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THE SOURCES OF KEATS' IDEA OF BEAUTY

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In the previous essays, we have studied two kinds of beauty, mortal and immortal which are found in the six odes of Keats. In this essay, we will study the sources of Keats' idea of beauty. The 'Ode on Melancholy,' the 'Ode on Indolence,' and 'To Autumn' deal with mortal beauty, because their theme is transience and the acceptance of life as it is. And the 'Psyche,' 'Nightingale' and the 'Grecian Urn' odes deal with immortal beauty.

The poet says in the 'Ode on Melancholy' that natural and physical beauty is transient and mortal, because it must die some day. Even Beauty, Joy, Pleasure, Delight are mortal. The poet further says in the 'Ode on Indolence' that it is folly to long for the wings of Love, Ambition, Poesy, because they are uncertain in this world, i.e. mortal. Therefore he is melancholy and indolent. Although, in 'To Autumn,' he reaches the acceptance of actual world as it is, a higher stage than that of the straight conflict between mortal and immortal world, he is still sceptical and pessimistic. The essay of Stuart M. Sperry in the *KSJ*, entitled "Keats's Skepticism and Voltaire,"¹ serves as a reference. The 'Ode to Psyche,' on the contrary, celebrates the creative power of imagination and love which are immortal, using effective images of natural beauty, which is mortal. Although this ode openly praises Art and Love, we find his scepticism behind his eulogy. The poet finds a way to escape from this world to the immortal world of art in the 'Ode

to a Nightingale.' In the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn,' the poet reaches the highest stage of his Beauty-Truth identification.

These three odes have different sources respectively. The 'Pshche,' according to Bate, owes a debt to Lemprière² and to William Adlington's translation (1566) of Apuleius (chapter 22).³ The 'Nightingale' has its source, according to George W. Whiting, especially in a sonnet of Charlotte Smith's.⁴ The 'Grecian Urn' owes much to the Borghesian vase which was produced by Mr. Wedgwood at New Etruria, according to Dwight E. Robinson.⁵

There are mainly three sources of Keats' idea of beauty in his six great odes: (1) Greek myth and philosophy of Socrates and Plato, (2) Medieval Romance, (3) Contemporaries, e.g. Charlotte Smith, Voltaire, J.J. Winckelmann, Sir William & Emma Hamilton, J. Wedgwood, etc. We will trace these sources chronologically, then summarize them.

(1)-1. Greek Myth

Robert D. Wagner, in his essay on Keats in *KSJ*, concludes thus: Perhaps it is best to see Keats as struggling between two kinds or theories of imagination — loosely, a romantic or unlimited imagination, as in "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and a disillusioned or limited imagination, as in "Ode to Psyche" and the Soul-making passage (and the second "Hyperion").⁶

He stresses that 'anti-romanticism' is not only implied in the 'Ode to Psyche' but is, to a great extent, what the poem is all about. He further stresses Keats' anti-romanticism as follows:

He is able to move from the actual to the ideal, from the Psyche in Cupid's arms to the completed soul, without falling into the romantic trap of confusing the two or finding them hopelessly

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incompatible. In the end he does not look to death to sustain the ideal, but back to life, to "the warm Love."⁷

However, he finds 'the aspiration of romanticism' in this ode, as in the renewal of the holiness of things in Psyche's temple. If the gods no longer sanctify 'the air, the water, and the fire,' the poet's imagination does, as the poet declares, 'I will be thy priest' (l. 50).

The source of the 'Ode to Psyche' is, according to Bate, Lemprière and Adlington. When Keats found that Psyche was made a goddess only after the Augustan age — only after the era of 'Olympus' faded hierarchy' was already coming to an end, — Keats was struck by the relevance of this 'late' deity to what seemed to him now the proper object of poetry and of his own efforts. Bate also says:

The story of Psyche and Cupid, which Keats read in William Adlington's translation (1566) of Apuleius (chapter 22), also had a potential moral that caught his imagination and, to some extent, merged with the general thought of the poem.⁸

The myth begins with the Venus' jealousy of Psyche, the youngest and most beautiful of three princesses. Although Venus commanded her son Cupid (Eros) to force Psyche to fall in love with the 'most poor, most crooked, and the most vile' creature he can, Cupid himself fell in love with Psyche as her unknown husband. After the secret has leaked out, Cupid fled away where Psyche could not follow him. But Jupiter, at Cupid's petition, finally sanctions the marriage and makes Psyche immortal; and Love may thus be said to have rescued the mind.

