophy was felt, not derived from an exercise of logic or reason, and though he had an understanding of the general principles, he could not fully work out the details. His struggle was not with describing Apollo, his character based on the Greek god, but with his own pursuit of an Apollonian ideal.

Originally, Keats sought to create a poem that would be truly Grecian in plot and substance, but the final work is more aligned with his fellow Romantics. A sketch for the plot of Hyperion can be found in Woodhouse's annotated copy of Endymion: "The poem if completed would have treated of the dethronement of Hyperion, the former God of the Sun, by Apollo,— and incidentally of those of Oceanus by Neptune, of Saturn by Jupiter, etc., and of the war of the Giants for Saturn's reestablishment, with other events, of which we have but very dark hints in the mythological poets of Greece and Rome."213 However, Hyperion ends with Apollo's apotheosis and contains very little of the classical story. Like his contemporary Percy Shelley in Prometheus Unbound, Keats relies on Hesiod's succession of the Titans by the Olympians in Greek mythology to explore the evolution in human thought through history without relying on a traditional Christian interpretation of the universe. Keats was influenced by his early mythological experiences and described an advanced conception of the spiritual forces active within the universe, and, like Shelley, found his new Romantic conception to be closer to

213 Keats 1899 p. 189
classical Greek thought than to 18th-century Christianity. But unlike Shelley, who reverses the
generations of Greek gods to attack directly the concept of omnipotent power-gods such as
Jupiter and Jehovah, Keats's Apollo is the embodiment of poetry and the intellect. By choosing a
god of art over power, Keats avoids the radical politics inherent in Shelley's poetry, and Keats's
poetry can serve to soothe the soul of the reader instead of assaulting his fundamental beliefs.

There are many critics who dismiss the claims that a religious impulse can be found
within Keats's work, and they deny the possibility that the Titans and the gods can represent
spiritual truth. Ronald Sharp, who most thoroughly embodies this argument, claims, "Like all
gods, [Apollo] exists only in the human breast... Apollo does not transcend human history; he
lives only within it, and serves only its needs. His immortality and divinity are thus metaphors
for the intensity of his humanity and for the life-affirming power of beauty which that intensity
reveals."\textsuperscript{214} To justify this claim regarding Apollo, Sharp describes the "Mansion of Many
Apartments" theory, discussed later in this chapter, as restricting "the spiritual arena to the
human" and explained that "for Keats the human realm discloses its rich spiritual possibilities
only to those who have recognized the illusion of seeking fulfillment in some higher sphere."\textsuperscript{215}
Ultimately, Sharp believed that the letter represents a "historical movement towards increased
humanization, and Milton, Wordsworth, and Keats each represent successive steps in that
direction."\textsuperscript{216} If \textit{Hyperion} stood alone, Sharp's argument could be valid. However, Apollo's
appearance throughout Keats's earlier poems, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, depict an Apollo
who is consistently described as being both above all poets and the originator of all poets.

However, there are many critics who agree with Sharp, and they see all of Keats's poetry as

\textsuperscript{215} Sharp p. 118
\textsuperscript{216} Sharp p. 124
representing aspects of the human mind.

In *Hyperion*, Keats focuses on two gods, Hyperion and Apollo, who are both sun gods representing the source of the limited truth and beauty that humans, with our mortal senses and limitations, can experience through nature and human society - "all [we] know on earth, and all [we] need to know." It is natural to think that both deities are related to human thought, but I cannot accept Harold Bloom characterizing Keats's divine truth as mythopoeic or his claim that *Hyperion* contains "an internalization of romance." Likewise, I am unable to accept M. H. Abrams's view that the imagination replaces an external divinity and "plays a role equivalent to that of the Redeemer." The influence of Bloom and Abrams dominated the studies of Keats, and most critics either describe the gods as metaphors for Keats's psychological development or artistic development. The latter camp is exemplified by Keith White when he says, "We have, then, two projections of the same god. Hyperion represents the old Keats, and as such is the nature god. Apollo becomes the god of art, Keats's new concern." Neither side is correct because Keats is not Wordsworth, and *Hyperion* is not the *Excursion*. Keats's gods represent aspects of the universe because they are gods, and, as gods, they transcend the mortal state of things and exist in a permanent state. The gods are not metaphors for concepts, but are the active forces that allow such concepts to exist. As gods, Hyperion and the other Titans are connected to the process in which an objective truth can be known through nature, but that truth is limited to the base, sensory enjoyment of the universe. Apollo is the embodiment and source of a new awareness that there is more to truth and beauty than immediate happiness. He represents a more complete, emotional manner of relating to the universe, and he provides mortals with a path to

219 White, Keith. *John Keats and the Loss of Romantic Innocence*. Atlanta: Rodolpi, 1996. p. 120
obtaining an understanding of how the universe works. The Titans are connected to a necessary, early stage in conceiving of and relating to the universe, and they may have been reconciled with the Olympians, with their new way to relate to a universe greater than human mind represented by Apollo, had Keats been able to finish the work. Within Keats's works, the universe transitions from the rule of gods who embody a physical relationship with the universe to the rule of gods who represent abstract ideas and a deeper emotional understanding. The universal progress runs parallel to individual development, and humans are guided by the prophets of new gods: the poets. Progress is an external force that exists beyond human control, and attempts to discuss Keats's poetry in terms of psychological and internal progress alone fail to acknowledge how all of nature is affected. Before I can discuss how Hyperion reveals this universal progression, I must first explain Keats's concept of the grand march of intellect.

**The Grand March of Intellect**

In a May 1818 letter to his friend John Hamilton Reynolds, Keats synthesizes his ideas about the progress of the individual mind in search of truth and the general historical "march of intellect" in human thought, in a way that helps explain why he focused on Apollo as representative of ideal truth. This letter is fundamental to understanding *Hyperion* because, as Stuart Sperry explains, the poem "is no more than the epic rendering of that fundamental change Keats describes to Reynolds."²²⁰ Keats begins with a discussion on Wordsworth to deny that poets must establish a grand philosophical system within their works. Accordingly, Keats believes that poetry's primary focus is to reveal generalized truths that relate to the human condition and to help the individual pursue a relationship with the universe:

And whether Wordsworth has in truth epic passion, and martyrs himself to the human heart, the main reason of his song – in regard to his genius alone – we find what he says true as far as we have experienced and we can judge no further but by larger experience – for axioms in philosophy are not axioms until they are proved upon our pulses: We read fine things but never feel them to the full until we have gone the same steps as the Author.\textsuperscript{221}

Keats continues his description of Wordsworth's discovery in the famous passage on "the Chamber of Maiden-Thought." It is in this metaphor that he describes the individual progress of any sensitive individual mind, not infused with dogma, as one of moving from naive thoughtlessness to the beginnings of thought and delight over experiencing nature and human nature. It is soon after that delight fades into recognition of human suffering, and then to further speculation on what human relation to the universe really is. Keats claimed that Wordsworth had reached this final stage in \textit{Tintern Abbey}:

I will return to Wordsworth – whether or no he has an extended vision or 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 – Well – I compare human life to a large Mansion of Many Apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me. The first step into we call the infant or thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain so long as we do not think – We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second Chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of this thinking principle within us – we no sooner get into the second chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere. We see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there forever in delight. However, among the effects this breathing convincing one's nerves that the world is full of misery and heartbreak, pain, sickness and oppression; whereby this Chamber of Maiden-Thought becomes gradually darkened, and at the same time, on all sides of it, many doors are set open – but all dark – all leading to dark passages. We see not the balance of good and evil; we are in a mist. \textit{We} are in that state, we feel the "Burden of the Mystery," to this Point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive when he wrote 'Tintern Abbey' and it seems to me that his Genius is explorative of those dark Passages. Now if we live and go on thinking, we too

\textsuperscript{221} Keats 1899 p. 301
shall explore them – he is a Genius and is superior to us, in so far as he can, more than we, make discoveries and shed a light on them.  

The "Mansion of Many Apartments" is an allusion to the Gospel of John 14:2: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." However, Keats grounds his "mansion" within the human mind and ignores any theological ramifications of the phrase. Instead, Keats describes a historical "Grand March of Intellect" that has gradually rejected the superstitions and dogmas of religion in favor of dramatizing human experience as a search for meaning with temporary "resting places" of dogma rather than as a journey already possessing it:

Here I must think Wordsworth is deeper than Milton – though I think it has depended more upon the general and gregarious advances of intellect, than individual greatness of Mind – From the Paradise Lost and other Works of Milton, I hope it is not too presuming, even between ourselves to say, that 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 etherial and authentically divine – who could gainsay his ideas on virtue, vice, and Chastity in Comus, just at the time of dismissal of Cod-pieces and a hundred other disgraces? Who would not rest satisfied with his hintings at good and evil in the Paradise Lost, when just free from the inquisition and burning in Smithfield? The Reformation produced such immediate and great benefits, that Protestantism was considered under the immediate eye of heaven, and its own remaining Dogmas and superstitions, then, as it were, regenerated, constituted those resting places and seeming sure points of Reasoning – from that I have mentioned, 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 – Yet Milton as a Philosopher, had sure as great powers as Wordsworth – What is then to be inferr'd? O many things – It proves there is really a grand march of intellect – , proves that a mighty providence subdues the mightiest Minds to the service of the time being, whether it be in human Knowledge or Religion.  

In this letter, Keats seems to be working out an idea of individual and collective human

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222 Keats 1899 pp. 301-302.
223 King James Version
224 Keats 1899 p. 302
knowledge in which religions have been imperfect but progressive attempts to define some real but ultimately inaccessible spiritual relation between humans and the larger universe in which they exist. He distrusts "axioms in philosophy" because they will never be adequate to explain the burden of the mystery nor appropriately guide one to the final stage that Wordsworth reached. Keats seems to imply that comprehensive religious and philosophical systems are actually "superstitions" to be outgrown, and that the best humans can do is to develop a limited understanding of an ideal relationship they can have with the universe to satisfy their own needs for truth and beauty as represented by Apollo, not Zeus or Jehovah.

While contradicting previous religious systems, Keats sought to replace religion not with atheism but with a spiritual system that is closer to the human heart. Robert Ryan, in his analysis of religious language and themes in Keats's poetry, describes two theological systems operating within Keats's poems: "we see an example of the ability of Keats's imagination to operate within two completely different mythic systems—which I will call arbitrarily, Theist and Apollonian… As Keats grew older, he carefully withheld from his poetry all direct references to the first deity, and Apollo seemed to reign supreme." Ryan's book focuses on the Theist system while ignoring the Apollonian, and Keats's later poems and letters are read by him as describing said system. It is my belief that there are not two different systems but one, and that the disappearance of Christian or Theistic statements described by Ryan represents a merging of these systems with the Apollonian. When Keats wrote his letter discussing the progress of history, he was not, as Ryan points out, "seriously considering embracing Christianity as a faith to live by. But I think he was coming to realize the value of having some systematic view of the nature of things, some framework according to which he could organize his insights and experiences."

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225 Ryan p. 103
226 Ryan p. 165
Wordsworth, Keats saw "consolation for the sufferings of human life" and Ryan claims, "He does not say he agrees with Wordsworth's conclusions. What he has come to admire is the older poet's intensive search for conclusions." 

Keats is searching for his own conclusions, and developing his own system, and Ryan correctly argues that "in Keats's view, the development of theology and the development of all human thought is presided over and directed by a 'mighty providence' that raises up prophets and reformers in each age to lead mankind toward a purer, more refined religious consciousness." It is uncertain as to why Ryan did not associate this "mighty providence" with Apollo, or see that Apollo can represent "human Knowledge or Religion." Apollo, as god of healing, poetry, prophets, and knowledge, is able to provide a means to soothe what burdens the human condition in a way Keats felt other systems lack. His character is, to borrow Shelley's description of Prometheus, "exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement." 

Like Shelley, Keats is responding directly to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and *Hyperion* can be viewed as the next step in the "Grand March of Intellect." However, I disagree with Sharp's characterization of *Hyperion* as a humanistic step, and I believe that the poem should be viewed as only as separating suffering from the condition of original sin (Milton) to demonstrate how suffering is necessary to achieving enlightenment.

By 1817, Keats's poems suggest that his own individual development of an ideal relationship to the universe, his own concept of Apollo, involves not just bidding Flora and Old Pan adieu, but discovering some seriously limited "superstition" or error in seeking an ideal conceived in terms of sensory beauties of nature. The ambition that he found interfering with his moral and poetical development in the "Hymn to Apollo" is only one of the many problems that

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227 Ryan p. 167
228 Ryan p. 172
229 Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*
his poems identified. Just as earlier peoples believed in the divinity of natural objects and forces such as the sun or storms, a young mind not enslaved to some preexisting religious system will naturally form its first imaginative ideal of harmony between itself and the universe in sensory terms – the eternal sensory joys of love, spring, youth, and art represented on the first side of the Grecian urn. This mind will then conceive of its own relationship to this harmony as a marriage or love affair with nature, which is variously represented in Keats's own poems by the relationship of men with the characters Cynthia, “La Belle Dame,” and “Lamia,” of which the latter two are more ironic than the first. But when Keats's narrators can only conceive of an ideal in terms of natural, sensory joy, they are not only thwarted but devastated by their pursuit. Lycius and the knight in “La Belle Dame,” in particular, love in a manner that is static and self-centered, oriented toward an ideal of personal pleasure and power, and generally insensitive to the beloved. Keats alludes to the problem of seeking a romantic relationship with a divine presence within nature throughout his early poems, but the later narrators seem trapped in their desire not for a masculine search for truth but a passive love of feminine pleasure.

The preoccupation of Keats's narrators to pursue nature goddesses reveals their desire to obtain the role of supreme and unchanging power-gods, as the husbands of said goddesses, who are able to possess forever the bliss they seek. Keats acknowledges the failure of such pursuits by shifting from pastoral myths emphasizing the pursuit of goddesses to a creation myth describing gods who desire only to retain their power but ultimately fail. Critics have approached Hyperion in many different ways, but most of the critics have overlooked the characterization of the Titans for how the overall structure and movement of the poem reinforces their critical emphasis. To the mythopoeic critics, Hyperion is man's own overcoming of nature through use of the imagination, evolving to a later stage where the imagination becomes the god. To Walter Evert, Hyperion is
only one stage in identifying the nature of Apollo as poetic harvester and cannot be considered a complete realization. To those such as Andrew Motion, *Hyperion* represents some political struggle from Keats's historical era, perhaps the death of monarchy in favor of republicanism:

Keats combines the poem's self-exploration with a more "disinterested" political and historical theme. This has usually been discussed simply in terms of the shift in power between generations. In *Hyperion* and the Titans, Keats "portrays the illness of a whole society that has gone awry," using diverse images of sickness as he contemplates existence with "a 'healthy deliberation' born of philosophical 'knowledge'".  

While each looks at *Hyperion* in an informative and helpful way, none of these critics ever analyzes how the details of Keats's text characterize the Titans, seeming instead to import ideas from outside the text to explain what the Titans are. A detailed analysis of this text suggests that Keats does not think the classical gods are adequate to explain objective forces. However, this does not mean that he believes, as assumed by the mythopoeic critics, that the Titans are only an external representation of internal forces.

Keats relies on the fall of the Titans to dramatize two different, yet each partly true, conceptions of the universe, represented by the Titans on one side and the gods on another. The progression from one conception to a more comprehensive one, from one set of deities to another, is similar to Wordsworth's progress in *Tintern Abbey*, from solitary enjoyment of nature itself as "all in all" to seeing it more tragically and heroically mingled with "the still sad music of humanity." Personal encounters with nature become a means to some higher truth that exists in both nature and the human mind, rather than as an "appetite, and a love" that needs no further thought, an experiential end in itself. The Titans represent what humans can conceive nature to be like if this conception is limited to the way Keats experiences nature's blisses in the early

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230 Motion p. 313
poems. The early narrators experience an eternal and superior presence like the nightingale (of "Ode to a Nightingale," discussed later), never "tr[odden]... down" by time, and one with many aspects, including the kind of sensory beauty that is represented by goddesses such as Phoebe and Cynthia. However this state may feel, the universe itself can only be inferred from the emotions it evokes, and Keats represents this experience with anthropomorphized beings. As in classical myth, Keats connects what happens to the individual to cosmic progress. Just as humans are able to rise to power after the Titans fall, the progress in Keats's own internal "mansion" of thought reflects a gradual, not necessarily linear march of intellect in the universe, from immanently-experienced interrelations of beings to more dynamic, self-aware, and altruistic interrelations.

Hyperion

Turning to the text of Hyperion, I will explain how Keats incorporated his concept of universal progression and his budding theological system into his fragmented epic. First, I will analyze how the description of Saturn's fallen state reveals a fundamental shift within the structure of the universe. Then, I will reveal how Book II sets up Hyperion's desire to pursue a futile course of action, which, when contrasted with the words of Oceanus, leads only to despair instead of acceptance of the new cosmic order. Finally, I will argue that Apollo's apotheosis in Book III is the culmination of Keats's theories of poetry, the grand march of intellect, and of a new system of salvation that will take a central role in The Fall of Hyperion.

Like Book II of Prometheus Unbound, the first scene of Hyperion associates the Titans with an earlier stage in both the condition of the universe and the human understanding of it. But Keats dramatizes their state in much greater detail; the Titans are unable to develop beyond
dwelling in sensory bliss, because they are immortals who are intellectually fixated. They are replaced by a new state of consciousness that tries to go beyond personal power to seek a relation to the universe that can only come after acknowledging the pain of experience. The Titans inhabit a static and cold environment, the "shady sadness" of a "vale / Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn," that reflects the Titans' mental condition (Book I, lines 1-2). Saturn, far from his position as supreme ruler, sits immobilized: "His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead, / Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were closed" (Book I, lines 18-19). This impotence seems to provoke confusion to those like Aske, who stated: "If we remind ourselves that in Hyperion Keats deliberately adopts a particular voice, the epic voice of Milton, it seems more than startling to find the beginning of his version of Paradise Lost denying the presence of any voice... Why these muted voices, at the moment when the poet should be celebrating the eloquence of his epic muse?" Aske seemed unable to find an answer, but Keats is making a symbolic point: Saturn is paralyzed and impotent because he is unable to accept a life that has him in any position other than that of supreme ruler. His life had, until his fall, only one purpose, and he, like all the other Titans, is unable to comprehend change or adapt to a relationship with the universe that differs from his own original identity. This led Sperry to describe the scene as representing "[Saturn's] loss of power and vital creativity. Indeed a conception of power in its various degrees, the ability to animate and vitalize creation, is fundamental to the scene." Saturn has no voice because he can no longer tap into even a small aspect of the generative power that motivates the universe, the very power described as the song of nature in "Ode to Apollo." Saturn, as the previous ruler, is the one most greatly affected, but his followers share in his paralysis because they are fixated on a universe in which Saturn must rule.

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231 Aske p. 90
232 Sperry p. 180
When Thea, Hyperion's spouse, attempts to comfort Saturn, she can only remind him of his fallen state, and she forms a sculpture-like tableau of despair with him (Book I, lines 23-88). This portrayal of the fall of the Titans is unique; in the classical versions of the Titanomachy, most of them either disappear, are banished into the nether regions of Tartarus, or end up as slaves to the gods performing menial but necessary tasks, such as holding up the heavens. Keats, by changing the myth, is emphasizing that the Titans internalize this Tartarean state of being in a Dantesque manner. Eventually, Saturn is able to speak, but only to voice his despair and to dwell on what was lost: "I have left my strong identity, my real self / Somewhere between the throne and where I sit / Here on this spot of earth" (Book I, lines 113-116). In other words, Saturn, like the other Titans, cannot conceive of a universe or one specific aspect of the universe except one defined by their control and rule; the throne, or power, IS Saturn and all Saturn can be. As Saturn claims,

   it must— it must
   Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King
   Yes, there must be a golden victory;
   There must be Gods thrown down (Book I, lines 25-127)

but, as Sperry put it, "Saturn can only look to the past, to a heaven he has lost, for the rehabilitation of his godhead. Blinded by his egoism, he is unaware of the strong irony implicit in his words." Saturn believed it would be progress to return to his rule, but that would only be a regression to a more primitive state. He is incapable of overthrowing the new order because he lacks the ability to conceive of any state without his supreme dominance over all creation. He could have a role in the new creation if he embraced a cooperative, dynamic relation to the new forces in the universe as a handful of Titans demonstrate in Book II. Zeus, Saturn's successor,

233 Sperry p. 180
represents a form of justice that is not personal power but the just and self-aware coordination of all the other gods' claims and demands. Zeus is subject to that law himself, and it does not always satisfy his own desires. For example, when his own sons are killed in *The Iliad*, a poem over which Keats expressed great fondness, he knew that he could not interfere due to the need for a greater justice. Zeus replaces Saturn because Saturn cannot exist without complete supremacy, or understand any reason for limits or changes in his power.

