# Immortality and Death:

# John Keats and the Tradition of the English Ode

by

Miyoko Murai

1997

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION·····i

CHAPTER

I. ODE AS A VEHICLE OF PRAISE AND IMMORTALITY: THE ENGLISH ODES FROM JONSON TO DRYDEN·····1

II. APPEARANCE OF DEATH AND MORTALITY: THE ENGLISH ODES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY·····48

III. REVIVAL OF IMMORTALITY AND GLORY: THE ODES OF THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETS·····86

IV. IMMORTALITY AS AN ELYSIUM: IMMORTAL BOWER IN KEATS'S EARLY ODES AND "ODE TO PSYCHE"·····117

V. CHANGE OF THE NIGHTINGALE IN "ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE": FROM AN ENCHANTING IMMORTAL BIRD INTO A BIRD OF DEATH·····153

VI. ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION OF CIRCULARITY IN "ODE ON A GRECIAN URN" AND "ODE ON INDOLENCE"·····186

VII. FINAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN IMMORTALITY AND DEATH IN "ODE ON MELANCHOLY" AND "TO AUTUMN"·····230

BIBLIOGRAPHY·····276

# INTRODUCTION

It is often said that 1819 was Keats's *annus mirabilis* as a poet. This is not because in that year he wrote such various poems as "La Belle Dame sans Merci," *Lamia*, and *The Fall of Hyperion*, but because he wrote his five great odes only in five months or so. Though written in rather a short period of time, these odes vary in their themes. Apparently, it may seem impossible to find some order or a common grand theme among them. However, in the sequence of Keats's odes, a continuity of concern really exists. It is a concern for immortality and death. His early odes begin as a conventional means to present and praise blissful immortal world which is, in other words, the fertile world of his imagination. Before long, barren death appears all of a sudden in this happy immortal world, and it is revealed that an ominous shadow of death is insidiously lurking in the midst of immortality. Then, his odes begin to present another aspect, transience and its acceptance. By the final acceptance of death and rebirth, and their perpetual cyclicity, the opposition between death and immortality comes to be reconciled. The ode sequence presents, after all, their opposition and reconcilement. The purpose of this paper is to examine the continuity of concern for immortality and death which runs through Keats's odes, and reveal the process of their final reconciliation.

Now the term "ode" has become so capacious as to be little informative, and the same may be said of Keats's days. For the poet, the origin of the ode and its essential characteristics must have already become too far away to put restrictions on him when he wrote his own odes. However, immortality and death, the continuous concern in his odes, are in fact two essential elements of the ode. Also, the very reconciliation

of their opposition is the essential function of the ode. Originally the ode was born to give immortal honor to men who are equally doomed to death. Death urged men to write odes. It may be said that death was the origin of the ode. In order to reconcile inevitable death and ideal but impossible immortality, ancient poets began to write odes. In the following chapters, first the two essential characteristics of the ode, immortality and death, will be examined in the odes of the English poets before Keats. After that, we will consider the appearance of the two characteristics in the sequence of his odes.

The first chapter will reveal the character of the traditional public ode of praise. In ancient Greece, poetry was mainly written as a praise or a prayer to the gods. Before long, mighty tyrants began to seek grand poetry to highly praise, not the gods, but the tyrants themselves, their great achievements and honor. Then the ode was born. The basic function of the ode was to give immortal honor, not to immortal gods, but to mortal men. The sixteenth and the seventeenth century English poets devoted themselves to following sincerely this convention of the ode. They wrote various odes as occasional poems. At some national events, on someone's birthday or death, and other various occasions, they wrote many odes to praise the honor and the achievements of someone great and immortalized his or her name.

Then, about the end of the seventeenth century, mortality, transience, and death gradually began to appear in the ode. The second chapter will deal with this second characteristic of the ode. The meditation on death and mortality did not originate in the English poems of that century. It originated in the odes of the ancient Greek and Roman

poets, especially in the odes of Horace. While writing many odes dedicated to his mighty patrons, Horace introduced nature into the ode, and created the *carpe diem* or the *non semper* atmosphere of his own. At the transition of the seasons, he thought about the transition of man's life and contemplated mortality and death. The eighteenth century English poets especially loved such gloomy contemplation in their odes. At someone's death, they never attempted to praise and immortalize the great achievements of the deceased. Instead, they devoted themselves to mourning over death and meditating on the inevitable doom of all men. The ode completely lost its public character and became a vehicle of private inner feelings. Also, the poets of this time severely criticized the traditional public ode of praise and its too optimistic or easygoing way of immortalization. For them, the conventional ode was an utterly formal, inane and empty poetic form, and the reference to honorable immortality virtually disappeared from their odes.

The third chapter will consider the odes of the English Romantic poets. They no more criticized tradition in their odes. Instead, they revived immortality and glory in their odes, which were quite different from those of the traditional ode of praise. In their odes, they praised and sought after inner glory and inner immortality which enabled them to feel and directly respond to the outer world. They yearned for blissful immortality within themselves. Thus, before Keats, most of the English odes attempted to treat either of the two essential elements of the ode.

The following four chapters will examine the odes of Keats. First, the fourth chapter will treat his early odes and "Ode to Psyche." Keats's fragmentary early odes attempt to follow the traditional ode of praise.

He highly praises the immortality of the gods and the great poets of old, and presents their abode as an Elysium. In "Ode to Psyche," we can see similar characteristics. Psyche and Eros are enjoying their immortal love. The fertile natural world around them is depicted as a blissful immortal bower.

Then, as we will see in the fifth chapter, "Ode to a Nightingale" reveals barren death lurking in the fertile immortal world. As a fascinating songbird, the nightingale entices the poet into the ecstatic joy of immortal world. In the middle of this bliss, however, the bird suddenly discloses an ominous shadow of death to the poet. The sixth stanza will examine a similar latent shadow of death in the happy world of immortality depicted on a round Grecian urn. The important difference between these two odes is that in the final stanza of "Ode on a Grecian Urn," an inscription on the urn is introduced. It suggests circularity, that is, the possibility of perpetually repeated appearance of fertile immortality and barren death. The suggestion of circularity foreshadows their final reconciliation in "To Autumn." Similar suggestion of circularity is presented in "Ode on Indolence," in the three figures who perpetually appear before the poet.

The last chapter will show the reconciliation between immortality and death in Keats's final odes. Now immortality is not yearned for. Instead, a sense of transience comes to the fore. "Ode on Melancholy" depicts the true experience of melancholy of Keats's own, which is possible only when one can really and greedily savor transient beauty. The poet no more attempts to fly to the blissful immortal world. He attempts to accept transience and decay in the actual world. However,

it cannot be denied that the battle-like, fierce enjoyment of transient beauty sounds a strained note. It is in "To Autumn" that transience and death are serenely accepted, and the longtime opposition between immortality and death disappears. In the apparently immortal maturing process of autumn, the poet finds decay and death. But now they are not flatly rejected. The poet comes to realize great cyclicity that revolves around all, including both maturity and death, or rebirth and death, altogether as its integral part.

As is well known, there is no conclusive evidence of the exact date of composition of Keats's odes of 1819, and opinions differ among critics. Though some of them assert that "Ode on Indolence" was written before "Ode on a Grecian Urn" or "Ode to a Nightingale," this paper will treat his odes in above-mentioned order.

# CHAPTER I

## ODE AS A VEHICLE OF PRAISE AND IMMORTALITY: THE ENGLISH ODES FROM JONSON TO DRYDEN

Originally the word "ode" didn't signify any particular poetic form.[1] Etymologically speaking, the word derives from a Latin word *oda*, which means "song," and furthermore, from a Greek word *aoidê*, which has the same meaning. At first it only signified "song" or "poem" in general. Of course the ancient Greek poets, for example, Simonides and Pindar, didn't call their works "ode."[2] Likewise, the Roman poet Horace simply called his collection of odes *carmina* (songs). In short, originally no fixed name existed to represent the poetic form that now we call "ode."

The Greek lyric began after the eighth century B. C. In those days, poetry was indispensable especially when the ancient Greek people offered a prayer or a hymn to the Olympian gods. On such religious occasions, the Greek poems were not read silently as they usually are today. Instead, they were almost always recited. The recitation was performed either as a solo, sung by a single person, or in chorus, sung by *colos* (choirs). In most cases it was accompanied by dance and the music of *lyra* (lyre) and *aulos* (flute). Such recitation was called *chorikon melos* (choral song). Gradually this kind of poem or song underwent various changes and sophistication both in its form and in its contents, and finally became one of the important literary genres called "ode." Therefore, the original and essential role of the ode was to offer a hymn or a praise in public to the ancient gods.

But the Greek mighty tyrants of rich poleis, who gained enormous

power in the late sixth and the early fifth century B. C. when the Persian War broke out, couldn't be satisfied with the ordinary ode which conventionally gave a praise or a hymn only to the Olympian gods. What they ardently wanted was the grand ode that would magnificently praise illustrious men of great wealth and power, that is to say, the powerful tyrants themselves, and immortalize their great names even after their death. In order to meet such demands, the Greek professional poets made every effort. At some religious festivals or on some public occasions, they wrote various odes to loudly praise the powerful tyrants, that is, their important patrons, and to make their fame and greatness remembered forever. As a result of their earnest efforts to make better odes by carefully arranging the poetic forms and choosing more suitable splendid words and phrases, the Greek choral ode gradually attained the highest stage of prosperity to become one of the great literary genres later.

Moreover, the establishment of this new literary genre, ode, a poem to praise someone, divine or human, and immortalize his name, was closely connected with the development of the ancient Greek athletic games. The early Olympic Games was held at Olympia, in Elis in 776 B. C. as a festival dedicated to Zeus. Soon it was followed by the institution of the Pythian Games at Delphi that is famous for the temple of Apollo, the Isthmian Games at Corinth in honor of Poseidon and the Nemean Games at Kleonai dedicated to Zeus. These four games all contributed the prosperity and popularity of the Greek national athletic contests in the late sixth century B. C. when the mighty tyrants sought for a new kind of ode to praise and immortalize themselves. These games

greatly aroused the interest of the ancient Greek people and had religious, political and social significance in their lives. As William H. Race says, "The fame of an Olympic victor lived after him,"[3] the athletes from all over Greece competed each other to the best of their ability not for a reward or a prize, but for honor alone. To gain honor was their only and ultimate aim.[4] The victors could enjoy considerable prestige in their home poleis all their lives. So they earnestly desired to be praised loudly for their glorious victory to be remembered forever in the best poems written by the best poets.

Among a lot of events of the games, for example, running, wrestling and boxing, the most prestigious ones were horse-race and chariot-race. Because it was very difficult to own meadows or pastures on the small islands in Greece, and it required enormous wealth to keep horses, only the rich tyrants and nobles, such as Hieron in Syracuse and Theron in Akragas, could take part in these races. Of course these wealthy men themselves never risked their lives in a race. They hired good drivers and trainers to win the game. But whoever the actual driver might be, the owner of the horses was considered the winner of the event. Hence, to praise a victor in a race was to praise an owner of the horse, that is to say, a powerful man with great wealth. In most cases it was not the actual anonymous victor but the mighty noble who always enjoyed the greatest honor in a race.

Pindar preferred to give such adjectives as *epinicios* (for a victory) and *encomios* (celebratory) to his poems which praised the tyrant or the victor of a race. With the increasing demand of the mighty patrons who were gaining enormous wealth and power at that time and with the

development and popularity of the four great athletic games, many Greek professional poets wrote *encomia* whose main subjects were the great patrons or their ancestors, and *epinicia* whose main subjects were the victors of the athletic games. The ode has its origin in these two kinds of ancient Greek poems. As D. S. Carne-Ross says that such "victory ode . . . differs from most modern poetry in this respect too, that it is always occasional,"[5] the ode was originally a very occasional and formal poem. The ancient ode poets were always conscious of the public, the listeners including their great patrons, and attempted to entertain and please them.

As has been mentioned above, primarily the ode, a kind of a choral poem, was a hymn offered to the Olympian gods. However, as Race regards *epinicia* a kind of "secularization" of a hymn,[6] a hymn to the gods and their transcendental powers was gradually transformed into a hymn to a mortal man and his greatness. The ode began to loudly praise, not the immortal gods but human beings, and give them honor.[7]

In addition to this function, there is one more important point concerning the various characteristics of the ode. The honor offered to someone in the ode was always connected with immortality. The ode often sang emphatically that man's honor would last forever. Immortality was an important element in the ode to praise someone. As has been suggested out, the ode was a kind of secularization of a hymn to the gods. This secularization did not only change the subject of the ode from the Olympian gods to human beings. By the secularization, man's mortality compared to gods' immortality came to be realized all the more acutely. When a poet tells about the honor of a man burdened with

mortality, the man's honor should not perish with his death. In order to emphasize the excellence of someone, a poet had to give him the superiority that would transcend his mortality. Thus, in the ode offered to human beings, man's honor was always highly immortalized. The ode became, as it were, an immortal memorial to a mortal man.[8] As Simon Goldhill thinks that Pindar's *epinicia* follows "the tradition of poetic immortalization,"[9] and Gilbert Highet says, "An ode is a song in the classical manner, written for eternity,"[10] the ode came to praise and immortalize a mortal man.

With these new attributes of the ode, the Greek poets made every effort to write fine odes in order to praise and immortalize the honor or the fame of the victors and their mighty patrons. Of course each poet made odes for various purposes and on various occasions, but their effort was not a mere flattery to their patrons to gain an advantage over other poets. To the ancient Greek people there were two possible motives that exercised a great influence on the formation and the popularity of the ode. The first one was the ancient Greek view of life, that is to say, man should live, above all things, for honor and fame. The second one was their realization of the power of art, its power to immortalize one fleeting moment.

C. Maurice Bowra, who calls the ancient Greek view of life the "heroic outlook," describes their way of life as this:

> The essence of the heroic outlook is the pursuit of honour through action. The great man is he who, being endowed with superior qualities of body and mind, uses them to the utmost and wins the applause of his fellows. . . . His honour is the centre of his being. . . . By prowess and renown he gains an enlarged sense of personality and well-being; through them he has a second existence on the lips of men.[11]

It was the ideal way of life for the ancient Greeks to use to the utmost their "superior qualities" which they got from the gods at their birth,[12] and draw a praise from others. Furthermore, one's honor should last forever within the memory of the living not only in his lifetime, but also after his death. The ancient Greek really believed that through everlasting honor men could gain another life, that is to say, immortality after death.[13] Such a preference for immortal honor seems to be much influenced by the ancient Greek idea of the afterworld. As Robert Garland says that to the ancient Greeks, "With death all retribution ceases. There is no hint of a reckoning on the other side of the grave,"[14] the ancient Greek people only had very ambiguous notion of the world after death. It is often pointed out that all the dead men in the works of Homer are very shadowy and obscure. The Greek people had no single clear-cut image of Hades and the life in that world. While it is usually said that they were not vainly in dread of death, they realized well that death would bring all to naught. Therefore, the life in this world was everything for them. Life was all the more precious for the existence of inevitable death. The ancient Greek people ardently desired to make the most of their ability and gain honor in their lifetime, and finally leave the honor in order to live forever in many hearts after death.

In addition to such a view of life, the ancient Greek realization of the power of art also much contributed the popularity of the ode. Highet remarks that it was the ancient Greek people who realized for the first time the close relationship between art and permanence:

> Greece knew that dramas and songs, tales and histories, are not amusements for moment but, because of their continuously fertile content, permanent possessions for the mind. This was the discovery of the Greeks.[15]

What drove the ancient Greeks to art was a strong impulse to give permanence to one fleeting moment. Among various art genres, poetry gives permanence to the passing moment with its power of words. Bowra says that the role of poetry is "to perpetuate in words the moments of rapturous illumination . . . and to share them with other men," and like Highet he asserts that the ancient Greeks realized well the power of poetry to immortalize.[16] For them, it was an essential mission of poetry or, as it were, its raison d'être, to transcend the limit of mortality and make its subject immortal. Hence, poetry was often compared to a magnificent building, a solemn temple, precious gold, an adamant, or whatever that would last forever. Among various kinds of such poetry, the ode was born especially to praise and give honor, first to the gods and later to men. Therefore, the Greek poets made the most of this kind of poetry, the ode, as a suitable vehicle to immortalize the honor of their subject and give immortality to the mortal as well as the immortal gods.

Such immortal honor was not given only to a victor or a mighty patron. As Carol Maddison points out, "The poet, like the hero, was part of the glory of Greece,"[17] the writing of the ode itself was closely connected with the immortalization of the poet's fame. That is to say, by leaving excellent odes of praise and immortalization to posterity, the poet also immortalizes his own name. When the Greek poets wrote odes to immortalize someone, they were also fully aware of such glorious self-immortalization.

As has been mentioned above, the poem which we now call "ode" owes its origin to "encomium" or "epinicions." The epinicions, or victory odes were rather short-lived and now most of them are lost. Simonides of

Keos (ca. 556-468 B. C.) is credited with the invention of this epinician genre. As one of the Greek early professional poets who wrote poetry for a consideration, Simonides traveled widely in Greece and wrote a lot of odes for many mighty tyrants in Thessaly, Sicily, and southern Italy. His earliest epinician ode is said to have been written about the end of the sixth century B. C., but unfortunately most of his odes are lost.

It was Bacchylides of Keos (ca. 520- ca. 452 B. C.) and Pindar (ca. 518- ca. 438 B. C.) who followed Simonides. Bacchylides, the nephew of Simonides, wrote many odes, but few of them have survived just like the case of his uncle's odes. Actually it was Pindar who wrote and developed fine victory poems, some of which have fortunately survived, and practically established one of the important literary genres, "ode." It can be said that Pindar was the greatest and the last ode poet of the ancient Greece. He was born in Thebes of Boiotia. His family belonged to the aristocratic. In a fairly happy home environment, he studied the art of the choral ode and won good reputation as an ode poet in his early days. He was only twenty when a tyrant in Thessaly gave him a commission to write a victory ode, "Pythian V." From that time on, Pindar became a favorite with many mighty tyrants, for example, Theron of Sicily and Hieron of Syracuse. He traveled widely to write odes for powerful patrons and won such lustrous fame as Maddison says, "The honours rendered to Pindar at Delphi approached those of a demi-god."[18] Within forty years after Pindar's death, however, this new genre died completely. The victory ode, born around the late sixth century B. C., blossomed during the lifetime of Pindar and suddenly died by the end of the fifth century B. C. Among these three Greek poets, the following will

examine some odes of Pindar and then some of the Roman poet Horace as well in order to see the essential characteristics of the ode, that is, praise and immortality.

As an excellent poet, Pindar wrote various kinds of poems such as "hymn" to the gods, "dithyramb" dedicated to Dionysus, "encomium" to his patrons and great ancestors.[19] But unfortunately, of all his works only 45 "epinicions," victory odes dedicated to the victors in the Olympian, Pythian, Isthmian and Nemean Games, have completely survived. Of these 45 victory odes, 23 odes begin with an invocation to the gods. For example, in "Pythian XI" which praises the foot-race victor Thrasydaios of Thebes in the Pythian Games, Pindar uses the first whole stanza for the long invocation to the Thebean Goddess Semela and Ino. As Race points out, "Pindar's ode are far from being completely secularived,"[20] his odes still abounded in hymnal elements.[21] In order to praise the great achievements of mortal men, Pindar used the form of a hymn which originally praised the great power of immortal gods.