The theme of this ode, the praise of Love and Imagination, the praise of Immortal Beauty, is successful when the poet declares that he will be the priest of Psyche, namely, the symbol of Love and Immortality. However, R.D.Wagner writes about Keats' famous theory of soul-making as follows:

...man cannot become a "Soul," cannot acquire identity, except through the medium of this world. "Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul?" Critics have not been failing to observe that this ideal is contradicted by most of the poems for which Keats is best remembered, poems in which a romantic alienation from life, an evasion of the "World of Pains and troubles," is the dominant note...the ode is something less than what the theory of Soul-making promises.⁹

In addition to its theme, this ode owes its source to general Greek mythology in describing natural beauty; for example, the colour of forests, trees, leaves, meadows, flowers, temple, altar; the fragrance of a censer. The following images all belong to Greek myth: Goddess, Olympus, Phoebe, Vesper, oracle, antique vows, choir, Dryads, etc. These images play an effective role in creating the imaginative world of Greek myth. However, on account of its lack of a well-organized theme, this ode is generally considered to be sweet, but unsuccessful as a creative work.

(1)-2. *Greek Philosophy*

It is not a new discovery to indicate a Platonic truth in Keats. Albert Gérard in his essay¹⁰ writes that we can discover it in the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn.' He writes that the first half of the urn's apothegm, "Beauty is truth," came from Keats' notion that 'what the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth — whether it existed before or not.'¹¹ He writes that the first section of the ode, which is summed up in the apothegm, exhibits something of the quintessential truth of love. Then he indicates that

This is a Platonic truth: the beauty of art is due to the fact that

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art is the perfect embodiment of an Idea which, in actual life, can only manifest itself in imperfect forms owing to the limitations of human nature.¹²

As Empson writes in his essay that 'Keats was trying to work the disagreeables into the theory,'¹³ Keats supplemented his theory of art as the creation of ideal beauty with the theory of art as revelation of the beautiful in the actual. As Gérard indicates, there is a synthesis of the twofold dialectical movement in the ode: truth in the Platonic sense and beauty in life. Art is, for Keats, Gérard writes, 'not Eternity but only an analogue of it.'

Bate, however, takes a negative position regarding the Platonic influence on Keats, because of the following reasons indicated in his essay as follows:

It must be admitted that to try to develop a systematic Neoplatonism for the poem is a little like trying to evolve a Lockean philosophy from his frequent use of the word "sensation" in the letters.¹⁴

Bate further writes that 'youthful idealism is ardently eclectic,' and concludes on the same page as follows:

If here and there Keats used abstractions, adjectives, or images that suggest conventional Neoplatonic poetry (he lacked even the small exposure to Plato himself that a college undergraduate might possibly have had), it is because they were emotionally welcome to the naive, untutored idealism that existed side by side with his strong empirical sense.

Bate writes, however, that sometimes Keats asked Severn to read him a little from other books they had with them — Mme. Dacier's translation of Plato, some pages from Maria Edgeworth's novels, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Don Quixote*, (January, 1819).¹⁵ Since Keats

had a copy of Plato, although in translation, it would be natural that Keats read it and that he was influenced by it. Miss A. Ward in her book writes that the book was Madame Dacier's *Works of Plato Abridg'd* 'which contained several of the early dialogues and the *Phaedo*, that beautiful testimony to immortality by Socrates on the afternoon of his death.'¹⁶ Ward writes that the book which was on Bailey's shelves made the most 'lasting impression' on him (1818). Ward also writes that Keats came to be interested in philosophy as follows:

Quoting Milton's line "How charming is divine Philosophy!" he explained to George that he now appreciated it as never before; and his journal at this time (March, 1818) shows a new concern with the perennial questions of the nature of the soul.

A discussion at Taylor's evidently fired his interest in Plato again.¹⁷ It is well-known that Keats in a letter to George calls the world 'The Vale of Soul-making' and distinguished Soul from Intelligence thus:

.... there may be intelligence or sparks of the divinity in millions — but they are not Souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself.