Hyperion's appearance in Book I is a contrast with Saturn's; the sun deity still reigns, and it is hoped that his might could restore the Titans to their former glory. As a divine presence who represents the "light" or truth that illuminates the Titans and the natural forces they represent, like time and oceans, Hyperion ultimately can only illuminate the limitations of the earlier ideal of order—its static, time-dominated, and power-oriented qualities. Hyperion at the poem's beginning has not yet fallen unlike the others; however, like all Titans, Hyperion is bound by the same limitations of being and must succumb to the weight of the universe's natural progression. More interestingly, the reason he actually falls is that he tries to take what he is, the sun, and dramatically alter its natural activity as a demonstration of power rather than participating in the new order. Upon discovery of Saturn, Hyperion exclaims "Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall? / Am I to leave this haven of my rest, / This cradle of my glory" (Book I, lines 234-236). In order to act, where all other Titans have failed, Hyperion attempts what is natural to him but beyond the natural order: prematurely raising the sun across the sky. His intent is to "scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove, / And bid old Saturn take his throne again," thus resetting the natural progression and allowing the Titans to forever exist in the golden land of pleasures in which the Titans thrived (Book I, lines 249-250). Though well before dawn, he still "bid the day begin, if but for change" because he thought that he could do the impossible (Book I, line 291). Hyperion,
like Saturn, is being confronted with a universe that changes and in which no god has absolute power as an individual, only the limited power represented by his own identity. The majority of the Titans are unwilling or unable to accept this reality. Hyperion is, as Keats describes, a "primeval God" but "the sacred seasons might not be disturbed" (Book I, lines 292-293). Thus, Hyperion has no true power over the universal structure, only within it. He is no ruler, but is powerless to act except only to obey the natural cycle, and, in confronting his inability to exercise control beyond a limited sphere, he succumbs to the despair that fills the other Titans. Without being touched or attacked, he is beaten by his inability to work within a set of universal laws he must recognize as greater than he, and he can only lie "in grief and radiance faint" (Book I, line 394). Hyperion has only beaten himself by refusing to accept that he is not part of an all-powerful group of forces that could overcome the power of Jove. As a comment on what happens to Keats himself and potentially other young idealists, the danger of loving one's own experiences of nature is that they are not the measure of the universe. If one insists on staying asleep forever in Cynthia's or La Belle Dame's arms, then one will end up with nothing at all, because human beings, like Hyperion and Saturn, can't control powers greater and more beautiful than themselves. Such a tendency toward ego-centrism, as exhibited by the Titans, seems to be inherent in the undeveloped aspects of the universe itself, to the extent that beings and forces try to maximize and externalize their own power and existence without consideration of what is true or necessary. And to the extent that humans embody this tendency toward ego-centrism, they too will become static and wasting away, like Lycius and the knight in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci."

There is fleeting hope that Hyperion can return the Titan's former glory, but he abandons his limited but glorious place in the universe for an impossible conquest, like Endymion or the "Belle Dame" knight. Coelus tells Hyperion, "I have seen my sons most unlike Gods" (Book I,
line 328), and he tries to help Hyperion discover how to reverse their fate. Hyperion, who was once the "Son of Mysteries" and the representation of the joys and fruits of the Titans (Book I, line 310), is now full of "fear, hope, and wrath" (Book I, line 332) that become the "sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay and fall" (Book I, line 336). Coelus recognizes his despair and commands him to go see Saturn, to "seize the arrow's barb / before the tense string murmur," and save himself while Coelus "will keep watch on thy bright sun" (Book I, line 344-348). Ironically, Coelus represents an even more primitive state of the universe than the Titans, and his castrated state represents both a physical impotence and a complete disconnection from the act of creation. Coelus encourages his son to confront Apollo and his bow, to resist what Apollo will represent, rather than to take the wound of truth and accept the inevitability of change, but, at the same time, he temporarily usurps Hyperion's control over the sun. Keats does not dwell on the irony or on the temporary gain of power by a former deity. Instead, the focus is on Hyperion, who "plunged all noiseless into the deep night" (Book I, line 357) to make his last march as a Titan. Hyperion is a force that no longer accepts his place in a changed universe, and, like most Titans, chooses to abandon the place he still has in this world, not to stay with the sun, when he realizes that he no longer embodies absolute power over the universe. White interprets the interaction between father and son as a mere metaphor regarding art: "Demythologized, this revelation suggests that the replacement of natural beauty with that conveyed by art is ordained."234 This argument would suggest that Keats abandons any joy to be found in nature or sees nature as no longer providing a glorious presence in the world. Such is absurd when considering that Hyperion is trying to alter nature as part of his rebellion, and at no time is Apollo or any of the gods seeking to destroy nature. Instead, Hyperion abandons his role, and it is Hyperion's actions

234 White p. 124
and not Apollo's that lead to his fall.

By choosing his old identity as a ruler over a different but vital, working relationship with the new gods, Hyperion can only illuminate the depressing state of the other Titans, a state he has now chosen to share. In terms of his motives if not in terms of defying an omnipotent and benevolent God, Keats here seems to be directly echoing the moral implications of Lucifer's fall—Hyperion, too, tries to remain complete and sufficient unto himself, defying any outward control and change, rather than accepting his place in a universe bigger and better than he alone can be. As Hyperion descends to the Titans, Keats describes to great lengths the pain that the fallen Titans suffer from but also emphasizes that some Titans, like Mnemosyne and Phoebe "were free to roam abroad, / But for the main, here found they covert drear" (Book II, lines 1-32). Before Hyperion can descend, Saturn walks among the Titans and speaks: "Not in my own sad breast, / Which is its own great judge and searcher-out, / Can I find reason why ye should be thus" (Book II, lines 129-131). He cannot understand why the Titans suffer, but asks Oceanus to speak.

Oceanus is the most self-aware of the Titans, and his role in Hyperion is to describe Keats's view of the Grand March of Intellect and how it applies to the war in heaven. Oceanus claims, as demonstrated by Book I, that "we fall by course of Nature's law, not force / Of thunder, or of Jove" (Book II, lines 181-182). He continues by claiming "as thou wast not the first of powers, / So art thou not the last; it cannot be: Thou art not the beginning nor the end" (Book II, lines 188-190). In the beginning, as Oceanus says, there was a world of Light, but now comes the "pain of truth" (Book II, lines 195-202), a description which parallels the chambers through which the mind progresses according to Keats's letter cast in Christian terminology. Oceanus claims that the Titans are not "conquered," but still have a place in a universe now
overseen by new gods that follow. Like "eagles golden-feathered" compared to the "forest-trees" of Titans, these new gods are "a power more strong in beauty" that will "pass / In glory" the Titans (Book II, lines 206 – 239). This description parallels the development of the individual in the Chamber of Maiden Thought; he discovers that joy is not all that exists and that there is something greater in the universe, represented by the burden of the mystery, to which he may be able to relate. Sharp viewed this speech as "suggesting not that suffering will ultimately be eliminated but that each new religion seems to represent a further step away from illusion. But what is most striking about Oceanus's account of the grand march of history is its extraordinary inclusiveness, embracing not just pagan religions but, by virtue of its loaded imagery, the biblical religions as well."

To digress briefly from the main argument of this chapter, Sharp's point is to deny Christianity a role within Keats's works and to suggest that Keats sees things only in internalized or humanistic terms. However, Keats is adding Christian language to a war in heaven that should solely be pagan, which could be Keats's attempt to follow the path set forth by his three mythographic sources discussed in Chapter 2. Those earlier works, especially Tooke's, discuss Greco-Roman myth in terms that Christians can understand because they want to impart truths that the myths once contained, not replace Christianity with paganism. If anything, the Christian language could be a step beyond Apollo, the Judeo-Christian religion already dominating the words and thoughts of the pagan deities before Christ's birth and the silencing of Apollo's oracles described in Virgil's *Eclogues*. Sharp claimed that "Keats denies Christianity the unique status it claims and implies that all religions must be viewed as human phenomena," but it is more likely Keats wished to impart a universality within all religions.

Instead of dismissing all religions, Keats wanted to embrace all religions, which is how I

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235 Sharp, p. 135
236 Sharp p. 135
interpret his later portrayal of the "Vale of Soul-Making," which will be discussed in Chapter 5. For now, it is enough to interpret Oceanus's speech as recognizing his place in the world. He does not preach despair but acceptance of what is to come, because he and the other Titans, like Coelus before him, are subject to the evolution of a newer and more beautiful set of principles.

Oceanus, though, finds that he has no direct connection to these new gods, unlike Phoebe and Mnemosyne. As Sperry argues, "For all his wisdom, he has not been able to preserve his godhead or to escape a scalding in the sea, while his pleas for calm of mind arises from a stoic resignation that does not approach the idea of sublimity Keats was intent on expressing in the character of Apollo." Oceanus is descriptive of how to act, but he does not aid the new gods, which is why he must dwell with his fallen kin. Clymene follows Oceanus's speech with the introduction of Apollo that precedes the arrival of Hyperion, an introduction that despairingly emphasizes the beauty that Oceanus heralds. As Clymene describes her attempt to capture the sadness of the Titan's fall into song, she hears another sound that causes her, as she claims, to "throw my shell away upon the sand" (Book II, lines 269-279). It is Apollo's music, and it causes her to be "sick / Of joy and grief at once," and then, seemingly, the music haunts her as she flees, as the fall still haunts the Titans (Book II, lines 287-299). White explains that Clymene flees because Apollo "brings with him poetry, an art form that evidently did not exist for the Titans." However, it is the message of the song and not the form that causes her concern. As Sperry argues, "the weakness and sentimentality of her narration" is used "to dramatize the inability of the Titans, whether on the level of pure emotion, intellect, or power, to achieve the mastery of Apollo." Apollo, as Clymene testifies, represents the new order that captures grief

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237 Sperry pp. 185-186  
238 White p. 131  
239 Sperry p. 186
and joy, all of the emotions representing one's weaknesses as well as one's strengths. None of the Titans is capable of provoking such emotions, and Clymene's behavior reveals that the Titans are too emotionally stunted to handle the feelings exuded by Apollo. She, like Oceanus, is a passive Titan who is unable to accept a place in the universe left for her yet unwilling to struggle against the new order. Clymene and Oceanus, like some of Keats's early narrators, dwell in a world filled with the glory of Apollo but are unwilling to join in song with the god and work towards some higher purpose. Passivity or the lack of direct support for the new order, and not just active opposition, is enough to cause the Titans to lose their place in the universe.

Enceladus, as one of the fallen Titans, cannot bear to listen to those who quietly accept the new gods' rule. Like Satan, he rebels against his fate and emphasizes the need for vengeance. Lashing out, Enceladus abuses Clymene, declaring her "over-foolish" and that the Titans must not forget the younger god's deeds (Book II, lines 309-321). His argument is that the Titans have passively accepted the new gods and explain away their loss instead of acting. Even though Enceladus seeks vengeance, he provides a good argument that Oceanus and Clymene missed: Apollo has not yet come and Hyperion still has power, so the universe has not yet completely evolved beyond their control. It is at this opportune moment that Hyperion comes, shining his light upon the many Titans that were once in darkness. However, the light does not shine hope but reveals "The misery his brilliance had betrayed / To the most hateful seeing of itself" (Book II, lines 369-370). However grim the scene is, Hyperion joins his brethren who are trapped in desires to return to past ways, "shouted forth old Saturn's name," and proved his inability to ever accept the changed world (Book II, lines 388-391). To Sperry, "Hyperion finds it impossible to conceive that nature could remain the same while he has changed," but Hyperion has not
changed except in attempting to rebel against nature and his former identity. Instead of finding a new place in the universe or working with the gods, the Titans are forever trapped in their own fall, unwilling to reconcile and still longing for the past. They are like the bold lover on the Grecian urn, trapped in an eternally frozen world that will never fulfill their desires to live in their ideal world of fulfilling, sensory joy. They alone choose not to move on, to not participate in the new world unless they have complete control over it. They refuse to change. The moment of Titanic resistance against fate becomes a moment forgotten because Apollo becomes the focus of narration.

Apollo, unlike Zeus, does not battle against the Titans nor does he confront the ancient deities. He does not cause the fall of Hyperion; he is simply a beautiful god who takes the full force of truth unto himself. Keats begins his third book invoking the Muse and Apollo, asking Apollo to "let the rose glow intense and warm the air," replacing the position that Hyperion previously left to Coelus after his despair (Book III, line 15). As a poet, Keats is finally writing his own poem directly inspired by Apollo—to tell Apollo's own story, not his own or one like his as in previous poems. Apollo has a role both within and outside the text, which is unique and denotes Apollo as the source of the poem and not Keats or the narrator. The narrator connects back to the events of the first book, telling of Apollo's journey from his mother's side in a parallel to how Hyperion left his father (Book III, lines 29-30). Apollo's journey is far different from Hyperion's fall, because Hyperion descends from his throne after finding himself unable to change the universe back to the times of the Titans' joyous reign while Apollo spends his time immersed in nature, recounting all the beauties of the universe, be they joyful or painful. Nature is heralding Apollo, as Evert points out, "The poetry of earth is never dead, and it sang to the god

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240 Sharp p. 138
on the morning of his glory." Nature welcomes his ascension because Apollo is in harmony with nature, and is not an opponent to nature, which connects back to how nature joins with Apollo in song as described in "Ode to Apollo." Apollo's journey is similar to the individual mind's progression through the Chamber of Maiden-Thought; first he loses himself in the blisses of sensory nature, then becomes sad and is approached by Mnemosyne. Through her presence, knowledge is awakened in Apollo and he explains his "striv[ing]to search" (Book III, line 88). Already, Apollo differs from Hyperion; Apollo desires to fully understand all of the universe and experience whereas Hyperion only cares for power and the right to rule. Apollo becomes a god through accepting and incorporating the sorrows that have already happened in the universe – presumably with the sadness of the Titans' own beauty and limitations at the top of the list, and conveyed to him by a Titan goddess, Mnemosyne. White argues that "Apollo's deification takes sorrow and makes it the stuff and substance of art. The younger Keats knew only natural beauty. In 'Hyperion' the older Keats has moved into the next phase of his artistic development. He is now creating art about art." However, Keats's argument in the grand march of intellect is that Wordsworth is truer than Milton because Wordsworth speaks closer to the human heart, not that he discusses art. Sorrow is part of Apollo's song because Apollo embraces pain and suffering, which is intrinsic to nature, instead of rejecting it as the Titans do. Art, therefore, is subservient to truth as a whole, just as art is only one component of the greater knowledge that Apollo embraces in his deification. Ultimately, Apollo represents a harmony in the universe, and he provides a way for humans to experience it that combines the experience of Greek oracles and Christian suffering – built upon the empathy with the tragedy of the Titans rather than rejecting them.

242 White p 134
It is a moment of despair and suffering that destroys Hyperion and elevates Apollo, showing how the universe favors those, even gods, who seek higher and more complete knowledge instead of seeking only their own fulfillment. Hyperion, like Saturn, represents an antiquated view of the universe that desires pleasure and power, and he is replaced by a higher conceptualization. This conceptualization, in the form of gods like Zeus, is a creator and controller, but these new gods also accept their limitations and work through them. Apollo, in seeking truth, realizes through Mnemosyne that he must submit himself to all emotional experience, including pain, to achieve his divine aspect. The desire for something greater than Apollo's experience is similar to the struggle that Keats experiences, but, as Evert points out, Apollo can transcend mortal limitations:

Like Keats, as he was before the Reynolds epistle, he feels the necessity of joining himself to some principle higher than that of mere earthly experience... his power is incommensurate with his yearning desire, and he is left numb and dazed by the struggle of his spirit to free itself from the bondage of mere sense. Because he is a god *in posse*, his limitations can be overcome, however, and, gazing upon the face of the silent goddess before him.\(^{243}\)

Apollo's desire is not to rule or to exist only for egotistical delight, but to know the universal secrets and truth, and that is why he asks "Whose hand, whose essence, what Divinity / Makes this alarum in the elements, / While I here idle listen on the shores / In fearless yet in aching ignorance?" (Book III, lines 104-108). Such a concept like Apollo's truth allows Apollo to control the physical world, but he is not limited in power like the fallen Hyperion, because Apollo represents the truth that can move the sun, instead of having the form of the sun. As Apollo claims, "knowledge enormous makes a God of me," and it is knowing the secrets of the universe that allows him to assume the mantle of divinity (Book III, line 113). However, that

\(^{243}\) Evert p. 235
knowledge exists for Apollo alone, and Keats never depicts a mortal capable of transcending through the same manner. Although mortals can never obtain the divine truth, Apollo's path to apotheosis reveals the necessity for his followers, especially the poets, to pursue all knowledge, both joyous and painful, if they hope to obtain a glimpse of the god's truth.

It is after the state of natural bliss and the time of searching and pain that Apollo takes over the position of power abandoned by Hyperion. What truly makes Apollo a god, as opposed to a mortal who follows the Chambers to the final stage of revelation, is the moment of absolute suffering. After Apollo gains his knowledge, he "die[s] into life" and ascends, transforming into a being that has experienced all possible emotions and thoughts, all joy and sorrow (Book III, line 130). Apollo's desire was for knowledge, not power, which contributes to his right to replace the fallen Titan, and unlike Hyperion, Apollo is willing to accept and embrace his suffering instead of dwelling in the past.

The third book ends with the final word "celestial," hinting to the divine outcome, but Apollo's fate is unknown. Sperry argues, "Yet the confrontation between the two deities, the decisive triumph of the one over the other, was something Keats could not fully dramatize for the reason that he had not experienced it within the terms of his own being." The critical consensus is solidly behind Sperry's words, but they assume that the original plan of a "war in heaven" structure of the poem was not abandoned on purpose. Additionally, there are those like Sharp who see the Titans as just aspects of humanity: "we need only remind ourselves that for Keats, all gods reside in the human breast, even if their originators do not acknowledge that fact." But the Hyperion that we have does not match either Sperry's or Sharp's view; Keats's final word, "celestial," reveals an Apollo that abandons his physical substance and becomes

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244 Sperry p. 193
245 Sharp p. 133
heaven itself. He has merged with the universe because he gave up his ego and embraced the world around him. White claims that "Each generation surpasses the previous generation's ability to produce beauty," but Keats's letter describing the march of intellect is about morality, and not beauty. Hyperion caused himself to fall because he rebelled against nature and tried to substitute his own will upon the universe, not because he was merely part of the previous generation. As shown in "Ode to Apollo," Keats views many of the previous poets as able to join in Apollo's song, and he consistently saw beauty in Shakespeare's works. Hyperion, like the previous poets, can aid the next generation, allowing the future to build on their greatness. Instead, Hyperion chooses to withdraw from the world, denying his light because he is no longer in power. There is no possibility of a future battle because there are no entities to wage war. Apollo has become truth itself. Keats has abandoned his previous mythographic works to tell a myth based on his budding understanding of the universe in which humans are bound to follow, but the myth is not limited solely to the human experience.

Apollo is unquestionably divine and represents a greater presence in the universe, but he is also something that Keats cannot fully describe. Hyperion was limited, and ultimately fell, because he was stuck in a static existence with no true power in a world that the Titans once dominated. To Sperry, Hyperion's "portrait is filled with an anxiety, frustration, and exhaustion,—culminating in the god's collapse 'in grief and radiance faint' following his struggle to force open prematurely the portals of the dawn—that seems a reflection of Keats's emotional life and possess a reality." Hyperion is suffering because he has moved in the Mansion of Many Apartments from the room of bliss to the room filled with darkness and pain. Instead of accepting loss and seeking a higher truth, he rebels against it and dwells in his misery, always

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246 White p 128
247 Sperry p. 188
looking back and never trying to push forward. Apollo overcomes the static nature of the Titans by progressing through bliss, pain, and then enlightenment. He is transformed into something far beyond a physical being after receiving the knowledge of the universe, the truth of the divine that makes him "first in beauty," which is "first in might." Apollo follows a divine path that resembles the later chambers, but the reader, like Keats, is never able to fully realize the last moments of divine transformation, because man is unable to truly grasp more than a limited understanding of the universe. Instead, Apollo, the embodiment of truth, sends his inspiration down to the poets, and it is through his power that poets are able to tap into a creative force in the modern universe.

**Beyond Hyperion**

*Hyperion* ends abruptly. There is much speculation among critics about how Keats would have finished the narrative of the poem, but he died only a few years later without composing what would continue after "celestial." Instead of dwelling on the poem's missing conclusion, most critics proceed from the epic fragment to the great odes Keats wrote in the spring of 1819, but only a few critics draw more than general connections between the odes and the epic. Of the critics who describe a fundamental relationship, Helen Vendler, in *The Odes of John Keats*, concludes with an examination of *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* and "those parts intersecting with and reflecting the five earlier odes." I do not believe that Vendler went far enough in drawing links between the poems, and this chapter will examine the spring odes ("Psyche," "Indolence," "Melancholy," "Nightingale," and "Grecian Urn") as a direct expansion of the key concepts that form *Hyperion*. Additionally, I argue that each poem contains an attempt by an individual (either the narrator, Keats, or the audience) to understand the key concepts.

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found throughout the different parts of *Hyperion* and internalize the Apollonian ideal.

Although we do not know the order in which Keats wrote the five odes, they were composed at a time when Keats realized he could not finish *Hyperion*, and each poem contains a sense of completion that the epic lacks in its fragmented state. Their chronological order of composition matters less than their overall thematic structure when taken as a whole. Instead, I believe that they are five facets of a whole, and they represent, with *Hyperion*, Keats's understanding of the truth that Apollo compels poets to impart to humanity. As a result, the odes can be arranged in such an order that the poems correspond to the progression through the levels of awareness described in the Mansion of Many Apartments letter and expanded to a universal level in *Hyperion*. By returning to these themes, Keats symbolically overcomes the fragmented nature of *Hyperion* and prepares himself for the eventual return to the subject in *The Fall of Hyperion*.

Therefore, I will not discuss these poems as separate and distinct entities but in relationship to the other odes and to Keats's Apollonian poems as a whole. First, I will show how "Ode to Psyche" reveals Keats's use of poetry to form a new system of worship. Second, I will explain how "Ode to Indolence" describes an internal conflict over Keats's obligation to serve mankind, which is a transition between the worship founded in "Psyche" and actively worshiping a higher power. Third, I will interpret "Ode to Melancholy" as a defense of the role of suffering in revealing truth, a lesson that Keats seeks to impart to his poetic audience as part of his service to mankind. Fourth, I will describe how "Ode to a Nightingale" portrays the failures of any attempt to connect to the divine by escaping into the pleasures of nature, which is a difficult lesson that all of humanity must learn. Finally, I will illustrate how "Ode on a Grecian Urn" depicts art's ability to grant immortality when it reveals both beauty and truth after showing how
humanity must move on from a desire for bliss and pleasure. In this order, Keats establishes the need for worship, sets his goal to help others, determines "suffering" as his topic, explains how painful truth comes from the failure to unite with nature, and finally explains how art is able to incorporate all of these aspects to reveal true immortality. In composing these five poems, Keats reaffirms his commitment to the Apollonian path in preparation for his later re-attempt to complete the *Hyperion* epic.