However famous Pindar might be as a talented ode poet, he was one of the Greek professional poets who wrote poems for a consideration. For him, as for other poets, patrons were very important. Of course Pindar got many patrons all over Greece, and Hieron of Syracuse in Sicily was the mightiest among them. Hieron ardently loved art and literature. He commissioned many poets including Pindar, Simonides and Bacchylides to make odes and showed them a great deal of hospitality at his home. With his vast wealth, he supported various athletic games, especially horse-race in which the Sicilians excelled. In "Olympian I," dedicated to Hieron who won the horse-race, Pindar calls Hieron "Syracuse's

horse-loving king" and sings loudly, "Fame shines for him in the colony of brave men founded by Lydian Pelops."(23-24)[22] His loud voice of praise refers to not only Hieron but also every mighty tyrant in general. A man who gains "fame" with enormous power and wealth is the greatest. Pindar calls such men "kings" and "victors." Needless to say, Hieron, who was the king, and the victor as well, was one of such great men to Pindar. In his many odes dedicated to Hieron, there is really the "intention of immortalizing Hieron as a model for an enlightened ruler," as Race points out.[23]

It is true that as a talented poet, Pindar wrote odes to praise the power and wealth of his patrons who won a victory in athletic games, and to make their names remembered forever. But, on the other hand, he always realized that he was nothing but one of the many professional poets depending on the favor of mighty patrons. His words of praise sometimes sound like bombast or flattery to his patrons. In "Nemean VII" Pindar tells Thearion of Aigina:

> I am a guest-friend. Keeping away dark blame,
> like streams of water I shall bring genuine fame
> with my praises to the man who is my friend,
> for that is the proper reward for good men. (61-63)

He calls himself "a guest-friend" and asserts that a praise is the proper, or the best reward for the nobles. Giving a praise to patrons is the essential duty of ode poets, as Pindar says in "Pythian II," "Various men pay the tribute of a resounding hymn to various kings at recompense for their excellence"(13-14).

Thus the odes of Pindar were written with the object of giving a praise to victors and tyrants before everything. Therefore, though given the name of the Greek great athletic games to their titles, his odes

never tell minutely about the actual games. As John D. Jump remarks that the "games are little more than Pindar's point of departure,"[24] to Pindar the actual games were nothing more than a means to praise someone great. But the names of the game, the event, the victor himself, and furthermore, his family and hometown were important elements in his victory odes.[25] After an opening invocation to Zeus in "Olympian IV," which praises Psaumis of Kamarina who won the championship in the chariot-race, Pindar says that the immortal honor is given not only to the victor Psaumis himself, but also his hometown Kamarina:

> But, son of Kronos, you who rule Mt. Aitna,
> windy burden for hundred-headed Typhos the mighty,
> receive an Olympic victor,
> and, with the aid of the Graces, this celebratory revel,
> longest-lasting light for achievements of great strength.
> For it comes in honor of the chariot of Psaumis,
> who, crowned with Pisan olive, is eager to arouse
> glory for Kamarina. (6-12)

Psaumis' victory is the "longest-lasting light." It is an immortal honor. And the honor is also the "glory for Kamarina," his birthplace. In "Olympian XI," which praises Hagesidamos of Lokroi, the victor in the boxing, Pindar sings:

> Be assured now, son of Archestratos,
> that because of your boxing, Hagesidamos,
> I shall adorn your crown of golden olive
> with my sweet song of celebration,
> As I pay respect to the race of the Epizephyrian Lokrirans.(11-15)

Here the ode is dedicated not only to Hagesidamos himself, but also to "the race" in his hometown Lokroi.

But Pindar didn't write victory odes only to praise someone's great achievement loudly and temporarily. As he says in "Isthmian, IV," "Thing goes forth with immortal voice / if someone says it well, and over the all-fruitful earth and through the sea has gone / the radiance of noble

deeds forever undimmed (40-42), he believed that man's great achievement and fame should be remembered by his fellows forever after death. Pindar often asserts that the immortal honor is the best and final reward for the life of great men:

> The posthumous acclaim of fame
> alone reveals the life of men who are dead and gone
> to both chroniclers and poets.
> . . . . . .
> Success is the first of prizes;
> and renown the second portion; but the man who
> meets with both and gains them has won the highest crown.(93-100)

The "posthumous acclaim of fame" is very important. Fame and renown would live on forever after the death of great men. To win success in this world and, furthermore, to leave immortal fame after death were the most desirable and ideal life for the ancient Greeks.

In addition to the immortality of great man's honor, Pindar also praises the immortality of poetry itself. In "Nemean IV," he says, "The word lives longer than deeds, / which, with the Graces' blessing, / the tongue draws from the depths of the mind (6-8). He fully realized that poetry has the power to make man's fame remembered forever in the mind of others. It has been already suggested that the ancient Greek people recognized the immortality of art, its power to retain one fleeting moment forever, and they often compared art to solid buildings or hard adamant. Pindar also calls poetry a "treasure house of hymns" and asserts that nothing can destroy it:

> Neither winter rain, coming from abroad
> as a relentless army
> from a loudly rumbling cloud, nor wind shall buffet
> and with their deluge of silt carry into the depths
> of the sea. But in clear light its front
> will proclaim a chariot victory,
> famous in men's speech
> shared by your father. ("Pythian VI," 10-17)

Poetry will not be destroyed forever. It preserves the honor of victors and tyrants and leaves it to posterity. Poetry has the power to immortalize man's glory. In his odes Pindar often praises the immortality of poetry as ardently as he praises the immortality of his patron's honor. Conversely, even the greatest achievement would be doomed to sink into oblivion, if it is not retained in a poem. Pindar also makes such an assertion about the transience of great man's honor:

> If a man succeeds in an exploit, he casts a honey-minded
> cause into the Muses' streams for great deeds of valor
> remain in deep darkness when they lack hymns.
> We know of a mirror for noble deeds in only one way,
> if, by the grace of Mnemosyne with the shining crown,
> one finds a recompense for his labors
> in poetry's famous songs. ("Nemean VII," 11-16)

Poetry, or its "famous song" can immortalize man's "great deeds of valor" and "noble deeds" in the memory of people. Accompanied by music and dance, Pindar's odes were sung by the *colos* in the presence of his mighty patrons and nobles. They were written and performed in order to honor great tyrants, victors, their families and hometowns. Realizing, and employing to the full, the power of poetry to immortalize, Pindar gave rich immortality to the honor of mortal man in his victory odes.

The ancient Greek ode thus praised and immortalized human beings burdened with death. It flourished well particularly in Pindar's lifetime, then nearly died out soon after his death. It was the Roman poet Horace (65-8 B. C.) who, while following the tradition of Greek ode, transformed it and established his own style of ode. Unlike Pindar who belonged to the aristocracy, Horace's father was a freedman, a former slave. But he gave his son the best education that his capital afforded

at Athens. Virgil was one of Horace's many friends in his school days at Athens, who was just beginning his career as a poet. Through Virgil's recommendation, Horace was admitted to the favor and friendship of Maecenas, the faithful and confidential subject of Octavian (later Augustus), and a lover of literature. Under the patronage of Maecenas and, through him, of Octavian, Horace wrote many odes. The three volumes of his ode collection *Carmina* were dedicated to his mighty patron Maecenas. In Rome, odes were no longer accompanied by music and dance because there existed no such great public occasions as the Greek athletic games.[26] The Roman people didn't need any magnificent choral ode sung by the *colos*. Horace wrote some odes as if he wrote a simple letter to his friends. Even in the odes dedicated to Maecenas, his voice sound fairly relaxed compared to rather strict and formal voice of Pindar. Although many of his odes were written in the form of dedication, they were mostly written and read in a more private, smaller circle. Most of his odes treated more private, common themes, and became rather lyrical and tender.

Of course, the circumstances around the poet and the ode had changed since Pindar's days, and some new characteristics of the ode were born,[27] but Horace's odes still kept the tradition inherited from the odes of Pindar. As can be seen in the invocation to Calliope in the opening of "Book II, ode 4," or the hymn to Mercury in "Book I, ode 10" and the hymn to Apollo and Diana in "Book I, ode 21," the odes of Horace still kept the hymnal characteristics which indicate the origin of the ode. Moreover, he too wrote many odes to praise his patrons and the royal family. He loudly sung about the immortal glory of the nobles, the power

of poetry of immortalizing one fleeting moment, and his own immortal honor as a great poet even more frequently than Pindar. Though his odes became rather private and lyrical, they still retained the same important characteristics as the odes of Pindar, that is, praise and immortality.

Needless to say, as *Carmina* itself was dedicated to Maecenas, many of the odes in this collection give a grand praise to Horace's great patrons, Maecenas and Augustus. Especially for the Roman Emperor Augustus, who rapidly expanded the Roman territory by his mighty power, Horace wrote the highest ode of praise. In "Book III, ode 5," he compares Augustus to Jove in heaven and says, "Augustus shall be deemed a god on earth / For adding to our empire the Britons and dread Parthians"(3-4)[28] For his great achievements as a ruler of the empire, Augustus gets the supreme praise to be elevated even to "a god on earth." And Horace repeatedly emphasizes the immortality of the emperor's honor and asserts that it is his duty as a poet to honor the emperor's great achievements. He says, "In what caves shall I be heard . . . Peerless Caesar's immortal glory?/ I will sing of a noble exploit, recent, / As yet untold by other lips"("Book III, ode 25," 3-8). The honor and immortality are closely connected in his odes.

Of course, such essential power for immortalization is inherent in poetry itself. Horace asserts that poetry would never die:

> Think not the words will perish
> Which I, born near far-sounding Aufidus,
> Utter for linking with the lyre,
> By arts not hitherto revealed!
> . . . . . .
> Nor has time destroyed whate'er Anacreon
> Once sung in sport. Still breathes the love of the Aeolian
> Maid, and lives her passion confided to the lyre.
> ("Book IV, ode 9," 1-12)

Horace, more frequently than Pindar, praises the power of poetry to give fertile immortality to the honor of mortal man. Furthermore, he often sings about the immortal honor which he would win as a peerless poet, though Pindar seldom made such a bold assertion:

> I have finished a monument more lasting
> Than bronze and loftier than the Pyramids' royal pile,
> One that no wasting rain, no furious north wind
> Can destroy, or the countless chain of years
> And the ages' flight. ("Book III, ode 30," 1-5)

This is the last ode of the third book of *Carmina*. Like Pindar, Horace compares the immortality of poetry to the metal, "bronze," and the building, "Pyramids" in order to praise poetry's immortal power. In the same ode dedicated to Maecenas, Horace sings about the immortality of his own honor as a poet:

> I shall not altogether die,
> But a mighty part of me shall escape the death-goddess.
> On and on shall I grow,
> Ever fresh with the glory of after time.("Book III, ode 30," 6-8)

As has been mentioned above, for the ancient poets, to write an excellent ode was closely connected with the immortalization of the poet's own fame. Goldhill says, "as the poem records the *kleos* of the victory, the proper performance of that praise also promises the *kleos* of the poet." He points out that the very "self-glorification" which ode poets often performed in their works was "a constant grounding for the glorification of the victor."[29] Such self-glorification, about which Pindar sang rather moderately, became very prominent in the odes of Horace. In his works Horace praised loudly the immortality , not only of his patrons' honor, but also of poetry in general and of his own honor as a poet. It is true that the ode underwent several changes in its theme and form from the days of the ancient Greek poets to the time of the Roman Empire. But

the ode had been always the best means to praise and immortalize. The immortality referred to in the ode was still very fertile and desirable at this point.

Then, how was the ode with these characteristics accepted and developed in England? Before turning to a closer examination of its development in England, a few remarks should be made concerning the long way the ode went from Rome to England. After the death of Horace, the ode didn't develop very much and poets didn't write odes as ardently as before. In the Dark Ages, both Greek and Latin were almost out of use except in church. Then in the Middle Ages, though some scholars read the odes of Horace, poets and the public scarcely knew his works, to say nothing of the odes of Pindar. The ode had been virtually dead for a long time. Therefore, in the fourteenth century when Pindar and Horace were rediscovered as a part of the great rediscovery of classical literature and various literary genres including ode, they gave a really great impact on the Renaissance scholars and poets.[30)]

The rediscovered ode revived first in Italy and France. At the end of the fifteenth century, the Florentine scholar Landino and his pupil Politian introduced Horace to Italy and gradually his odes became very popular. Then in 1513 the publisher Aldus in Venice published the first edition of Pindar's odes in Greek, and in 1535 it was published in Latin. In France, Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585) one of the seven poets of the Pléiade, titled his poems "ode" and attempted to create his own style of ode. Though Ronsard's all efforts were in vain, he at least introduced the new literary genre, ode, to French poets and had a great influence on them and the English poets of the fifteenth century as well.

After the ode revived and won popularity in Italy and France in this way, it finally came to be known to the English Renaissance poets. At first they accepted and developed this new form of poetry as a part of the significant inheritance of classical tradition. The ode was written as a sublime occasional poem, mostly dedicated to someone great. At a certain national event, or on someone's birthday and death, the English poets wrote many odes in order to praise the honor and the achievements of the King, Queen, nobles, their friends or the deceased, and made their name remembered forever. They used the ode as the best means for praise and immortalization, which were the essential characteristics of the ode of Pindar and Horace.

The English poets of the sixteenth century, for example, Thomas Campion (1567-1620), Michael Drayton (1563-1631), came to know Pindar's odes through Ronsard. They translated many of the odes of Pindar and attempted to write their own style of ode. In the introduction to his *Poems Lyrick and Pastorall*, Drayton remarks about the ode:

> An Ode is known to have been properly a Song, moduled to the ancient Harp, and neither too short-breathed, as hastening to the end, nor composed of the longest Verses, as unfit for the sudden Turns and loftie Tricks. . . . Some transcendently loftie, and far more high than the Epick (commonly called the Heroique poem) witness those of the inimitable Pindarus, consecrated to the glorie and renown of such as returned in triumph from Olympus, Elis, Isthmus, or the like.[31]

Drayton seems to realize that the ode is a transcendently lofty song, and that it is consecrated to the glory and renown of such as returned in triumph. He knew well that the main purpose of the ode is to give a high praise to man's glorious achievement. Once talking about his poem "Ballad of Agincourt," however, he called it an "Ode . . . or if thou wilt, Ballad."[32] His definition of this new poetic form was still very

ambiguous.

Similar ambiguity can be found in Shakespeare. Shakespeare used the word "ode" twice in his dramas. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, Dumain, pining for dear Katharine, says, "Once more I'll read the ode that I have writ"(IV, iii, 96). And in *As You Like It*, the disguised Rosalind tells lovesick Orlando, "There is a man haunts the forest that abuses our young plants with carving 'Rosalind' on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies on brambles"(III, ii, 350-353). In these two examples, the word "ode" only suggests an innocent love poem. Jump regards Shakespeare's use of the word "ode" as "normal enough in his time and place."[33] The English poets of the sixteenth century preferred to use the word to suggest various kinds of poems.

Among the poets of the sixteenth century, it was Ben Jonson (1573-1637) who early realized the essential role of the ode, that is, praise and immortalization, and succeeded in writing his own style of ode. The English Renaissance poets often quoted from the Greek and Roman poets in the original or in translation and imitated some of the expressions in the classical poems. For them, it was not a mere pedantry but adding refinement and dignity to their works. Jonson too, who is called "the best scholar . . . and the most sedulous translator,"[34] translated some of the odes of Horace. His classical knowledge ranged from Horace to various poets and writers such as Seneca, Cicero, Tacitus.[35] Judging from the titles of his odes, for example, "Ode. To Sir William Sidney, on His Birthday," "To the Right Honourable Jerome, Lord Weston. An Ode Gratulatory, for his Return from His Embassy, 1632," it is clear that most of his odes are occasional poems. Jonson usually wrote

odes on some memorial days or social occasions just like the ancient classical poets did. As for the poetic form too, he followed the classical examples. He often used the triadic form that consists of "Turn," "Counter-Turn" and "Stand," which are similar to "strophe," "antistrophe" and "epode" in the grand ode of Pindar. "The subject matter of the odes [of Jonson] is serious," as Wesley Trimpi puts it,[36] his odes follow the essential role of the ancient ode, that is to say, they praise and immortalize someone's name and glory on some public occasions as sincerely as possible.

"Ode. To Sir William Sidney, on His Birthday" was written on the twenty-first birthday of Sir William Sidney (1590-1612). Jonson celebrates this young man's birthday[37] and tells him how he should live henceforth. As Trimpi points out, "Like an epistle, the poem is a direct address to a particular person and deals with a particular situation,"[38] his tone is very affectionate and frank as if he were directly talking to one of his friends. Such a friendly tone often appears in the ode of Horace.[39] In the opening stanza, a room to celebrate this memorial day, "a context and an occasion for Jonson's praise and advice,"[40] is prepared. Then Jonson says, "I may tell to Sidney what / This day / Doth say"(12-14)[41] and begins to tell Sidney to improve himself in order to "outstrip your peers"(26) and always aim at new "virtue"(32). Furthermore, he tells the young man to live an honorable life from now on. If he does so, this day will be honorably remembered in the future:

> So may you live in honour as in name,
> If with this truth you be inspired;
> So may
> This day
> Be more, and long desired;
> And with the flame

Of love be bright,
As with the light
Of bonfires. Then
The birthday shines, when logs not bur, but men.(51-60)

Sidney, the subject of the ode, is not a man who has already achieved something great, but who is still young and should achieve something great in the future. So Jonson doesn't celebrate his birthday with a loud praise. Instead, he ends his ode with the prophecy of immortal honor of Sidney in the future, singing that after an honorable life, his twenty-first birthday will be remembered forever.[42)]

In the ode dedicated to Lucy, Countess of Bedford in *Love's Martyr*, Jonson devotes himself more ardently to giving a praise to the virtuous lady:

Splendour, O more than mortal!
For other forms come short all
Of her illustrate brightness,
As far as sin's from lightness. (1-4)

Beginning with Lucy's beauty that transcends the "mortal," Jonson praises her virtue such as "wit as quick and sprightful / As fire"(5-6) and her judgment "adorned with learning"(9) one by one. But her virtue is so high as to make the poet utterly depressed:

Alas! Then wither wade I
In thought to praise this lady,
When seeking her renowning,
Myself am so near drowning? (17-20)

Jonson asserts that the ode is the best poetic form for a mortal weak poet to praise or renown a lady's awe-inspiring virtue, even if it is above his ability.