Ward writes that Keats moves 'beyond the Platonic idea of soul-making' — the belief that 'with death the soul will slough off the imperfect knowledge of bodily life for the perfect knowledge of the intellect.'¹⁸ Wisdom must be attained in this life, Ward writes, by slow perfection, not of knowledge but of expression. Ward further writes of Christmas in 1818 as follows:

His mind was turning back to the old arguments with Bailey, and to the noble example of Socrates, who had led him to grapple for his own system of soul-making.¹⁹

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Therefore, although the truth-beauty identity of Keats resembles the Ideal of Plato, and Keats must have learned the way of soul-making from Socrates, his fundamental idea of beauty, truth, art, poetry, must have been created by himself only through his own experience of life. The supremacy of art over nature, that is to say, that of immortal beauty over mortal beauty, is not an idea which Keats discovered for the first time in the history of literature. It may be right to insist that Keats owed his basic concept of beauty, truth, philosophy, life, art, etc., to his predecessors, in the Greek classics, mainly Socrates and Plato; then he developed his idea of the 'vale of soul-making' by himself with the experiences he had during his short life. Although Bate indicates eclecticism in the development of Keats' 'soul-making,' we should note the fact that Keats possessed a book of Plato, and that Plato's concept of the ideal closely resembles Keats's.

(2) Medieval Romance

It is commonly known that Keats revered Spenser, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and it is a fact that he possessed their copies of their works. Surely we can discover some influence of medieval romance on Keats. For instance, the personified image of the moon as a queen in the 'Ode to a Nightingale' (l. 36) reminds us of some love scene in a medieval romance. The image of 'her throne' (l. 36) and the scene where the queen is 'Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays' (l. 37) are effective in creating the typical image of medieval romance which is always gorgeously glittering with gold and silver.

The image of 'a bright torch, and a casement ope at night' in the 'Ode to Psyche' (l. 66) reminds us of the religious meaning of the contrast between darkness and light in the medieval ages; or of some knight's tale in which a brave knight endeavors to save a lady who is

imprisoned in a tower with a casement open at night and he finally succeeds in it and both live in happiness. Light and darkness are symbols of life. In the 'Psyche,' the poet convinces himself that he will be a 'priest of art.' He foresees many difficulties and rewards for that mission. The image of the 'bright torch' symbolizes his mind which is full of conviction and expectations for the future, but the image itself reminds us that there is 'darkness' in life. Therefore, he cheers himself up by the image of the 'casement' to show his courage and bravery towards the forthcoming 'darkness.'

Such images in the 'Ode to a Nightingale' as 'Flora and the country green' (l. 13), 'Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth' (l. 14), 'the warm South' (l. 15) reflect the influence of medieval romance, which longed for the countries which had enjoyed prosperity in ancient times, seeking for freedom from the restrictions of religion, and emulated the spirit of those nations.

We can also see the influence of medieval romance in the following image in the 'Nightingale' ode: 'magic casements, opening on the foam/Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn' (ll. 69-70). The poet's imagination becomes so powerful and elastic that it can go back to ancient times as far as the middle ages. He convinces us that the voice of the nightingale is immortal, because it has been heard in every age in human history, and has been always comforting human hearts. He also praises beautiful ladies.

Evert indicates that Keats respected his predecessors and he addressed poems for them; to Spenser, Milton, and 'King Lear!'²⁰ Although Bate writes that 'after Milton, the vigor of Dryden was to catch his imagination; and at all times from early 1818 until the end, there was the gradual, pervasive effect on him of Shakespeare,'²¹ that influence was a technological one, namely, of his skill in composing

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poems. Therefore, we can not discover the direct influence of Shakespeare on Keats' great odes, but an indirect one on the images previously mentioned.

(3)-1. Voltaire

Stuart M. Sperry, in his essay previously mentioned, first admits that Keats' ideas take their shape more from the conflicting impulses of his own inner being, and then stresses the influence on Keats as follows:

Unlike Shelley, he did not come under the intellectual dominance of a Plato or a Godwin, although, in his own way, he took account of these and other writers. . . . he shares certain important intellectual affinities with the Enlightenment.²²

Since Voltaire 'enjoyed a currency in early nineteenth century,' it is possible that Keats had read his works while he was at school in Enfield. In spite of Haydon's horror of Voltaire's religious iconoclasm, atheism, and the cynical double and enemy of Christianity, Keats had taken a decided interest in Voltaire and had formed his own opinion of that writer's merits.²³ As evidence for believing that Keats' knowledge of and interest in Voltaire became considerably deeper, Sperry says:

At the time of his death, his library contained three of Voltaire's major works: the *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations*, the *Siècle de Louis XIV*, and the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*.²⁴

He says that it is most unlikely that Keats was not acquainted with works which were included among his own collection of books. For proof, Sperry provides letters which shows that Keats was either reading or thinking of Voltaire throughout an appreciable part of his literary career. Keats' first reference to Voltaire occurs in a letter of February 21, 1818, in which he says 'I am reading Voltaire.'²⁵ On April

21, Keats writes that 'I have been reading lately two very different books, Robertson's *America* and Voltaire's *Ciecle De Louis xiv.*'²⁶ On December 31, 1818 after reading the *Essai sur les moeurs*, Voltaire's great universal history, Keats writes thus:

We with our bodily eyes see but the fashion and Manners of one country for one age — and then we die — Now to me manners and customs long since passed whether among the Babylonians or the Bactrians are as real, or even more real than those among which I now live.²⁷

Sperry points out that a study of Keats in the light of Voltaire helps to reveal an important undercurrent in Keats' thinking, namely, the strain of naturalism which distinguishes Keats' 'romanticism' from that of many of his contemporaries. He agrees with what H.N.Fairchild has already argued that there is 'some suggestion of direct influence,'²⁸ and reaches the following conclusion of his own:

.... Voltaire's view of nature, man, and the historical process, as well as his ingrained anti-clericalism, may have had an influence on Keats.²⁹

Voltaire writes thus:

Il est vraisemblable que notre habitation a éprouvé autant de revolutions en physique que la rapacité et l'ambition en ont causé parmi les peuples....³⁰

Sperry summarizes these pasags in the following words:

Man discovers violence and disorder on all sides of him — not merely in the historical world of his own making but in the domains of physical and animate nature. Human existence is limited, and to some degree determined, by these same conditions; and it is this more comprehensive realization that seems to provide the framework for the skepticism that grows throughout

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Keats's verse and letters.³¹

This idea of Voltaire seems to have influenced Keats' mature scepticism, as seen in the following words:

....Man is originally "a poor forked ceature" subject to the same mischances as the beasts of the forest.... The most interesting question that can come before us is, How far by the preserving endeavours of a seldom appearing Socrates Man-kind may be made happy.... 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....

The point at which Man may arrive is as far as the paralel state in inanimate nature and no further.³²

This idea appears in the theme of the 'Ode on Melancholy,' and the 'Ode on Indolence.' The disorder and deformity manifest within the natural world, Sperry indicates, had long been a concern of both classical and English writers. He says that Keats would have found abundant material to prompt a pessimistic attitude toward nature and its process, for example, in Lucretius, the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the Mutability cantos in Spenser, Milton's chaos, Young's 'Night Thoughts,' or Thomson's *The Seasons*.³³ However, as Sperry points out, Keats' tendency to look on man as a merely natural being, suffering the same hardships and limitations as other creatures in a world cut loose from the control of a divine providence, as follows:

They want both a nest and they both set about one in the same manner — they get their food in the same manner.³⁴

and that of Voltaire have much in common, as seen in the following passage:

(L'homme) est perfectible; et de là on a conclu qu'il s'est perverti, mais pourquoi n'en pan conclure qu'il s'est perfectionné jusqu'au

point où la nature a marqué les limites de sa perfection?³⁵

As for his view of history, Sperry concludes thus:

....Keats, in his attitude toward historical change and process, shares with Voltaire....andthe "grand march of intellect" is not far removed from "la marche de l'esprit humain" (XIX, 227). Nor is it unlikely that the view of history and belief in progress that emerge from many of his later poems and letters were influenced by his known interest and reading in Voltaire.³⁶

As a conclusion, Sperry says that Keats would not have found the question, 'What benefit canst thou do..../To the great world?' (*The Fall*, 11. 167-168), so pressing, unless he had believed in the 'overriding importance of the struggle against superstition, ignorance, and human suffering.' He finally insists thus:

Among those writers there can be little doubt that Voltaire figured prominently in his mind.³⁷