"Ode to Psyche" depicts the relationship between the human and the divine in both the mythic (Psyche and Cupid) and meta-poetic (narrator and Psyche) terms that Keats first described in "I stood tip toe." Psyche serves as a transitional force between the human and the divine in both a literal, narrative sense and as a symbolic representation of the mind/soul/imagination's ability to connect to the spiritual aspects of nature. Within the ode, the story of Cupid's and Psyche's relationship is assumed, and Psyche has apotheosized before the start. However, the original myth describing the events leading up to her apotheosis contains many parallels to the relationship of Endymion and Cynthia within *Endymion* discussed in the previous chapter, especially the Wordsworthian desire to "wed nature" and to obtain a relationship with the divine presence found within nature. However, the true emphasis of the poem is on the narrator crafting the story of the two lovers, becoming yet again one of the "myth makers" in "Tip Toe": "O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung / By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear, / And pardon that thy secrets should be sung" (lines 1-3). Ronald Sharp argues, "Psyche is a goddess of his own making," but it can only be a creation insofar as the mythmakers of "Tip Toe" created their gods and goddesses. Although the stories might be fiction, their essence is derived from inspired truths. When Sharp claims, "[Psyche] is fairer because she

249 Sharp p. 35
arises out of and fulfills the need of the human psyche for beauty and meaning," he associates the
goddess with human weakness instead of divine substance, and he goes so far as to declare,
"when the fond illusions of the old religions no longer compel belief, one must create one's own
gods."\textsuperscript{250} However, Keats's letters to George suggest an earnest belief in something beyond
himself, a higher power, which is not being created within the poem but described in mortal
terms. There are some critics like Brotemarkle who claim that "The idea that Keats considers the
imagination a merely human and subjective mind is clearly mistaken. That it is something
'other'—ethereal, deriving its only realized value from human pursuits of wisdom and beauty—is
constantly underscored by representing it as woman-goddess-animal whom the mortal youth
adores."\textsuperscript{251} Going further, Karla Alwes emphasized this point when she explains, "the attempt
will again define both poet and imagination as sacred. The poet seeks amelioration through the
only goddess capable of restoring a lost soul."\textsuperscript{252} All of Keats's poems discussed so far reveal his
longing to connect with the divine, to obtain an Apollonian immortality that all of the great poets
enjoy, but "Ode to Psyche" embraces a direct worship not found in the earlier works.

Unlike \textit{Hyperion}, "Ode to Psyche" describes an individual's interaction with the goddess
and the aftereffects of apotheosis, and the ode can serve as a pseudo-conclusion to the epic.
Psyche is revealed as a beautiful goddess who, like Apollo, is fundamentally connected to human
mental processes, but she is ignored and neglected by those who should worship her. She is not a
manifestation of an aspect of the narrator or Keats but is external to and distinct from the narrator
in terms of language and narrative. The narrator worships the goddess by creating a "temple" in
his mind, which is an expansion of his consciousness that honors the goddess but does not

\textsuperscript{250} Sharp pp. 35-36
\textsuperscript{251} Brotemarkle p. 70
\textsuperscript{252} Alwes p. 116
fundamentally affect her essence:

        And in the midst of this wide quietness
        A rosy sanctuary will I dress
        With the wreathed 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:
        And there shall be for thee all soft delight
        That shadowy thought can win,
        A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
        To let the warm Love in! (lines 58–67)

Psyche is a strong choice for Keats's ode because of her earlier appearance in his "I stood tip
toe," her existence in myth as a medium between the divine and mortal, and her relationship with
the embodiment of love, Cupid. To Sperry, she is "the goddess of the poetic soul" and of "a
poetry of instant discovery and unquestioning belief" that was overtaken by "a poetry of
established, even ritualized, order—the poetry of high commemoration." Sperry's view of the
poem is historical and dry, but his attempt to link the poem to some form of historical
progression is correct. Instead of form and manner, however, Keats/the narrator seeks to restore a
poetry capable of looking deeper into the human soul as expressed in his "Grand March of
Intellect" concept. Oddly, Vendler does not make this connection, and she instead describes
Psyche merely as "the soul in love." It is more than just being "in love"; it is the complete
union of imagination and love. Symbolically, the union of the mind (Psyche) and the
embodiment of love (Cupid) embody the very truths of the human heart that Keats felt
Wordsworth was approaching.

        By focusing on Psyche and her relationship with the human mind, Keats has provided
much fodder for those who interpret Keats's use of myth as symbolic of human psychological

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253 Sperry p. 254
254 Vendler p. 48
development. Martin Aske compared the ode with Wordsworth's poems that focus on the internal aspects of the human mind:

The point about the 'Ode to Psyche' is that it suggests how the Wordsworthian mode might begin, of historical necessity, to replace more archaic modes of poetic discourse. As both classical fiction (a goddess to be worshiped) and emblem of soul or mind, Psyche might be said to situate the inevitable passage from 'external' to 'internal'. It is, however, characteristic of the ode that it should hover indeterminately, on the borders of fiction and mind, between the landscape of old song and the deep silence of thought.  

Similarly, it is my contention that all of Keats's mythological poetry performs the same function of serving to hover between fiction and mind; the use of gods and divine creatures establishes an external universal principle that must affect humans, and Keats focuses primarily on those that deal with the human heart and mind to serve his purpose. If Keats was to pursue the strict Wordsworthian mode, he would not need gods in any form, but if he wanted to establish a true union between man and nature that Wordsworth sought, then divinity is necessary. Dorothy Van Ghent attributes a magical element to the ode and explains how it is necessary for unification with the divine in nature:

In an age of unbelief and anxiety, when collective sacramental forms have been rubbished off as delusions of antiquity, the poet—to find again a mode of union, between consciousness and nature, the spirit and the senses, the ego and the outer world—must create that union by the magic of the poem itself, which is both spiritual and sensuous...  

Although I disagree with many of the sexual components of Van Ghent's greater arguments regarding Keats's poetry, I agree that Keats's ultimate goal is to aid the reader's spiritual renewal through art. The gods, especially Psyche in this instance, are tangible aspects of nature that the poet draws upon to aid in this reunification. Though the narrator says he is building a temple within his own mind, Keats builds a temple through the creation of the poem, and, in doing so,

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255 Aske p. 109
he seeks to convert others to the faith.

"Ode to Indolence" is the least favored of the great odes, and it is of a lesser quality than the other poems. However, the ode is deeply personal, because it incorporates aspects of Keats's conflict between desiring a life of poetry and serving humanity in more practical means through the field of medicine. Both "Psyche" and "Indolence" provide insight into Keats's thoughts on the poetic profession, but "Indolence" dwells on Keats's fears that his pursuits may be for naught. The narrator of the ode challenges three figures, Ambition, Love, and Poesy, who in turn challenge the narrator. These figures are connected to art in a literal sense; they move about an urn, but they retain a power and life of their own fueled by Keats's imagination. Ian Jack explains, "he is using his visual source as a springboard for the imagination, and not as an original that must be followed with pedantic accuracy." \(^{257}\) The figures are of Keats's creation, representative of his own struggles with the concepts of ambition, love, and poetry. However, Aske points out that Keats "remains unmoved because although he is able to identify each figure, in his state of indolence he prefers to watch them 'fade'... into indistinctness, and thus be spared the gaze of their alert countenance." \(^{258}\) Thus, the "Indolence" of the poem could be either the temptation to become lost in contemplating these three aspects or the refusal to pursue any of the aspects.

Keats begins by questioning the suffering that comes with trying to find one's place in the world. He breaks it down to its most basic elements of cause and effect and draws conclusions about the world. Much of the content is a reprisal of Book One of *Hyperion*, focusing on the existential struggle of determining one's place in a universe that refuses to give you a commanding role. As the poem progresses, the narrator is able to reject Ambition, which is the

\(^{258}\) Aske p 115
flaw of the Titans, and Love, which was the essence of "Ode to Psyche." As for Poesy, the narrator finds it harder to reject her, and she seems to represent the happy, pastoral poetry described in "Sleep and Poetry":

For Poesy!—no,—she has not a joy,—
At least for me,—so sweet as drowsy noons,
And evenings steep'd in honied indolence;
O, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,
That I may never know how change the moons,
Or hear the voice of busy common-sense! (lines 35–40)

The pleasures of poesy are capable of hiding the individual from reality, which the narrator seems to desire. However, that same narrator is able to claim that Poesy offers no "joy" in recognition that hiding from reality's pains are not the same as overcoming them. Ultimately, the poem reverses the essence of "Sleep and Poetry," and the narrator is able to banish all three aspects that tempt him:

So, ye three Ghosts, adieu! Ye cannot raise
My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass;
For I would not be dieted with praise,
A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce! (lines 51–54)

Walter Jackson Bate was unconvinced by the dismissal: "What had started a mere rendering of a mood of passivity begins to betray a divided attitude crossed by inconsistent attempts at self-persuasion. When he recognizes the figures, the poet really wishes to follow them. It is only because he cannot do so that he ends by dismissing them." Bate seemed to suggest a level of petulance and pettiness that is uncharacteristic of Keats. The young poet was constantly plagued by self-doubt, and it seemed to him very unlikely that he would ever become one of the great poets described in "Ode to Apollo" after he failed to complete Hyperion. To dismiss poetry as a whole and abandon the pursuit would be natural, yet Keats is composing a poem about the very
subject. To this point, Bate explains, "The odes had indeed reawakened some of his confidence, more than he knew at the time."\(^{260}\) This confidence is not explicit, because there is no mention of what path the narrator will choose, and Vendler argues, "the rhetorical shape of the poem is that of a stalemate."\(^{261}\) However, there is not a stalemate by the end of the poem, because he has become accepting of a changing world where he will not rule. By rejecting the forces that seek to paralyze him, the narrator appears to be coming to terms with a shifting reality in a way that the Titans were incapable of doing. By rejecting the figures, he is willing to move on to the future regardless of its holding pleasure or suffering. It is for this reason that "Ode to Indolence" serves to connect "Ode to Psyche" with "Ode to Melancholy."

"Ode to Melancholy" contains many similarities to "Ode on Indolence," but "Melancholy" fully addresses the topic of pain's relationship with art instead of avoiding it. He begins the poem with the necessity of embracing suffering instead of fleeing to oblivion:

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul. (lines 1-10)

Jeffrey Baker summarizes the stanza as a circular argument: "Do not, by any of the means specified here, obliterate your consciousness, because if you do, your consciousness will be obliterated."\(^{262}\) Bate is straightforward when he explains, "It is wakefulness that is prized, the

\(^{260}\) Bate p. 529
\(^{261}\) Vendler p. 39
capacity to savor, even if it include 'wakeful anguish'.

When reading "Ode to Melancholy" without the context of the other poems, their interpretation is correct, but they fail to recognize the nuances of the statement that appear when the ode is combined with Keats's other poems. The mention of Lethe and the forgetfulness that comes from drinking from its waters is an allusion to Virgil's *Aeneid* and the ritual of the dead who seek rebirth. Their action is the opposite of Apollo's restoration of memory, through Mnemosyne, that allows him to die into a greater life. The oblivion of forgetting allows someone to start again, but an individual who pursues this course of action is forever trapped in a cycle of innocence and suffering. The only way to break this cycle is to embrace suffering and knowledge, pushing forward to true understanding.

Likewise, the allusion to Psyche, and possibly "Ode to Psyche," emphasizes the relationship between knowledge and life, and the shades could refer to the distracting figures who try to steal you away from life in "Ode to Indolence." Thus, the warning is not to hold onto consciousness for consciousness's sake, but to avoid the loss of something greater, a spiritual connection to truth. Such a lesson also serves to predict the death of Lycius in *Lamia* after he gives up his obligations in life to waste away in a world of dreams. Baker reveals there is a universality to Keats's lesson that extends beyond just the Greco-Roman mythic system when Keats mentions a "rosary" in the stanza: "The contemplation of Christ's suffering and death, with the grief, fear, bitter disappointment and sense of defeat that it brought to his mother and friends, is at the center of the rosary, as suffering is at the center of human experience. But on either side of it are more positive things, and the cycle is completed with 'Glorious' promises." Thus, the poem not only provides a warning against oblivion because it will take one away from truth but also acknowledges that suffering and pain are connected to that truth. In this view, the state of

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263 Bate p. 522
264 Baker pp. 159-160
melancholy is part of the "Mansion of Many Apartments," and one must push forward from the state to follow the Apollonian path.

The ode's approach to melancholy is ambiguous, and there is little to gain by dwelling in a melancholic gloom. The poem, like "Ode to Indolence," is personal, and it is easy to assume that Keats was wallowing in a melancholic state. E. C. Pettet points out that Keats, "on his own confession, had luxuriated in a 'love of gloom' and... felt it necessary to warn his sister against dieting the mind with grief." Likewise, Vendler declares, "This is a personal poem in an impersonal guise, and retells the torments suffered in relation with one's 'mistress'." I agree that the subject matter of the poem is personal, but I believe it is personal in relation to the "Mansion of Many Apartments." The ode incorporates imagery related to "dying into life" and suffering for the sake of truth, two important aspects of Hyperion's conclusion. Although the beginning of the poem warns against seeking death or forgetfulness to hide from suffering, it is easy to believe that the poem encourages the reader to "glut thy sorrows" (line 25) and to "feed" on the pain. Baker explains, "The difficulty with this reading is that it conflicts with all the prohibitions of stanza one, and the spring-like freshness of the imagery of the first four lines of stanza two.... He has been encouraged implicitly to a balanced consciousness of reality to see sorrow as necessary to refreshment and renewal." An obsession with melancholy paralyzes an individual just as the Titans were paralyzed, and the only way to overcome paralysis is to accept suffering and seek out a higher understanding of truth beyond the sensual. In a sense, melancholy, and suffering, are necessary, but they tempt an individual away from truth just as pleasure does. There appears to be a need for a balanced approach to suffering, but there is no mention of what such a delicate

266 Vendler p. 166
267 Baker p. 162
balance can provide an individual. Instead, there is an escape, and Baker argues, "The escape, if one is being recommended, is not to aestheticism or indulged emotions, but to reality, which has such pearls among its rubbish."²⁶⁸

The third stanza potentially adds another layer that makes it difficult to determine how the narrator is advising the audience to deal with melancholy, but comparisons with Keats's other poems reveal the necessity of overcoming the paralysis created by melancholy. Van Ghent explained why each stanza is so different from the prior one and how it represents the struggle with melancholy:

"the conflicting terms of the problem, the simple opposition of extreme emotions and feelings, must be somehow transformed in the end... By its dramatic approach, it places anxiety under the aspect of experiment—that is, as not merely a static condition of suffering but as a theater of exploratory action and of revelation through stress and conflict."²⁶⁹

However, Sperry argues that the scenes of the poem contain their own paralysis: "Yet one realises that the gesture is forever suspended, forever withheld, forever in the process of being made."²⁷⁰ There is a sort of immortality present, yet there is no movement or possibility of progression. It is the immortality of the Titans, not Apollo. Only the reader is capable of progression from stanza to stanza while the subject matter is frozen. The concluding focus is on pleasure and suffering in abstract terms:

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 shalt taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung. (lines 25-30)

Melancholy is secondary to Delight and Joy, and it is both praised and lamented. There is

²⁶⁸ Baker p. 162
²⁶⁹ Van Ghent pp. 147-148
²⁷⁰ Sperry p. 284
something divine to be found in a melancholic state, but the use of "trophies hung" also suggests an aspect of imprisonment.

In my reading of the ode, the beginning offers hope of an Apollonian salvation, which is the result of progressing through the chambers. However, the end of the poem reveals how those who are fixated only on joy become paralyzed when that joy is supplanted by suffering. This is a return to Hyperion, and the Titans embody this paralysis when they fully embrace melancholy, forever dwelling in the memory of their rule. At the same time, the ode is looking forward to Lamia, foreshadowing Lycius's inability to accept reality and succumbing to the pleasurable dream. Both pleasure and pain are forever connected, and an obsession over one or the other results in a loss of life. When the failures resulting from an obsession with melancholy are combined with both the pursuit of the divine in "Ode to Psyche" and the struggle to understand one's role in a changing universe of "Ode to Indolence," "Ode to Melancholy" reveals the poet's need to overcome the temptation to wallow in suffering and teach others how to do the same if he is to pursue immortality.

"Ode to a Nightingale" does not contain the same mythic setting found in the other odes, but it does examine the world of poesy that dominated Keats's earlier poems. The nightingale is derived from the well-known myth of Philomela, a tragic female figure who suffered greatly until she was transformed into a bird and became one with nature. Among the English poets that Keats favored, the nightingale was a popular image. On one side, John Milton's Il Penseroso embodies the melancholy and sorrow found within the original myth. On the other, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's The Nightingale sought to correct Milton's claims and attributes to the nightingale a sense of a joy that can be found while experiencing nature: "In nature there is nothing melancholy" (The Nightingale line 15). With Coleridge as a guide, the nightingale could
reveal a way to overcome suffering by escaping into nature, but Keats's ode is quick to undermine that possibility.

The poem describes a narrator who is entranced by a nightingale's song, a song that seems to represent the power of nature as a whole. Although the concept of nature's song is attributed to Apollo in "Ode to Apollo," the god does not make a major appearance within the "Ode to a Nightingale." Instead, poesy, the softer, more natural, aspect of poetry connected to Cynthia in "I Stood Tip-Toe," dominates the poem. The ode begins suddenly with the narrator overcome by a feeling that he has either been poisoned or is influenced by a drug. The source is soon revealed to be the nightingale's song:

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,— (lines 1–6)

As Bate explains, "It begins... with the heart, and with the heart so caught by hope of empathy with the song of the unseen bird that, for the moment, the restless, questioning intellect is paralyzed." However, there is more to the scene than Bate describes, which Leon Waldoff points out: "The aching heart, it is not always easy to remember, is a metaphor for a state of mind, the key to which is the mythological allusion to the river Lethe. The poet feels dead, and as if he were journeying to another world." Paralysis and Lethe recur throughout the post-

Hyperion poems because they represent two ways to avoid the Apollonian path, and the nightingale's song encourages the narrator to give up his life to wallow in sensation. However, the narrator of the poem has not learned to resist the seductive call and, as Bate continues, "The

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271 Bate p. 502
first half of the poem continues to try to assert the precarious, almost-attained identification with
the bird or with its song."\textsuperscript{273} No longer a poison, the narrator wanted to experience more of the
feeling and escape from reality:

\begin{verbatim}
O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South!
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim: (lines 11–20)
\end{verbatim}

This is a direct reprisal of "Ode to Melancholy," with the "purple-stained mouth" returning to
"Joy's grape," and the rest of the passage relates to the pastoral imagery of "Sleep and Poetry."

The narrator wishes to become lost within the joy of nature just as the narrator of "Ode to
Melancholy" sought to embrace sorrow, and both are a form of passively obliterating the self.

Waldoff argues that this action is "doubly defensive, enabling Keats both to escape dejection...
and to commence restoring 'a sort of Philosophical Back Garden' (I, 254) or spiritual bower,
which he has imaginatively constructed many times before."\textsuperscript{274}

The narrator uses metaphorical wings to join the nightingale, and it is at this moment that
the poem moves into a deep, imaginative state that is reminiscent of "Sleep and Poetry":

\begin{verbatim}
Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! (lines 31–35)
\end{verbatim}

The charioteer image of the earlier poem returns: a god of knowledge and poetry, not of wine and

\textsuperscript{273} Bate p. 503
\textsuperscript{274} Waldoff p. 120
pleasure. However, it is the narrator who becomes the charioteer, and the mention of "Queen-Moon" places the narrator in the role of Endymion, who hoped to unite the enjoyment of natural poetry (the nightingale's song) with the feminine force of nature and become immortal. There is no longer a division between the poet and his subject (Keats and Endymion), just as there is no longer a division between charioteer and narrator (Apollo and Keats). However, the narrator is not divine but only someone who wishes to become immortal through nature, and the passive approach to immortality cannot work.

The state the narrator sought is similar to the state of death mentioned in "Ode to Melancholy," but it is actually one that is full of life. By embracing nature, the narrator is transformed, losing the sense of sight but obtaining a heightening of his other senses. He gains a new understanding of the world but not a complete one, like the one obtained by Apollo in *Hyperion*. Ultimately, the narrator recognizes that he cannot be one with nature and is forced back into reality:

> Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
> To toll me back from thee to my sole self!  
> Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
> As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.  
> Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
> Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
> Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
> In the next valley-glades:  
> Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
> Fled is that music:—do I wake or sleep? (lines 71–80)

According to Keith White, it is at this moment that "Keats then recants his idealism and realizes that it is not the bird but the deception caused by the bird's song that is immortal. Keats realizes that like others he too has been deceived by the song."275 The natural song, like the lure of poesy

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in "Sleep and Poetry," allows for only a temporary connection to nature. Being a reader or listener places the narrator into a passive role, allowing immortality to wash over him, but it does not allow him to fully participate in that immortality. The Endymion path, the one of a dreamer, is ultimately rejected just as a path of joy alone is rejected. Instead, reality requires one seeking immortality to pursue something greater, something that can be found only through the Apollonian path: the creation of great poetry like the immortal poets of "Ode to Apollo" and "I Stood Tip-Toe."