Among many odes of Jonson, it is "To the Immortal Memory and Friendship of That Noble Pair, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison" that clearly relates the immortal honor of really great men after their death and the immortality of his own fame as a poet. This ode was written in

order to mourn over the death of Morison who died at twenty-one years old in 1629, and to console his friend Cary. Several morals can be found such as "What is life, if measured by space, / Not by the act?"(21-22) and "It is not growing like a tree / In bulk, doth make man better be"(65-66). The tone is similar to his advice for young Sidney in his previous ode and, in a sense, similar to the many gnomes in the ancient odes, especially in Pindar's. Jonson asserts that man's worth is measured not by how long he lives, but by how he lives ("A lily of a day / Is fairer far, in May, / Although it fall and die that night" 69-71). Then he praises the greatness of Morison who died too young:

> Alas, but Morison fell young!
> He never fell: thou fall'st, my tongue.
> He stood, a soldier to the last right end,
> A perfect patriot, and a noble friend;
> But most, a virtuous son.
> All offices were done
> By him so ample, full, and round,
> In weight, in measure, number, sound,
> As, though his age imperfect might appear,
> His life was of humanity the sphere. (43-52)

Jonson praises Morison because he was a brave "soldier," a "perfect patriot" and "a noble friend," and especially because he was a "virtuous" man.[43] Because of his very virtue, Jonson says, Morison wins immortality after death:

> Call, noble Lucius, then for wine,
> And let thy looks with gladness shine;
> Accept this garland, plant it on thy head;
> And think, nay, know, thy Morison's not dead.
> He leaped the present age,
> Possessed with holy rage
> To see that bright eternal day,
> Of which we priests and poets say
> Such truths as we expect for happy men;
> And there he lives with memory, and Ben
>
> Jonson, who sung this of him, ere he went
> Himself to rest,
> Or taste a part of that full joy he meant

To have expressed
In this bright asterism. (75-89)

Because of his virtuous life, Morison transcends mortality ("He leaped the present age") and live forever in the memory of others. Therefore, Cary should shine "with gladness." There is no need for him to lament the death of his dear friend. The twin stars, Morison in heaven and Cary on earth, will keep on shining forever. Their friendship gains immortality through the death of virtuous Morison.

But Jonson doesn't end his ode only with the praise of Morison and the immortality of the two men's friendship. As has been pointed out by many critics, for example, "the persistence of Morison's life as remembered by his friend depends on the immortality of the poet Jonson,"[44] or "Jonson is discreetly celebrating his own immortalizing power, and his consequent immortality through verse,"[45] after the praise and immortalization of the subject, Jonson refers to his own immortal fame as a poet. Effectively using "run-over,"[46] or enjambment, "Ben / Jonson" himself appears. He says that by his ode, Morison can win immortality, and that Jonson too will be immortalized, will "taste a part of that full joy." By writing an ode on the death of a virtuous man, he immortalized his own honor as a great poet. Considering the reason why Jonson wrote so many odes, Robin Sowerby states:

> Why then did he attempt the grander lyric from of the Pindaric ode? It may be said that the dignified form of the poem is commensurate with Jonson's exalted conception both of the persons and values he is celebrating and of his own role as priest of the Muses who can pass on the surviving world an evergreen poetic garland.[47]

Before everything, Jonson wrote odes to give someone a praise for his valuable character and achievement, and to immortalize the subject. In addition to this, he often referred to his own immortality as a poet who

could leave "evergreen poetic garland" to posterity. The immortal honor of someone great and the immortal power of poetry or the poet were repeatedly referred to in the ancient odes from Pindar to Horace. The ode of Jonson, who attempted this new genre of poetry rather early among the English Renaissance poets, shows that he fully realized the essential role of the ode and faithfully followed it.

Robert Herrick (1591-1674), a "true son of Ben,"[48] loved classical literature very much under the influence of Jonson. Though Herrick wasn't so good at Latin as Jonson, he had a thorough knowledge of Greek and Roman literature, especially of Roman antiquities.[49] As it is said that "Horace was Herrick's first love,"[50] he loved *Carmina* very much and attempted to translate some of the odes in the collection. In his *Hesperides*, the name "Horace" appears many times. Therefore, about Herrick's poems in general, critics often point out the similarity of their themes with those of Horace's odes, such as the transience of life, the inevitability or the abruptness of death, and the exhortation to enjoy the fleeting moment.[51] Certainly the familiar themes in Horace, that is, *carpe diem* and *non semper*, often appear in many of Herrick's lyrics, for example, "To the Virgins, to make much of Time," "To Daffodills" and so on. Such themes as the transience of life and the meditation on death expressed in the ode will be discussed in the following chapter. What has to be noticed here is that Herrick never treated such themes in his own odes. His *carpe diem* and *non semper* themes appear only in his lyrics. Compared to the number of such lyrics, he wrote very few odes. We have only five odes, and that they are far from good ones. But even from these few odes, we can see that Herrick knew the essential role of

the ode as a suitable poetic form to treat praise and immortality, though unlike Jonson, the subject of his ode was always God.

"An Ode of the Birth of our Saviour" is one of Herrick's few odes. In this rather short ode which has only thirty-two lines, he decorates the poor birthplace of Jesus with richness suitable for our Saviour in order to praise and immortalize his supreme glory. The opening lines, "In Numbers, and but these few, / I sing Thy Birth, Oh JESU!"(1-2),[52] indicate that Herrick will sing and celebrate the birth of Jesus, that is to say, he is going to attempt, as it were, a nativity poem, in the form of the ode, though in vain.

Following the tradition of nativity poems, the ode first depicts Jesus' poor birthplace. It is "a base / Out-stable"(8), and his cradle is "a homely manger"(16) and he is wrapped in "clouts"(21). Herrick decorates this conventional shabby birthplace with "Ivorie"(23) and "Amber"(24), and gives "silks"(17), "sundry precious Jewells"(18) and "Lilly-work"(19) to the glorious baby. Then, what awaits Jesus is not "sup'rabundant scorn"(4) or "disdain"(25), but the supreme "Glories":

> The Jews they did disdaine Thee,
> But we will entertaine Thee
> With Glories to await here
> Upon Thy Princely State here,
> And more for love, then pittie,
> From yeere to yeere
> We'll make Thee, here,
> A Free-born of our Citie. (25-32)

The Saviour's birth will be honored and praised with glory forever in the future ("From yeere to yeere"). Instead of simply following the traditional description of Jesus' birthplace, Herrick decorates it with something new as if he himself were the Magi. He attempted his own nativity ode in order to praise the glory of Jesus, though the attempt was

incomplete and almost in vain.

Similarly, "An Ode, or Psalme, to God" refers to the "eternal Glorie"(6) of God. As George N. Shuster points out, the sixteenth and the seventeenth century poets often used the word "ode" for various poetic forms such as "sonnet" and "hymn."[53] Here Herrick uses the word "ode" as a synonym for "psalm" or "hymn," which is the original form of the ode. Like Jonson, Herrick fully realized that the ode is the best poetic form to give a high praise and immortalize someone's name. In the opening stanza, he calls to God:

> Deer God,
> If thy smart Rod
> Here did not make me sorrie,
> I sho'd not be
> With Thine, or Thee.
> In Thy eternall Glorie. (1-6)

He prays, "I may from Hell / Flie up, to dwell / With Thee, and Thine in Heaven"(16-18) and eagerly desires to be with God and his eternal glory. In order to express the eternity and the fertility of the glory of God, Herrick chose the ode as the most suitable vehicle. But unfortunately, he wasn't so successful in his odes as in his lyrics. Maddison says that Herrick's odes are "a bit too saccharine and pretty." And about "An Ode of the Birth of our Saviour," he observes very truly that "Herrick lacks the strength for such a theme."[54] Needless to say, by "such a theme," Maddison here refers to the nativity ode. In the odes of Horace, Herrick found suitable themes for his lyrics, that is to say, *carpe diem* and *non semper*. In his odes, however, he never referred to such themes and only attempted to give a praise for the eternal glory of God, because, for him, immortal praise was the essential role of the ode. Though he tried to write his own nativity ode, it was far beyond his power. It was John

Milton (1608-1674) who wrote the great nativity ode to celebrate Jesus' birth and praise his eternal glory.

It is well known that Milton was excellent in Greek and Latin. He read Pindar in the original and translated the odes of Horace.[55] But he himself wrote very few odes, and "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" was one of them.[56] It was written in 1629, the same year when Jonson wrote "To the Immortal Memory and Friendship of That Noble Pair, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morrison." As Milton tells in "Elegy VI" (*Elegia sexta*), he wrote this ode before dawn on Christmas Day in 1629.[57] Nativity poem or ode, where the glorious birth of Jesus is presented, existed already in the Middle Ages. A poor stable, a baby in a manger, the magi, hymning angels and the flight of the pagan gods are indispensable elements in nativity poems.[58] Milton begins his ode with the familiar stable scene, then he tells about the various miraculous phenomena caused by the baby's birth, and finally returns to the same stable scene. He relates these marvelous phenomena in the natural world as precious achievements that testify the greatness of the baby and foretell the future supremacy of Jesus. In this ode, he praises the glory of "the Son of heaven's eternal King"(2) who gives us "a perpetual peace"(7).

The opening lines of the introductory stanza foretell the supreme achievement of the baby in the future:

> This is the month, and this the happy morn
> Wherein the Son of heaven's eternal King
> Of wedded maid, and virgin mother born,
> Our great redemption from above did bring;
> For so the holy sages once did sing,
> That he our deadly forfeit should release,
> And with his Father work us a perpetual peace. (1-7)

Stuart Curran says that this ode is "the first of Milton's poems to reveal his unique architectonic genius," and very truly asserts that this is "a poem erected upon the opposing stresses of hymn and ode, of a hymn to the recreated godhead and an ode celebrating his human incarnation."[59] Milton himself called this poem in two ways, "hymn" and "ode." It is a hymn to praise the "Son of heaven's eternal King," and at the same time, it is an ode to praise his human incarnation for the supreme achievement of "redemption" and "perpetual peace." He fully understood the difference of the functions of the ode and the hymn. The former mainly treats human beings as its theme, while the latter, the original form of the former, mainly treats gods.

Then, in the invocation to "heavenly Muse"(15), it is told that this "humble ode" is dedicated to Jesus as a present for his birthday:

> See how from far upon the eastern road
> The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet,
> O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
> And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
> Have thou the honour first, thy Lord to greet,
> And join thy voice unto the angel quire,
> From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.(22-28)

Milton wants to "prevent" even the Magi in order to celebrate the baby's birth and praise him for his great achievement and eternal glory and, furthermore, win the "honour" first as a poet. He realized very well that the ode is the best form of poetry to give and, at the same time, to win, the immortal honor.

In the following hymn composed of twenty-seven stanzas, the miraculous changes in the natural world are depicted. At the birth of a baby, silence reigns over everything in the realm of the nature. The "winds"(64), "ocean"(66), "birds"(68), "stars"(69), "Lucifer"(74) and even

the "sun"(79) stand still in awe of the "heaven-born-child"(30). Then there comes music followed by a "globe of circular light"(110)[60] and the angelic choir. Finally at the birth of Jesus, all the pagan gods, the Greek "Apollo"(176), the Roman "lars"(191) and "lemures"(191), or the Philistine Dagon(199), the Ammonite "Moloch"(205), the Egyptian "Isis"(212) and "Osiris"(213) and so on, take to flight. All these supernatural phenomena are caused by an infant's birth. And in the last stanza, the ode returns to the same stable scene again.

Milton tells a simple story of Christ's birth in the frame of ode. He did so because the ode is the most appropriate poetic form to tell about the eternal glory of someone great. Here, the glory and the supreme achievement of a great man, or an infant, are depicted as grand "metaphysical and supernatural worlds,"[61] or as the "baroque panorama."[62] By praising and immortalizing the glory of Christ, the poet himself can win the immortal glory just like the ancient ode poets.[63] Thus the ode of Milton also inherited the essential function of the ode, that is, praise and immortalization.

In the preface to *Pindarique Odes, Written in Imitation of the Stile and Manner of the Odes of Pindar*, Abraham Cowley (1618-1667) says, "If a Man should undertake to translate Pindar Word for Word, it would be thought that one Mad-man had translated another."[64] In his ode, he didn't use the triadic form like Jonson who used "turn," "counter-turn" and "stand," following the Pindaric "strophe," "antistrophe" and "epode." Though the title says, "Written in Imitation of the Stile and Manner of the Odes of Pindar," Cowley used not the Pindaric regular stanzaic form, but his own irregular form. He imitated and translated the odes of

Pindar in his really original way. Therefore, his odes, which are often called "irregular" odes or "English" odes, have been unfavorably criticized by many critics who assert, "His poems themselves are negligible,"[65] or his poetry are "of a baroque artist of genuine but mediocre talent."[66] In most cases his odes have not been given much importance in the history of English ode.

However, "Through him the ode became the principal Lyric vehicle for the sublime," as Curran puts it,[67] Cowley regarded the ode as the best poetic form to sing and immortalize "the sublime" just like the many English poets before him had done. In his odes, we can find typical characteristics of the occasional ode, as their titles show, for example, "To the Lord Falkland, For his safe Return from the Northern Expedition against the Scots," "On the Death of Mr. Jordan," "To the Bishop of Lincoln, Upon his Enlargement out of the Tower." Maddison regards these poems as "typically odic."[68] Cowley's odes written on some occasions such as his friend's death, loudly praise and immortalize the virtue of the subject just like the odes of Jonson and many other English poets before him, though Cowley's stanzaic form was quite different from them. He too inherited the tradition of the epinician ode, the ode to praise and immortalize.

To see such characteristics of epinician genre in Cowley's odes, some of his odes, especially the ones in his *Pindarique Odes, Written in Imitation of the Stile and Manner of the Odes of Pindar* will be briefly examined here. This collection has fifteen odes. The first three odes are translations of Horace's odes. But of course, they are very original translations given "all we can add to him [Pindar] by our Wit and

Invention."[69] The other twelve odes are Cowley's original odes. The first one "The Second Olympique Ode of Pindar" has an introduction:

> Written in Praise of Theron Prince of Agrigentum (a famous City in Sicily built by his Ancestors) who in the seventy-seventh Olympique won the chariot-prize. He is commended from the nobility of his Race from his great Riches (an ordinary Common-Place in Pindar) from his Hospitality, Munificence and other Virtues.

This is the ode, he says, which celebrates the chariot-race victor Theron, his "Riches," his "Hospitality," "Munificence" and other "Virtues." What Cowley attempted is a really typical epinician ode. The opening lines call to the Muse:

> Queen of all Harmonious things,
> Dancing Words, and Speaking Strings,
> What God, what Hero wilt thou sing?
> What happy Man to equal Glories bring? (1-4)

Following the tradition of the victory ode, Cowley begins to sing about the "Glories" of a "Hero." The hero Theron wins honor which is equal to the honor given to the gods such as Jove and Hercules, though Pindar repeatedly warned not to praise mortal man so highly as when one praises the immortal gods:[70]

> Pisa does to Jove belong,
> Jove and Pisa claim thy Song,
> The fair First-Fruits of War, th'Olympique Games,
> Alcides offer'd up to Jove,
> Alcides too thy strings may move;
> But, oh, what Man to joyn with these can worthy prove?
> Joyn Theron boldly to their sacred Names;
> Theron the next honour claims;
> Theron to no man gives place,
> Is first in Pisa's, and in Virtue's Race;
> Theron there, and he alone,
> Even his own swift Fore-fathers has out-gone. (7-18)

Deviating from Pindar's original ode that praises Theron rather moderately for fear of arousing wrath of the gods, Cowley boldly ranks Theron with the gods. Even in the form of a translation, he attempted to give the highest honor to Theron in his own original way.

"The Praise of Pindar. In Imitation of Horace his Second *Ode*, Book 4" begins with "Pindar is imitable by none: / The Phoenix Pindar is a vast Species alone"(1-2). This is an ode to celebrate the "Phoenix" poet Pindar. Like his translation of Pindar's ode mentioned above, this translated ode is also quite different from Horace's original ode. Here Cowley attempts to praise the immortality of Pindar and his great odes more ardently than Horace really did in his ode:

> So Pindar does now Words and Figures roll
> Down his impetuous Dithyrambique Tide,
> Which in no Channel deign's abide,
> Which neither Banks nor dikes control.
> In a no less Immortal Strain,
> Or the great Acts of God-descended Kings,
> Who in his Numbers still survive and reign. (12-19)

Pindar's "Immortal Strain," without sinking into oblivion, praises the "Immortal Gods" and the great achievements of "Kings" forever. Through Pindar's immortal odes, they gain fertile immortality ("still survive and reign"). Cowley here attempts to sing in praise of the immortalizing power of the great ode and the immortal honor Pindar has gained for leaving such grand odes to posterity.

"The Resurrection" is called "Cowley's first original Pindaric."[71] Unlike his many odes, it is not an original translation nor a mere imitation of the classical ode. Cowley here attempts to sing by using his own words and his own style, though the result was that he only repeated what Pindar and Horace had already sung in their great odes. He asserts that what is indispensable to man's virtue is a "Verse," that is to say, an ode:

> Not Winds to Voyagers at Sea,
> Nor Showers to Earth, more necessary be,
> (Heav'n's vital Seed cast on the Womb of Earth
> To give the fruitful Year a Birth)
> Than Verse to Virtue; which can do

The Midwif's Office, and the Nurses's too;
It feeds it strongly, and it cloaths it gay,
And when it dies, with comely Pride
Embalms it, and erects a Pyramide
That never will decay
Till Heav'n it self shall melt away,
And naught behind it stay. (1-12)

After the death of a man of high virtue, an ode becomes an immortal monument ("a Pyramide / That never will decay") to make his virtue remembered forever in the memory of other people. Pindar calls an ode a "treasure house" ("Pythian VI") that nothing can destroy. And Horace, on completion of the third book of *Carmina*, says that "I have finished a monument more lasting / Than bronze and loftier than the Pyramids' royal pile" (Book III, ode 30"). Following these great ancient ode poets, Cowley's ode sings about the immortality of the ode, its power to leave honor and virtue forever to posterity. His original odes, including this one, are often criticized mainly because of their "lack of unity,"[72] maturity or sophistication. However, it must be noted that Cowley attempted to sincerely follow the tradition of the ode and considered the ode as the best poetic form to sing of virtue and immortality, though his translations sometimes became too original.

The irregular ode, introduced by Cowley's original translations of the great classical odes in 1656, later became "a suitable vehicle for dignified themes."[73] Following Cowley, many poets wrote various odes and it is well known that the Poets Laureate of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century often wrote occasional poems, such as Birthday Odes and New Year Odes annually dedicated to the King by using this poetic form.

Writing odes was very popular among the poets already in Cowley's

lifetime and in 1660 when Charles II came to the throne, numerous odes were written for the King. But most of them were bombastic eulogies as the poets too earnestly devoted themselves to showing loyalty to the King. Among such poets, it was John Dryden (1631-1700) who inherited the tradition of the ode as the best vehicle for praise and immortalization. Dryden loved classical literature very much. He translated and frequently quoted many works of the Greek and Roman poets such as Ovid and Virgil. About the various rules for writing poetry in general, he said that the ancients "are and ought to be our masters."[74] He loved *Carmina* and classified the odes in this collection into three types, "panegyrical," "moral" and "jovial."[75] Sincerely following the classical tradition, he fully realized, and attempted to use, the essential role of the ode as a panegyric, namely, to sing about some great achievement and to give immortality.