(3)-2. *Charlotte Smith*

George W. Whiting, in his essay on Keats,³⁸ starts from the premise that Keats was no doubt indebted to his predecessors, as Mr. Edmund Blunden³⁹ says, for example, Shakespeare, Milton, Browne, Wordsworth, and Horace. Whiting discovered the analogy between the last stanza of Keats' ode and a sonnet by Mrs.Charlotte Smith. This sonnet, entitled 'Fairwell to the Nightingale,' is number VII in Mrs.Charlotte Smith's "Elegiac Sonnets," the sixth edition(1792). He writes as follows:

Without the author's name and with some verbal variations ('green brake,' 'mossy nest,' 'dear to sadness'), it had been published in *The European Magazine and London Review*, 1782, (p. 235), where a note informs us that the phrase 'dull ear' is from

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Shakespeare and that the seventh line is almost verbatim from Milton.⁴⁰

In *The Universal Magazine*, December, 1792 (pp.408-414), a critic, identified only as J.T., contrasts Milton's sonnet "To the Nightingale" with Charlotte Smith's "On the Departure of the Nightingale," and concludes that Mrs.Smith's sonnet is superior in fancy, sentiment, imagery, harmony, and grace, although he admits that Milton triumphs without a rival in the epic. Whiting proves the anticipations of Keats' famous ode in the sonnet, by such evidences as follows:

Certain words and phrases of this sonnet seem to recur in Keats's ode: "Adieu," repeated several time; "Fled is that lay," resembling "Fled is that music"; "bright Flora," which is paralleled by "Flora and the country green," and so on.... There is some similarity of mood; there is a comparable blending of traditional ideas and real emotion.⁴¹

Although Charlotte Smith's feeling may seem to lack intensity, her melancholy was due to 'real sorrow.' Whiting concludes in his essay that Keats' success owes much to his own experience, especially of his brother's death, and to his own power of imagination. He further says:

Transported on the wings of poesy, he ought in imagination surcease from sorrow. But the beauty of nature and the charm of the song of the nightingale brought only temporary relief. As Kenneth Muir has said, Keats finally realized that escape from the misery of the human state is impossible.⁴²

Indeed, as E.E.Guy says in his essay on Keats,⁴³ in the 'Ode to a Nightingale,' it seems 'rich to die' while the nightingale is pouring forth its soul in ecstasy and before returning, from an imaginative flight, to the world in which 'fancy cannot cheat so well/As she is fam'd to do.' W.Evert, in his book entitled *Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of Keats*

studies the main images of this ode, those of the nightingale and wine, and writes as follows:

As the unseen singer, a virtually disembodied voice in nature, expressing in harmonious tones the latent principle of beauty in the natural world, the nightingale functioned in the same mediatory way that Apollo functioned in Keats's over-all mythopoetic theory of poetry.⁴⁴

The nightingale's song in the natural world, in his opinion, tuned poetic sensibility to the universal principle of harmony. The imagination could contemplate 'a homogeneous world of ideal forms and conceptions, could perceive the essential relationships of the mundane and the divine.' Wine, on the other hand, served as 'the physical counterpart of poetry, the distilled essence of that ripeness to which Apollo, speaking through the voices of the natural world, brought the perceptive and contemplative mind.' Evert writes that, in Keats' earlier synthesis of the poetry-making process, the nightingale and wine were symbolic representations to lead man toward 'supernal truth.' However, Keats returns to the setting of the Apollo ode, the poet's Elysium, in the "Bards of Passion of Mirth." The difference is that, there is absolutely no commerce between the spheres of heaven and earth, namely 'the double Immortality of Poets.' As Evert says, in the 'Ode on Melancholy,' the poet is 'not disguising as sensibility a weak-kneed desire for escape, but placing himself in his own prototypal position of exposure to that natural beauty which will lead him to seek a yet higher consummation.' Evert says that he is in 'the archetypal situation of the pre-Endymion relationship between poet and nature.' The poet yearns to complete his ideal by 'the Lethe-wards transition,' cutting every tie with the real world, namely through the 'intoxication of wine' which for the poet is 'the true, the blushful Hippocrene.' The poet

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convinces himself here that we can be united with truth only in the world of ideal beauty namely in that Immortal Beauty which can be attained through drinking wine. However, this conviction changes in the fourth stanza, that the escape from this world can be achieved through 'imagination.' Although what the poet desires in the Nightingale ode is the intoxication of Poesy, Evert points out that