The nightingale's song entrances the narrator and fills him with such pleasure and longing that he realizes can never last, symbolizing all the pastoral joy Keats once experienced. In a similar vein, Jeffrey Baker argues, "If the moment when the nightingale's voice promised more abundant life was a moment of illusion, imagination and art can offer nothing better, nor even as good." However, pleasure is all the nightingale can promise, and pleasure can never fulfill. The poem does not suggest that nature offers the best form of pleasure but that even nature's seductive pleasure is ultimately a lie that takes you away from truth. Read as the fourth poem, "Ode to a Nightingale" directly takes on the Wordsworthian desire to "wed" nature, and, like "Ode to Melancholy," the poem reveals the need to pursue a higher truth than that found in sensual delights. Keats's ode takes from both Milton and Coleridge, embracing the melancholic and the joyous aspects when describing his own nightingale. However, Keats reverses the spirit of all three versions, describing the bird as first providing escapist joy that ultimately leads to sorrow and a rejection of immersing oneself in nature. By relaying the nightingale in this manner, Keats transforms the Classical and English tradition into a commentary on many of the ideas expressed within Endymion and Hyperion.

By reading the odes in this order, they reveal the narrator's struggle to determine his relationship with nature and his longing to obtain immortality: "Ode to Psyche" professes his desire to return to a classic relationship with the divine; "Ode to Indolence" describes the poetic path; "Ode to Melancholy" explains the need to come to terms with suffering; and "Ode to a Nightingale" describes the failures to escape into the natural world. Instead of encouraging one to become lost within nature or pleasure, poetry must serve man and lead him to higher truths, and the poet must embrace humanity to accomplish that feat. The final poem of the segment, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," discusses immortality that can be found through art, and it reveals how a mortal can join with the divine by creating art that reveals both "truth and beauty." As the final poem in this ordering of the odes, the Grecian urn described provides an answer that is missing from all of the other poems.

The "Ode on a Grecian Urn" describes an urn that was based on a real object that becomes one of Keats's own creation, and the "ode" of the title is both the story revealed through the ekphrastic description of the urn ("on a" meaning "on the surface of a") and the form of the poem ("on a" meaning "on the topic of a"). The images of the ode describe a scene that can represent the progression of one mental state to another, which serves as a metaphor for both the chambers that individuals experience and the greater universal progression described in Hyperion. However, the poem itself is not about progress but how art can guide the audience to universal truth. The viewer of the urn first witnesses the Arcadian scenery, where one being pursues another in a Pan-like state of ecstasy. The narrator first sees the figures on the urn, like the unfallen Titans, as being in a permanent state of natural, youthful, about-to-be-fulfilled bliss. But by the end of Stanza 3, he realizes they are "far above" and are "breathing human passion"—static and ideal, and also something that would "cloy" if humans could actually get it. They are
paralyzed by their immortal pleasure. Baker summarizes, "Pleasure is not merely transient, it is a cheat, fulfillment is anticlimax, satiety a kind of surfeit."  

But the narrator's dissatisfaction with this experience—his "burning forehead" and "parching tongue"—lead him to seek a more spiritual, sacrificial, and less knowable set of experiences on the other side of the urn. The second scene, which completes the rest of the Urn's truth and beauty, is reminiscent of Aeneas' spiritual cleansing before entering Hades, depicting men abandoning the physical world of delight and searching for the divine, and of Apollo's acceptance of the suffering experienced after confronting Mnemosyne. He no longer desires to chase after impossible, self-centered, and cloying "more happy love! More happy, happy love!"

The other side of the urn dramatizes a group of worshipers giving offerings to the divine presence in the universe, offering themselves up for a higher cause and sacrificing their own sensory pleasure in the pursuit of spiritual truth (31-40). The narrator does not join with those individuals, but he is led to inquire about their activities, which is the ultimate power of art. To Baker, "The urn's power to stimulate not an act of faith, but meditative bewilderment about these matters, is perhaps given poignant modification by its funerary function." This is ultimately the whole point of the poem; the urn exists to challenge the viewer and to force him to look for something greater in life beyond sensation.

In the same way that Apollo seeks the knowledge and understanding of how the universe works in Hyperion, humans on the other side of the urn, and the cloyed and parched speaker, seek Apollo for guidance and a limited understanding of the universe that mortals can comprehend. It is out of following the footsteps of Keats's Apollo that the eternal message of the Urn becomes clear: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need  

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277 Baker p. 179  
278 Baker p. 169
to know" (lines 49-50). These words recall Oceanus's speech as he claims that "first in beauty should be first in might," because the universe deems that the dominant objective forces are those who subjected themselves to the truth of the universe and have given up sensory joy in pursuit of this objective truth. Baker reminded us that "Some critics, following the Arnoldian heresy, believe that Keats and other Romantics regarded art as a surrogate for religion." To the contrary, it is the urn's, and the artist's message that man must pursue the spiritual and attain what truth that Apollo deems for us to have. Art is merely the conduit of truth, not truth itself, and art is not what matters but the truth and beauty that infuses art with its power. Thus, Keats finally gives us, in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," a prescriptive way for man to act that appropriately follows the path of Apollo and truth.

As the urn provides a message on how to obtain Apollonian truth, the creation of the ode provides a means to obtain Apollonian immortality. Keats created the ode, and thus the urn, and imbued it with truth. Through clever phrasing and vivid imagery, the poem has been taught to millions, if not billions, of people. More people have possibly heard "truth is beauty, beauty truth" than any line from Paradise Lost. In reading the odes in this order, they form a metacommentary on the whole poetic process, and it is difficult to not believe it was intentional. Most of Keats's poems are about the poetic process in some form, and "Ode on a Grecian Urn" transforms the ode's narrator from passive listener to active describer. Although the narrator claims "thou sayest" (line 48), it is ultimately the narrator speaking those words to the reader. The urn is only alive because of the narrator's description, relying on his imagination to tell a story only hinted at on the urn. The lesson on the urn is to move from the passive worship of Cynthia and to take up the active force of Apollo, and Keats embraces that completely in form. It

279 Baker p. 183
is no coincidence that of the odes, this is the poem that granted him immortality.

Through the five great odes, Keats returns to five important aspects of *Hyperion*: the pursuit of immortality, the pursuit of poetry, the role of melancholy and suffering, the inability to join with nature, and the process of obtaining immortality through the creation of art. His philosophical or theological understanding of the universe has been fleshed out so that he can finally create a grand epic, which will allow him to obtain immortality. The only difference is that Hyperion describes the divine aspects of the universe while the great odes focus on the human. In Chapter 5, I will discuss how Keats combines the lessons for humanity contained within the great odes with the plot of *Hyperion* when writing *The Fall of Hyperion*. However, the chapter will begin with a thorough discussion of *Lamia*. Although an epic describing Apollo should theoretically best encapsulate Keats's theories on Apollonian truth, it is the pastoral poem about dreaming (*Lamia*) that, through the negative, creates the strongest lesson on how to obtain Apollonian salvation. *Lamia* is, in my reading, a purge of all of the pastoral desires that Keats still held. The five odes reveal his weakness, his desire to embrace an Endymion state of dreaming, but they ultimately conclude that there is another way. In *Lamia*, Keats definitively reveals that immortality cannot be found in dreaming, and the lesson of the poem prepares the reader to determine if *The Fall of Hyperion* is really a vision or just a dream. Thus, Chapter 5 will describe how Keats transitioned from *Hyperion* to the great odes and then to *Lamia* before finishing his message of Apollonian salvation in *The Fall of Hyperion*. 
Keats abandoned *Hyperion* in a fragmentary state, but he never abandoned his desire to create an epic that would allow him to join in the song of nature along with Apollo and the immortal poets as described in "Ode to Apollo." In Chapter 4, I discuss how Keats incorporates aspects of his epic into his great odes, and the odes add a human perspective to the cosmology revealed in *Hyperion*. However, the epic and the odes fail to instruct the new priests, the poets, in how to spread the Apollonian truth, which was the central concern of Keats's final years. Surrounded by both tragedy and literature, Keats fixates on forging a new philosophy that provides a solution to suffering through art, beauty and truth. As Stuart Sperry argues, *Lamia* allowed Keats to obtain his original objective: "there was still the possibility of dealing with the concerns that mattered most by means of comic satire and analysis."\(^{280}\) However, *Lamia* cannot serve this function because it concludes in tragedy. *The Fall of Hyperion* represents Keats's final attempt to compose an epic that incorporates elements of *Lamia* and the Apollonian poems, and his objective is to transform the role of suffering from a bane into a blessing with his system of soul-making.

Apollo, as a mythic figure, provides Keats with much material for his philosophical system. As god of knowledge, he represents both pleasurable and painful truths. As god of medicine, he is capable of both inflicting and curing what ailed humanity. As god of art and prophecy, he is able to directly work with humanity, imbuing his servants with divine understanding. These three aspects are all present in Keats's mythographic texts, and they all play a role, to some extent, in his Apollonian poems. In *Hyperion*, however, Keats adds a new dimension to Apollo: the role of savior. By dying into life, Apollo sacrifices himself to allow a new universal system to reign, one superior in truth and beauty to Hyperion's. He is a Christ-like figure in a world without Original Sin; Apollo dies not to overcome a fallen state but to allow

\(^{280}\) Sperry p. 294
humanity to achieve a greater understanding of the universe than that embraced by the Titans. Instead of redemption, Apollonian salvation offers something approaching perfectibility. Keats does not say if Apollo replaces Christ or is subservient to him, but Keats creates a new system that rewrites the Fall as described by John Milton in *Paradise Lost*. Suffering, therefore, is not the consequence of sin but a natural experience on the path to enlightenment within the Apollonian system.

This chapter will explore the role of suffering and the need for a system of soul-making. First, I will describe how *Lamia* depicts the pursuit of pleasure as the cause of suffering. Then, I will discuss how *Lamia* serves as a negative version of *Hyperion*, revealing the error of those who pursue pleasure over truth and the error of those who use truth to shame those trapped by the coils of pleasure. This will lead into an analysis of Keats's letter describing the "Vale of Soul-Making," a new system that would correct the "cold philosophy" that led to the tragic ending of *Lamia*. Finally, this chapter will discuss how Keats created *The Fall of Hyperion* as a combination of *Hyperion*'s mythic story, the human component of the Great Odes, and the need for a "warm" philosophy as revealed in *Lamia*. This change provides the instruction for future poets who seek to serve Apollo, commissioning a new generation of poets as the priests who will correct the problems of society by relying on a moral system that understands the human heart, one that is more Wordsworthian than Miltonic.

*Lamia* is a lengthy, narrative poem that incorporates pastoral elements similar to many of Keats's early works, and the poem can be read as a re-visitation of Keats's earlier ideas. As a commentary on his earlier understanding of the role of poetry, the character Lamia is a demonic version of Cynthia, one who creates through dreaming but lures men away from Apollonian truth. However, the view that Lamia is a manipulative enchantress can be found in Keats's source

Philostratus, in his fourth book *De Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that going betwixt Cenchreas and Corinth, met such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was a Phoenician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him; but she, being fair and lovely, would live and die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried with her a while to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, amongst other guests, came Apollonius; who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no substance but mere illusions. When she saw herself descried, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it, vanished in an instant: many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece.

Burton's chapter discusses mythic and heroic instances of melancholy and suffering derived from the pursuit of love and sexual passions, but the section on the lamia monster emphasizes an illusionary aspect lacking in the other stories. In this regard, the myth is similar to the events described in Keats's "La Belle Dame Merci" or *Ode to a Nightingale*, which reveal how the pursuit of pleasure can steal you away from reality. In Keats's version, he retains the general story of Lamia's seduction of Lycius, her being unmasked by Apollonius, and the revelation that all of her riches were an illusion. However, he adds a prologue, in which she sacrifices her natural beauty to pursue Lycius, and a conclusion, in which Lycius dies when Lamia is exposed as an impostor. These additions, and commentary from the narrator throughout the poem, provide a new context for the original lamia myth, keeping the same warning against abandoning oneself to pleasure while providing a warning to those who follow the wrong path in trying to "save" those ensnared by a lamia.

There are three primary components to *Lamia*: the transformational prologue describing
how Lamia abandons her immortal aspects to pursue a mortal; the dream-like romance between Lycius and Lamia that ends with a confrontation by Apollonius; and the harsh reality with which the poem concludes. Each component makes an important statement on the nature of pleasure and fantasies, and they are vital to understanding the message behind the poem on the role of suffering in human development. Lamia's prologue establishes the central dispute between duty and pleasure, beginning with "The ever-smitten Hermes... bent warm on amorous theft" (I, lines 7-8). The messenger god abandons his service to Jove because he is enraptured by a girl, who he followed "From vale to vale, from wood to wood" (I, lines 27). Hermes is not a god but a one dimensional figure who, as Walter Jackson Bate points out, is limited to a "single-minded intentness." He is not Apollo or a substitute for Apollo, and Apollo's direct role within the poem is minor. Hermes is like the lover depicted on the side of the Grecian Urn, and Lamia is quick to point out that there is something missing when they meet:

"Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
The only sad one; for thou didst not hear
The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chaunting clear,
Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long melodious moan." (I, lines 71-75)

Lamia's knowledge of the god's problem is revealed in a dream, and she is able to gain insight into Hermes's inability to experience the beauty and truth of Apollo's song. It is an ominous sign that Hermes abandons duty (to Jove) and truth (through Apollo) to pursue passion, but there is no analysis on this point by the narrator. Instead, the god and snake agree to work their power to provide the other with the object of their desire: the nymph for Hermes and a philosopher from Corinth, Lycius, for Lamia.

Keats goes to great lengths to describe Hermes neglecting his duty and Lamia losing the

281 Bate p. 553
natural beauty of her serpentine state. Most critics overlook these key details, because they interpret the poem as an endorsement of the pursuit of passion. Instead, the narrator makes it clear that these are self-destructive behaviors and warns that humanity can never follow the path that the two immortals set upon:

    It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
    Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly pass
    Their pleasures in a long immortal dream. (I, lines 126-128)

It is uncertain if Lamia provides Hermes with the object of his desire or only an illusion of it. However, the passage describes the deceitful nature of dreams in contrast to the truth of reality, a binary that is associated with the Apollo/truth vs. Cynthia/dreams dichotomy found in Keats's earlier poems. Jeffrey Baker emphasizes this aspect of Lamia when he argues, "she is and is not a real woman because she represents reality invested with illusion... the problem of appearance and reality is made painfully ironic by the fact that the appearance is largely of the beholder's making."²⁸² Dreams played a central role in Keats's poetry, as I describe in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, but these lines contain a dark connotation. Although dreams can provide great pleasure, only immortals have the ability to abandon their obligations to dwell on them. As I discuss in Chapter 4, the narrator of "Ode to a Nightingale" learns a similar lesson: dreams are pleasurable but the moment will always be fleeting. Gone is the hopeful outlook of Endymion, because only gods can enjoy the dream for a "long" (yet not eternal) period of time, unless a human is capable of being elevated into an immortal state (Psyche).

However, even immortals can suffer as a result from indulging in dreams. Lamia is granted a human form, which painfully strips every aspect of her previous beauty:

    Left to herself, the serpent now began

²⁸² Baker p. 35
To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,
Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent;
Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish dreear,
Hot, glaz'd, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,
Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling tear.
The colours all inflam'd throughout her train,
She writh'd about, convuls'd with scarlet pain:
A deep volcanian yellow took the place
Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;
And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede;
Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks and bars,
Eclips'd her crescents, and lick'd up her stars:
So that, in moments few, she was undrest
Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,
Nothing but pain and uglines were left.(I, lines 146-164)

As Andrew Motion points out, the narrator demonstrated his "mixed feelings by combining
wonder with revulsion when he describes her physical change." But Motion doesn't go far
enough: there is little wonder contained within Keats's description of her transformation, and
there is far more revulsion. Lamia is unable to realize the sacrifice she makes by denying her true
immortal beauty to pursue physical pleasure. She is not the suffering Apollo who dies into life
for truth but a lustful self-mutilator who sheds her natural beauty for a human form. Her dreams
are actually nightmares, but she is incapable of realizing the horror of the situation until after she
was divided from Lycius. Even then, it becomes unclear if Lamia ever fully acknowledges the
destruction caused by her action, especially the death of Lycius, because she vanishes from the
story.

The tension between dreams and truth informs the second section of the poem, which
concludes with the confrontation between Apollonius and Lycius. After Lamia provides Hermes

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283 Motion p. 433
with the object of his desire, she is granted a human form and is able to enter into a blissful relationship with the object of her desire, Lycius. However, the narration contains many subtle warnings that hint at the inevitable tragedy of their relationship. When Lamia comes upon Lycius, he is "Like a young Jove" to whom she "fell into a swooning love" (I, lines 218-219). Ironically, Lamia falls in love with an individual described as being like Jove, the god she undermines by aiding Hermes earlier in the story. This irony is reinforced when Lycius soon after makes a sacrifice to Jove, and the god allowed Lycius and Lamia to meet ("Jove heard his vows, and better'd his desire" I, line 229). In this moment Lycius chooses to worship Jove as the god of husbands instead of the god of kings, favoring the pleasures of marriage over civic responsibility. This is a poor choice, one resulting in Lycius's death, and the narrator foreshadowed the tragedy of Lycius and Lamia by reference to the loss befalling Orpheus ("But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice " I, line 248). Then, Lycius unknowingly foreshadowed his own fate in an attempt to romance Lamia: "Even as thou vanishest so I shall die" (I, line 260). Before transitioning into a description of the lovers' romance, the narrator casts doubt on the relationship by describing it in terms of a dream: "And as he from one trance was wakening / Into another" (I, lines 296-297). These are foreboding images that reinforce the inevitability of the tragedy that follows.

Although the relationship is doomed to fail, Lycius seemingly had no control over his actions. He is at first an innocent victim, dominated by passion and the power of the gods, which matches Keats's seemingly pessimistic view that suffering will happen to everyone, even to the divine beings like the Titans. Yet, some part of him recognized that his actions would not stand up against reason. When the philosopher Apollonius passed nearby, Lycius shies away from him, describing him to Lamia as "The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams" (I, line 377). The narrator does not say if it was Lycius's folly or Apollonius's folly, but Lycius acknowledged the
dream-like quality of his experience. However, Apollonius is ignored as the lovers' passion re- 
exerted its influence. As Lycius and Lamia reclined in their palace of illusions, abandoning duty 
for pleasure, they continued in a half-dream state in which "they might see each other while they 
almost slept" (II, line 25). Baker describes the effect Lamia has on Lycius as an emotional 
poison: "Lamia, in one of her symbolic aspects, is truly venomous, though her poison is 
delicious, paralysing not the nervous system but the development of emotional life." While this 
is true in a general sense, emotional maturity is described in Keats's Apollonian poems as giving 
up natural blisses to fulfill a higher calling, the dissemination of both beauty and truth. 
Furthermore, as Porscha Fermanis points out, "Lamia's wealth results in a denial of public and 
social commitment," and this extends to Lycius. He no longer serves civil society but acts like 
an indulgent child who seeks only to hide in a bower of delight. 

In most of Keats's poems, the dream-state or the ability to wallow in natural bliss must 
come to an end. Mid-passion, the lovers are roused by harsh music, and Lycius's awakening from 
the dream comes with pain:

> the sounds fled,  
> But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.  
> For the first time, since first he harbour'd in  
> That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,  
> His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn  
> Into the noisy world almost forsworn.  
> The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,  
> Saw this with pain, so arguing a want  
> Of something more, more than her empery  
> Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh  
> Because he mused beyond her, knowing well  
> That but a moment's thought is passion's passing bell. (II, lines 28-39)

The sinful (though "sweet") passion replaced with a desire for something more recalls Adam's

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284 Baker p. 36
and Eve's two contrasting moments of intercourse in *Paradise Lost*. Unlike Milton's Adam and Eve experiencing guilt post-intercourse following their eating of the fruit, the passion between Lycius and Lamia is both sinful and sweet/innocent. Also, the innocence of their lovemaking is ruined by the intrusion of the outside world, not by their learning the difference between good and evil. To the contrary, Lycius's status as philosopher suggests he already understands morality. Keats's lovers are also at odds with each other, not with their selves, and Lamia complains that Lycius wants more than she can offer. She attempts to make him feel guilty for even considering the world beyond their dream-like bliss ("You have deserted me;—where am I now? / Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow" II, lines 42-43). Lycius responds that he had no other care but her, yet he wants to show her off to the world and brag about his joy, which spoiled the purity of their earlier passion:

Against his better self, he took delight
Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.
His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue
Fierce and sanguineous as 'twas possible
In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.
Fine was the mitigated fury, like
Apollo's presence when in act to strike
The serpent—Ha, the serpent! certes, she
Was none (II, lines 73-81)

The roles between Lycius and Lamia are reversed, and, as Jeffrey Cox explains, "Lycius finds enjoyment in domination." Bliss is not enough for Lycius, he needs to dominate her and exhibit her to the world like a braggart. Instead of using his talent to fulfill his civic duty, he is consumed by a tyrannical, twisted form of love that Lamia "lov'd" (II, line 81). Lamia submits to Lycius but demands that Apollonius must be kept from presence of the couple.

It is no coincidence that Apollonius serves as a counterpoint to the dream-state enjoyed.