Dryden considered "Alexander's Feast or The Power of Music: an Ode in honour of St. Cecilia's Day" the best poem among his many odes. In 1683 the London Musical Society began the annual performance of musical odes in honor of the patron of music, St. Cecilia, on her day, the 22nd in November. In 1687 Dryden wrote "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687" and the Italian composer Giovanni Draghi wrote the music for his ode. Ten years later, Dryden wrote another ode for the same occasion, "Alexander's Feast or The Power of Music: an Ode in honour of St. Cecilia's Day." This time Jeremiah Clarke wrote the music and it was a great success. This is an occasional ode performed in public, ranking Alexander with God and highly praising St. Cecilia, the patron of music. Accompanied by the grand "Chorus," the ode gained the essential elements of the Greek choral

ode, that is to say, the music and the public.

When discussing Dryden's odes, critics often refer to "Alexander's Feast" and praise its excellence as a good example of really traditional choral ode. But the characteristic of the choral ode is not our present concern. In order to see high praise and immortalization in the ode, we will examine Dryden's other two odes which inherit the tradition of the ode of praise and immortality more definitely than "Alexander's Feast." The first one is "An Ode on the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell." Purcell was a composer who made the music for the first performance of musical odes on St. Cecilia's Day in 1683 and died in 1695. This is a typical ode of praise that celebrates Purcell as a remarkably talented composer and loudly sings about the immortality he wins after death for his great music. The ode first depicts a lark and a linnet that are only "listening and silent and silent and listening, and listening and silent obey"(9)[76] because they are completely stunned by the "heavenly lay"(6) of a nightingale. Then, after the ode tells about Purcell's "godlike" music like the nightingale's "heavenly lay," and about the "fame"(11) and the admiration he has already won in his lifetime, the death of the great composer is announced:

> So ceased the rival crew when Purcell came;
> They sang no more, or only sang his fame.
> The godlike man,
> Alas! too soon retired,
> As he too late began. (10-15)

But his death will not vainly sink into oblivion. The angels hear his great music and bring him to heaven, where Purcell is warmly welcomed by the gods:

> The heavenly choir, who heard his notes from high,
> Let down the scale of music from the sky;
> They handed him along,
> And all the way he taught, and all the way they sung,
> . . . . . .

The gods are pleased alone with Purcell's lays,
Nor know to mend their choice. (23-31)

Purcell, a man of rare gift for music, will enjoy high honor forever in heaven after death just as he has been celebrated on earth. In this short ode, Dryden follows the tradition of the ode and performs praise and immortalization of the name of the deceased.

In "To the Pious Memory of the Accomplished Young Lady Mrs. Anne Killigrew," the same characteristics of the traditional ode of praise can be found. Ann Killigrew was a maid of honor to Mary of Modena, James II's wife, and her father, Henry Killigrew was a chaplain to Charles I. Anne loved paintings and poetry, and she painted a few portraits of the nobles. She died of smallpox in 1685 when she was only twenty-five. As the poem is called the "finest biographical ode,"[77] it tells about Anne's short but excellent life as a poet, a painter and an attractive lady. It highly praises her honorable life. In the opening invocation, Anne is called, "Thou youngest virgin-daughter of the skies." She has already won immortality in heaven:

Thou youngest virgin-daughter of the skies,
Made in the last promotion of the blest;
Whose palms, new plucked from paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
Rich with immortal green above the rest:
. . . . . .
Whatever happy region is thy place,
Cease thy celestial song a little space;
Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
Since heaven's eternal year is thine.
Hear, then, a mortal muse thy praise rehearse,
In no ignoble verse. (1-17)

The contrast between the "immortal" and the "mortal" is very clear. The ode attempts to give a high praise to Anne who has already gained "heaven's eternal year" among the "immortal green." Then, the next ten irregular stanzas minutely tell about the reason why Anne is now enjoying

immortality, that is to say, about her former noble life on earth. She was a great "poetess" who were known to heaven already at her birth:

> Thy brother-angels at thy birth
> Strung each his lyre, and turned it high,
> That all the people of the sky
> Might know a poetess was born on earth
> And then, if ever, mortal ears
> Had heard the music of the spheres. (44-49)

She had a great talent not only for poetry but also for paintings:

> But what can young ambitious souls confine?
> To the next realm she stretched her sway,
> For painture near adjoinging lay,
> A plenteous province, and alluring prey. (91-94)

She could draw "whate'er her soul designed"(106). As a poet and as a painter, "nothing to her genius was denied"(142). In the last three stanzas, the death of this attractive and highly talented lady is announced. However, there is no need to mourn over her death. As the opening stanzas have already told, Anne wins blissful immortality in heaven:

> Now all those charm, that blooming grace,
> The well-proportioned shape, and beauteous face,
> Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes;
> In earth the much-lamented virgin lies.
> . . . . . .
> But look aloft, and if thou ken'st from far
> Among the Pleiads a new-kindled star,
> If any sparkles than the rest more bright,
> 'Tis she that shines in that propitious light. (149-177)

Though her life was very short, Anne leaves her name forever in the memory of people for her beauty and her various gifts. At the death of a virtuous lady, Dryden wrote an ode to praise her highly. As Edward Niles Hooker says, he conferred "immortality on Anne Killigrew and the arts she practiced."[78]

So far we have seen that the English poets from Jonson to Dryden fairly well understood and tried to use the traditional characteristics of

the Greek and Roman odes which originally developed from "hymn" (*encomium*) and "victory song" (*epinicium*). For them, the ode was an important poetic form whose theme was "the sublime."[79] By writing an ode, they could praise someone great and make his or her name immortal. Immortality, the essential element of the ode of praise, had been always creating a very fertile and blissful atmosphere, far transcending the mortal world of men of no genius. Around the end of the seventeenth century, however, a subtle change was brought in this tradition of the ode. Gradually death began to creep into the ode which had been thus filled with high praise and rich, desirable and ideal immortality for a long time.

## Notes to Chapter I

1. According to the definition of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, "ode" was a "poem intended or adapted to be sung" in "reference to ancient literature (and in some early use of the word in English)."

2. About the origin of the word "ode," see William H. Race, *Pindar* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), p. 24, and Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature* (1949. New York: Galaxy Book, 1957), p. 230.

3. William H. Race, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

4. For further details, see Kevin Crotty, *Song and Action: The Victory Odes of Pindar* (Baltimore: Johns Hipkins University Press, 1982), p. 55.

5. D. S. Carne-Ross, *Pindar* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 13.

6. William H. Race, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

7. About the important roles of the ode, see Simon Goldhill, *The Poet's Voice: Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 69. He says that "the notion of *kleos* is linked in a fundamental way to the poet's voice," and asserts that the ancient poets were much influenced by *kleos*, which means "that which is heard," "the report," or "fame, glory, renown."

8. About the immortality of honor, Goldhill states, "Yet mortality provides a necessary limit to such competitive striving for fame, and the preservation of *kleos* requires a memorial at the end. As well as the *kleos* of notable achievement, there is also "a *kleos* associated with death," *ibid.*, p. 71.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

10. Gilbert Highet, *op. cit., p. 230.*

11. C. Maurice Bowra, *The Greek Experience* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1957), p. 21.

12. The ancient Greeks called these qualities *arete* or *areta*. Race interprets *areta* as "excellence" and says that "a distinguishing characteristics of the Greek spirit from Homer to Pindar and beyond is the constant striving for *areta*, the full expression of human capability, achieved by superior performance in the public realm." He regards *areta* as one of the important characteristics of the ancient Greeks William H. Race, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

13. As an example of future glory, Bowra quotes the words of Pericles in Thucydides' *Historiai*, "Hatred does not last for long, but the brilliance of the present is the glory of the future, stored up for ever in the memory of men. It is for you to safeguard that future glory, and to do nothing that is dishonourable," C. Maurice Bowra, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

14. Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 60.

15. Gilbert Highet, *op. cit.*, pp. 547-548.

16. Bowra asserts, "This conception of the nature of poetry grew from the Greek view of its task. The primary impulse in the arts is to give permanence to the fleeting moment, to bid it stay because we cannot bear to lose it, to defy mortality by creating something which time cannot harm. The Greeks expressed this by comparing poetry to such inanimate objects as pillars or temples or gold or ivory or coral," C. Maurice Bowra, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

17. Carol Maddison, *Apollo and the Nine: A History of the Ode* (London Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 8.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

19. For further details on the variety of Pindar's odes, see Robin Sowerby, *The Classical Legacy in Renaissance Poetry* (London: Longman, 1994), p. 134.

20. William H. Race, *op. cit.*, p. 24

21. Generally, classical hymns consist of two parts. First comes an invocation which includes a name of a god, some proper adjectives for the god, the genealogy and location, the power or the influence of the god. Then a request or a prayer follows. About the characteristics of classical hymns, see William H. Race, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-28, C. Maurice Bowra, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

22. All the works of Pindar are extracted William H. Race, ed. and trans., *Pindar,* 2vols. (Loeb Classical Library) (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

23. William H. Race, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

24. John D. Jump, *The Ode* (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 4.

25. Regarding the importance of the winner's homeland and his family as the essential elements of a praise, see Simon Goldhill, *op. cit.*, p. 137, Kevin Crotty, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

26. About the absence of public occasions, Race says, "Instead of having real social occasions for which their poems were designed, they treated the occasions as part of the imaginative structure of their poems. . . . That is, the imagined occasion supplied the form for the poem and sometimes suggested the outline of the thematic treatment," William

H. Race, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

27. The new and important element of the ode, that is to say, the thought of death, which can be found mainly in the odes of Horace, will be discussed further in the following chapter. So here we will discuss only the praise and immortalization, the traditional characteristics of many Greek and Roman odes.

28. All the works of Horace are extracted from C. E. Bennett trans., *Horace: Odes and Epodes* (Loeb Classical Library) (London: William Heinemann, 1914; revised. 1988).

29. Simon Goldhill, *op. cit.*, pp. 143, 165.

30. Gilbert Highet, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-231.

31. Carol Maddison, *op. cit.*, pp. 2909-291.

32. Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 182.

33. John D. Jump, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

34. Gilbert Highet, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

35. Joanna Martindale, "The Best Master of Virtue and Wisdom: The Horace of Ben Jonson and His Heirs," Charles Martindale, and David Hopkins, eds., *Horace Made New: Horatian Influence on British Writing from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 54.

36. Wesley Trimpi, *Ben Jonson's Poems* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 192.

37. "His [Sidney's] career so far had been unpromising," (Ian Donaldson, ed., *Ben Jonson* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985], p.

679).

38. Wesley Trimpi, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

39. Martindale says, "Like Horace in the *Odes*, in his poems to his friends, Camden, Selden and others, Jonson creates an ideal world of friendship and cultivation, modifying his embattled stance," Joanna Martindale, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

40. Wesley Trimpi, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

41. All the works of Ben Jonson are extracted from Ian Donaldson, ed., *Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

42. Race regards the advice in Jonson7s odes as the same as the "gnome" in Pindar's odes. He says that Jonson's odes have "the ethical gravity and serious dignity of Pindar's odes," William H. Race, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

43. Paul H. Fry asserts that the theme of this ode is "the identification and description of human virtue" and he regards this theme as "the theme of nearly everything Jonson wrote," (Paul H. Fry, *The Poet's Calling in the English Odes* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980], p. 15).

44. William Fitzgerald, *Agonistic Poetry: The Pindaric Mode in Pindar, Horace, Hölderlin and the English Ode* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), p. 24.

45. Robin Sowerby, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

46. Race remarks that Pindar often used "gnome" and "run-over" which are very similar to those in Jonson's odes. See William H. Race, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

47. Robin Sowerby, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 154, John D. Jump, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

49. About the classicism of Herrick, Melville J. Ruggles says that it was "not of Athens or Alexandria, but of Rome," Melville J. Ruggles, "Horace and Herrick," *Classical Journal* 31(1936), p. 224-225.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

51. Graydon W. Regenos asserts, "The uncertainty of life, the inevitability of death, and the admonition to enjoy life while we may, are recurrent topics in both Horace and his English imitators," and he points out the popularity of the theme among the English poets including Herrick in those days, (Graydon W. Regenos, "The Influence of Horace on Robert Herrick," *Philological Quarterly* 26(1947), p. 270.

52. All the works of Robert Herrick are extracted from F. W. Moorman, ed., *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921).

53. George N. Shuster, *The English Ode from Milton to Keats* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964), p. 79.

54. Carol Maddison, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

55. Shuster regards Milton's "Latin Pindaric of 1646, *Ad Joannem Rousium Oxoniensis Academiae Bibliothecarium* as "the first tangible proof that an English poet of the seventeenth century studied the original Greek odes," George N. Shuster, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

56. About this ode, critics often try to find out which of the two poets had the greater influence on the poem, Pindar or Horace. For example, Jump thinks that "the poem reminds us of Pindar" and says that "its rich language and striking imagery, its oblique allusions and swift transitions, and its impassioned lyricism and transcendent loftiness are

all characteristics that it shares with the triumphal odes of the Greek," John D. Jump, *op. cit.*, p. 12. And Stuart Curran asserts, "Milton's Nativity poem is Horatian in its meditative, progressive structure, psalm-like in its solemnity and sweeping temporal urgency," Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986], p. 64. To argue this point, however, would carry us far away from the purpose of this paper. Here we will examine only the traditional characteristics of the ode similar to the odes of Pindar and Horace, that is to say, how Milton praised and immortalized the glory of God in his nativity ode.

57. "Elegy VI," 79-88.

58. About the nativity ode in general, see Carol Maddison, *op. cit.*, p. 330, John Carey ed., *John Milton Complete Shorter Poems* (London: Longman, 1989), p. 98. All the works of John Milton are extracted from this edition.

59. Stuart Curran, *op. cit.*, p. 64. About the general characteristics of the hymn, see note 21 above.

60. The "light" was an indispensable element in the classical ode, especially in Pindar's victory odes. Bowra remarks, "Pindar's guiding and central theme is the part of experience in which human beings are exalted or illuminated by a divine force, and this he commonly compares with light," C. Maurice Bowra, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

61. Carol Maddison, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

62. Paul H. Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

63. Regarding the double role of the ode poet, that is, the praiser and the praised, Fitzgerald says, "In Milton's 'Hymn,' the poet appears

in two antithetical guises: Milton associates his own calling with that of Isaiah, the humble mouthpiece of God at the same time he ambitiously claims the honor 'first [his] lord to greet.' The fluctuation between active and passive is typical of this mode," William Fitzgerald, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

64. All the works of Abraham Cowley are extracted from Alexander B. Grosart, ed., *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Abraham Cowley* 2vols. (New York: AMS, 1967).

65. Gilbert Highet, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

66. John D. Jump, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

67. Stuart Curran, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

68. Carol Maddison, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

69. See Cowley's "Preface" to his collection of odes, *Pindarique Odes, Written in Imitation of the Stile and Manner of the Odes of Pindar.*

70. This point will be discussed further in the following chapter.

71. Carol Maddison, *op. cit.*, p. 384.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 385.

73. John D. Jump, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

74. Amanda M. Ellis, "Horace's Influence on Dryden," *Philological Quarterly* 4(1925), p. 54.

75. Stuart Gillespie, "Horace's *Ode 3. 29*: Dryden's 'Masterpiece in English,'" Charles Martindale, and David Hopkins, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 148.

76. All the works of John Dryden are extracted from Keith Walker, ed., *John Dryden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

77. George N. Shuster, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

78. About the immortalization of Anne Killigrew, Edward Niles

Hooker says, "The elegy, the poem to or on a writer (or other artist), the loose Pindaric ode, the assessment of achievement, the personal statement of faith in art, and the panegyric---familiar elements in Dryden's poetry---are combined to confer immortality on Anne Killigrew and the arts she practiced," Edward Niles Hooker and H. T. Swedenberg, Jr., eds., *The Works of John Dryden* vol. 3 [Berkley: University of California Press, 1969], p. 317.

79. About "the sublime" in the ode, see Norman Maclean, "From Action to Image: Theories of the Lyric in the Eighteenth Century," R. S. Crane, ed., *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952).

# CHAPTER II

## APPEARANCE OF DEATH AND MORTALITY: THE ENGLISH ODES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Among many classical authors, it was Horace whose works the English Neoclassical poets and writers of the eighteenth century, such as Joseph Addison and Jonathan Swift, most frequently and ardently translated and quoted in their works.[1] Alexander Pope (1688-1744) was one of them. As is well known, Pope was greatly influenced by Horace's various works, especially by his *Epistles* and *Satires*, and wrote various kinds of poems, such as mock-epics, satires, epistles and, of course, odes. "Part of the Ninth Ode of the Fourth Book" is his translation of Horace's ode, though not completely an accurate one. As its opening line, "Lest you should think that verse shall die,"[2] shows, it is an ode that highly praises the power of poetry to immortalize the mortal. "Ode for Music on St. Cecilia's Day" is an occasional grand ode similar to Dryden's "Alexander's Feast." It celebrates the patron of music, St. Cecilia, and the immortality of music. Like many English poets previous to him, Pope regarded the ode as the best vehicle for praise and immortality. But among his odes which attempt to follow the tradition, there is one that is a little bit different from his other odes. It is a very short poem, "Ode on Solitude." It begins like this:

> Happy the man whose wish and care
> A few paternal acres bound,
> Content to breathe his native air,
> In his own ground. (1-4)

Here Pope depicts an ideal quiet country life where men provide milk, bread and clothes for themselves, soundly sleep at night and enjoy "study

and ease"(13) by day. Then, after such a tranquil life, the poet longs for peaceful death:

> Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
> Thus unlamented let me die,
> Steal from the world, and not a stone
> Tell where I lie. (17-20)

The poem never refers to man's honor, much less to fertile, desirable immortality after death. Though Pope attempted a conventional poetic form which prefers as its theme some great man's honor and his immortality after death, he only meditated on the moment of his own tranquil death. John D. Jump calls this ode "one of his [Pope's] few lyrical poems."[3] In a rather lyrical atmosphere of this ode, keen awareness of man's inevitable destiny, death, exists.

Thenceforth, the notion of death or mortality began to creep in the odes of the English poets. This change in subjects was brought on partly because the function of the ode itself began to greatly change in those days. While the ode had been fully conscious of the public and "the Sublime," and its important function to give praise and immortality had been established and inherited among the English poets, the ode gradually became more and more formal and the public occasions suitable for such formal odes were very rare. To the poets, the ode was no more an occasional grand public poem but a convenient vehicle to express their private, inward feelings. Then, death came to appear as a new subject for the ode. Instead of innocently praising immortal honor after death, poets began to contemplate on death itself. Meditating on man's inescapable destiny, death, some poets wrote quite lyrical gloomy odes while others wrote poems proposing to enjoy momentary pleasure.

It must be pointed out, however, that this apparently new subject

was not originated in the English ode at all. In fact, originally the ode was closely connected with the notion of death and mortality. In the following, fist we will see death and morality in the odes of Pindar and Horace. Then the odes of Gray, Collins and Cowper will be examined to see the change in subjects of the English ode, that is to say, the appearance of death and morality in the ode, in place of conventional high praise and fertile immortality. And furthermore in the next chapter, we will see how the English Romantic poets followed and broke the tradition of the ode.