....for all the richness of imagery in the fourth and fifth stanzas, the joy, if it is joy, is strangely muted. One is struck, for instance, by the fact that what is seen in the imaginative vision includes nothing that the real world does not supply, the difference being simply that the imagination is capable of calling up these phantasmal entities at will. And the vision is obscured by darkness.⁴⁵

The poet, therefore, in the fifth stanza, must 'guess' what his imagination supplies, uncertainly. The words make 'funerary suggestions,' 'death hints.' The idea of mutability is still alive in this ode, as the poet says in complete despair, 'I have ears in vain/To thy high requiem become a sod.' The reason is as Evert says:

In those past times the poet could successfully employ his imagination to transmute the beauty of the real world into ideal forms and create charming new worlds for the purified objectification of the highest human truths. But *this* poet, in *his* time, cannot.⁴⁶

He has to forsake the 'never-never land of imagination,' and has already withdrawn from it, with disappointment after his successful entry, because he has to leave the world which contains 'all the beauty that mortal man can ever surely know.' Evert insists that the subject of the poem has been 'the role of the imagination as a mode of enlarging and apprehending the intuitions generated by the world of physical sensation.' He concludes as follows:

....he....acknowledged in the epistle to Reynolds, that the beauty of this earth is its own excuse for being, and that the imagination that tries to make it something more can only deprive us of even that small portion of ascertainable good that human life can truly offer.⁴⁷

He first acknowledged the mutability of the world, then longed for the immortal world through imagination, but finally he had to recognize that the imagination is also as mortal as he is. In this poem, the poet longs for the ancient days of Greek myth, as in the passage like 'the blushful Hyppocrene' where imagination seems to be powerful for him in solving the scepticism, the idea of mutability, and reaching the immortal world. However, he does not use these images for a constructive purpose but as means for reaching his conviction that he can not enter and be united with immortality without cutting off his relationships with this mortal world. Here, in this sense, the poet shows the 'negative influence' of Greek myth and a 'positive influence' from Charlotte Smith and Voltaire.

(3)-3. *Wedgwood*

Although Keats has been the subject of scholarly and critical articles, Dwight E. Robinson in his essay⁴⁸ says, the sources of the imagery contained in the famous ode have been ignored for more than half a century. For instance, Robinson points out that Sir Sidney Colvin had 'long-perpetuated misconceptions,' because Colvin said as follows:

It is no single or actually existing specimen of Attic handi-craft that he (Keats) celebrates in this ode, but a composite conjured up instinctively in his mind from several such, as well as from prints and pictures.⁴⁹

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Robinson also says that the Greek vases we find in museums are 'just about as antithetical to the impression Keats conveys in his ode as can be imagined.' He reports that the surface of the pots are flat; colored in red, black, or white; with conventionalized scenes. There are no marbles in the exhibits, as described in the 'Grecian Urn' ode, 'brede of marble men and maidens overwrought'; and the *dramatis personae*, consisting of gods, mythical heroes, athletes, theatrical mimes, and stock characters are seldom, if ever, portrayed in the mood of 'happy, happy love.' Moreover, Robinson discovers an important fact, and says as follows:

A great variety of pre-4th Century B.C.vases had been unearthed by Keats's day.⁵⁰

The Greek vases, especially among the Athenians, were, according to the book *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* published by the *Union Academique Internationale*, always made of clay, never of marble, because 'the classical Greeks and especially the Athenians entertained a cultural aversion toward domestic luxuries.'⁵¹ In addition to that, Robinson makes the most telling point of all, as follows:

...most of the classically Greek urns which were discovered in the 18th Century had been exhumed in Tuscany. For this reason, the antiquearian of Keats's day held firmly to the mistaken view that such vases were of Etruscan rather than exports from Greece. Thus if Keats had been writing to an actual Attic urn he would certainly have believed it to be Etruscan, for the same reasons that led Wedgwood to call his works "New Etruria"; for Wedgwood's initial endeavors were inspired by these same mistitled discoveries.⁵²

Josiah Wedgwood, a master potter, died in 1795 when Keats was born. W.B.Honey says that Wedgwood's work was

charged with a peculiar sweetness of sentiment which distinguished it from the Graeco-Roman art from which it was so largely copied and is, of course, far removed from the taut astringent quality of authentic Greek art itself. Not only were the subjects of the decoration sentimentalized in expression and treatment, but the Classical shapes themselves, of urn, amphora and the rest, were altered and exaggerated with a similar result.⁵³