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286 Cox p. 60
by Lycius and Lamia. His name is derived from Apollo, and Apollo famously destroyed the mighty snake, Python, to wrest control over the Delphic Oracle. However, Apollonius is not the only pseudo-Apollonian figure: Lycius is also compared with Apollo when dominating Lamia, and Hermes wields the snake-bound Caduceus that transformed Lamia. Although both Lycius and Hermes fulfill Lamia's desire, their actions are just as essential to her downfall as Apollonius's. Only their intentions are different. Lemprière, in his *Classical Dictionary*, lists "Lycius" as one of Apollo's many names, which makes it probable that Lycius is just as much a proxy of Apollo as Apollonius. Additionally, the Caduceus was given to Hermes by Apollo, which Keats's mythographic sources describe as representing amorous intent. If Keats is recalling Lemprière's descriptions, then all three male characters represent different aspects of Apollo's character. However, they all fall short of the Apollonian ideal, and each has a role in Lycius's destruction with Apollonius taking the most active role. Apollonius is a harsh moralizer and a possible stand-in for the Christian response to pagan myth and the pursuit of passion. Similarly, he is possibly related to Milton's depiction of sin, suffering, and the loss of innocence in *Paradise Lost*. The crushing of Lamia could be seen as the Miltonic Christian's desire to destroy the influence of a serpent, and Lycius's death is the result of a Christian moral system that lacks compassion. Regardless of any source, the Apollonius of *Lamia* represents a view that, though true, is ultimately too harsh to benefit society. After Lycius and Lamia marry, Apollonius appears once again:

So in they hurried all, maz'd, curious and keen:
Save one, who look'd thereon with eye severe,
And with calm-planted steps walk'd in austere;
'Twas Apollonius: something too he laugh'd,
As though some knotty problem, that had daft
His patient thought, had now begun to thaw,
And solve and melt:—'twas just as he foresaw. (II, lines 156-162)
He is immune to the dream, and his inability to be charmed is probably what gave Lamia such foreboding when they first met. All others at the wedding feast succumbed to the dream, with "every soul from human trammels freed" (II, line 210). As Bate points out, Apollonius "is given throughout an impressive dignity lacking in the others."287 He is not bound by passions nor does he lose himself to his raw desires. However, Apollonius concedes to tradition and participates in the symbolic donning of wreaths, which allows the narrator to describe aspects of the three main characters through their choice: Lamia wears willow and "adder's tongue;" Lycius adopts the thrysus, a symbol of Bacchus and "forgetfulness" (II, line 226); and Apollonius dons thistle, because "all charms fly / At the mere touch of cold philosophy" (II, lines 229-230). Although Apollonius is the only one with dignity, the narrator adds a harsh appraisal of his character because he will expose the lack of dignity in the others.

Soon after, the "cold philosophy" of Apollonius enables him to break Lamia's spell and reveal that she is a snake. Lycius realizes that every experience with Lamia was false, but it is a truth too painful to bear. In a reversal of Apollo meeting Moneta in Hyperion, Lycius looks into Lamia's eyes and finds only emptiness:

Poor Lamia answer'd not.
He gaze'd into her eyes, and not a jot
Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal:
More, more he gaz'd: his human senses reel:
Some hungry spell that lovelines absorbs;
There was no recognition in those orbs. (II, lines 255-260)

Apollonius gives Lycius a vision, but it is a mockery of the transcendent illumination. Neither Lycius nor Lamia gains insight, but she vanishes and he dies. Lycius's reaction, to Karla Alwes, represents his failed desire to "find comfort for his own egocentricity," and the "the advice given

287 Bate p. 560
in the 'Ode to Melancholy,' to 'feed deep, deep upon [the mistress's] peerless eyes' in order to
counteract the effects of mortality is not applicable here." Additionally, Lamia's control over
vision, as when she allows Hermes to find his nymph, is supplanted by Apollonius's ability to
destroy vision:

Then Lamia breath'd death breath; the sophist's eye,
Like a sharp spear, went through her utterly,
Keen, cruel, perceant, stinging (II, lines 299-301)

Her breath gives sight, and Apollonius's sight removes breath. She is unable to resist Apollonius's
power because dreams are only real to gods and Lycius lives in the realm of man. In one sense,
they are opposites, Lamia is the creator and Apollonius is the destroyer, but Lamia's creation is
not real and Apollonius brings only truth. However, Apollo, the charioteer, is both creator and
destroyer, master of imagination and truth, and the characters of Lamia represent only fragments
of his being. He is able to die and be reborn because he is the balance between truth and beauty,
taking on both aspects because both are necessary to rule over this universe. Similarly, the lesson
from the Grecian urn is that "truth is beauty, beauty truth"—neither of the two sides can exist
without the other, and Lycius merely transitions from a living death to a true death because he is
unable to experience true beauty or truth.

Many critics, especially those of the 19th-century, either claim that the ending of Lamia
condemns Apollonius's interference or take an ambiguous stance on which character is morally
wrong. Motion summarizes the argument that Apollonius caused Lycius's death, claiming that
Apollonius "becomes a form of the evil he banishes." Neil Fraistat takes a neutral position and
says that the poem cannot provide a statement one way or another: "By refusing to take sides, by

288 Alwes, Karla. Imagination Transformed: The Evolution of the Female Character in Keats's Poetry. Carbondale:
Southern Illinois University, 1993. p. 159
289 Motion p. 436
presenting a dilemma with no possible solutions, Keats himself becomes an ironist."\textsuperscript{290} Similarly,
Dorothy Van Ghent asserts, "since the old man's interference with the marriage issues only in
death, one is left in uncertainty as to which is the more unnatural and wickedly illusionary—the
disguise of the snake as a woman or the old man conceit of rationality."\textsuperscript{291} However, Baker
argues the contrary position: "I am going to suggest that the implication of the whole poem is
that Apollonius is right, that Lycius's death is not his old tutor's fault, and that Lamia, in one of
her aspects, is indeed a destructive being."\textsuperscript{292} Baker expresses his agreement with Douglas Bush's
argument that Lamia represented a sexual or sensuous fantasy, and he goes on to add that
Lycius's death is a death of "a Keats whom Keats rejected, and the nineteenth century beatified.
Already sick of being a pet lamb in Hunt's sentimental farce, Keats was trying to save himself
from the Keatsians. But the poet loved the outworn self who died in the poem, and perhaps still
loved too the perilous principle of beauty in all things that died with him."\textsuperscript{293} Additionally, Baker
builds off Earl Wasserman's explanation that "Apollonius is not an independent value, but an
inherent faculty of the mortal Lycius," which externalizes the internal struggle that Keats
described in "Sleep and Poetry," the desire to spend ten more years in bliss.\textsuperscript{294} In a similar vein to
Baker, Leon Waldoff argues, "The critical attitude taken toward [Lycius] by the narrator and the
death invented for him by the poet indicate that Keats felt a bond with him that he wished to
repudiate."\textsuperscript{295} However, he then undermines this stance: "The agent of repudiation, Apollonius, is
not an entirely new voice in Keats's poetry. His precursors are Glaucus and the kings and princes.
But their voices of experience are now replaced by a paternal voice of unrelenting reason and

\textsuperscript{292} Baker p. 39
\textsuperscript{293} Baker p. 47
\textsuperscript{294} Wasserman, Earl. \textit{The Finer Tone}. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967. p. 168
harsh judgment."\(^{296}\) Ultimately, Waldoff is unwilling to fully blame Apollonius, instead claiming that "we cannot hold him responsible for the death of Lycius unless we argue that he should have been able to anticipate that Lycius would die as a result of the disclosure."\(^{297}\) I sympathize with Waldoff’s interpretation, but I do not believe that the poem it is a repudiation of the Lycian aspects that may or may not be found in Keats. Instead, *Lamia* repudiates the actions of Lycius and Apollonius, and the poem is a manifestation of Keats's view of external truth instead of representing his own, internal conflict.

*Lamia* is not merely a lamentation over cold philosophy destroying the beauty of dreams but a philosophical statement regarding the human condition. Although some of Keats's Apollonian poems indulge in verbal flourishes and wallow in beauty, they all attempt to provide a moral or lesson for the reader. Many critics viewed *Lamia* as a defense of either the pursuit of unbridled pleasure or the imagination, but some critics go further than Baker to claim that the poem is anti-Romantic in its rejection of dreaming. In particular, Jack Stillinger describes the poem as "Keats's fullest and most pessimistic exposition of the dangers of dreaming, of overindulgence in illusion and the impossibility of escape from the realities of the human condition."\(^{298}\) Keith White defends Stillinger's controversial interpretation, arguing that *Lamia*, like *The Eve of St. Agnes* and *Ode to a Nightingale*, is a "rejection of the imagination."\(^{299}\)

Additionally, White discusses Lemprière's listing of Lycius as an alias for Apollo: "Because Apollonius is in Burton's *Anatomy*... we can only speculate that Apollonius might, in Keats's imagination, be Apollo in disguise. If so, Apollo no longer acts as the god of imagination but as

\(^{296}\) Waldoff pp. 174-175  
\(^{297}\) Waldoff p. 175  
\(^{299}\) White p. 176
one who helps Lycius to see the truth.\footnote{White p. 165} Although I agree with many of Stillinger's and White's arguments, I believe that all three positions (that Lamia rejects cold philosophy, rejects the imagination, or is ambiguous) are wrong.

In Lamia, Keats rejects neither imagination nor truth. Sperry persuasively undermines the three positions held by most critics: "For any reasoned balance of sympathies, not to mention taking sides, is out of the question. The characters and the attitudes they represent are all hopelessly inadequate."\footnote{Sperry p. 309} Although he is correct that we cannot take a side, he ignores the possibility that we could declare the three characters as morally wrong because they are "all hopeless inadequate." In Ode on a Grecian Urn, the urn describes lovers forever frozen, neither alive nor dead, and the "cold pastoral" of the pious who were forever away from their city. Neither extreme allows one to participate in civic life, although, as I argue in Chapter 4, human development requires the rejection of the passionate life and the pursuit of higher truths. A compromise is needed between a life of passion and a life removed from humanity: humans must learn that pleasure does not satisfy yet be willing to gently guide those who suffer as a result to a higher understanding of life. The dreamers cannot be dragged out of their fantasies by "cold philosophy," but they can be slowly aided by a philosophy guided by the human heart. Lamia reveals that "cold philosophy," an echo of the phrase "cold pastoral," is a scientific approach to reality that strips the beauty from nature and is just as destructive as uncontrolled passion. In essence, Lamia is a tragic re-imagining of the story found upon the urn of Ode on a Grecian Urn: the polarization of the passionate and rational extremes found on the urn are embodied by Lamia and Apollonius. The urn includes both sides in a compassionate and positive manner because they are two halves of the human self, and reconciliation of the two halves are part of
the urn's message: true beauty is truth and true truth is beauty. Just as to destroy one physical half of the urn would destroy the urn, destroying one half of Lycius keeps him from experience true life, and Apollonius and Lamia both kill Lycius.

The lesson of *Lamia* is that one must recognize natural beauties without becoming obsessed with them. It is an argument for moderation in life and declares that those who promote moral extremes must instead serve mankind. It is not enough to be "right" but instead they must be helpful. To Keats, what humanity needs most is a warm philosophy, one that seeks to encourage both dreams and reality that can reveal beauty which eases suffering in addition to providing consolation that helps an individual move forward. *Lamia* only deals with negatives, and it does not provide a substitute system that corrects the pursuit of pleasure or reason. However, Keats provides an outline of his warm philosophy when he discusses the concept of "soul-making."

**Vale of Soul-Making**

By early 1819, Keats's nascent philosophical system appears regularly throughout his works. In the letter describing his understanding of mental progression as a "Mansion of Many Apartments," he also discusses the "Grand March of Intellect" by arguing that Wordsworth represents a morality closer to the human heart than Milton's. Both the individual mind and the universe are constantly progressing towards a deeper understanding, but Keats fails to describe a Post-Wordsworth moral system. It seems that Keats's dissatisfaction with "cold philosophy" in *Lamia* represents a critique of Miltonic morality, but it is also possible that he is rejecting the Romantic desire to escape into nature and the imagination as represented by Lamia. In many Romantic poems, there is often the struggle between choosing nature or society. In Wordsworth's
poems, the struggle is often implicit, but Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Conversation Poems directly
discuss the issue. In particular, the depiction of a dichotomy between the poetry/imagination and
philosophy/civic duty in Coleridge's "Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement" could
have influenced the struggle between Lamia and Apollonius over Lycius, but there is no direct
evidence to support this possibility. Although Wordsworth is closer to the human heart, he was
unable to create a moral system that joins the beauty of nature with the truth of society. Keats
tries to create this better moral system in his "Vale of Soul-Making" letter, which is an extension
of his Apollonian system. To describe how the letter completes the Apollonian system, I will first
discuss what Keats says about "soul-making" before applying it to Lamia.

In the letter, Keats expresses dissatisfaction with the philosophical and theological
systems held by his contemporaries while suggesting that there might be one original religion or
belief, a system of "soul-making":

The most interesting question that can come before us is, How far by the
persevering endeavours of a seldom appearing Socrates Mankind may be made
happy--I can imagine such happiness carried to an extreme--but what must it end
in?--Death--and who could in such a case bear with death--the whole troubles of
life which are now frittered away in a series of years, would the[n] be
accumulated for the last days of a being who instead of hailing its approach,
would leave this world as Eve left Paradise--But in truth I do not at all believe in
this sort of perfectibility--the nature of the world will not admit of it--the
inhabitants of the world will correspond to itself. Let the fish Philosophise the ice
away from the Rivers in winter time and they shall be at continual play in the
tepid delight of Summer. Look at the Poles and at the Sands of Africa, Whirlpools
and volcanoes--Let men exterminate them and I will say that they may arrive at
earthly Happiness--The point at which Man may arrive is as far as the parallel
state in inanimate nature and no further--For instance suppose a rose to have
sensation, it blooms on a beautiful morning it enjoys itself--but there comes a cold
wind, a hot sun--it cannot escape it, it cannot destroy its annoyances--they are as
native to the world as itself: no more can man be happy in spite, the worldly
elements will prey upon his nature--The common cognomen of this world among
the misguided and superstitious is 'a vale of tears' from which we are to be
redeemed by a certain arbitary interposition of God and taken to Heaven
Call the world if you Please "The vale of Soul-making". Then you will find out the use of the world (I am speaking now in the highest terms for human nature admitting it to be immortal which I will here take for granted for the purpose of showing a thought which has struck me concerning it) I say 'Soul making' Soul as distinguished from an Intelligence–There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions–but they are not Souls <the> till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself. Intelligences are atoms of perception–they know and they see and they are pure, in short they are God–How then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them–so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each one's individual existence? How, but by the medium of a world like this? This point I sincerely wish to consider because 'I think it a grander system of salvation than the chryst<e>ain religion–or rather it is a system of Spirit-creation–This is effected by three grand materials acting the one upon the other for a series of years. These three Materials are the Intelligence–the human heart (as distinguished from intelligence or Mind) and the World or Elemental space suited for the purpose of forming the Soul or Intelligence destined to possess the sense of Identity. I can scarcely express what I but dimly perceive–and yet I think I perceive it–that you may judge the more clearly I will put it in the most homely form possible–I will call the world a School instituted for the purpose of teaching little children to read–I will call the human heart the horn Book used in that School–and I will call the Child able to read, the Soul made from that School and its hornbook. Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways! Not merely is the Heart a Hornbook, It is the Minds Bible, it is the Minds experience, it is the teat from which the Mind or intelligence sucks its identity. As various as the Lives of Men are-so various become their Souls, and thus does God make individual beings, Souls, Identical Souls of the Sparks of his own essence-This appears to me a faint sketch of a system of Salvation which does not affront our reason and humanity-I am convinced that many difficulties which Christians labour under would vanish before it–there is one which even now Strikes me–the Salvation of Children–In them the Spark or intelligence returns to God without any identity–it having had no time to learn of and be altered by the heart-or seat of the human Passions–It is pretty generally suspected that the chr[i]stian scheme has been copied from the ancient persian and greek Philosophers. Why may they not have made this simple thing even more simple for common apprehension by introducing Mediators and Personages in the same manner as in the he[a]then mythology abstractions are personified–Seriously I think it probable that this System of Soul-making–may have been the Parent of all the more palpable and personal Schemes of Redemption, among the Zoroastrians the Christians and the Hindoos. For as one part of the human species must have their carved Jupiter; so another part must have the palpable and named Mediator and Saviour, their Christ their Oromanes and their Vishnu–If what I have said should not be plain enough, as I fear it may not be, I will but [for put] you in the place where I began in this series of
thoughts—I mean, I began by seeing how man was formed by circumstances—and what are circumstances?—but touchstones of his heart?—? and what are touchstones? but proovings of his heart? and what are proovings of his heart but fortifiers or alterers of his nature? and what is his altered nature but his Soul?—and what was his Soul before it came into the world and had these provings and alterations and perfectionings?—An intelligence—without Identity—and how is this Identity to be made? Through the medium of the Heart? And how is the heart to become this Medium but in a world of Circumstances? . . .

Bate explains that the central concern of the letter is to correct the inadequacies of the contemporary theological approaches:

The thought of the complexities, the repeated obstacles to any continued happiness, the uncertainties, the limitations, throws back to the 'common cognomen of this world' as a 'vale of tears.' From this 'vale' it is assumed by the more hopeful that 'we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven.' But surely this is a 'circumscribed' notion. This consolation, Keats feels, not only disregards but also contradicts the nature of that process through which we hourly acquire our experience.

By applying Keats's description of his system to the plot of Lamia, Apollonius's destructive use of philosophy is comparable to those who promote the "vale of tears" concept. They are harsh moralizers who destroy, not redeem. The Apollo of Hyperion, in contrast, is a Christ who dies into life without need to save mankind from sin. He is a god who becomes "celestial" to bring about an age of enlightenment, not to create "palpable and personal Schemes of Redemption."

His actions are part of a universal progress to greater beauty and truth where suffering is necessary for education.

In the previous chapters of this dissertation, I discuss Keats's philosophical and religious views in terms of his poems that feature Apollo. I believe that, when reading the letters and poems together, they were intended to form one Apollonian system. Many critics either describe the Apollonian aspects of Keats's poems in terms of aesthetics or fail to acknowledge their

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303 Bate p. 482
relationship with the philosophical and theological beliefs expressed in his letters. In particular, Ronald Sharp describes the letter as an example of Keats's "radical skepticism" and "must be read as Keats's solution to the traditional religious problems of suffering and mortality." Even Robert Ryan, who argues in *The Religious Sense* that Keats created a theological system within his poetry, separates the two into distinct components:

In this easy shift we see an example of the ability of Keats's imagination to operate within two completely different mythic systems—which I will call arbitrarily, Theist and Apollonian… As Keats grew older, he carefully withheld from his poetry all direct references to the first deity, and Apollo seemed to reign supreme.  

Years later, Ryan returns to the issue and links the two systems together, "Keats apparently entertained the notion that for him the experience of suffering was a means of attaining the fullness of divinity." After Keats fails to complete *Hyperion*, as Ryan explains,

Keats's views on the purpose of human suffering were undergoing a change, rejecting the kind of 'march of mind' historical optimism to which he had earlier subscribed. In the meditations that culminated in his conception of the world as a 'vale of Soul-making'... he resigned himself to the realization that even if mankind might be made happy in a better social order, such happiness would only end in death... He went on to elaborate the alternative rationale for human suffering and the vision of human potential that underlie his conception of the world as a 'vale of Soul-making,' where suffering is the means devised by God for the formation of individual human identity. This long meditation on 'systems of salvation' included a striking revision of his conception of classical myth and of its relation to the Christian story--a changed attitude toward the value and utility of all such anthropomorphic religious systems.

The two systems, Theological and Apollonian, are one system built around suffering. Although Ryan discusses the possibility that Keats's system exists solely to dismiss contemporary religions, it seems unlikely that he would rely on Apollo, and not Christ himself, in his poems to

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304 Sharp. p. 25  
305 Ryan 1976 p. 103  
307 Ryan 2004 p. 167
accomplish a dismissal. Instead, Keats's system is a challenge to the Apolloniuses of the world, those who use truth as a weapon against others regardless of the truth.

By focusing on both the concept of the soul and its development, Keats creates a system free of the philosopher's pure reason on one side and the moralist's abandonment of the material world on the other. Keats was seeking a balance in all things, as James Chandler argues, "At the same time, this exercise is just as obviously an effort to recuperate the concept of the soul from those who would deny it outright. The sense of historical present, defined by the tension between enlightenment analysis and Christian superstition, seems very much assumed in Keats's rhetoric here."\(^{308}\)

Chandler then describes Keats's source for *Ode to Psyche* as a possible source for soul-making, "Keats's own 'soul-making' account distinguishes, likewise, three elements or 'grand materials' in the process. What in Apuleius had been intellect, soul, and body, becomes in Keats the triad of intelligence, heart, and world."\(^{309}\) By adding "world" to the components of the soul, Keats adds an external, mortal element. Sharp takes this addition to imply that there is only a human component to Keats's system, arguing, "But if, like Keats, one thinks that placing faith in any kind of higher reality must always be dangerously deceptive, then suffering will be viewed only in a human context. Its rewards, if any, must be experienced in this life."\(^{310}\) If the letter is read on its own, then Sharp's interpretation can stand without question. However, it is likely that Keats is addressing those who follow Apollonius's path in *Lamia*, ignoring the possibility that spreading "truth" can destroy an individual in this life without giving him a benefit in the next. Keats's system, therefore, is not to provide "rewards" in this life but to prevent further destruction that can only harm the individual and society.