As has been mentioned in the first chapter, Pindar praised his mighty patrons and the victors in the Greek athletic games, and immortalized their names in his odes. But he did not write odes just as he pleased without any restriction. Pindar often put gnomes, a kind of maxim or a "pithy saying,"[4] while giving loud praises or telling about lofty myths. These gnomes can be found in many of his odes, for example, "Do not seek to become Zeus; you have all there is, / if a share of those blessings should come to you. / Mortal things befit mortals."("Isthmian V," 14-16), "In each matter there comes / due measure, and it is best to recognize what is fitting"("Olympian XIII," 47-48), "One must seek due measure of gains; / too painful is the madness of unattainable desires"("Nemean XI," 47-48). Through these gnomes, Pindar suggests not to be proud, to know one's own lot. While the victors, and even the tyrants, were highly praised for their great achievements, they were always warned not to be too proud. About "the deathly sin of the Greeks, pride," Carol Maddison relates:

> The victor must also be warned against the deathly sin of the Greeks, pride. He must be reminded that he is a man with a man's

> imperfections and limitations, that he must not assume too much or the gods will destroy him. . . . Therefore the ode must conclude on a warning poet, in a more sober mood.[5]

As one of the pious ancient Greek poets, Pindar most dreaded the divine wrath aroused by the pride of arrogant victors and tyrants. As Simon Goldhill says, "The dangers of incurring *phthonos*, and particularly divine *phthonos*, set a limit to and control for the expression of praise,"[6] high praises and serious warnings against pride aroused by the praises always coexisted in Pindar's odes.

Thus he gave a lot of gnomes to the victors and tyrants, advising them that they should know their place and seek for the mean. It was because Pindar dreaded the divine jealousy and wrath aroused by the arrogant victors and tyrants. But the jealousy and the wrath of the gods could be also aroused by an arrogant poet who, not knowing his own lot, would praise some proud men as if they were a god and boldly attempt to leave immortal poems to posterity. At the bottom of Pindar's odes, clear realization of the fatal difference between the gods and men, between the immortal and the mortal, existed. The gods enjoy eternal life, while men are at the mercy of the fleeting time and are all doomed to death. In Pindar's odes, meditation on mortality frequently appears among his various words of high praise. For example, in "Nemean IX" which praises Chromios of Aitona, the victor in the chariot-race, Pindar says:

> If along with many possessions one wins famous
> glory, there is no further promontory
> upon which a mortal may set his feet. (46-47)

Even if man wins the most illustrious name, he cannot change his own fate as a mortal man. The same, or a bit pessimistic meditation on death and transience can be found in "Pythian VIII" which praises Aristomenes of Aigina, the victor in the wrestling:

> In a short time the delight
> of mortals burgeons, but so too does it fall to the ground
> when shaken by a hostile purpose.
> Creatures of a day! What is someone? What is no one? A
> dream of a shadow
> is man. But Zeus-given brightness comes,
> a shining light rests upon men, and a gentle life. (92-97)

Man is no more than a "dream of a shadow." Inevitable death is always awaiting him. For Pindar, however, man's brief life is all the more precious for its transiency, especially when it shines with man's singular talent even for a moment. Man's life becomes brilliant and great because of this very unusual moment.

In the opening lines of "Nemean VI," Pindar sings:

> There is one race of men, another of gods, but from one mother
> we both draw our breath. Yet the allotment of a wholly
> different power separates us, for the one race is nothing,
> whereas the bronze heaven remains a secure abode
> forever. Nevertheless, we do somewhat resemble
> the immortals, either in greatness of mind or bodily nature.
> (1-5)

Man and the gods are crucially different in that the former is "nothing," while the latter enjoy "a secure abode forever." Man cannot know what destiny is awaiting him tomorrow. But here too, Pindar tells about the precious moment when man wins immortality through his "greatness of mind or bodily nature." Because of the very mortality of man, his great achievement becomes all the more important, and poets must retain such a precious fleeting moment forever in their poetry and in the memory of people.

While the ode was primarily used as a praise of mighty patrons or glorious victors, it was essentially born because death is always awaiting man, and because man realizes well his own severe fate. It may be said that death is the origin of the ode. Death is, as it were, the raison d'être of the ode. At the bottom of high praise for a man or immortalization

of his name, realization of mortality and death always lurked. About the death in Pindar's odes, C. Maurice Bowra points out that "there is very little pathos, still less tragic tension."[7] To Pindar, realization of mortality and death didn't give birth to any pessimistic view of life. Instead, it enabled him to see life more positively, to praise man's great achievement more highly. Death visits all men. But, because of its very existence, the attempt to leave man's honor forever behind him becomes all the more important. In this way, the notion of death and mortality already existed in the ancient Greek odes, or rather, the ode was founded on this very notion.

Thus for Pindar, meditation on death and mortality was a kind of stimulus to high praise and immortalization. At the same time, it worked as a kind of restraint on too immoderate words of praise and immortalization. And it must be noted that, though such realization of death really gave birth to the ode, Pindar never treated death or mortality as the main theme of his odes. Primarily his odes sing about blissful honor and immortality. On the contrary, many of Horace's odes treat death and mortality as their main themes. As has been examined in the first chapter, Horace wrote a lot of odes dedicated to his great patrons, Augustus and Maecenas, in order to praise and immortalize their great names. But he also wrote odes that only meditate on death and transience of life without any words of praise and immortality. Such a subtle change in the themes of the ode was brought on because the ode became less public or less occasional in Horace's day. Mainly treating what was more personal, more lyrical, the ode came to be made and read in more private circle. About the subtle difference between the odes of

Pindar and Horace, Steele Commager says, "We leave the world of static relationships for that of alternation, progress, growth and decay, a more private world of change, time and age."[8] The stable world of the ode of praise and immortality was gradually turned into the unstable world governed by change and transience, where realization of death came up to the surface.

In "Book I, ode 28," in which the ghost of a shipwrecked traveler speaks to the grave of philosopher Archytas on the seashore, Horace tells about all men's doom, death, through the mouth of the ghost:

> But a common night awaiteth every man,
> And Death's path must be trodden once for all.
> . . . . . .
> Without distinction the deaths of old and young follow close on
> Each other's heels; cruel Proserpine spares no head. (15-20)

The ghost does not want a magnificent grave made of adamant nor a high praise that would last forever in the future. Instead, after telling about "the deaths of old and young," he asks the passing mariner only to bury his bones with these simple words, "Though thou art eager to be going, 'tis a brief delay I ask. Only three handful of earth! / Then thou mayst speed upon thy course"(15-16).

In "Book II, ode 14," Horace tells his friend Postumus about the universal truth that "death is inevitable." From generation to generation, we all repeat birth and death forever:

> Alas, O Postumus, Postumus, the years
> Glide swiftly by, nor will righteousness give pause
> To wrinkles, to advancing age,
> Or Death invincible.
> . . . . . .
> Earth we must leave, and home and darling wife;
> Nor of the trees thou tendest now,
> Will any follow thee, its short-lived master,
> Except the hated cypress. (1-24)

About the meditation on mortality and death which frequently appears

in the odes of Horace, Commager relates, "Horace intends us to experience the fact of change, and ultimately of death, with the immediacy that we experience a river, a flower, the moon, or the season.[9] As an important means to let us thus experience the severe fact of death with the immediacy, Horace frequently used nature in his odes. While Pindar scarcely depicts natural scenes in his odes, nature often appears in various scenes of Horace's odes to make him, and the readers, meditate on mortality and death. Such a description of nature in the ode is, as we will see later on, one of the important characteristics of the English odes of the eighteenth century. In "Book I, ode4," Horace depicts all nature filled with the joy of spring:

> Keen winter is breaking up at the welcome change to spring and the Zephyre,
> And the tackles are hauling dry hulls toward the beach.
> No longer now does the flock delight in the fold, or the ploughman
> In his fireside, nor are the meadows longer white with hoary frost.
> . . . . . .
> Now is the fitting time to garland our glistening locks with myrtle green
> Or with the blossoms that the unfettered earth brings forth. (1-10)

Every creature is enjoying its own life to the full. Then, suddenly, death appears in the middle of this happy scene of spring:

> Pale Death with foot impartial knocks at the poor man's cottage
> And at princes' palaces. Despite thy fortune, Sestius,
> Life's brief span forbids thy entering on far-reaching hopes.
> Soon shall the night of Death enshroud thee,
> And the phantom shades and Pluto's cheerless hall. (13-17)

The abrupt appearance of death in the peaceful joyful spring really resembles the familiar warning voice, *Et in Arcadia ego*, as Commager truly points out.[10]

Similarly in "Book IV, ode 7," Horace meditates on the incessant change of seasons in the middle of happy spring. First, he depicts all

nature filled with the joy of life:

> The snow has fled; already the grass is returning to the fields
> And the foliage to the trees.
> Earth is going through her changes.
> . . . . . .
> The year and the hour that rob us of the gracious day warn thee not
> To hope for unending joys. (1-8)

Seasons are incessantly changing, but they infallibly return every year and we can enjoy the same natural scenery as we have enjoyed the previous year. On the contrary, we cannot "hope for unending joys" in our life. We are equally burdened with mortality. Death takes away everything and leaves nothing unending behind, even if we have achieved something great or gained high honor:

> Yet the swiftly changing moons repair their losses in the sky.
> We, when we have descended
> . . . . . .
> Are but dust and shadow.
> . . . . . .
> When once thou hast perished and Minos has pronounced on thee
> His august judgment,
> Not family, Torquatus, nor eloquence, nor righteousness
> Shall restore thee again to life. (13-24)

Thus, Horace often meditated on mortality and death when he saw incessant change of seasons in nature. What has to be noticed here is that, except in a few odes dedicated to his patrons, he scarcely referred to fertile immortality based on the severe realization of man's destiny, though Pindar sometimes did in his odes. Seeing the incessant change in nature, Horace only meditated on transience, mortality and death quietly without praising or immortalizing someone great. Furthermore, as Gregson Davis points out, "The illusory hope for immortality . . . is indicted as the inappropriate response to the scene, and is often juxtaposed with the superior *carpe diem* response,"[11] Horace often advises us to leave everything to the gods and enjoy the day, realizing,

"Nothing is perpetual" (*non semper*):

> But put aside delay and thirst for gain,
> And, mindful of Death's dark fires, mingle,
> While thou mayst, brief folly with thy wisdom!
> 'Tis sweet at the fitting time to cast serious thoughts aside.
> ("Book IV, ode 12," 25-28)

Horace wrote a lot of *carpe diem* poems in which he repeated the same advice, "Even while we speak, envious Time has sped. / Reap the harvest of to-day, putting as little trust as may be in the morrow!" ("Book I, ode 9," 7-8). Though many critics point out easy Epicureanism in these odes,[12] at the bottom of Horace's *carpe diem* odes or convivial odes with various banquet motifs, severe realization of mortality and death really exists.

Therefore in Horace's dirge, any immortalization of the name of the deceased cannot be found. He wrote "Book I, ode 24" when poet Quintilius, one of his friends died:

> What restraint or limit should there be to grief
> For one so dear? Teach me a song of mourning,
> O Melpomene, thou to whom the Father
> Gave a liquid voice and music of the lyre.
> Does, then, the sleep that knows no waking lie heavy on
> Quintilius? (1-6)

Horace does nothing but mourn the death of his bosom friend. He does not attempt to highly praise the great achievement of Quintilius nor refer to the immortality of his honor after death. He only repeats that the dead friend will never return however deeply he may grieve. To stand the grief calmly is the only way for him to soothe the pain:

> Even wert thou to strike more tunefully
> Than Thracian Orpheus the lyre once heeded by the trees,
> Would then the life return to the unsubstantial ghost,
> Which with his gruesome wand Mercury,
> Not kind to ope the portals of the Fates to our entreaty,
> Has gathered once to the shadowy throng?
> 'Tis hard; but by endurance that grows lighter
> Which Heaven forbids to change for good. (13-20)

In this way, originally death and immortality were often referred to. They were the essential elements in the ode. Death was, as it were, the foundation of the ode. Based on this realization of man's severe destiny, Pindar wrote odes to give immortality to the tyrants and victors, while Horace wrote to keep the notion of death always in the mind of people. From the beginning, the ode treated these two opposite themes, that is to say, fertile, blissful immortality and severe, barren death.

As we have already seen in the first chapter, of these two themes, the early English poets mainly treated the former. They wrote odes in order to give blissful immortality to man's honor. Even if they temporarily referred to mortality or death, they did so only as a means to celebrate the immoral honor more effectively. Paul H. Fry, arguing, "Seventeenth-century odes are meant to be public, meant, that is, to be hymns, encomia, funeral orations, and so on; but in fact, they are already personal and dissident," points out the difference between the odes of the eighteenth century and the public grand odes of the previous century.[13] As we have already seen in Pope's "Ode on Solitude" published in 1709, the eighteenth century odes began to be very personal poems. The poets of this century, such as Gray, Collins, Cowper and the earlier Romantic poets gave the ode "radical internalization."[14] The essential function which the English ode had fulfilled for a long time, that is, praise and immortalization, began to be minimized. Norman Maclean points out, "Changes in a society ceasing to be dominated by the court brought changes in the attitude toward the professional compliment and hence toward the most complimentary form of poetry."[15] In those days people were no more concerned about the public, and the poets began to turn their

eyes not outward, but inward, toward their own inner voice. To the poets, the ode was no more a simple means to praise and immortalize. It was the best vehicle for their private feelings. By using this poetic form, they could sing very personal thoughts and feelings in a very traditional, magnificent way. Then, instead of blissful, glorious immortality, the ode began to bear the second theme, that is, meditation on death and mortality.

Of course, the theme of the ode didn't change suddenly in the eighteenth century. Though the poets of this century, Gray, Collins and Cowper are often called "a new school of ode writers," and their odes really marked "a renaissance,"[16] they still lived an age of transition and used both themes in their odes.

Among the three poets of this transitional period, it was Thomas Gray (1716-1771) who most notably inherited the tradition of the English odes as a vehicle for praise and immortality. As is generally known, Gray could read Pindar in the original. Most of his odes have the complete schemes and precise triadic forms with strophe, antistrophe and epode, sincerely following the odes of Pindar. Using these metrical schemes and forms, Gray wrote very traditional odes of praise and immortalization. "The Progress of Poesy. A Pindaric Ode" and "The Bard. A Pindaric Ode" are typical of this kind. However, as J. A. K. Thomson points out that the "fact is that the genius of Gray had not much affinity with that of Pindar. It was meditative and elegiac,"[17] actually his odes were "totally alien to ancient Greece"[18] and, at the same time, they tended to be estranged even from the tradition of the English ode. "Ode on the Spring" and "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" are a good

example of this kind. While Gray sincerely followed the tradition of the English ode of praise and immortality, he regarded the ode as a convenient vehicle for meditation on transience, mortality, and death. In the age of transition, he attempted two kinds of themes in his odes.

First we will see his traditional odes of praise and immortality. "The Progress of Poesy. A Pindaric Ode" has a motto quoted from Pindar's "Olympian II." It says, "I have many swift arrows under my arm / in the quiver / that speak to those who understand, but for the whole subject, they need / interpreters"(83-86). In a sense, this is a very proud, or rather arrogant motto. In his letter, Gray tells Thomas Warton about this ode:

> I desire you would by no means suffer this to be copied nor even show it, unless to very few, and especially not to mere scholars, that can scan all the measures in Pindar, and say the "Scholia" by heart.[19]

Here we can see that the poet has much pride in this poem. He says that his ode treats very traditional and sublime theme, and that it is impossible for a man of ordinary ability to really understand it. The ode begins with a conventional invocation to the great odes of Pindar, "Awake, Æolian lyre, awake, / And give to rapture all thy trembling strings"(1-2). It is often called a kind of "progress poem." It treats the poetic continuity from the classical poetry to the English poetry of the great poets of old, such as Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, and furthermore, to the future English poetry after Gray. William Fitzgerald asserts that this genre enjoyed high popularity around the middle of the eighteenth century:

> It is no coincidence that in the mid-eighteenth century the Pindaric comes to be associated with the Progress poem, a genre in which the period's anxiety about the relation between a glorious poetic past and a present perceived to be incapable of matching that achievement is played out in a narrative tracing the historical

> progression of various arts, and especially poetry. It is in England that this genre is most in evidence.[20]

The progress poem has its origin in Pindar's odes in which the present glory of tyrants and victors is compared to the past great achievements of the gods in myth, and moreover, the continuity of glory in the future is referred to. What has to be noticed here is that, as Fitzgerald says that already "in Pindar we can see the germ of a problem that will become paramount to later poets, for the transition between past and present is not always entirely smooth," at the bottom of this genre, "poetic anxiety"[21] always exists. In fact the progress poetry contains various feelings of the poets, for example, irritation and despair over their deep seated sense of inadequacy as a poet and the deep gulf between the old poets and themselves after the great poetic age. Conversely, such deep despair over the gap between the past and the present reflects their desire for historical or poetic continuity, their ardent desire for the immortality of poetry. In this ode, Gray praises many great poets of the past and predicts the immortality of the great English poetry after him. He tried to overcome his own poetic anxiety by describing the great, immortal continuity of poetry from the classical past through his own age and to the future.

After the invocation to the odes of Pindar, the opening lines of the second stanza call to the power of poetry,[22] "Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul, / Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs, / Enchanting shell!"(13-14). Then after the "Progress of Poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England"[23] is depicted in the second epode, Gray tells about the development of the English poetry in the glorious past. First Shakespeare appears:

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's Darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
To Him the mighty Mother did unveil
Her awful face: The dauntless Child
Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smiled. (83-88)

Shakespeare, "Nature's Darling" and "dauntless Child," is called an "immortal Boy!"(91) and Gray highly praises this immortal great poet. Then Milton and Dryden appear:

He [Milton] pass'd the flaming bounds of Place and Time:
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where Angels tremble, while they gaze,
He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car,
Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear
Two coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder cloath'd, and long-resounding pace.
(98-106)

Following these great poets who magnificently walked the "field of Glory" in the past, Gray himself appears in the third epode of the final stanza:

Oh! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
Wakes thee now? tho' he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban Eagle bear
Sailing with supreme dominion
Thro' the azure deep of air. (112-117)

He compares himself to "the Theban Eagle," Pindar. Though he admits that there is no comparison between the innumerable immortal great poets of old and himself, a poet of mediocre ability, he still asserts that nobody but Gray will really inherit and hand down the great continuity of English poetry:

Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray,
With orient hues, unborrow'd of the Sun:
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great. (118-123)

The great continuity of poetry, from the classical past through the present age and to the future, can be attained only by the serious efforts

of great poets including Gray himself, by their keeping "distant way" beyond "the limits of a vulgar fate." Using the form of an ode, Gray attempted to celebrate the immortality of poetry.

"The Bard. A Pindaric Ode" also needs the full knowledge of the history of Wales and England, and of literature. Just like "The Progress of Poesy," the poem uses the triadic form and needs "interpreters" "for the crowd." Here, a Welsh bard curses the conquering Edward I and prophesies the doom, death and the final loss which await the King and his descendants. Then he foretells the glorious reign of Elizabeth I, the glorious advent of great poets and the blissful future of English poetry. Finally he precipitates himself into a deep ravine. However persecuted, poetry won't perish, nobody can destroy its continuity. Poetry is immortal as has been repeatedly asserted in many of the conventional odes. The death of the bard in the final stanza seems glorious rather than tragic. Here too, Gray follows the tradition of the ode as a vehicle of glory and immortality.