Robinson goes on to pursue the approximation between Wedgwood and Keats and says that the poet must have depended on one of Wedgwood's many versions of the 'Borghese,' a marble specimen now in the Louvre, which contains all of the details of the Bacchanalian verses of the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn.' Robinson says that the following images in the ode were Wedgwood 'extras,' in the following passages:

The "deities or mortals," "the maidens loath," "the mad pursuit," "struggle to escape,"and the "wild ecstasy"are the property of both the antique and its latter-day "foster child." But only Wedgwood's "bride of quietness" has trees to qualify it as a "sylvan historian"or the herbaceous border to make the legend "leaf-fringed," or a floral base to perfect the "flowery tale."⁵⁴

Robinson writes that it was no doubt to a visionary antique urn that the poet wrote, but that more essential to the work of the artist is 'what goes on in his subconscious mind.' He supposes that the seed of the decision to write the great ode must have been sowed several years before, at a time roughly contemporary with his decision to become a poet. He writes that 'the propagator of that seed was his first sight of the jasperware of Josiah Wedgwood.'⁵⁵ Robinson writes that although there are such 'legislators in taste' respected by Wedgwood, as the

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Duchess of Portland, the Duke of Bedford, Lord Holland, Charles Towneley, 'none is more marvelously exemplary than Sir William Hamilton of the Scottish ducal family of that name.'⁵⁶ Robinson writes of the influence of Hamilton's wife, Emma, on Keats, as follows:

Keats's unusual and striking verbal usage in saluting his Grecian Urn in the opening words of the last stanza of the ode as a "Fair attitude!" can scarcely be anything other than an echo of the title of the celebrated courtesan's recitals.⁵⁷

Because, Robinson writes, "Emma's posturings dedicated to ancient ideals of the female form came to be universally celebrated as her classical 'attitudes,'" she has 'left her mark upon the major arts.' However, Robinson writes that Sir William, namely, Emma's husband, is the keystone to reconstruct 'the fantastic edifice of the antique temple of Romanticism,' and to seek for 'the origins of Keats's aesthetic' and 'of the composition of the great ode itself.' If we trace back to the origin of William Hamilton's, we discover that the great scholar and champion of antiquity, J.J. Winckelmann, was one of the first to assail rococo — 'the scrolls and inevitable shell work which ornament can never escape' — and he broke his stick on the present subject. Robinson writes thus:

In matters of art he was *praeceptor Germaniae*.... Winckelmann's 'beauty' had become a gospel as well as an aesthetic, and men like Robert Adam, Sir William Hamilton, Flaxman and Wedgwood were full of an 'admiration' for antique severity, not different in quality from the romantic awe for the sublimity of waterfalls.⁵⁸

In summary, Robinson writes that the urn of the great ode was not Attic and hardly Greek, but that in the fittest sense of the word it was a 'Grecian' urn, so long as 'we denote the perplexed standards of taste

that marked the revival under which Keats wrote by the word most often given it by its own adherents.⁵⁹

(4) SUMMARY

Finally we shall summarize the sources of Keats' concept of beauty as follows. There are three main sources, according to chronological order. First, that of Greek Classics; myths and Platonism, which praise Immortal Beauty in Art, as found in the 'Psyche,' 'Nightingale,' and 'Grecian Urn' odes. His praise of natural beauty seems to owe its source to Greek myth. Second, Medieval Romances indirectly influenced his concept of the physical beauty of ladies, the bravery of knights, the glory of ancient countries, and Imperial images. Third, Keats owed much of his concept of beauty to his contemporaries; the 'Nightingale' ode to Charlotte Smith; the 'Melancholy' and 'Indolence' odes to Voltaire's scepticism; the 'Grecian Urn' to J.J. Winckelmann, Sir William Hamilton, Emma, and Wedgwood. Although the number of Keats' predecessors is large, Keats transcended and absorbed them and developed his own method of 'soul-making.' The great odes show us the result. Keats could write them because he was balanced in his mind at that time. Recognizing many sources of Keats' concept of beauty, nevertheless we should not forget to stress that the odes were born from his life experiences full of misery, pain, and suffering. His concept of beauty is not simple but dual, because he praises the immortal beauty of art on the one hand, and recognizes beauty in actual life on the other. At first, he simply praises the immortal beauty in art; however, he finally compromises by praising mortal beauty of nature, including human lives, because he discovered his mortality and the limitations of art itself. Therefore, though we find many descriptions of natural beauty throughout the odes, Keats is conscious that the

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immortal beauty in art is superior to anything else in the world.