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\(^{309}\) Chandler p. 423

\(^{310}\) Sharp p. 51
The "Vale of Soul-Making" is a realistic appreciation of the role life plays in educating and developing the soul, but it is also a warning that outside forces can ruin souls. Sharp asks, "But what is the value of soul-making? It seems to me of the utmost significance that Keats never argues that it is valuable, but only suggests that it is by employing a loaded religious vocabulary." But Keats does answer the question; the "Mansion of Many Apartments" describes the process that humans go through, *Hyperion* expands the process to a cosmic level, the Great Odes explore man's relationship with nature, and *Lamia* shows the destruction caused by those who abandon reason on one side and imagination on the other. In Keats's view, all humans are already on a path towards some form of enlightenment, and the poets are called by Apollo to serve as guides, as suggested by "I Stood Tip-Toe" and "Sleep and Poetry." Although Keats says he does not believe in perfectibility, Chandler points out that:

This remark seems to leave the door open for another kind of perfectibility, and the playful summary suggests that it did, by virtue of it's apposition between seeing the soul as the effect of altering one's nature and as the effort of 'perfectioning' of it... Thus, while Keats is rejecting a kind of historical perfectibility that is too narrowly utilitarian in character, he is clearly advocating another: improvement through what Shelley described... as the refinement of the passions through poetry.\(^{312}\)

The role of the poet, therefore, is as the educator of mankind, and the poet teaches through promoting both beauty and truth. The poet must also establish a balance between an indulgence in the imagination and sensory bliss, the false understanding of beauty, with a commitment to cold philosophy and pure reason, the false understanding of truth. Only through harmonizing these two sides can the suffering of the world be limited to that which develops the soul

Though Keats wrote the letter while composing the Great Odes and conceiving *Lamia,* his language seems more exploratory than certain, as if he was groping for the best words to

\(^{311}\) Sharp p. 53  
\(^{312}\) Chandler pp. 475-476
describe the soul-making system. Although the letter helps to explain the poems, the poems provide the context necessary to understand the letter. As part of a greater Apollonian system, "soul-making" provides the true purpose of poetry: to guide humanity to truth by helping them properly understand the role suffering plays in life. It is into *The Fall of Hyperion* that his thoughts coalesce, coming together to provide a narrative that reveals the process of adopting the Apollonian system. As the final Apollonian poem, *The Fall of Hyperion* represents Keats's final thoughts on life, poetry, and morality.

*The Fall of Hyperion*

*The Fall of Hyperion* is possibly Keats's greatest poetic accomplishment, but it is incomplete. Composed near the end of Keats's short life, it is a mature summary of Keats's Apollonian philosophy and combines elements from *Hyperion*, the Great Odes, *Lamia*, and other poems. As I describe in Chapters 2 and 3, Keats recognized the importance of composing an epic poem from the beginning of his career, and his return to the Hyperion myth reveals his need to complete the abandoned story. However, *The Fall of Hyperion* attaches a preface to the story, not a conclusion, and re-frames the truths revealed in *Hyperion* in human terms. Although critics interpret the poem as a metaphor for psychological or historical development, I believe that the poet character in *The Fall of Hyperion* represents either a generic poet or a version of Keats himself. He has an honest desire to follow Apollo and serve humanity, and he follows an initiation ritual in imitation of Apollo's sacrifice in *Hyperion*. This ritual of dying into life is necessary for a poet to understand truth and beauty, which prepares the poet to share Apollo's message with others. Regarding the "Vale of Soul-Making," the poet character's trial and tribulation are not necessarily the new system that Keats describes in his letter but the process of
a poet readying himself to promote that system.

Before discussing the duties of the Apollonian poet who has completed the ritual, I will first refute the traditional classification of the poem as Dantesque and explain how such a classification overlooks many key aspects of the poem. Then, I will analyze the essential role dreams play within the poem. Finally, I will explain the Virgilian origins of the initiation ritual and how similarities with the *Aeneid* suggest that poets have a duty to mankind. By relying on Virgil, not Dante, as Keats's source, *The Fall of Hyperion* can be viewed as an inevitable conclusion of his many poems and letters.

Many critics have declared that there is a substantial relationship between *The Fall of Hyperion* and Dante's *Purgatorio* to justify attributing Dante's ideas to Keats's poem. Famously, Harold Bloom declares, "The Fall, like [Shelley's *Triumph of Life*], is a poem of desperate crisis, and both works derive their structure and temper from Dante's *Purgatorio*, an inevitable influence for poems so self-chastening, and so bitterly determined to seek a new knowledge of internal realities." Critics are drawn to assume the poem is Dantesque in meaning because Dante thoroughly influences the style of the poem. As Sperry explains, "Unlike Hyperion, The Fall is divided into cantos and narrated in the first person. Throughout the induction the dreamer, like Dante in the *Purgatorio*, is required to make repeated ascents by means of steps... These and other changes have been sufficient to persuade many critics that in *The Fall* Keats was rejecting Milton in order to embrace Dante as his new master." However Sperry goes on to argue that Keats did not fully reject Milton and that "The Fall was an allegory of poetic sin and expiation through intensity of suffering." Although I agree with Sperry that critics favoring a Dante

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314 Sperry, p. 313
315 Sperry p. 316
connection have overstated their case, I believe that Sperry does not go far enough. The purgatorial aspects of the *Divine Comedy* have as much to do with Virgil as they do with Christianity, and Virgil's *Aeneid* was a work that Keats knew to a greater extent than the writings of Dante. Additionally, Keats was not a traditional Christian, let alone a Catholic like Dante, and it would be a mistake to assume that the vision the poet receives is comparable to the theological crisis and subsequent exploration of Heaven found in Dante. Furthermore, Dante describes purgation as necessary for the redemption of sin, and Keats rejects traditional Christian morality due to its heavy handed focus on sin in his "Vale of Soul-Making" system. Relying on Virgil as a model, the poem is not one of "desperate crisis" but of an honest desire to follow a path to poetic immortality started many years prior when Keats wrote "Ode to Apollo."

Virgil offers Keats an alternative description of purgation and initiation that serves to ready one for a higher calling without the burden of the "vale of tears." Andrew Fichter, in his analysis of the *Aeneid*, describes the Virgilian process of purgation:

> After death, as Anchises explains it, the soul must undergo a process of purgation, including punishment for sins, and then have its memory of its former existence erased before it can conceive a desire to return again to the body. The basic precept of Anchises' disquisition, and of the Neoplatonic doctrine from which it is derived, is that the human soul is contaminated when it assumes bodily form.  

Dante does not hide Virgil's influence on *Purgatorio*; the waters of Lethe await those who climb the mountain of Purgatory, and Dante, the character, is personally guided by Virgil through Hell and Purgatory. However, Dante adds Christian elements to the act of purgation not found in the *Aeneid*, including only erasing the memory of sin instead of all memory. In *The Fall of Hyperion* and *Aeneid*, the main character's longing for a personal, egotistical pleasure and glory is purged,

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and the hero, instead of receiving Christian Paradise, is given a chance to participate in the
Apollonian truth. Although Dante returns from his journey through the afterlife to compose his
poem, his concern is more for the soul after death than the condition of mankind while still alive.
This attitude, taken to the extreme, could justify Apollonius's saving Lycius's soul while
condemning him to death. Instead, the Keatsian poet is called to spread a system of soul-making
intended to save mankind in this life, not the next.

One of the main similarities between the *Divine Comedy* and *The Fall of Hyperion* is the
dream-like exploration of divine truths; Dante and Keats both rely on Virgil's use of dreams to
convey important knowledge to the main character. However, Keats deviates from both by
questioning the truth of dreams. He prefaced the poem with an analysis of the relationship
between dreams and poetry:

> Fanatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave
> A paradise for a sect; the savage too
> From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
> Guesses at Heaven; pity these have not
> Trac'd upon vellum or wild Indian leaf
> The shadows of melodious utterance.
> But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die;
> For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,
> With the fine spell of words alone can save
> Imagination from the sable charm
> And dumb enchantment. Who alive can say,
> 'Thou art no Poet; may'st not tell thy dreams'?
> Since every man whose soul is not a clod
> Hath visions, and would speak, if he had loved
> And been well nurtured in his mother tongue.
> Whether the dream now purpos'd to rehearse
> Be poet's or fanatic's will be known
> When this warm scribe my hand is in the grave. (Canto I, lines 1-19)

White explains that there are three types of individuals described in this preface, the non-
dreamers, the dreamers, and the poets: "the non-dreamers are empiricists... 'Dreamers' are
idealists. They are 'dreaming things' who think not of this world but of the world in their imagination... Keats is using poet in a different sense, that is as one who is aware of his gift and uses it to improve the way the world lives."\(^{317}\) Although dreams and poetry contain a similar origin, poetry is a refined understanding of the truths revealed in dreams, and the narrator does not know if he is merely a dreamer or a poet. This self-doubt and confusion could connect to the destruction that extremes of dreaming and truth caused in Lamia, but it is doubtful that the narrator was worried his writing would cause either extreme. Instead, the narrator feared that his writing is pathetic, lacking the power of poetry, or that he is consumed by imagination as Lycius was consumed by Lamia's illusions. As Sperry argues, "The introductory paragraph thus sets forth a necessary but complex relationship between the dream and poetry. Poetry commences with the dream, yet, in its further, ideal sense, transcends it."\(^{318}\) This is a new and subtle difference in the relationship between dreams and poetry from Keats's other poems, but it aligns with his understanding of progression of the self, the universe, and in poetic form.

Keats hints at the progression from dreamer to poet in many of his poems, but his later works describe dreaming as a life-destroying indulgence. Negative depictions of dreams play a thematic role in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," where dreaming leads a man astray into the land of the fey, "The Eve of St. Agnes," in which dreaming keeps the audience from knowing which action happened in "reality," and in Lamia, where Lycius exists in a living death while under Lamia's influence and then suffers a true death when Apollonius forces him out of the dream-state. Only in Endymion does dreaming satisfy the hero, and Keats was thoroughly dissatisfied with the poem. It is possible that his depiction of Lamia could be interpreted as a rejection of Cynthia. However, the relationship between dreaming and poetry, not just poetic subject, was

\(^{317}\) White pp. 171-172
\(^{318}\) Sperry 1973 p. 317
originally defined in "Sleep and Poetry." In a dream state, the poet is able to witness the "end and aim of Poesy," which Bloom interprets to mean:

A poem is neither thought nor personality; it does not affirm anything, not even the poet himself. A poem grows out of consciousness as naturally as leaves come to a tree. The poem transcends nature, and yet is the natural outgrowth from nature. Keats's vast idea is of the apocalyptic use of poetry, which is to apprehend a full truth of nature and man which less disinterested and more artificial modes cannot arrive at, and to express this apprehension by unobtrusively being itself, a wording that cannot be reduced.  

It is the dreaming that allows Keats's narrator to understand nature poetry, the lower form of poetry that is related to the poetry inspired by Cynthia's in "I Stood Tip Toe." Evert explains the basis of this dream and its connection to Keats's poetry when he declares:

Keats has a great deal to say about the poetic calling in this work, and it is here that one finds the famous lines (96-125) in which his anticipated progress is charted, from wandering in the realm of Flora and Pan… to culmination in the nobler recording of the agony and strife of the human heart. The general movement of the passage is from lyric to romance to heroic poetry, and while the focus of description is on the gentler aspects of human experience, there is no question whatever of where the poet expected his apprenticeship in delight to lead him. The idea of an heroic poem was already with him as an ultimate goal.

With the poet narrator's desire for a progression to heroic poetry in mind, the connection between the "dream" of "Sleep and Poetry" and *The Fall of Hyperion* is made clear; Keats wishes to progress to that final stage and write heroic poetry. As Waldoff says:

From the beginning Keats's image of the poet has included a notion of epic struggle... the poet's identity in 'The Fall' is not only the result of earlier acts of identification with various heroes, with Endymion, Porphyro, the Knight-at-arms, and Lycius, all figures in the internal romance of the poet's psyche. It is a culmination of Keats's continuing identification with his great precursors. Just as he sees Wordsworth (and, to a lesser extent, Milton) as a giant engaged in an epic exploration of dark passages beyond the limits of human knowledge, so he sees himself... Keats retains in 'The Fall' essentially the same view of the role of

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319 Bloom pp. 367-368
320 Evert p. 98
the poet that he had set forth in 'Sleep in Poetry'...\textsuperscript{321}

This may explain why Keats re-framed his heroic poem, the epic \textit{Hyperion}, by adding a dream to the beginning of the poem.

The first stage of the poet's dream in \textit{The Fall of Hyperion} begins in Eden or a location similar to Eden. The narrator finds hints of a feast that "seem'd" to be "by angel tasted" or "Mother Eve," but there is no proof of their prior presence (Canto I, lines 30, 31). These Judeo-Christian elements are uncertain, and the scene also recalls the poetic paradise from "Sleep and Poetry." In light of Evert's claim regarding the realm of "Flora and Pan," the blending of Christian and Pagan imagery creates a universal paradise that represents the original state of the poet narrator who finds joy in nature and wishes to compose pastoral poems. However, any allusion to paradise would be compared with the one lost in \textit{Paradise Lost}. Bloom claims that Keats has "reentered Eden"\textsuperscript{322} and Sperry, more directly, declares that "Through partaking of the fragments, he achieves communion with a former innocence and, specifically through Eve, with the universality of human experience that has descended for its loss."\textsuperscript{323} However, there is no evidence of a "return" to a time before The Fall, or even a Miltonic Fall. The narrator merely exists without an origin, and there is no moral judgment cast upon him. Instead, the substance is the raw bounty of nature for which the narrator soon experiences an "appetite,/ More yearning than on earth I ever felt,/ Growing within" (Canto I, lines 38-40). Evert casts the paradise as "temptations of the sense," but he suggests that "this too is apparently requisite to the visionary poet, for, did he not yield to their attractions, he would not finally drink the potion (Canto I, lines 41-46) that delivers his consciousness to the ultimate vision."\textsuperscript{324} Instead of being "requisite" to

\textsuperscript{321} Waldoff pp. 189-190
\textsuperscript{322} Bloom p. 422
\textsuperscript{323} Sperry p. 7318
\textsuperscript{324} Evert pp. 288-289
the visionary poet, it is a mistake that keeps the poet from obtaining his vision just as the sensual delights trapped Lycius in his dream. The narrator consumes the substance of the meal, but he is not satisfied with simply pleasures. He needs something more that paradise cannot provide.

Feasting does not cause the narrator to suffer a Fall like Eve nor is the narrator ever prohibited from consuming any substance. Instead, it is natural for him to grow weary of the pleasure caused by eating and to seek something greater. Sperry argues that the scene parallels Eve's dream regarding temptation, and "The remains of the feast of summer fruits the dreamer tastes provide substantial knowledge of lost innocence and man's subsequent decline throughout the course of history." Similarly, Van Ghent claims, "The food taken by the Dreamer at the mystic meal is a transformative food; that is to say that it is sacramental." However, the poem does not describe any revelation or knowledge provided by consuming the food, only a thirst that is both literal and symbolic. Jeffrey Baker acknowledges the problem with critics interpreting this passage when he says, "But it is not entirely certain that this is a legacy from an innocent past, or that it is, as Bate suggests, a little later, a sacramental meal," but he adds that the poet narrator is "re-enacting the sin of Adam." Eve's consumption of the forbidden fruit provides her with great knowledge while casting her from paradise, but the narrator consumes food to no effect or judgment placed upon him. He has the entire bounty of Eden before him, but he longs for something more because the pleasure cannot satisfy. This is a reversal of Paradise Lost, and Keats condemns the Edenic state as empty and unsatisfactory without placing a moral judgment against those who seek knowledge. It is also possible that Keats is responding to Shelley's Prometheus Unbound and Shelley's merging of the Miltonic Serpent with Christ to create a

325 Sperry p. 319
326 Van Ghent p. 224
Prometheus who serves mankind through revolutionary defiance and sacrifice. However, as Leon Waldoff points out, "There is no such moral or revolutionary concern in the Hyperion poems."  Instead, Keats attributes the desire for knowledge to a fundamental aspect of human nature, not one granted by a benevolent Titan, and the scene recalls the first stages of the "Mansion of Many Apartments." By reversing the nature of Eden, Keats is progressing beyond Milton's limited moral viewpoint to a system that does not blame suffering and the loss of paradise upon sin.

The narrator satisfies his thirst with a "transparent juice," and the "full draught" allows him to transition from the garden to a mysterious temple (Canto I, lines 42, 46). Evert identifies this transition as "the bias of both Endymion and the later poetry toward the values of human life."  Surprisingly, Evert does not examine this scene in context of his earlier analysis on wine: "many of the references to wine in his poetry simply communicate the pleasure of drinking it. But there is also an occasional note of its utility as an intoxicant, an available Lethe, for the banishment of insistent memory."  He continues, "it is clear that his poetry is represented as a draught comparable, though not equal, to one from the sacred fountain of the Muses, i.e. classical poetry" and there is "a hint of the associational process by means of which wine becomes a metaphor for poetry." This early wine/Lethe image appears once again at a time when the narrator reenacts passage through the first stages of the "Mansion of Many Apartments" and the hierarchy of poetry described in "Sleep and Poetry." The waters cause the narrator to become unconscious to the sensual world, allowing him to move from one side of the Grecian Urn to the other. No other dreamer character within Keats's poetry is able to break free of the sensual world through dreams, but the poet narrator is experiencing a sort of dream within a dream.

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329 Evert p. 289
330 Evert p. 67
331 Evert p. 68
Additionally, Keats's use of the clear liquid is comparable to Virgil's description that waters of Lethe prepare the soul to return to the world, but Aeneas avoids the river so he can re-enter the world with the knowledge necessary to fulfill his destiny in Book Six of the *Aeneid*. However, it is important for the reader to understand that the poet narrator's actions are not an allegory for types of poetry but are the proper means to prepare the self to write a higher form of poetry.

The "banishment of insistent memory," to use Evert's phrase, removes any attachment to the sensual world and allows the poet to arrive at the temple grounds. The temple is not a metaphor for heroic poetry, or a mental state. Instead, it is the place where a poet can witness Apollonian truth. In his atheistic zeal, Bloom mistakes the temple and the meaning behind its sacred ground when he claims, "Keats blends five religious traditions… because he wants the abandoned temple of Saturn to represent the shrine of religious consciousness itself. The death of one god is for Keats the death of all, and Saturn in this second version of *Hyperion* is not less than ancient and displaced piety, in all its historical forms." The temple is not dedicated to Saturn but to his fall and the subsequent rise of Apollo's truth. However, this image of a temple must be understood in the context of Keats's poetry.

There are two odes which influence the role of temples in Keats poetry: "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to Psyche." In "Grecian Urn," the image of the temple is limited to a "green altar" and a "mysterious priest." It is an ambiguous scene, and there is little direct evidence as to what function the temple plays. However, the passage describing the temple is found between a scene of unfulfilled passion a message claiming that "'beauty is truth, truth beauty,' – that is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know" ("Grecian Urn" lines 49-50). Therefore, it is possible that the "temple" allows an individual to transition from a life of

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332 Bloom p. 423
unfulfilled passion to the message of truth. In "Ode to Psyche," the narrator uses the concept of a temple as proof that he will dedicate his life to truth and the creative power of the imagination. As Evert explains, "there can be no doubt about the poem's main import, that the poet piously dedicates himself to a continuing imaginative veneration of [Psyche's] memory, which he calmly and firmly distinguishes entirely from conditions in the external world." However, the poem is more than this; Psyche has been left without followers, and so the narrator "will be thy priest, and build a fane/ In some untrodden region of my mind" ("Psyche" lines 51-52). The temple of The Fall of Hyperion is the "last" temple, forgotten. No wonder, the poets of the age are all "mock lyrists, large self worshippers/ And careless Hectorers in proud bad verse" (Canto I, lines 207-208). Keats returns to his critique of bad poets from "Sleep in Poetry," where the narrator lashes out at those "That blasphemed the bright Lyrist to his face" (line 202). For a poet to be true to Apollo, he must, playing off of Keats's pun, create temples between their temples, and he must have "suffer'd in these temples" giving praise to the divine (Canto I, line 180). However, this is only half of the basis for Keats's temple.

In addition to temple imagery found in Keats's other poems, there is a relationship between the temple in The Fall of Hyperion and the temple of Apollo that Aeneas must enter in Book Six of the Aeneid. As discussed in Chapter 2, many have accepted Lord Byron's slur that Keats did not have a background in the classics, but he did know Virgil's poetry and translated the Aeneid as a schoolboy. While other poets, like Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser, had an emotional impact in Keats's formation as a poet, Virgil provides Keats with both a Classical and Pagan understanding of the universe that he could not enjoy until Chapman's translation of Homer. Bate describes Keats's apprenticeship with Hammond as a time "that Keats tried to

333 Evert p. 307
continue something of a life he had known before. Rather touchingly, not knowing what else to do, he worked at first during his spare hours on the prose translation of the *Aeneid* he had begun at school. Apparently, it was finished within a few months.\textsuperscript{334} Keats's appreciation of Virgil is further revealed in his addition of Virgil as one of the immortal poets that join with Apollo in "Ode to Apollo." It is not coincidental that, in creating an epic poem about Apollo, Keats would return to the poet who was an important influence during his transition from school to his career in poetry. Like Dante, Virgil would be Keats's guide into the underworld.

Although Virgil's *Aeneid* discusses the journey of Aeneas, his depiction of religion offers much for those not destined to be great heroes. Thomas Greene claims:

> The charms and beauty of Virgil's religion are actually far more winning in his accounts of human worship, where he is most himself and most spontaneous…Virgil's faith must have been like his hero's: inward and intuitive, taking sustenance from places known, from ritual and tradition, from tree and bush and earth. His faith must have been vague in some respects, blurred around the edges, shot with doubts, but his fervor, his openness to some transcendence, were very vital and enriched the dramatic substance of his heart.\textsuperscript{335}

Virgil's "inward and intuitive" religion is comparable to the mental temple that Keats establishes for Psyche and the temple he discovers within his dreams. The journey is both internal and external, and it requires the individual to be pure of intention and body. When the poet arrives, he must travel west because "eastward, where black gates/ Were shut against the sunrise evermore." (Canto I, lines 85-86). Although this moment is reminiscent of the final lines of *Paradise Lost*, the poet narrator is not cast out of Eden but instead welcomed into the land of the immortals. The East represents dawn, which is connected to youth. Although youth is lost to him, the narrator is not the same as Wordsworth's in *Ode: Intimations of Immortality*. Age provides Keats's narrator

\textsuperscript{334} Bate p. 32  
\textsuperscript{335} Greene, Thomas. *Descent from Heaven*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1975. p. 88
with the experience necessary to find truth and to enjoy Apollo's harvest as described in "To Autumn." He is no longer bound by a desire for pleasure but is capable of introspection and contextualizing natural truths. Experience does not inhibit the narrator's ability to find the sublime in nature as Wordsworth wrote, and the passage overturns both Milton's and Wordsworth's belief that our earlier state was our better state. The poet narrator enters into a realm of the unknown, which is similar to how, Virgil describes Aeneas's descent as into "yet unreveal'd to human sight,/ Ye gods who rule the regions of the night" (Dryden Book 6: 374-375). However, there is another important connection, the relationship of the East and pleasure. Before Aeneas can be allowed into the underworld, he must overcome his attachment to sensual pleasure. As Greene explains, "Virgil is concerned with conferring a certain metaphysical prestige upon right conduct. Aeneas' conduct as the god finds him appears exemplary but is in fact misguided. It represents an evasion... Aeneas' evasion stems not so much from any love for Dido as from a dreamy willingness to indulge himself under her opulent, oriental hospitality."336 The pleasure that Keats's narrator found is in the general substance of nature, not from a woman, but it is an attachment that still needs to be removed. By indulging in the waters of forgetfulness, the narrator separates from the pleasures of the garden and is allowed to begin his journey to enlightenment.