The ode begins with the bard's curse to Edward I, "Ruin seize thee, ruthless King! / Confusion on thy banners wait"(1-2). The greater part of the ode is filled with similar curses and ominous prophesies to the King and his descendants. Then "Visions of glory"(107) and "unborn Ages"(108) are depicted, and the bright future of England is foretold. And then "a Form Divine," that is, Elizabeth I appears. Finally in the last epode, Gray announces the revival of English poetry in the days of this great Queen after the long dark period of persecution, and he introduces Spenser, "The verse adorn again / Fierce War, and faithful Love, / And Truth severe, by Fairy fiction drest"(125-127). Then the

birth of the great poets, Shakespeare and Milton, is told:

> In Buskin'd measures move
> Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
> With Horrour, Tyrant of the throbbing breast.
> A Voice, as of the Cherub-Choir,
> Gales from blooming Eden bear;
> And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
> That lost in long futurity expire. (128-134)

About the "distant warblings" Gray himself explains that it is "The succession of Poets after Milton's time." After the death of Shakespeare and Milton, great poets will appear one after another forever in the future. Even if Edward I cruelly persecutes or kills numerous bards, poetry is immortal. It will live on "in long futurity." After these long prophesies, the bard kills himself:

> "Be thine Despair, and scept'red Care,
> To triumph, and to die, are mine."
> He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
> Deep in the roaring tide he plung'd to endless night. (141-144)

Though the bard is severely persecuted by the cruel King to death, it is not a miserable death of a loser, but a glorious death of a poet who supports the great continuity of poetry. Poetry won't perish forever after his death. Glory and honor are closely connected with the death of the bard, though there are no words of high praise.

While Gray treated these traditional themes of the English ode, he also wrote many odes with a quite different theme. "Ode on the Spring" begins with a very lyrical scene of spring:

> Lo! Where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
> Fair VENUS' train appear,
> Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
> And wake the purple year!
> The Attic warbler pours her throat,
> Responsive to the cuckow's note,
> The untaught harmony of spring:
> While whisp'ring pleasure as they fly,
> Cool Zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky
> Their gather'd fragrance fling. (1-10)

In the middle of this sweet spring scenery, where flowers are in full bloom, a nightingale and a cuckoo are singing and a lovely cool breeze is blowing, the poet enjoys the pleasure of the sweet season to his heart's content. And he casually sees the "insect youth" that "are on the wing, / eager to taste the honied spring, / And float amid the liquid noon"(5-7). Then, all of a sudden, a voice, "Such is the race of Man"(32), comes and the busy insects remind him of the busy life of man. Now he cannot feel the same joy of spring any more as he felt just a moment ago. What occupies his mind now is nothing but the gloomy thought of transience of life and man's severe destiny, death. He says that "they that creep, and they that fly, / shall end where they began"(33-34):

> Alike the Busy and the Gay
> But flutter thro' life's little day,
> In fortune's varying colours drest:
> Brush'd by the hand of rough Mischance,
> Or chill'd by age, their airy dance
> They leave, in dust to rest. (35-40)

His meditation on the transience of time, season and life is quite incompatible with the lively nature of spring around him. Beginning with the happy joy of spring, his thought finally sinks into the dismal meditation on the destiny of all men who are "in dust to rest." As Fry says that this ode is "about alienation from the weather,"[24] here Gray cannot innocently enjoy nature to the full. He expresses his own meditative feelings upon the lively scenery of spring and begins to muse on death.

Of course the ode doesn't end with these gloomy thoughts. Suddenly a voice "Poor moralist!"(43), makes Gray return to himself. The last three lines, "On hasty wings thy youth is flown; / Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone-- / We frolick, while 'tis May"(48-50), bear a

resemblance to the lines in Horace's many *carpe diem* odes. Gray ends his ode by advising us to enjoy the day. But the marked impact of the gloomy tone in the middle of the sweet description of spring is too strong, even though the ode ends with "frolick." Thus, death and mortality, familiar themes in Horace's odes, began to appear in the odes of Gray rather early among the English poets. Though apparently the theme of his ode is spring, Gray can neither genuinely enjoy it, nor highly celebrate its blissful immortality. The lyrical or meditative elements, whose appearance we have already seen in the ode of Pope, are becoming conspicuous. In this poem Gray used an ode as a vehicle of his sober, gloomy meditation on mortality and death.

About Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," Fry relates, "Like 'Ode on the Spring,' this poem presents a lively scene that is far removed from the poet's present outlook and opens a vast distance between the sportive kind and the gloomy moralist."[25] Here too, Gray doesn't know what to do with the "distance" between the lively nature and himself, a mortal man. Again he begins to muse on transience, mortality and death. Like his previous ode, this poem also opens with the lyrical description of the scenery around Eton College:

> Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
> That crown the watry glade,
> Where grateful Science still adores
> Her HENRY'S holy Shade;
> And ye, that from the stately brow
> Of WINDSOR'S heights th' expanse below
> Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
> Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
> His silver-winding way. (1-10)

But the poet cannot objectively see the scenery and praise its unchanged beauty, nor celebrate its immortality. Instead, on seeing the dear

unchanged nature, he begins to express his feelings aroused by the familiar natural scenery in spite of himself. Gray reflects on his youthful days when he was a carefree young man, a "stranger yet to pain"(14). Musing on the fleeting time in a melancholy frame of mind, he sees young men, full "many a sprightly race"(22). They are really full of "gay hope"(41), health and vigor, all passing the "thoughtless day, the easy night"(48). Then suddenly he cries, "Alas, regardless of their doom / The little victims play!"(51-52) and he begins to meditate on "human fate":

> Yet see how all around 'em wait
> The Ministers of human fate,
> And black Misfortune's baleful train!
> Ah, shew them where in ambush stand
> To seize their prey the murth'rous band!
> Ah, tell them, they are men! (855-60)

At this warning voice, various dooms that take man unawares, for example, "Despair"(69), "Sorrow"(70), "Poverty"(88), "slow-coming Age"(90), appear. Of course, "death" is "more hideous" than anything else:

> Lo, in the vale of years beneath
> A grisly troop are seen,
> The painful family of Death,
> More hideous than their Queen. (81-84)

Men are all condemned "alike to groan"(92). Innumerable pains and troubles and final death are awaiting them. Like his previous ode, however, here too the poem doesn't end only with the gloomy reference to death. Gray says that there is no need to let the youth know their severe destiny:

> Yet, ah! why should they know their fate?
> Since sorrow never comes too late,
> And happiness too swiftly flies,
> Thought would destroy their paradise.
> No more; where ignorance is bliss,
> 'Tis folly to be wise. (95-100)

Again here is the familiar *carpe diem* tone advising us to enjoy the day

because time is always fleeting. The unchanged beautiful scene around Eton college is not highly praised, nor immortalized. The scenery is only used as a means to express the poet's gloomy thought on death.

Thus, Gray wrote odes to give a high praise to the immortality of poetry and at the same time, he also used death as an important theme for his odes. After Gray, the English ode began to express poets's various private feelings more and more. Meditation on transience, mortality, and death became their preferred theme. The glorious ode on blissful immortality was gradually turned into the morbid ode on gloomy death.

Like Gray, William Collins (1721-1759) could read Horace in the original. He often referred to Alcaeus, Sophocles and Plato, and was greatly influenced by the classical literature including the odes of Pindar and Horace.[26] Many of his odes, for example, "Ode to Liberty," "Ode to Fear" and "Ode to Mercy," attempt the traditional triadic form. They begin with an invocation or a calling to the subject by using "O Thou" or "Thou" to sincerely follow the tradition of the ode of praise and immortality.

It is true that Collins owes much to the classical models, but what should be noticed here as the important characteristic of his odes is that he often treated the ode as a kind of dirge or elegy, that is to say, he introduced elegiac, or morbid elements into the ode. Originally the elegy was based on very personal, passionate meditation on death and mortality. "Ode Written in the Beginning of the Year 1746" and "Ode on the Death of Mr. Thomson" are good examples of such an elegiac ode. The former was written on the killed soldiers and the latter on the death of

a poet. In both odes, Collins doesn't praise or immortalize the honor of the deceased. He only mourns their death. At someone's death, he used the form of an ode to gloomily meditate on mortality and death in general. About the popularity of the genre of elegy, Alastir Fowler says, "Originally implying a lamentation, the term [elegy] was later used for hymns, epigrams, genethliacs, and other types . . . it belonged to a broader category of genre than hymn or genethliacon."[27] As Fowler points out, especially in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, the elegiac elements were introduced into various literary genres such as ode, ballad, hymn and so on. Many poets attempted their own elegiac elements in various poetic forms. Influenced by the popularity of these elegiac elements expressed in various poetic forms, Collins too attempted his own elegiac meditation in his odes. Because of his rather gloomy elegiac tone, critics often call Collins a harbinger of the morbid graveyard poets, or of the Romantic poets.[28] In the following, we will see how death appears in the above-mentioned two odes of Collins. Then, a few remarks will be made concerning his "Ode to Evening" where death never appears.

"Ode Written in the Beginning of the Year 1746," the "finest short ode in language,"[29] has only twelve lines. Collins wrote this poem in order to commemorate the English soldiers who were killed at the war in 1746 when the English army was defeated by the Young Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, who claimed the throne of Great Britain. As the poem is very short, it may be quoted in full here:

> How sleep the Brave, who sink to Rest,
> By all their Country's Wishes blest!
> When *Spring*, with dewy Fingers cold,
> Returns to deck their hallow'd Mold,

She there shall dress a sweeter Sod,
Than *Fancy*'s Feet have ever trod.

By Fairy Hands their Knell is rung,
By Forms unseen their Dirge is sung;
There *Honour* comes, a Pilgrim grey,
To bless the Turf that wraps their Clay,
And *Freedom* shall a-while repair,
To dwell a weeping Hermit there![30)]

It is true that, following the tradition of the ode of praise, Collins refers to the honor of the soldiers, "*Honour* comes, a Pilgrim grey, / To bless the Turf that wraps their Clay." However, he doesn't concretely tell about the great achievements of the deceased to praise them highly, nor about the immortality of the soldiers' honor after death. Instead, here he only mentions "*Spring*," "Fairy," "Forms unseen," "*Honour*" and "*Freedom*" that visit and deck the grave of the soldiers. This occasional ode, dedicated to those who were killed in the defense of their country, is used only to meditate on the death and the grave of the killed soldiers. Filled with various gloomy images such as "Mold," "Sod," "Knell," "Dirge," "Turf," "Clay" and "weeping," the ode incessantly reminds us of a gloomy graveyard and sad death.

"Ode on the Death of Mr. Thomson" was written in 1748 when James Thomson, a poet and a friend of Collins, died. Here too, we can find no concrete reference to Thomson's honor as a great poet, nor to his immortality after death. Collins only mourns Thomson's death in the middle of the lyrical beauty of nature:

In yonder Grave a DRUID lies
  Where slowly winds the stealing Wave!
The *Year*'s best Sweets shall duteous rise
  To deck *it*'s POET's sylvan Grave!

In yon deep Bed of whisp'ring Reeds
  His airy Harp shall now be laid,
That He, whose Heart in Sorrow bleeds
  May love thro' life the soothing Shade. (1-8)

In his "Advertisement" to this poem, Collins says, "The Scene of the following STANZA is suppos'd to lie on the *Themes* near *Richmond*." He depicts the dead poet's "sylvan Grave" and mourns his death by using the familiar beautiful natural scenery where Thomson really lived and Collins himself lived too, though temporarily. Not only Collins but also all men and women who know Thomson grieve over his death:

> Then Maids and Youths shall linger here,
> And while it's Sounds at distance swell,
> Shall sadly seem in Pity's Ear
> To hear the WOODLAMD PILGRIM's Knell. (9-12)

Under the burden of deep grief, however, Collins asks himself if his "Dirge" and "Tears" can be of any use:

> But Thou, who own'st that Earthy Bed,
> Ah! what will ev'ry Dirge avail?
> Or Tears, which LOVE and PITY shed
> That mourn beneath the gliding Sail! (21-24)

In the similar odes on someone's death written by the earlier poets, we are told that there is no need to grieve over death because the deceased gains immortality. For example, Jonson sings, "And think, nay know, thy Morison's not dead. / He leaped the present age," or Dryden says, "But look aloft, and if thou ken'st from far / Among the Pleiads a new-kindled star . . . 'Tis she that shines in that propitious light." But here Collins never refers to blissful immortality after death. Instead, he meditates on "the buried FRIEND"(32), "Dear parted SHADE"(35), and the ode ends in deep grief:

> The genial Meads assign'd to bless
> Thy Life, shall mourn thy early Doom,
> Their Hinds, and Shepherd-Girls shall dress
> With simple Hands thy rural Tomb.
>
> Long, long, thy Stone and pointed Clay
> Shall melt the musing BRITON's Eyes,
> O! VALES, and WILD WOODS, shall HE say
> In yonder Grave YOUR DRUID lies! (37-44)

All nature grieves Thomson's "early Doom."[31] Though this is an occasional ode on the death of a friend, it never refers to his fertile immortality after death. The ode is used only to gloomily meditate on "Tomb," "Grave," and death.

Jump points out that, around this time, poets began to write odes whose themes cannot be classified as any of conventional ones, such as praise, immortality, mortality, and death. He takes Collins' "Ode to Evening" as an example of the odes with this new outlook. It has been already argued that the introduction of nature into the ode often made the poets meditate on death and immortality. Such meditation was one of the characteristics of the odes of Horace, Gray, Collins, Cowper and many other English poets after them. It is true that "Ode to Evening" is filled with natural description and the beautiful evening scenery, but it never refers to, nor meditates on, death. However, it really creates a morbid, "wistful,"[32] "totally elegian"[33] atmosphere of its own. It is the ode neither on immortality nor on death, written by "a pioneer in Romanticism."[34]

Though "Ode to Evening" has the new outlook, it also follows the tradition of the ode of praise by effectively using an invocation and a prayer. In the opening stanza, Collins says that this ode is dedicated to "chaste Eve"(2) "to soothe" her "modest Ear"(2). Then the "chaste Eve" is called in various phrases such as "O *Nymph* reserv'd"(5), "*Maid* compos'd"(15), "calm *Vot'ress*"(29) and "meekest *Eve*"(42) just like the ancient gods and goddesses were called in a hymn. And also, just like the hymnal ode, many invocations and prayers to Evening are repeated, for example, "Now teach me, *Maid* compos'd / To breathe some soften'd

strain"(15-16), "Then lead, calm *Vot'ress*, where some sheety Lake / Cheers the lone Heath"(29-30), "But when chill blustering Winds, or driving Rain, / Forbid my willing Feet, be mine the Hut"(33-34). Furthermore, Collins attempts to "hail" and "hymn" the name of Evening by singing, "As musing slow, I hail / Thy genial lov'd Return!"(19-20) or "Shall *Fancy, Friendship, Science,* rose-lip'd *Health,* / Thy gentlest Influence own, / And hymn thy fav'rite Name!"(50-52). Apparently this ode has several elements of the traditional ode of praise to a certain degree.

But there is no voice of high praise and immortalization. Collins does nothing but describe the lyrical scene of a quiet evening. Instead of a loud voice of celebration, we can find quite subtle auditory sense of the poet, who can catch the shrill shriek of a flying bat and the delicate sound of the alae or wings of a beetle:

> Now Air is hush'd, save where the weak-ey'd Bat,
> With short shrill Shriek flits by on leathern Wing,
> Or where the Beetle winds
> His small but sullen Horn
> As oft he rises 'midst the twilight Path,
> Against the Pilgrim born in heedless Hum. (9-14)

The ode is now "stealing thro'" the "darkening Vale"(17) till it melts into the "Stillness" of the evening and becomes the part of the quiet evening itself.

In this serene twilight, Collins imagines various evening scenes in various seasons:

> While *Spring* shall pour his Show'rs, as oft he wont,
> And bathe thy breathing Tresses, meekest *Eve*!
> While Summer loves to sport,
> Beneath thy ling'ring Light:
> While sallow *Autumn* fills thy Lap with Leaves,
> Or *Winter* yelling thro' the troublous Air,
> Affrights thy shrinking Train,
> And rudely rends thy Robes. (41-48)

It is true that here Collins describes the incessant change of the seasons, but he never refers to transience, mortality, or death. However, the ode really has an elegiac, morbid atmosphere of its own. Walter C. Bronson argues that the odes of Collins "in their main effect, are not intellectual and didactic, but imaginative, pictorial, and lyrical." He acutely points out "the absence of the didactic point of view" as an important characteristic of the odes of Collins.[35] The gloomy meditation on death and the didactic tone, which often can be found in the odes of Gray, completely disappear in this poem, not to mention the familiar loud voice of celebration and immortality. Though using the form of a praise similar to the conventional hymnal ode, Collins wrote the ode only to describe lyrically and serenely the peaceful evening filled with "hush'd"(9) air, "twilight"(13) and "Stillness"(18) under the "dusky Veil"(40). The theme of the ode had been already changing from loud praise and immortalization to the morbid meditation on death. And in the mid-eighteenth century Collins introduced a simply lyrical poem reflecting the melancholic, elegiac feelings of the poet. He attempted an quite original ode whose theme was neither immortality nor death.

William Cowper (1731-1800) also attempted an original ode. But unlike Collins, Cowper tried to criticize the tradition of the ode itself rather than to establish some striking originality, and he often made a critical assertion in his own odes. As has been pointed out, the encomium ode had already become very formal in those days. "At its best," George N. Shuster argues, "the English poem of praise is distinguished for sincerity, thought, and enthusiasm. But at its worst . . . the encomiastic ode is a startling scarecrow crammed with

bombast and official sentimentality."[36] Nevertheless, many Poets Laureate frequently used this poetic form especially in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century when a lot of Birthday Odes and New Year Odes were written. However, while some poets persistently stuck to the tradition of the ode, others began to assume a very critical attitude toward it. Cowper was one of those critical poets. In his letter dated 4 August, 1783, he says that "we have few good English Odes."[37] Because of his really critical attitude toward literary convention, Coleridge called him "the best modern poet."[38] Of course Cowper could read Horace in the original. But Thomson asserts that there is practically no need to say "that Cowper was an excellent classical scholar for a writer of his date" because of his too severe, critical attitude toward tradition which he often expressed in his odes.[39]

Of course Cowper too followed the tradition of the ode in some of his poems. As it is clear from the title, "Ode Supposed to be Written on the marriage of a Friend" is an occasional ode celebrating the marriage of his friend. "An Ode on Reading Mr. Richardson's History of Sir Charles Grandison" tells about a deep impression he got on reading a history. In this ode, Cowper depicts the "illustrious course"(10)[40] of Grandison and other truly great men whom he calls in various phrases such as "the race of glory"(7), "the great and good"(26), and the "guardians of mankind"(27). Here Cowper highly praises the rare virtue of rare men.

These traditional odes of praise, however, are very few in case of Cowper. Most of his odes were written to severely criticize the traditional ode of praise and immortality in one way or another. In such critical odes, Cowper never mentions high praise or immortality.

Furthermore, though he sometimes refers to death, he rarely uses a didactic tone like Gray, or an elegiac morbid tone like Collins. In addition to writing his own critical odes, Cowper also translated some of the odes of Horace. It was not because he was simply fascinated by the classical literature nor because of mere pedantry. Actually he used them as an really effective means of criticism.