NOTES

1. Sturart M.Sperry, Jr., "Keats's Skepticism and Voltaire," *KSJ*, XII, p.93.
2. Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963, p.488, l. 32.
3. *Ibid.*, p.489, ll. 6-7.
4. George W.Whiting, "Charlotte Smith, Keats, and the Nightingale," *KSJ*, XII, p. 8.
5. Dwight E.Robinson, "Ode on a 'New Etrurian' Urn. A Re-flection of Wedgwood Ware in the Poetic Imagery of John Keats," *KSJ*, XII, p.35.
6. Robert D.Wagner, "Keats: 'Ode to Psyche' and the Second 'Hyperion,'" *KSJ*, XIII, p.34.
7. *Ibid.*, p.30.
8. Bate, *op. cit.*, p.488.
9. Wagner, *op. cit.*, p.30.
10. Albert Gérard, "Romance and Reality: Continuity and Growth in Keats's View of Art", *KSJ*, XI, pp.17-29.
11. *The Letters of John Keats 1814-1821*, ed. Hyder E.Rollins, Harvard University Press, 1958, I, 184.
12. Gérard, *op. cit.*, p.27.
13. W.Empson, *The Structure of Complex Words*, London, 1951, pp.370-371.
14. Bate, *op. cit.*, p.174.
15. *Ibid.*, pp.691-692.
16. Aileen Ward, *John Keats: The Making of a Poet*, The Viking Press, 1963, p. 128.
17. *Ibid.*, p.261.
18. *Ibid.*, p.277.
19. *Ibid.*, p.392.
20. W.H.Evert, *Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of Keats*, Princeton University Press, 1965, p.178.
21. Bate, *op. cit.*, p.86.
22. Sperry, *op. cit.*, p.75.
23. *Ibid.*, p.78.
24. *Ibid.*, p.79.
25. Rollins, *op. cit.*, p.237.
26. *Ibid.*, II,100.
27. *Ibid.*, II,18.

28. H.N.Fairchild, "Keats and the Struggle-for-Existence Tradition," *PMLA*, LXIV (1949), p.110.
29. Sperry, *op. cit.*, p.81.
30. Voltaire, *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations*, XIII, 168.
31. Sperry, *op. cit.*, p.82.
32. Rollins, *op. cit.*, II, 101.
33. Sperry, *op. cit.*, p.83.
34. Rollins, *op. cit.*, II, 79.
35. Voltaire, *op. cit.*, XI, 20.
36. Sperry, *op. cit.*, p.92.
37. *Ibid.*, p.93.
38. Whiting, *op. cit.*, p.4.
39. Edmund Blunden, "Keats and Predecessors: A Note on the 'Ode to a Nightingale,'" *The London Mercury*, XX (July, 1929), p.289.
40. Whiting, *op. cit.*, pp.5-6.
41. *Ibid.*, p.7.
42. *Ibid.*, p.7.
43. E.E.Guy, "Keats's Use of 'Luxury': A Note on Meaning," *KSJ*, XIII, p.92.
44. Evert, *op. cit.*, p.257.
45. *Ibid.*, p.263.
46. *Ibid.*, p.267.
47. *Ibid.*, pp.268-269.
48. Dwight E. Robinson, "Ode on a 'New Etrurian' Urn: A Reflection of Wedgwood Ware in the Poetic Imagery of John Keats," *KSJ*, XII, p.12.
49. Sir Sidney Colvin, *Life of John Keats*, New York, 1925, p.415.
50. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p.14.
51. *Ibid.*, p.15.
52. *Ibid.*, pp.15-16.
53. W.B.Honey, *Wedgwood Ware*, New York, 1949, p.2.
54. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p.22.
55. *Ibid.*, pp.27-28.
56. *Ibid.*, p.29.
57. *Ibid.*, p.36.
58. *Ibid.*, pp.30-31.
59. *Ibid.*, p.35.