After overcoming the sensual pleasures, the poet is faced with a new temptation within the temple. Before the stairs and the altar, the poet is confronted with various sights: clothes, jewelry, and all sorts of riches (Canto I, lines 79, 80), but the poet is capable of approaching the altar "sober-paced" (Canto I, line 93). However, the smell of "Maian incense" has "spread

336 Greene p. 82
around/ Forgetfulness of everything but bliss" (Canto I, lines 103-104). The poet, like Aeneas, has become overwhelmed by the sensation provided by the temple and is immersed in a false attainment of what he desires: Aeneas is overwhelmed by the image of mythic/heroic deeds performed by men, and Keats's poet is overcome by religious delight. Although they both indulge, they return to their purpose when chastised by their guide. Staying upon the steps immersed in religious delight is not the attainment of truth but leads the viewer to "wither in a few years" (Canto I, line 111). It is possible that this religious piety could be connected to the "cold pastoral" of the “Grecian Urn” that removes one from society, as described in Chapter 4, or it could encourage the abusive self-righteousness of Apollonius. It is not truth, but it can be found along the correct path to truth. If the poet seeks a place in the universe, then he must move on beyond religious pleasure, and, in doing so, he experiences a type of death.

Recognizing Keats's use of Virgil and the Apollonian ideal pursued by Aeneas allows the reader to fully understand the relationship between the poet and Moneta. The poet has overcome paradise, has entered the temple, and is given the final test: he must submit himself to the higher powers and sacrifice the pleasures he holds dear in order to attain the truth he seeks. If he is a true poet, not just a dreamer, he would be able to pass Moneta's ("admonisher" in Latin) challenge. The overwhelming incense threatens to keep the poet as prisoner to religious delight, but it also serves as an opportunity to connect to the immortals. Moneta claims that the incense will soon die out and, if he has not used the opportunity to step forward, it would be too late to reach the altar (Canto I, lines 115-117). He "felt the tyranny/ Of that fierce threat and the hard task proposed,/ Prodigious seem'd the toil," and he was finally able to climb the steps (Canto I, lines 119-121). He suffocates and comes close to death, but he is able to conquer and reach the altar. It becomes clear what Moneta's final challenge was: "None can usurp this height… But
those to whom the miseries of the world/ Are misery, and will not let them rest" (Canto I, lines 149-150). The poet could not hide from the pain in the world by immersing himself in bliss, but realized that a paradise could not be attained. Only through accepting that dwelling in pleasure is a form of living death is the poet able to let his old self die.

Many, like Bloom, have identified the poet character as Keats, but they neglect that Moneta embodies Keats's philosophy. It is not coincidence that the poet is told that he must climb to the altar or die, because Keats described a similar situation in his May 3, 1818 letter to Reynolds that discusses the "Mansion of Many Apartments." In his letter, Keats alludes to there being a "great whole" of knowledge and explains "high Sensation with and without knowledge appears to me this--in the latter case we are falling continually ten thousand fathoms deep and being blown up again without wings... in the former case, our shoulders are fledged[d], and we go thro' the same [air] and space without fear."337 In the same letter, Keats explains that the "Chamber of Maiden Thought" fills one with pleasure but soon leads the individual to realize that the world is filled with pain and suffering. Being overwhelmed by suffering is the "falling," and knowledge allows one to overcome the suffering. Moneta's threat is only what Keats has declared in his letters; the poet must seize the truth regarding suffering or be forever dragged down by it. Keats merges the elements of his philosophy with the Sybil's image in order to guide the poet, and possibly future poets, towards his proper role.

The organization of the poet's trial in The Fall of Hyperion is structurally similar to the "Chambers of Maiden Thought" with the addition of the Virgilian purification ritual. The poet, after reaching the altar, humbles himself before the universe and dedicates his life to the proper ends of poetry in order to obtain enlightenment. He is challenged and taunted by Moneta,

accused of being "a dreaming thing,/ A fever of thyself" (Canto I, lines 169-170). The poet, pushed into a corner, is unable to do anything but cry out: "shouted I/ Spite of myself, and with a Pythia's spleen" (Canto I, lines 201-202). He is overwhelmed like Aeneas who "with awful dread possess'd/ His vows to great Apollo thus address'd... Give me what Heav'n has promis'd to my fate" (Dryden Book 6: 86-87, 102). The power of piety, the force which drove both the poet and Aeneas to the temples in search of knowledge, overwhelms them and presses them into action. Then the poet attacks himself and the "all mock lyrists, large self worshippers/ and careless Hectorers in proud bad verse" before he demands knowledge like Aeneas before him: "Majestic shadow, tell me where I am, / Whose altar this; for whom this incense curls" (Canto I, lines 205-206, 209-210). Like Aeneas, he cries out to the divine powers the purpose of his journey and prepares himself to achieve his glorious destiny. Where Aeneas must overcome the downfall of Troy and lay the foundation of a better civilization, Rome, the poet must denounce his former self and those false poets in order to set the foundation for a truer form of poetry. Finally, when both have thrown themselves at the mercy of the divine, their guides are able to provide the information that they seek.

The poet is not a political figure like Aeneas, but he does seek to lead his people towards a higher calling. When the sacrifice is finished, Moneta admits,

My power, which to me is still a curse,  
Shall be to thee a wonder, for the scenes  
Still swooning vivid through my globed brain,  
With an electral changing misery,  
Thou shalt with these dull mortal eyes behold  
Free from all pain, if wonder pain thee not (Canto I, lines 243-248)

She, like the Sybil, is painfully burdened by the divine knowledge that overwhelms her body. Unlike Aeneas, the poet sympathizes with his guide; Aeneas searches for political and familial
truth, which leads him to his father, whereas Keats's poet searches for poetical truth to alleviate suffering. She has the knowledge the poet desires more than anything, but he knows that he could embrace the burden as fully as she does. He presses Moneta

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\begin{align*}
    \text{to see what things the hollow brain} \\
    \text{Behind enwombed: what high tragedy} \\
    \text{In the dark secret chambers of her skull} \\
    \text{was acting, that could give so dread a stress} \\
    \text{To her cold lips, and fill with such a light} \\
    \text{Her planetary eyes, and touch her voice} \\
    \text{With such a sorrow. (Canto I, lines 276-283)}
\end{align*}
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The poet desires to experience that pain, to witness the immortal tragedy, because he wants to connect to the truth that she protects. He recognizes that understanding allows one to obtain wings and overcome sorrow. By subjecting his will to Apollo, the poet subjects his heart to Moneta, who has become his muse.

When the reader realizes why Keats has returned to his Hyperion theme, the role of mortals becomes clear. Although the passage is incomplete, Keats is returning to the subject matter of *Hyperion* discussed in Chapter 4: the Titans are falling and Hyperion is left to decide his course of action. Those Titans who cling to thoughts of rebellion are trapped in a cave of sorrows without the ability to participate in the universe as they once could. Mnemosyne, one of the Titans, accepts that the new Gods will take over and aids Apollo in his elevation into his divine position. It is clear that Keats's sense of participation with the universal progression is Virgilian. Greene describes this relationship as he says,

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\begin{align*}
    \text{The poem is partly about the moral ambivalences which personality entails.} \\
    \text{The strongest, most vital personalities in the poem – Dido and Turnus – are} \\
    \text{defeated and humiliated, while Aeneas comes to succeed only as he gives up} \\
    \text{his selfhood. He has to surrender the pride and willfulness and energy which his} \\
    \text{two great victims refuse to surrender and so pay for with their lives. But Aeneas} \\
    \text{has surrendered still more than that; the deeper selfhood which situates one in a} \\
    \text{historical and social context, that which gives one a role and makes pietas possible.}
\end{align*}
\]
About this deeper kind of identity there are no ambivalences in Virgil's mind: it is the good that makes life possible.  

Keats's Apollo represents the ultimate situating of one's self in a historical context combined with self-sacrifice. The Titans, to the contrary, cling to their desire only to control and dominate, and their pride prevents them from embracing the universe. Gods and mortals are connected, and Moneta explains that Hyperion still has his worshipers: he "Still sits, still sniffs the incense teeming up/ From Man to the Sun's God – yet unsecure" (Canto II, lines 16-17). Both humans and gods must decide between surrendering their identity and becoming a force that participates in history or becoming egotists who lack the ability to shape the universe.

Strangely, some critics view the role of the Titans within The Fall of Hyperion as unnecessary. Bloom argues, "the Titanic myth is irrelevant to Keats's more intense concerns. Apollo is really all Keats needs for his own myth, and so The Fall of Hyperion tends to break into two poems." He then argues that The Fall of Hyperion expresses a "tragic vision" and "Keats lauds the strength of what is mortal as being enough to sustain the final intensities of tragic vision." However, the poem is not tragic nor is the poet able to fully witness the full vision of Apollo's ascension. Moneta explains the limited nature of the vision, "Mortal, that thou mayst understand aright,/ I humanize my sayings to thine ear,/ Making comparisons of earthly things" (Canto II, lines 1-3). The poet is not divine so he could never know how it feels to have had or to have lost the role of creator. As revealed in "Ode to Apollo," the highest position a mortal can attain is to participate in Apollo's song, but he can never be the master of that song. Unlike the Titans, he is still willing to participate in the universe to a lesser extent, and, through his muse Moneta, he is given a vision to create a poem that expresses this truth. The Titans are

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338 Greene p. 89
339 Bloom p. 431
340 Bloom p. 431
essential to *The Fall of Hyperion* because they embody the choice the poet has to make in terms of identity.

What Keats intended for his *The Fall of Hyperion* cannot truly be known, since the poem fragments before the poet is able to respond to the completed divine vision. It may be coincidental that the reader is left to feel the "burden of the Mystery" when Keats's poem is unable to progress beyond the beginnings of experience to discovering truth. However, it is obvious that, in having his poem narrated by a poet, Keats is commenting on the proper role of the poet. Evert explains Keats's purpose in *The Fall of Hyperion* when he claims:

> The basic attempt is to assimilate to the poet the qualities of the hero. Having been represented in action as one who greatly dares the unknown, the poet is defined in the ensuing discussion as one who, when he wholly what he should be, does so not for the mere pleasure of the adventure but on behalf of mankind. Keats had, of course, always thought of the poet as the benefactor of mankind. But where his earlier view of the poet's role had seen him chiefly as either putting his audience in touch with the eternal principle of harmony, or... moving the emotions of his readers as immeasurably to heighten their appreciation of life, his tentative new view comprehended something like direct ameliorative action in the public arena.\(^{341}\)

However, Evert's conclusion cannot be known for sure. But his claims to how Keats earlier defined poetic duty, to put "his audience in touch with the eternal principle of harmony," is evident, because the poet is given a vision of the universe and then, one could assume, share his newly discovered truths with humanity. Evert's final claim, that the poet is to "direct ameliorative action," assigns to the poem a social function similar to Virgil's *Aeneid*. But Keats, while fascinated with art, did not have an outward political agenda. One would expect, if the poem did have a civil/political intent, that the poet would receive a vision like Aeneas that allows a glimpse of a glorious political future. Instead, the only vision the poet receives is of the past.

\(^{341}\)Evert p. 293
The poet, then, serves as a poet-priest. This should not be taken in a manner similar to Milton's view of mixing poetry and religion, which Green explains: "Milton entertained in his hopes of becoming a Christian poet-priest," who, as he claims, "was inspirationalist; it denied study and rational control; it regarded the poet as a man possessed or driven by God to speak things his rational will resisted; it released the demonic powers within the word and made of it a searing, blazing, uncontrollable thing, an antisocial explosive." Instead, the poet is a solitary figure, like Moneta with whom the narrator sympathizes. Although he must condemn the false poets (Canto I, lines 207-208), it is a personal act that the poet must go through in dedicating his life to truth. A Keatsian poet will not descend from Sinai and cast down the non-believers into hell, as Milton may have wished to accomplish through his poetry. Instead, he desires to "build a fane/ In some untrodden region of my mind" ("Ode to Psyche") where he can join his voice, along with the other great poets in Apollo's temple ("Ode to Apollo").

The epic is not a personal attempt of Keats's to purge himself, as a Dante comparison may suggest, or to realize one's duty to humanity. Instead, The Fall of Hyperion portrays the natural progression that an individual must take before being able to attain truth. "Truth is beauty," but beauty does not imply pleasure. Instead, truth is the ruling force that controls the motions of the universe. One cannot understand all of truth, but one can partake in the truth in a limited capacity. The poet is not Apollo, nor can he become a god. Instead, poets are Apollo's subjects, just as their identity is only the "subject" in another sense, and the poets must subject themselves to a loss of identity to fulfill their purpose. They are not "humanistic," as Bloom may say; their duty is not to help the world by spreading "happiness." Instead, their duty is to promote truth.

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342 Greene p. 382
Keats's Apollonian poems and letters lead to the Apollonian truth of *The Fall of Hyperion*, and, when read together, they reveal his interpretation of poetry and morality. Most critics fail to understand Keats's accomplishment because they do not read the Apollonian poems as a progressive series of stages along the path to obtaining the Apollonian salvation described in "Ode to Apollo." Also, they miss important aspects of Keats's poetry because they analyze the poems through the lens of his mythographic sources and his letters. Although it is uncertain how much of Keats's Apollonian beliefs are Christian or Pagan, his poems reveal a belief in a higher power that guides humanity through the imagination. He does not worship himself, his mind, the imagination, or humanity. Instead, he worships truth and beauty, the two forces that, according to Oceanus, rule the universe.

In Chapter 6, I will explain how *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* form a connected narrative. By joining the two poems, the Titanomachy and creation story of *Hyperion* is transformed into an apocalyptic vision, and the Titan's fall in the past becomes a possible future that the poem would try to create. In this view, the Hyperion epics are not a return to Miltonic themes but a complete reversal of them, freeing humanity from the cycle of fall and redemption.
Chapter 6

On February 23, 1821, John Keats died at the age of 25 after struggling with tuberculosis. It was a painful way to die, one in which Keats was welcoming death to end his suffering, and it brought to an abrupt end his poetic career. In previous chapters, I traced the development of Keats's Apollonian theology from "Ode to Apollo" until The Fall of Hyperion. Although The Fall of Hyperion rewrites the introduction of Hyperion, it was left unfinished. We are left with two poems that overlap, but we can never, beyond a doubt, know what Keats would have done with either if he would have lived. However, the overlap between the two poems allows them to be discussed as one linked narrative that summarizes the message of Apollonian salvation that informs the majority of Keats's great poems. This concluding chapter will first discuss the relationship between the two Hyperion poems and how they form one whole. Then this chapter will discuss how the reversal of Miltonic imagery transforms Hyperion into an apocalyptic poem. Finally, this new understanding informs us that Keats's poetry forms one completed project, not an attempt at epic that left only fragments behind.

The conclusion of The Fall of Hyperion describes a Hyperion preparing for combat. Although there are some stylistic changes and word alterations, there is little difference between Canto II and the opening of its predecessor, Hyperion. In the original Hyperion, Hyperion is angered by Saturn's fall and storms into the palace of the sun in an attempt to take up his divine aspect and use it to overthrow the new gods:

Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies;
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies;  
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,  
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,  
That inlet to severe magnificence  
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath;  
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,  
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,  
That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours  
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,  
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,  
Through bow'rs of fragrant and enwreathed light,  
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,  
Until he reach'd the great main cupola; (Book I, lines 201-221)

Compare this passage to Canto II of The Fall of Hyperion (bold added to indicate duplication):

"Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy trance,  
"Goes step for step with Thea from yon woods,  
"Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,  
"Is sloping to the threshold of the West.  
"Thither we tend." Now in clear light I stood,  
Reliev'd from the dusk vale. Mnemosyne  
Was sitting on a square edg'd polish'd stone,  
That in its lucid depth reflected pure  
Her priestess garments. My quick eyes ran on  
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,  
Through bow'rs of fragrant and enwreathed light  
And diamond paved lustrous long arcades.  
Anon rush'd by the bright Hyperion;  
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,  
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,  
That scar'd away the meek ethereal hours  
And made their dove wings tremble. On he flared (Canto II, lines 46-62)

Although there is overlap between the two poems, critics either suggest that Keats would have  
rewritten or abandoned the narrative of Hyperion that follows this point or they ignore the  
possibility outright. The problem with linking the two fragmented poems is due to their two main  
differences: the events of Hyperion in The Fall of Hyperion are framed by the perspective of a  
narrator and the early appearance of Mnemosyne within the narrative. The latter change is of
greater concern because it complicates the possible unity between *The Fall of Hyperion* and *Hyperion*, and an examination of Mnemosyne's character suggests that Keats is following the example of Dante in *The Divine Comedy*.

It is uncertain why Keats uses the name “Mnemosyne” in addition to “Moneta” in *The Fall of Hyperion*. The narrator's muse and guide, as discussed in Chapter 5, is Moneta. She is like the Sybil, a conduit of divine truth for the poem's hero. Mnemosyne, as described in Book 3 of *Hyperion* and discussed in Chapter 4, unlocks Apollo's memory and aids him in his apotheosis. Many critics, including Walter Jackson Bate\(^\text{343}\), Keith White\(^\text{344}\), and Jeffrey Baker\(^\text{345}\), assume Moneta and Mnemosyne are the same character. If they are correct, then Keats could have fully replaced every use of Mnemosyne with Moneta. Assuming Moneta and Mnemosyne are the same individual would explain why both speak to the narrator in Canto I of *The Fall of Hyperion*. Additionally, it would explain why the narrator says that there are only "three fixed shapes" when describing a scene that attributes dialogue to four individuals: Thea, Saturn, Moneta, and Mnemosyne. By Canto II of *The Fall of Hyperion*, Moneta vanishes, and the description of Hyperion is attributed to Mnemosyne. Dorothy VanGhent argues that "the Dreamer keeps calling Moneta by the name of Mnemosyne, 'Shadow of Memory,' for the poet can't seem to keep them separated in his mind".\(^\text{346}\) It is likely that VanGhent is correct, and the dual use of names for the same individual solves a fundamental problem to which Baker alludes, "We have no way of knowing what Keats intended to do about Apollo—though it is suggestive that he had himself displaced the god as symbolic receiver of 'knowledge enormous'. [D. G.]


James suggests however, that Moneta would indeed have been a protagonist as well as a chorus. Moneta," therefore, is used to describe the goddess that originally guides the poet while "Mnemosyne" is the goddess that directly participates within the function of the story.

By separating the same character into "Moneta" and "Mnemosyne," Keats could have separated two functions of the goddess of memory: human memory and divine memory. However, both appear to have the same function as narrator within the frame of story at the end of Canto I. At the beginning of Canto II, it is Mnemosyne who explains why she is narrating:

"Mortal, that thou may'st understand aright,
"I humanize my sayings to thine ear,
"Making comparisons of earthly things;
"Or thou might'st better listen to the wind,
"Whose language is to thee a barren noise,
"Though it blows legend laden through the trees." (Canto II, lines 1-6)

Throughout Canto II, Mnemosyne explains how the fallen Titans sought Saturn's leadership, which transforms her into the narrator of *Hyperion* Book I. In essence, this adds a subjective, first-person perspective ("our whole eagle brood" Canto II, line 13, emphasis added) to what was an objective, third-hand account. It is uncertain if the quoted narrative of Canto I or Canto II can be taken as her memory, because the poem does not label which scenes are from the goddess's experience or from her general knowledge of the universe. Only her sayings, not the vision, are "humanized" for the narrator, and there is no explanation within the poem for why part of the original *Hyperion* is transformed into a speech and the rest is narrated directly. There are few critics who discuss the final lines of *The Fall of Hyperion*. Most likely, this deficiency is due to the lack of clear answers within the text.

The overlap in function between Moneta and Mnemosyne, especially in their

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347 Baker p. 112
summarizing events or providing explanatory information to the narrator, complicates the narrative structure of *The Fall of Hyperion* if this use of two names is not a typographical mistake. As White argues, "we cannot be sure what her role in the poem was going to be.... The goddess' change of names also adds to our difficulty. As Mnemosyne she is undoubtedly the mother of the muses, as Moneta less obviously so. The matter is aggravated by her change of place, and apparently, allegiance. In this respect Keats is not only muddled in himself, but the cause that muddle is in other men." It is possible that Keats could have merged them into one character or fully separated them by their temporal aspects if he lived to revise the work. However, it is also possible that Mnemosyne within *The Fall of Hyperion* is not the same Mnemosyne of *Hyperion* and that Keats intentionally used both names in *The Fall of Hyperion* to denote different aspects of the same being. Instead of Moneta being Mnemosyne, she can be read as an "older" self, much as the narrator Dante is an older version of the character Dante in *The Divine Comedy*. After Apollo's ascension, the goddess of memory who aided Apollo experiences her own fall. Instead of serving as the conduit of divine transformation, she has become the goddess of muses, and a muse herself. Her place in the universe is no longer absolute, but she holds a vital function: she must guide humanity to Apollo's truth. Thus, the name Moneta, meaning "admonisher," represents this change in function from memory to memory with the specific purpose of guiding an individual along a virtuous path.