In "A Reflection on the Foregoing Ode" written immediately after his translation of Horace's "Book 2, ode 10" in which Horace tells about the "golden mean," Cowper draws a sharp line between a "Christian"(4), that is, Cowper himself, and Horace, a Roman. About Horace's assertion of "golden mean," he boldly asks, "And is this all?"(1) and calls Horace a "Sweet moralist!" and severely criticizes the didactic tone of this ancient great ode poet. At the same time, Cowper attempted the translation of "Book I, ode 38" twice, in which Horace prefers simplicity rather than too elaborate sophistication and magnificence. In this poem Cowper tried to criticize the tradition of too elaborate odes with the assistance of Horace who asserts, "I hate their empty shows, / Persian garlands I detest"(1-2), or "I detest all Persian Fopperies, / Fillet-bound garlands are to me disgusting"(1-2). Through his many translations, Cowper condemned too formal, too elaborate odes and their conventional themes, that is to say, immortality and death.

Needless to say, Cowper's condemnation of too conventional odes appears more definitely and frequently in his own odes than in his translations. "An Ode: *Secundum Artem*" is his first serious ode of criticism. From the very beginning, Cowper scathingly criticizes the way conventional odes begin their opening stanzas:

Shall I begin with *Ah*, or *Oh*?
Be sad? *Oh*! Yes. Be glad? *Ah*! no.
Light subjects suit not grave Pindaric ode,
Which walks in metre down the Strophic road. (1-4)

He goes on his severe criticism about too artificial odes with various bitter words such as "the vacant mind"(11), "Mechanic dealers in sublime"(34), "Sadness in mechanic woe"(52), "Trim epithets"(53), "sound shall triumph over sense"(66).

"Ode to Apollo on an Ink-glass almost Dried in the Sun" is an ode written as a light verse. It defies the tradition of the ode as a sublime hymn to the gods. Though the poem begins with an invocation to Apollo, its main theme is nothing but an ink bottle dried up by the sun. He says that the ink is happy because it is stolen by Apollo, the god of poetry:

Illustrious drop! And happy then
Beyond the happiest lot,
Of all that ever pass'd my pen,
So soon to be forgot! (21-24)

The transience of poetry expressed in "So soon to be forgot!" is quite contrary to what the traditional ode repeatedly asserts concerning the immortality of poetry. The poem bitterly criticizes the traditional theme of the ode, that is, the sublime and immortality.

"Ode on the Death of a Lady who Lived One Hundred Years, and Died on her Birthday, 1728" was written to the memory of a woman. But Cowper never attempts to praise or immortalize the honor of the deceased. He only refers to her in the first four lines. Then he begins to tell about mortality and death in a very placid, objective, or rather indifferent tone:

We, the herd of human kind,
Frailer and of feebler pow'rs;
We, to narrow bounds confin'd,
Soon exhaust the sum of ours.

Death's delicious banquet—we
Perish even from the womb,
Swifter than a shadow flee,

Nourish'd, but to feed the tomb. (5-12)

Cowper doesn't end his ode only with the melancholic reference to, nor meditation on, death. He depicts the miserable aging process that man has to go through before death. We "mourn," dream, "doat" and "drivel" as we grow older:

And if life o'erleap the bourn,
Common to the sons of men;
What remains, but that we mourn,
Dream, and doat, and drivel then?

Fast as moons can wax and wane,
Sorrow comes; and while we groan,
Pant with anguish and complain,
Half our years are fled and gone. (17-24)

Here we can hardly find any elegiac atmosphere suitable for the lamentation over someone's death nor some serene meditation on mortality and death. In this ode Cowper tells about aging and death quite objectively and calmly without any didactic or morbid tone. He assumed a critical attitude toward the two traditional themes of the ode, immortality and death, and expressed it in his odes. The same critical attitude can be found in the odes of Burns, who criticized the conventional themes more scathingly than Cowper.

Robert Burns (1759-1796) wrote only four odes. In his few odes, Burns criticized tradition very severely and tried to discard it. After him, the theme of the ode was to undergo a great change. The odes of Burns were, as it were, a harbinger of coming change.

Burns wrote "Ode to Spring"[41] as a genuine lyric. Beginning with the lines filled with sexual connotations such as "when maukin bucks, at early f---s, / In dewy glens are seen"(1-2),[42] the ode depicts a typical scene of spring where we can see "the leaves sae green"(4) and "a bower where many a flower / Sheds fragrance on the day"(11-12), and hear the

fascinating song of "wild-birds"(15), such as "thrush"(17), "blackbird"(19), "linnet"(21), and "lark"(22). Everything is fresh and full of energy. No gloomy meditation on death can steal into this lively spring scene. Such total disappearance of death and, as we will see more clearly in the later Romantic poets, the disappearance of honor and glory are important characteristics of the odes of Burns. In his odes the two traditional themes are equally rejected.

In "Ode: For General Washington's Birthday" too, honor and glory completely disappear. In the opening lines, Burns flatly rejects the classical tradition:

> No Spartan tube, no Attic shell,
> No lyre Eolian I awake;
> 'Tis Liberty's bold note I swell,
> Thy harp, Columbia, let me take. (1-4)

Then he gives a praise of his own to America, to the "sons of Liberty, / Columbia's offspring, brave as free / In danger's hour still flaming in the van"(25-27). And in the latter half of the ode, he begins to level caustic criticism at England. Alfred, the King of Wessex, is addressed:

> Alfred, on thy starry throne,
> Surrounded by the tuneful choir,
> The Bards that erst have struck the patriot lyre,
> And roused the freeborn Briton's soul of fire,
> No more thy England own. (29-33)

The great poets of old who loved England and its freedom very much can be found nowhere in this country now. What Burns asserts here is entirely different from the everlasting succession of the great poets from the ancient days through the present and to the future, which Gray repeatedly emphasized in his progress ode. In this ode, the glorious immortality of poetry doesn't exist. Burns cries, "Thy England execrates the glorious deed!"(36), and incisively condemns England for

having meddled in the "glorious deed," that is, America's independence:

> England in thunders calls—"The Tyrant's cause is mine!"
> That hour accurst, how did the fiends rejoice,
> And hell thro' all her confines raise th' exulting voice,
> That hour which saw the generous English name
> Linkt with such damned deeds of everlasting shame! (39-43)

Instead of everlasting honor, which is often referred to in traditional odes, "everlasting shame" appears. In this ode, Burns never tells about glorious immortality.

"Ode, Sacred to the Memory of Mrs. –of—" begins with an invocation, "Dweller in yon dungeon dark, / Hangman of creation, mark!"(1-2). So it may seem to be a traditional ode written in triadic form to mourn over the death of someone great. But Burns never refers to the honor or the immortality of the deceased. He only plays down the death of a woman and never makes it an important occasion to meditate on man's destiny. First he introduces the woman to whom the ode is dedicated:

> Who in widow weeds appears,
> Laden with unhonoured years,
> Noosing with care a bursting purse,
> Baited with many a deadly curse? (3-6)

The ode was written at the death of a quite "unhonoured" woman. Her unattractive features and poor personality are revealed one by one in various phrases like "the wither'd beldam's face"(7), "that eye" where "rheum o'erflows"(10), "those hands, ne'er stretch'd to save, / Hands that took—but never gave"(12-13). Burns tells about the dishonorable life of the woman, that is, the "Keeper of Mammon's iron chest"(14). Because of her innumerable dishonorable behavior, "She goes, but not to realms of everlasting rest"(16) and glorious immortality would never be bestowed on her after death. Here we cannot find any elegiac tone or morbid meditation on mortality and death aroused by a woman's death.

Burns, a "rustic" and "contemporary" poet,[43] severely criticized the two themes of the traditional ode, while attempting a very lyrical simple ode on spring.

Just like the case of Cowper, however, Burns could not go farther than the mere criticism on tradition. After all, he could not find any original theme for his odes. The poets after Burns, that is, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Keats, never attempted such criticism on the tradition of the ode in their works any more. Instead, they devoted themselves to establishing the ode of their own. In their efforts, they found their original themes, that is, immortality, glory and death. These familiar themes of the traditional odes were to revive in the odes of the Romantic poets, though, of course, they were quite different from the ones in the previous traditional odes. In the following chapter, we will see the return of glory, immortality, and death to the odes of the English Romantic poets.

## Notes to Chapter II

1. Caroline Goad, *Horace in the English Literature of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), p. 7.

2. All the works of Alexander Pope are extracted from G. R. Dennis, ed., *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope* 3vols. (London: George Bell & Sons, 1891).

3. John D. Jump, *The Ode* (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 31.

4. William H. Race, *Pindar* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), p. 29.

5. Carol Maddison, *Apollo and the Nine: A History of the Ode* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 10.

6. Simon Goldhill, *The Poet's Voice: Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 139. Goldhill translates "*phthonos*" as "envy" and says, "'Envy' is the negative but perhaps expected response to another's success: the great man is bound to provoke the *phthonos* of men."

7. C. Maurice Bowra, *The Greek Experience* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1957), p. xvii.

8. Steele Commager, *The Odes of Horace: A Critical Study* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), p. 237.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 281.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 268.

11. Gregson Davis, *Polyhymnia: The Rhetoric of Horatian Lyric Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 155.

12. John D. Jump, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

13. Paul H. Fry, *The Poet's Calling in the English Ode* (New Haven:

Yale University Press, 1980), p. 60.

14. Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 66.

15. Norman Maclean, "From Action to Image: Theories of the Lyric in the Eighteenth Century," R. S. Crane, ed., *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 437.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 429.

17. J. A. K. Thomson, *Classical Influence on English Poetry* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1951), p. 145.

18. William H. Race, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

19. All the works of Thomas Gray, including his letters and his notes, are extracted from Edmund Gosse ed., *The Works of Thomas Gray* 4 vols. (New York: AMS, 1968).

20. William Fitzgerald, *Agonistic Poetry: The Pindaric Mode in Pindar, Horace, Hölderlin and the English Ode* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), p. 73.

21. Stuart Curran, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

22. In his note, Gray calls this power "Power of harmony to calm the turbulent sallies of the soul."

23. The note by Gray.

24. Paul H. Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

26. About Collins' classical background, see J. A. K. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 153, George N. Shuster, *The English Ode from Milton to Keats* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964), pp. 191-192, Edward Gay Ainsworth, Jr., *Poor Collins: his Life, his Art, and Influence* (New York:

Ithaca, 1937), pp. 119-122.

27. Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 136.

28. For example, see John D. Jump, *op. cit.*, p. 34, and Marilyn Gaull, *English Romanticism* (New York: Norton, 1988), p. 217.

29. George N. Shuster, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

30. All the works of William Collins are extracted from Richard Wendorf, and Charles Ryskamp, eds., *The Works of William Collins* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

31. Walter C. Bronson, in his notes to *Poems of William Collins* (New York: Ginn & Company, 1898), points out that the "early doom" is Collins' "language of affection" because "Thomson was forty-eight years old when he died."

32. Marilyn Gaull, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

33. Paul H. Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

34. Walter C. Bronson, *op. cit.*, introduction, p. xxxix.

35. *Ibid.*, p. xliv, p. liv.

36. George N. Shuster, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

37. James King and Charles Ryskamp, ed., *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), vol. II, p. 155.

38. See Mary Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads (1798)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 44-45.

39. J. A. K. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

40. All the works of William Cowper are extracted from H. S. Milford,

ed., *The Poetical Works of William Cowper* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950).

41. All the works of Robert Burns are extracted from James Kinsley, ed., *Burns: Poems and Songs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

42. The word "f---" means "copulation." In this ode there are some words with sexual connotations like "r—ger"(8), "f---'d"(24).

43. Marilyn Gaull calls Burns a "rustic bard" and at the same time, a "genuine contemporary minstrel" because of his severe, critical attitude toward tradition, Marilyn Gaull, *op. cit.* pp. 263-264.

# CHAPTER III

## RIVIVAL OF IMMORTALITY AND GLORY: THE ODES OF THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETS

As is well known, the English Romantic poets wrote a lot of odes. As George N. Shuster says that "the major poets of the Romantic time seldom were innovators in the sense that they devised new verse patterns . . . they were surprising content to store their harvest in familiar hives,"[1] most of the Romantic poets frequently used traditional, familiar, poetic forms, such as ballad, sonnet and ode. Needless to say, they didn't blindly follow the tradition but made a choice of their own. By the time of the English Romantics, the ode had been already acclimated to England as one of the important literary genres.[2] Therefore, the Romantic poets cannot have been too conscious of the conventional, essential function of the ode as a hymn or a praise to immortalize man's honor anymore. Meanwhile, the morbid meditation on mortality and death, which had become another important theme in the eighteenth century odes, and the severe criticism on the ode tradition itself, these two new themes also had reached a deadlock. At this period, the Romantic poets, free from restraint, could wrote the ode of their own and establish originality without blindly following the tradition, or severely criticizing and rejecting it.

Of course the Romantic poets wrote various odes on various themes, but at least we can find three characteristics in many of their various works. First, they introduced nature into the ode. As has been examined, to depict nature in the ode was becoming a new convention in

those days. Many of the eighteenth century poets, such as Gray, Collins and Cowper, had already introduced nature in their odes. They depicted nature in order to dolefully meditate on mortality and death. For the Romantics, however, nature was not only a kind of stimulus to the gloomy meditation on death. As Shuster points out about the nature depicted in the Romantic odes, "'Nature' was now not a norm merely but also an avenue of approach to man and his significance,"[3] nature directly appealed to the poet's mind.[4] By responding to, and sympathizing with, nature, the Romantic poets could meditate on, and be relieved from, their inner crisis.

The second characteristic is that the poets repeatedly referred to the loss of glory. Needless to say, the glory in the Romantic odes is quite different from the glory in the traditional ode of praise, which is closely connected with the honor of someone great. The Romantic ode attempts to sing about not the glory of others but the glory of the poets themselves, the glory in their mind. M. H. Abrams remarks, "The Romantic meditations . . . often turn on crisis—alienation, dejection, the loss of a 'celestial light' or 'glory' in experiencing the created world."[5] Abrams points out that the loss of glory is a very important element of the odes of the Romantic poets and it is even akin to the spiritual crisis of the earlier religious poets. To the Romantic poets, glory and its loss were closely connected with their inner crisis, that is to say, the crisis of their imagination, which meant death for them. In their odes, they often lamented such inner crisis, the total dryness of their imagination, and ardently sought after a relief.

The third and the most notable characteristics of the Romantic ode

is the return of immortality. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, immortality was severely criticized and flatly rejected as a too conventional, formal theme by the eighteenth century poets. To the Romantic poets, however, immortality meant a final relief from their inner crisis, from their spiritual death. It enabled the poets in dejection to feel the glory in nature and really enjoy their glorious power of imagination once more. Again in the ode immortality came to be praised and ardently sought after. Of course, the immortality in the Romantic ode "would no longer be 'the one' of yesteryear."[6] To the Romantic poets, immortality was no more associated with some formal public honor once given to someone great to praise and immortalize his name. From the eighteenth century, the ode rapidly became a "subjective lyric,"[7] a suitable vehicle to express poets' personal voice and emotion. As the Romantic ode thus gradually became very personal, immortality, which had gained very public, formal character, was also internalized and personalized. In their odes, poets lamented the loss of glory and their present state of spiritual death. They ardently sought after and praised blissful immortality that should exist within themselves, which became a new theme of the ode. In the following, we will see the poets' confession of their own state of spiritual death, their recovery from that miserable state, and the revival of immortality in some of the odes of the English Romantic poets. Sometimes their longed-for immortality was really gained after the severe struggle of the poets. But of course in most cases, fertile immortality was merely sought after in vain.

On the classical knowledge of William Wordsworth (1770-1850),

many critics give various comments. For example, Gilbert Highet asserts that "he [Wordsworth] had a good university education, knew a considerable amount of Latin and a little Greek,"[8] and thinks that Wordsworth knew fairly well about classical literature. On the other hand, John D. Jump doesn't place a high value on his classical knowledge, arguing, "William Wordsworth, too, had a copy of Pindar in his library. But when this was offered for sale the author of the best-known irregular ode of the Romantic period in England was found never to have read it."[9] Nobody know the truth, but at least we may say that Wordsworth did not write his odes with so wide, rich classical knowledge as Jonson and Gray enjoyed.

But of course Wordsworth must have fully realized the importance of the tradition of the ode and his deep indebtedness to it. His "Ode to Duty" is a good example. In his note addressed to Isabella Fenwick in 1843, he says:

> This Ode, written in 1805, is on the model of Gray's *Ode to Adversity* which is copied from Horace's *Ode to Fortune*; but is not the first stanza of Gray's from a Chorus of Æchylus? And is not Horace's Ode also modelled on the Greek[10]

His ode uses Gray's "Ode to Adversity" as a model, which is also on the model of Horace's ode, which is, again, on the model of various Greek odes. Here Wordsworth is fully conscious of the long, great tradition of the ode that exists behind his present poem. Gray's "Ode to Adversity" has the typical characteristics of the traditional ode as a hymn. Therefore, modeled on such a poem, the ode of Wordsworth also uses many hymnal elements. For example, loud callings to the subject of the ode, such as "Stern Daughter of the Voice of God! / O Duty"(1-2), "Stern Lawgiver! Yet thou dost wear / The Godhead's most benignant grace"(49-50), are

repeated many times. And a lot of conventional prayers appear, like "To humbler functions, awful Power! / I call thee"(57-58), "Give unto me, made lowly wise, / The spirit of self-sacrifice; / The confidence of reason give"(61-63).

Similarly, "Ode: 1814" also reflects his consciousness of tradition. Wordsworth takes the lines from Horace's "Book 4, ode 8" as a motto of this ode:

> We can give a poet's song and name the value of the lyre. Not public engravings on a marble base through which a second life is given to good men after death . . . set forth more clearly one's fame than the Muses; and if poems are not silent about what you have done well, you will have your reward.

The praise of the immortal power of poetry, which repeatedly appears in the traditional ode, is chosen as a motto. In this ode Wordsworth tells about the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte at Waterloo in 1815. It is the ode of praise to celebrate the English "patriot heroes"(116) who bravely fought against the army of Napoleon, and laud "their great deeds, perpetual memory"(147). The nine Muses are chanting "for patriot heroes the reward / Of never-ending song!"(116-117) and the poet prays the Muses to strike "audibly the noblest of your lyres . . . / So shall the characters of that proud age / Support their mighty theme from age to age"(125-132). This is a very conventional ode where the immortality of honor is highly praised.

While Wordsworth was thus fully conscious of the tradition of the ode and his deep indebtedness to it, he displayed striking originality in his ode. "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" is a good example of such original ode which exerted a great influence on the odes after him. It was written in two parts. The first

four stanzas were written in 1803, and the latter stanzas were written in 1806. In 1815, the present title was given and the three lines from "The Rainbow," "The Child is father of the Man; / And I could wish my days to be / Bound each to each by natural piety," were used as an epigraph. But when it was first published in 1807, it was simply entitled, "Ode," and instead of the lines from "The Rainbow," the epigraph was derived from Virgil's *Eclogues* IV, I, i , "*Paulo majora canamus,*" which means, "Let us sing a loftier strain." From this first epigraph, it is clear that Wordsworth was still fully conscious of the convention of the ode. He still thought that essentially the ode should be used to sing something sublime, something "loftier." For him, however, the sublime no more belonged to the honor of some other great men. It existed within the poet himself. In his note to Isabella Fenwick, Wordsworth says that the germ of this poem has taken root in his childhood's "sense of the indomitableness of the spirit within me":

> I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or a tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances.