By transforming into Moneta, Mnemosyne becomes a mere shade of her past, yet she is an active participant in modern affairs. At the same time, the occasional appearance of "Mnemosyne" within the vision reveals that Moneta still has a connection to her Titan past and the vital role she once had within the progression of the universe from one rule to the next. She is

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348 White p.112
two entities, representing the two worlds in which she exists simultaneously just as the
"memory" is the present reliving the past. She is like Janus, the two-faced god who looks both
backwards and forwards. Furthermore, the "memory" that she reveals is not completely her own,
and she is able to describe events from different locations. She is the universe's memory, only
able to be experienced by humanity on a vastly smaller scale than by Apollo. In essence, Moneta
is an avatar or human manifestation of the once proud Titan. This allows her to serve as both
vision giver to the poet narrator and character within the story.

In taking this view of Moneta, Mnemosyne represents the stage at which she was directly
involved in the events she later narrates, and the rest of Hyperion can be added to the narrative of
The Fall of Hyperion within this framework. This allows Keats to use Moneta/Mnemosyne as a
self-narrator without worrying about the "clearly clumsy arrangement" described by D. G.
James. The rest of Hyperion, therefore, can be added to the end of The Fall of Hyperion to
form one connected narrative. If Keats followed this path, then various passages would likely
have been transformed into speech from their visual descriptions, and it is possible that
Moneta/Mnemosyne would appear beside the poet-narrator as they both watch the original
Mnemosyne aiding Apollo in his apotheosis. However, the general narrative would not have
changed: Hyperion descends to the Titans because he is forever trapped in a selfish
understanding of power as Apollo ascends because he dies into life and embraces the essence of
truth and beauty. If the original conclusion of Apollo becoming "celestial" is unsatisfactory, then
the poem could have concluded with Mnemosyne transforming into Moneta to guide future poets
or with the narrator being sent forth into the world to spread Apollo's message of truth. If we use
Dante's path as a guide, it is possible that the end of The Fall of Hyperion could reveal the

narrator becoming the author of *The Fall of Hyperion*.

By connecting *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*, a pseudo-apocalyptic message of a universal salvation made possible by the actions of Apollo is revealed. The plot structure of the original *Hyperion* borrows many aspects of an external apocalypse, and the plot structure of *The Fall of Hyperion* incorporates elements of a personal, internal apocalypse. However, the shift in focus from the external to the internal development between the two poems is not to replace the concept of external change but to show how internal change is linked to the external progression of the universe. Together, the poems follow the progression of the poet-narrator through the "Mansion of Many Apartments," made possible because of Apollo's divine progression from the material/sensory world to the celestial. Keats does not "humanize" Apollo by conflating him with the poet-narrator. Instead, he describes a limited path by which humans can follow Apollo. The point of art, according to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, is "to place these images, totalized, and fitted to the limits of the human mind, as to elicit from and to superinduce upon the forms themselves the moral reflexions to which they approximate, to make the external internal, the internal external, to make nature thought, and thought nature". The focus in *The Fall of Hyperion* is to achieve Coleridge's purpose by returning poets to the Apollonian path so they may guide humanity to an Apollonian salvation.

Keats's *Hyperion* describes an Apollonian apocalypse styled after the Titanomachia: the war at the beginning of history between the Titans and the Olympians which results in the younger generation of deities overthrowing a previous set. "Apollonian apocalypse" is not a standard way to characterize the fragmented poem, but an examination of the poem through an apocalyptic lens provides a model for explaining key aspects of the poem's drama. Traditionally,

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critics have avoided comparing Hyperion with the Christian apocalypse because they believe the poem incorporates the concept of a slow, progressive development of the universe that leaves it uncertain as to when, or if, this development will stop. The strongest source of evidence for this interpretation comes from Oceanus's declaration in *Hyperion* that those who are more beautiful will end up ruling, which suggests that there will always be someone better to rule the universe. Humans, therefore, are just a continuation of the cycle, and humanity has either supplanting the gods or the gods are merely metaphors for stages of human growth. However, I believe that Apollo is the ultimate manifestation of an ideal that cannot be supplanted by others, and who, through his poets, will usher in a universe that is most true and most beautiful. Keats's inability to describe the post-apotheosis of Apollo is similar to his inability to describe the final stages of human development in the "Mansion of Many Apartments," and it is possible that his inability is due to both representing the final state of development that he could not fully comprehend. It is hard to deny that Keats's idea of universal progression was influenced by apocalyptic images, and Apollo can be seen as analogous to Jesus while the poet-narrator is related to John of Patmos. This is not to say that Apollo is Christ. Also, Keats differs from the traditional Christian apocalypse by not describing a final moment in which humanity is ushered into paradise. Even though his Hyperion poems are missing key aspects of the Christian apocalypse, it is possible that Keats would have included a New Earth within his Apollonian system if he would have lived longer. After all, Keats does depict moments similar to a human paradise in his other works: the poet's heaven in “Ode to Apollo;” the end of human disease and suffering following the union of Endymion and Cynthia in “I Stood Tip-Toe;” and the possibility of transforming suffering into something that helps humanity in the “Vale of Soul-Making” theory. Therefore, comparing the Hyperion poems with the Christian apocalypse can give us a way to interpret the meaning of
Keats's Apollo and predict where the poems would have gone next.

The apocalyptic tradition is a fundamental aspect of biblical studies that was well-known by post-Reformation Christians, and apocalyptic imagery can be found in both the Old and New Testaments. The tradition within the Old Testament, according to biblical scholar Fr. Carroll Stuhlmueller, "can be briefly characterized as an exilic and post-exilic development of prophetic style, in which heavenly secrets about a cosmic struggle and eschatological victory are revealed in symbolic form and explained by angels to a seer who writes down his message".351 There are few differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament form of the apocalypse beyond the latter describing the Second Coming of Christ. However, the New Testament form emphasizes the immediacy of the events to come, as Fr. Jean Louis D'Aragon points out: "[The Book of Revelation] is defined as an ‘apocalypse'; the message it contains concerns ‘what must take place soon,' i.e. the unraveling of history as determined by God."352 Keats, as a non-mainstream Christian, did not openly discuss the Christian Apocalypse and his stories focus on Grecian myth rather than Christian theology. By choosing to discuss Apollo and not Christ, Keats has provided much evidence to scholars who see either an absence of Christianity or the creation of a secular alternative to Christianity within Keats's poetry. However, Morton Paley reveals many direct references and allusions to the Book of Revelation that can be found throughout Keats's poetry, and there is much evidence that Keats had intimate knowledge of the work.353 Additionally, Paley points out, "Just as the Book of Revelation reconfigures images from parts of the Old Testament as the materials of apocalyptic vision... Keats's echoes of the Old and New

Testaments, sometimes simultaneous... have to do with the Temple and the Temple ritual."\textsuperscript{354}

Regardless of how much he agreed with various interpretations of Christianity, viewing the \textit{Hyperion} poems through the lens of the Christian Apocalypse explains many of Keats's decisions.

Even if Keats rejected the tenets of Christianity and the concept of the Christian Apocalypse as described in the \textit{Book of Revelation}, he was influenced by Christian epics, which heavily relied on Biblical imagery. Of these, Keats drew much inspiration for his poetry from Milton's \textit{Paradise Lost}, and M. H. Abrams documents the heavy use of the \textit{Book of Revelation} within Milton's poem.\textsuperscript{355} Even if Keats was not consciously aware of the apocalyptic form, he could have incorporated apocalyptic imagery and themes through mimicry. Of these, Abrams emphasizes "the line of change in Christian history" as essential to an apocalyptic poem:

\begin{quote}
The key events are abrupt, cataclysmic, and make a drastic, even an absolute, difference…. The visible denouement of the plot, however, awaits Christ's second Advent, which will bring an immediate restoration of lost happiness on earth. His reign will be followed, at the unknown but appointed moment, by the abrupt termination of this world and of time and their replacement, for all who shall be deemed worthy in the Last Judgment, by a heavenly kingdom in eternity.\textsuperscript{356}
\end{quote}

Keats was also influenced by the early Romantic poets' use of a progressive form of apocalypse; Wordsworth incorporated his understanding of a Baconian progression of the universal, a slower form of the apocalyptic model, into his poetry.\textsuperscript{357} This model focuses on the progression of the mind towards a union between the imagination and the universe and provides Keats a secular alternative to the traditional apocalypse to follow. Both models are found within \textit{Hyperion} and represent a key relationship between Apollo and humanity, but they are hidden behind ambiguity.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{354} Paley p. 285
\textsuperscript{356} Abrams pp. 36-37
\textsuperscript{357} Abrams pp. 59-61
\end{flushright}
Although the two models of the apocalypse, the divine cataclysm and the personal, mental progression, are connected to the themes of *Hyperion*, there are two factors that hinder a traditional apocalyptic or eschatological interpretation of the poem. The first factor is that the traditional Titanomachia takes place in the distant, prehistoric past, long before humanity existed. The second factor is the implicit lack of finality in Oceanus's description of universal progression. The latter can be dismissed because Oceanus's view (that rulers will always be those who are most true and most beautiful) does not prohibit the arrival of a deity who can never be surpassed, which allows the poem to fit either of Abrams's apocalyptic models. On one side, it is possible that Apollo's reign represents perfection through Baconian progress (perfectibility), allowing for no "greater" force to follow. On the other, it is possible that Apollo's rise, according to Tilottama Rajan, is "the myth of a recoverable perfection," and Oceanus's speech does not represent a progression forward but a return to an earlier, higher state. If Rajan is correct, then the universe of *Hyperion* is analogous to the Christian Fall, and Apollo's dying into life shepherds in a New Earth. In either situation, there is no reason to assume that some greater force will or must replace Apollo.

The other factor that hinders describing the Hyperion poems as "apocalyptic," the placement of the traditional Titanomachia myth in the prehistoric past, cannot be easily dismissed. In various Greek myths, Zeus overthrows the Titans before humanity is created, and Apollo's conquest of Hyperion predates civilization. However, the poem itself does little to establish if it is located within a certain epoch of time or follows a classical understanding of the events, and the brief hints that the Titans were being worshiped by humanity suggests that Keats is not staying true to the original myth. Additionally, Apollo's ascension represents a

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developmental finality within the universe when he transcends the material realm and becomes "celestial." These considerations justify Yukie Ando connecting Hyperion with the *Götterdämmerung* or *Ragnarök* (the Germanic/Norse mythic apocalypse), which undermines the possibility that the poem is merely an adaptation of the traditional Titanomachia myth.\(^{359}\)

Furthermore, the events at the mythic level parallel the development of the self, as John O'Meara points out, "[Keats's] original ambition, in conceiving of ‘Hyperion', had been to set his account of the evolution of consciousness into the greater framework of archaic origins and ultimate ends".\(^{360}\) This mixing of past, present, and future undermines the need to fix the events of *Hyperion* solely within the past. Instead, the events of the poem seem to exist beyond time, and, as seen in *The Fall of Hyperion*, a stranger is capable of experiencing these events first hand when guided by Moneta. This eternal ability to re-experience the death and rebirth of Apollo is similar to the Christians' belief that they experience Christ's passion during each liturgy, but the Apollonian experience is limited to one transformative moment in a poet's career.

Although *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* use characters from the Titanomachia, the focus within the poems is on divine beings attempting to come to terms with their new status within the greater universe and not on divine conflict. Hyperion represents an attempt to wield influence over the natural order of the universe, which fails because Hyperion is self-serving and unable to fully accept truth and beauty. His fall is the divine embodiment of the darkening of the second room in Keats's "Mansion of Many Apartments," but not a progression forward from that point. According to Hermione de Almeida, Hyperion is forced to witness "the shadows of his own distraught mind made visible as ‘darkness, death, and darkness.'"\(^{361}\) He is unwilling to


\(^{361}\) de Almeida, Hermione. "Prophetic Extinction and the Misbegotten Dream in Keats" in *The Persistence of Poetry*
accept this future state and tries to lash out, but he is, in the words of Bate, "Humbled in this impetuous attempt to assert himself against the cosmos". He is like Milton's Lucifer, the archetype of pride leading to a fall. Nancy Goslee argues that Apollo "sees that Titan and Olympian alike are no longer shaped embodiments of natural process but humanlike figures set within and controlled by those natural forces." This is possibly true, but only insofar as the inability to move on from one stage of mental awareness to another affects the whole universe. All intelligent beings, divine or human, can only join with the cosmos if they accept truth and beauty, which requires accepting the role of pain and suffering in development. Apollo becomes celestial because he embraces full knowledge, factual and emotional.

Most critics connect the ascension of Apollo in *Hyperion* to the poet narrator in *The Fall of Hyperion*, and they examine the Hyperion myth as a mythopoetic story of the mind. In particular, Wolf Hirst summarizes this argument by placing Apollo in the role of the poet and Mnemosyne as muse, and he describes Apollo's ascension as a metaphor for how "visions are transferred from Muse to poet 'all at once'". Apollo cannot be a mere poet because he is capable of taking onto himself full knowledge through memory, which suggests that he had this knowledge already within him. Additionally, Mnemosyne's transformation into Moneta suggests that she serves the new divine rule as a muse. She is incapable of ascension to the celestial state, and she must watch over Saturn's lonely temple.

Furthermore, the poet cannot become a god merely by gaining an understanding of facts. Paul de Man claims that "it remains obscure why the knowledge of the historical past... suffices

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362 Bate p. 397
to 'make a god of [him]," but de Man ignores the emotional knowledge that Apollo takes on during his ascension. As Ando points out, Apollo is "self-created from his own understanding. And this knowledge does not come from mere ideas." Mankind can only follow Apollo's path, but they cannot achieve what he achieved. He represents the complete acceptance of truth and beauty, and, like the sun, mankind can only glimpse at it and not become one with it. Apollo ascends because he embraces the intellectual mist, lifts it, and then becomes one with the universe. The fragmentation of the narrative reinforces the apocalyptic model in a negative way by use of a narrator who is unable to arrive at at the revelation that is implied in the poem. Like the vision of John of Patmos in Revelation or Dante's journey through the afterlife, divine truths can only be revealed to Keats's poet in limited, human terms. One day, based on the parallel, there might be a second coming in which Apollo is able to fully raise human understanding to a divine level, but that is an uncertain future. Instead, as Abrams argues, Keats's purpose is to establish his "system of soul-making" through the Hyperion poems.367

A Christian-like apocalyptic interpretation of the Hyperion poems is ignored by most literary critics because they view the rise of Apollo as a metaphor for limited, historical change. Whether it be the evolution of political rulers, the establishment of types of art, or a poet's personal development, these interpretations limit the scope of Keats's philosophy to the human. To Robert Gittings, Hyperion represents Keats's personal development through the shift from Hyperion to Apollo: "This identification of himself with the god who is both healer and poetic creator perhaps explains for the first time why the poem was called Hyperion and not Apollo. . . . The sorrows of the Sun Titan, so deeply dwelt upon, are so much like his own nervous

366 Ando p. 129.
367 Abrams p. 67
imaginings, the 'horrid Morbidity' of his old self, that the identification cannot be doubted.\textsuperscript{368}

Bate also associates Keats's development with Apollo: "Apollo's painful evolution into growing consciousness would tap, perhaps closely parallel, personal experiences of his own."\textsuperscript{369} Although Stuart Sperry does not directly connect Keats with Apollo, he argues that the poet-narrator of The Fall of Hyperion and Apollo are both guided to "the point of ultimate comprehension and understanding."\textsuperscript{370} However, there is no evidence within The Fall of Hyperion that merely learning of Hyperion's fall allows for "ultimate comprehension and understanding." Bloom extends the association of Apollo to poetry as a whole when he argues, "The birth of an artist and art beyond tragedy has been enacted in the transformation of Apollo, whose growing pains are his only human element, and whose completion is an apotheosis of poetry itself."\textsuperscript{371} Bloom is not alone in viewing Apollo as representing an evolution within art; Abrams claims that Apollo "displaces the simple pastoralism of the Golden Age,"\textsuperscript{372} and Tobias Gregory says, "Keats's gods appear as figures for old and new forms of poetic inspiration."\textsuperscript{373} Thomas Reed, relying on the same idea, describes the progression as the response of a Romantic to a previous poetic tradition when he says, "It is possible to assert that Saturn... and Apollo... are meant to suggest the difference between the Restoration and the nineteenth century in English poetry."\textsuperscript{374} Similarly, Goslee argues that the poem is based on "opposition between the sculpturesque and the picturesque,"\textsuperscript{375} and Alan Bewell attributes it to the "historical conflict between East and West"
via displacement of "Egyptian sculpture by the art of Greece."³⁷⁶ To Andrew Bennett, the poem describes "the notion of dying into poetic creation."³⁷⁷ These interpretations all have a similar drawback: if the Hyperion myth is only about poets and art, then it serves little purpose for a larger audience.

Instead, there is no evidence that Keats was concerned only with poetry when he crafted his poems, and Keats follows the religious purpose of his epic models, especially Milton and Dante, as he sought to guide humanity to a higher understanding of the self and spirit. Abrams partially describes this connection:

Keats had clarified his "system of Salvation" in his second letter, on the Vale of Soul-making. The Fall of Hyperion transfers the locus in which the burden of the mystery is unriddled from the ordeal of the growing mind of the god of poetry to the ordeal of the growing mind of the poet himself, as he moves through stages of experience to the discovery of his poetic identity and status. Keats does this by assimilating his Miltonic epic to the form of an earlier theodicy, Dante's dream-vision, The Divine Comedy, which had reconciled evil and suffering with God's justice not in a third-person narrative, but in an allegorical account of the narrator's own progress through hell and purgatory to heaven.³⁷⁸

Abrams does not fully differentiate the extent of the path that Keats's Apollo takes and that of the narrator within the two fragments, but he does associate the poet's path with the greater "system of Salvation." Apollo cannot be interpreted as a mere metaphor for art, because he is connected to art that exists to save humanity from the pain and suffering of the world by guiding mankind to higher truths. Walter Evert, one of the few critics who treats Keats's description of divine figures as divine figures, questions the relationship of Keats's Apollo and divinity: "One immediately wonders why, if the not-yet-god Apollo can achieve divinity, the fallen gods should not be able to re-achieve it. The only negotiable answer is Oceanus' dictum that 'first in beauty

³⁷⁸ Abrams p. 127
should be first in might". Evert is correct, but he leaves out the idea that "truth is beauty" and that truth requires the acceptance of pain and suffering. Additionally, Morton Paley points out that "when Oceanus tells Saturn, 'Thou art not the beginning nor the end', an ironical contrast is being made with One who is the beginning and the end, and who asserts it in Revelation 1:8.... Not being master of time, Saturn must accept the evolutionary pattern that Keats sees at work in it." Paley stops from identifying Apollo as "the beginning and the end," but Apollo does become master of time through complete knowledge, providing him with a level of understanding that surpasses all others. Furthermore, the progression of the gods is due to more than simple beauty, as Daniel Watkins argues, "The demise of one mythology and the emergence of another, for Keats, is not simply a matter of the less beautiful giving way to the more beautiful; it is a matter of the material and the ideological dimensions of experience undergoing radical structural change, so that life and consciousness themselves have to be entirely thought anew." However, Keats's poems describe a shift that extends further than what Watkins claims: the universe as a whole changes, and the previous pursuit of pleasure and decadence can no longer allow one to experience happiness. The Titans have no ability to rebel because the universe, not the gods, caused this to happen.

Although the universe shifts to allow for truth and beauty to reign so that humanity can achieve salvation, it is uncertain as to the extent and type of salvation possible for humanity to experience. Motion claims that the poem "insists on the need to replace a rigid divine order by a natural and humane dispensation," which matches the tone and purpose of the "soul-making"

380 Paley p. 282
letter. Apollo, therefore, is the divine path who, like Christ, opens the gates to Heaven and shows his followers the way forward. Colvin limits this savior role of Apollo when he argues that Keats "intended to present to us Apollo, enthroned after the abdication of Hyperion, in the character of a prophet and to have put into his mouth revelations of things to come, a great monitory vision of the world's future." Apollo cannot be mere prophet, or he would serve in Moneta's role to the poet. He is the moral ideal that Moneta trains the poets to follow, and the poets must complete the ritual that allows them to experience an apocalypse of self-development to form a truer relationship with nature.

Although Keats's Apollo began as a copy of the god as depicted by his childhood mythographic text, he was transformed into the embodiment of a complex system of salvation that commissions poet-priests to guide mankind to higher truths. By the end of Keats's life, the Apollo of the Hyperion poems became a Christ-like figure who exists beyond organized religion. According to Keats's letter explaining his "system of soul-making," all religions are based around the general concept of helping mankind overcome pain and suffering, but there are many hints that Keats felt Christianity was limited in its ability to save all of mankind due to its focus on specific dogma. Apollo, therefore, allowed Keats to create a Christ without Christianity, a figure that all could accept and no one would wage war over. By creating a Christianized Apollo, Keats does not contradict or condemn Christianity. Instead, Keats's system of salvation was an attempt to expand to all people the good that can be found within the faith of his contemporaries. Additionally, only the poets commissioned to serve Apollo's path of salvation are required to undergo the painful trials of self-sacrifice necessary to exploring the mysteries of Apollo, and they are sent forth from Moneta's side to spread the universal message to their own communities.

383 Colvin p. 436
The poets are not priests of Apollo but of a universal salvation through truth and beauty, which can be obtained by people of every faith. The Apollonian poems represent Keats's struggle to come to terms with this message of salvation, of truth, of beauty, and of a world filled with pain and suffering. Together, these poems represent a complete and full understanding that is not lacking because certain poems abruptly end in a manner that some critics find unsatisfying.