The ode attempts to devotedly contemplate on the "immaterial nature" of the poet himself. It is really a "self-contemplating," "self-reflexive" ode[11] and is quite different from the traditional odes of the previous poets. But Paul H. Fry, regarding the note of Wordsworth as an "apology," very truly points out that "Wordsworth's apology in the Fenwick note for his chosen myth of a prior existence reflects the etiological anxiety of any ode, the fear of dark places, and also recalls the antinomian relation of an ode to orthodoxy."[12] As Fry remarks, it

cannot be denied that even in this very "self-contemplating" ode, the poet must have been fully conscious of the tradition, of his unfathomable indebtedness to the long history of the ode, which must have forced him to write this "apology."

The notable characteristic of this personal ode based on the contemplation from his childhood is its frequent reference to the loss of glory. Though using a poetic form which should sing glory, Wordsworth sings its total loss.[13] In the first four stanzas, nature and its transcendental beauty are introduced, and in the middle of this dreamlike supernatural aura, the total loss of glory and the dryness of the poet's sensibility are revealed. In the latter section, we are told that the glory exists not in the external world but within the poet himself, and finally the poet comes to realize that the inner glory is immortal.

In the opening lines the poet stands in the middle of rather conventional natural scenery with "meadow," "grove," and "stream," which was once filled with "celestial light" and "glory" for him:

> 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 has been of yore;---
> Turn wheresoe'er I may,
> By night or day,
> The things which I have seen I now see no more. (1-9)

Apparently, nature has not changed at all. It is as beautiful, fresh, and lively as before. But the poet senses that something has changed somewhere. He acutely feels that he is utterly excluded from the jubilee in the natural world around him and deeply laments the loss of glory in nature. He says, "But yet I know, where'er I go, / That there hath past

away a glory from the earth"(17-18). Needless to say, the glory here is quite different from some exalted feeling or condition often aroused by loud admiration and praises in the traditional ode. To borrow the *OED*'s definition, the glory in this ode is the "resplendent beauty or magnificence," "an earthly beauty attributed by imagination." It is filled with "heavenly light" and "visionary gleam" and closely connected with man's essential ability to quickly respond to the beauty and joy in the external world. Totally deprived of such essential glory, the poet only laments his lost ability to innocently enjoy the radiant plenitude in nature, though even now, the "joyous song"(19) sounds in the happy natural world. He obstinately repeats questions, "Whither is fled the visionary gleam?/ Where is it now, the glory and the dream?"(55-56). Seeing the beauty of nature, he oscillates between joy and despair.

Examining the poet who in the middle of the lively nature thus deeply laments his present state of mind and longs for his former innocent days, Fry points out that this ode has something in common with Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" and "Ode on the Spring."[14] It is true that Gray begins his odes with the reference to the total loss of glory and the deep lamentation just like the case of the ode of Wordsworth. But Gray finally turns his thought toward something more external, public, and general to end his ode with the moralistic meditation on mortality of all men. On the other hand, beginning with the loss of glory and lamentation, Wordsworth turns his thought inward, toward his quite personal inner feelings and his state of mind to end his ode with the assurance of inner immortality of his own. He gives no didactic or moralistic messages about mortality in general. Instead, he

only refers to the immortality of his soul, that is to say, the immortality of glory and sensibility within him, which has existed long before his birth and will exist forever after his death:

> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar:
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy! (59-66)

As we grow from "our infancy" into the "growing Boy"(68) and "Youth, who daily farther from the East / Must travel"(71-72) and finally become the "Man"(75), glory gradually fades "into the light of common day"(76). But the children and their genuine joy in nature always remind the poet of the heavenly happiness and glory which he really enjoyed in his infancy and now he totally forgets. For him, the children and their innocent joy in nature are the unfailing proof of the immortality of the soul. Such remembrance of inner glory, though it tends to be buried in everyday life and falls into oblivion, can be repeatedly recollected in the poet's mind at certain stimulus. Through such intermittent recollection, he gains full assurance of the immortality of inner glory, that is to say, the immortality of his sensibility to respond to the joy in the outer world.

Now that the poet is entirely assured of his inner immortality, or the immortality of glory and sensibility of his own, he does not lament any more even when he sees the lively joy in nature. As he says, "The thought of our past years in me doth breed / Perpetual benedictions"(136-137), the recollection of the past days gives him immortal consolation. It is not some sentimental, nostalgic, private recollection of his infancy, but the recollection of the days long before

his birth. It is "the fountain light of all our day"(155) and "a master light of all our seeing"(156). Such precious "shadowy recollections":

> Uphold us, cherish us, and make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
> To perish never. (156-159)

Though the old age dims his memory, the poet is still convinced of the immortality of inner glory and says, "Though inland far we be, / Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea"(165-166).

In the opening stanzas, the poet lamented and was irritated at the sight of joyful nature. But now, because of this firm conviction, he can very generously speak to all the creatures around him, "Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song! / And let the young Lambs bound / . . . We in thought will join your throng"(171-174). Then he begins what Fry calls "the conversion to earthly sympathy."[15] He tries to turn his eyes not only to the beautiful scenery in nature but also to all the things in this actual world, whether they are pleasant or not. Now the poet can accept and truly sympathize even with the "human suffering"(187) and "man's mortality"(201), in addition to the innocent beauty and joy in nature. Assured of the immortality within himself, now he can live with joy whatever fate may be awaiting him. Needless to say, such a firm conviction of immortality, the immortality of his inner glory and sensibility, is gained through his incessant interchange with the external world, especially with nature.[16] As is well known, Wordsworth often refers to a precious moment of interchange with the outer world. For example, in *The Prelude* he tells about such a precious rare moment:

> A balance, an ennobling interchange
> Of action from within and from without,
> The excellence, pure spirit, and best power
> Both of the object seen, and eye that sees. (Book XIII, 376-379)

Through such incessant "ennobling" interchange with nature, with the external world, he recovers his precious remembrance of supreme joy in heaven long before his birth, and comes to be firmly assured of the immortality of glory within himself.

Many critics point out the great influence which this ode gave on the later poets.[17] Antony H. Harrison argues that this is "a poem of extraordinary ideological power, instructing its audience that nature beneficently hopes man to perceive the certainty of spiritual immortality."[18] As he truly points out that the essential characteristic of this ode is "a conscious revolt . . . against 'subjugation' by nature, by finitude and mortality," the most important point about this ode is that it attempts to treat and contemplate on "immortality" as its theme against "mortality" or "finitude." It is not the immortality which often appears in the traditional ode as a simple means suitable to praise some great achievements of other men. What Wordsworth attempts to sing here is inner immortality, the immortality of sensibility to directly feel and respond to beauty in the external world. For the poet, the unfailing assurance of immortality of this kind is the crucial relief which enables him to get over the total loss of glory, or the dryness of imagination. Thus through the interchange with nature, what is highly praised here is the quite personal immortality, the immortality of one's ability to feel and respond. It is entirely different from the public immortality in the conventional, occasional ode. As the most suitable poetic form to sing and praise such personal inner immortality, Wordsworth chose the form of an ode. Though the ode had been already acclimated to England in those days and the poets were not so conscious of the essential function

of the ode any more, Wordsworth still regarded it as an appropriate poetic form to sing and praise the immortality of his own.

Before examining the odes of the other Romantic poets, there is one important point to be noticed here. For Wordsworth, immortality was a state of bliss closely and directly connected with his inner glory. Apparently we can find no dismal or oppressive element in his immortality. It is always a desirable state filled with fertility and joy. Of course he refers to "man's mortality"(201) in the ode, but there exists no gloomy mood. However, it cannot be denied that for once in his ode when he addresses a child apparelled "in celestial light," "Thou, over whom thy Immortality / Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave"(117-118), some gloomy, oppressive characteristic of immortality is subtly hinted at.[19] The blissful immortality is ponderously brooding over the child. Such a dark shadow lurking in the fertile world of immortality will be discussed in the following chapters on the odes of Keats. Therefore, for the moment we won't consider this point any further.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) often referred to the state of apathy and the dryness of imagination in his letters. For example, he says, "My Imagination is tired, down, flat and powerless . . . as if the *organs* of Life had been dried up; as if only simple BEING remained, blind and stagnant!" "I have been . . . undergoing a process of intellectual *exsiccation*. . . . The Poet is dead in me."[20] What is asserted in these letters is that Coleridge is now only giving a dull response to the external world and that he is as good as spiritually dead. He experienced the same dryness and decline of sensibility as Wordsworth confessed in his

ode. In "Dejection: An Ode" Coleridge revealed such inner dryness and attempted to be relieved from that miserable state. In 1799 he met Sara Hutchinson, Mrs. Wordsworth's sister, for the first time, and he wrote her a verse letter in 1802. This ode was written mostly based on this verse letter to Sara, though Coleridge omitted some of its personal contents. Needless to say, as it was originally written as a private letter, the ode has some biographical characteristics. T. S. Eliot says that in this ode the "passionate self-revelation rises almost to the height of great poetry"[21] and he sets a high value on its autobiographical elements. Coleridge wrote this poem as a kind of response to the first four stanzas of Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood." Both odes deeply lament over the loss of glory and joy, and seek for a relief from their present miserable state of spiritual death. Therefore, critics often point out the influence that Wordsworth gave on Coleridge and the similarity between their odes. As we have already seen, however, after the fourth stanza in his ode Wordsworth comes to be firmly convinced of inner immortality, and finally he can somehow get over spiritual death. On the other hand, Coleridge cannot experience any such confident realization of the immortality within him to be entirely relieved from the total dryness of imagination after all. Because of this final failure, the ode of Coleridge seems to appeal to us more immediately and dramatically than the ode of Wordsworth who is successfully relieved. Coleridge's deep lament over the loss, decline, and spiritual death sounds really painful and poignant. Because of this, his ode is sometimes called a "dirge."[22]

As an epigraph to this ode, Coleridge took four lines from "Sir

Patrick Spence." This is a popular ballad which fictionalizes the frequent shipwrecks that the Scottish nobles often suffered in the thirteenth century.[23] The quoted lines of the ballad (25-28) are the words of a sailor who foretells a fatal storm from the look of the sky in order to dissuade Patrick Spence, his captain, from sailing out, but in vain. The ballad is written, based on the familiar folklore superstition that some natural phenomenon is the prophecy of some ominous accident. Under the present threatening sky, which seems to be foretelling a fatal storm just like the "new Moon" foretelling "a deadly storm" in the ancient ballad, Coleridge laments over the dryness of imagination and his present miserable state of spiritual death. And he attempts to be relieved from the pain with the help of the oncoming storm. Here too, nature plays an important role to directly respond to the poet's mind, to awake and revive his dried-up imagination.

For the poet, the gathering wind of this tranquil night seems to give him a really blissful relief. Seeing the threatening sky similar to the sky depicted in the ancient ballad, he ardently hopes to be relieved from the apathy through the overwhelming power of the oncoming storm. He sees "the old Moon"(13) in the lap of "the New-moon winter-bright"(9)[24] which is, according to the ancient superstition, a symptom of:

> The coming-on of rain and squally blast.
> And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
> And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
> Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
> And sent my soul abroad,
> Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
> Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live! (14-20)

The repetition of "even now" and "now" makes us expect the impending change of the weather, and consequently the imminent change within the

poet's mind. He hopes to enjoy the "wonted impulse" again with the help of the enormous power of natural phenomena, such as rain, blast, and gust. Under the stimulus of the gathering wind, he expects "a correspondent inner breeze"[25] which would revitalize his dead mind and give him again the wonted energy and life. For him, the present state of apathy is a "grief without a pang"(21) and yet he has no control over it at all. Therefore, he turns to nature for a relief. In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,* a mariner, alone on the lifeless wide, wide sea, ardently wishes for life and movement, and he hopes that the wind blow to make his ship go on. The mariner looks westward for some token of bliss in the sky only to see a "spectre-bark"(202) with its ominous crew, Death and Life-in-Death. Just like the mariner, here the poet, alone and as good as dead, tries to gaze "on the western sky"(28) with "blank"(30) eyes in order to find a relief in vain. Then he looks at the "crescent Moon"(35) similar to the "horned Moon"(210) that the lonely mariner gazes on in despair. Looking at the western sky, at the crescent moon, at the "thin clouds above"(31), and the at stars that are now "sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen"(34), the poet cries, "I see them all so excellently fair, / I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!"(37-38). All he can do now is to "see" beauty in the external world without feeling it with real pleasure. The spell of the slain albatross does not break from the miserable mariner until he comes to really feel, bless, and love the beauty of the water-snakes in rich attire. Similarly, the desired salvation is not given to the poet because he is now suffering from spiritual death and he cannot feel or sympathize with beauty in the outer world at all.

Then he comes to realize that it is "a vain endeavour"(42) to seek

for a relief from without, that his wished-for relief exists within himself(45-46). He says that "in our life alone does Nature live"(48) and begins to turn his eyes inward to his own mind:

> Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
> A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
> Enveloping the Earth—
> And from the soul itself must there be sent
> A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
> Of all sweet sounds the life and element! (53-58)

The "beauty-making power"(63) that gives birth to overwhelming light and glory in the external world really exists within the poet himself. Because of the existence of this immortal inner power, "We in ourselves rejoice!"(72) and "Joy," "Life," and "Life's effluence" are born.

Unlike Wordsworth, however, the poet's affliction cannot be soothed even when he realizes the immortal glory and power within him. In the sixth stanza, which Eliot calls "one of the saddest of confessions that I have ever read,"[26] the poet recollects all his former blissful days when joy really existed within him. He compares his miserable present days to those happy bygone days :

> But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
> Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
> But oh! each visitation
> Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
> My shaping spirit of Imagination. (82-86)

In his miserable state totally deprived of shaping power, all he can do now is nothing but "be still and patient"(88) and temporarily divert to some abstract intellectual studies.

After all, the desired salvation from his spiritual death has not been given. Even the vigorous power of the raging storm, or the contemplation and the assurance of the immortal shaping spirit within him cannot give him life and energy at all. Now the poet listens to the raving wind again.

But it cannot be a benignant savior for him anymore. Instead, the gathering wind is now nothing but a useless "Mad Lutanist"(104) who only makes "Devil's yule, with worse than wintry song"(106). Utterly despaired of getting his wished-for relief, the poet now attempts to pray, not for himself, but for his beloved Sara, that the external world "from pole to pole" might be filled with joy and life forever(134-136). He wishes Sara the eternal joy that has not been granted to him. He prays, "Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice"(139). As George Dekker says that the "last stanza sees hope for Sara not for the poet,"[27] he ends his ode by wishing immortal joy and glory not to himself but to Sara. The repetition of "ever" and "evermore" in the last line reveals his still lingering longing for the rejected immortality of glory and joy within him.

M. H. Abrams says that what was intolerable to Coleridge was the dualism, that is to say, the "absolute separation between mind and the material world."[28] Just like Wordsworth, he suffered from the total lack of the wonted interaction with nature. He ardently wished for the blissful correspondence between him and the external world. In other words, what he sought after was the primary imagination in his mind stimulated by the interaction with the world around him. To use the words of Coleridge himself, it was "the living power and prime agent of all human perception," and "a repetition in the infinite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."[29] He sought for immortal creation, immortal beauty-making power, and immortal shaping spirit of imagination within himself. He realized very well that immortality, that is, the immortal glory and joy in his mind, was indispensable for him as a poet. But he could not be firmly assured of its real existence

anymore because he was so greatly suffering from its total lack.[30] It may be said that, as the natural phenomena depicted by a sailor of "Sir Patrick Spence" was ominously foretelling the final death of the nobles and the mariners, the gathering storm around the poet is foretelling the frustrated wish without any relief in the end. From the beginning, the storm is foretelling the final helpless state of the poet in unfathomable spiritual death.

Thus Coleridge attempted to confess the utter loss of inner glory by using the poetic form of ode like Wordsworth. For these poets, the ode was a suitable vehicle to tell about their inner afflicted state of spiritual death, and furthermore, about immortality and life as a relief from their dejection. While Wordsworth became assured of his inner immortality and praised it as a salvation from personal crisis, Coleridge could not get any such assurance after all. Then, how about the other Romantic poets? Of the two younger poets who followed them, George Gordon Byron (1788-1824) was "a traditionalist in language and style" who "seems an odd one."[31] His odes are a little bit different from the ones of the other Romantics. In his few odes, it is rather difficult to find any lament over his own inner dryness, or an earnest longing for inner immortality, or another new theme of his own. However, in those days he could not write totally traditional odes anymore, though he was a devoted admirer of Greece.[32] Before examining the ode of Shelley, we will have a brief look at Byron's two odes, "Ode to Napoleon Bounaparte" and "Ode on Venice" to see their characteristics, which are different from other poets of that period.

Judging from their titles, these two odes may seem to follow the form

of the traditional ode of praise. But actually they only sing about the loss of glory quite severely without any conventional high praises dedicated to someone great. "Ode to Napoleon Bounaparte" begins by addressing Napoleon in acid tone, "'Tis done—but yesterday a King! / And arm'd with Kings to strive— / And now thou art a nameless thing"(1-3).[33] This is an ode written to completely deprive Napoleon of his former glory. It does not attempt to praise his great achievements and glorious victories at all in order to immortalize his name. Napoleon, who is now so "abject—yet alive"(4), is portrayed as a really miserable man:

> The Desolator desolate!
> The Victor overthrown!
> The arbiter of others' fate
> A Suppliant for his own! (37-40)

Without deeply lamenting over the present miserable state of the former hero at all, the poet devotes himself to telling about the total, perpetual loss of glory from this "King" in a very cool, cynical tone, questioning, "Are all thy playthings snatched away?"(162). In the last stanza he changes his harsh tone for the first time to say, "Yes—one—the first—the last—the best-- / . . . / Bequeath'd the name of Washington, / To make man blush there was but one!"(173-177). By naming Washington as a really great man who might replace Napoleon, Byron makes us turn away from the abject King and suggests immortal continuity of glory attributed to really great men like Washington.

"Ode on Venice" begins with a loud calling to the subject, "Oh Venice! Venice"(1), but it does not follow the tradition of the ode of high praise at all. Like the ode dedicated to Napoleon, this is an ode that tells about the eternal loss of glory in Venice. The former glorious commonwealth, Venice, is now utterly deprived of its glory:

Thirteen hundred years
Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears;
And every monument the stranger meets,
Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets. (15-18)

Progressive deterioration or incessant decay is the only way for miserable dying Venice to continue to live. Here too, in the last stanza the poet changes his harsh tone. He says, "Fly, and one current to the ocean add, / One spirit to the souls our fathers had, / One freeman more, America, to thee!"(158-160) and attempts to set hope in America as an ideal country where new glory will be born in future.

Now the former national hero Napoleon becomes an abject desolator, and glorious Venice is utterly covered with dust. Byron depicts the total loss and deprivation of glory with "an unrelieved irony."[34] His ironical tone is quite different from the tone in the traditional ode that highly praises glory, continuity and progress in order to give honorable immortality to its great subject. Napoleon is now so "abject—yet alive," and Venice is still living in its own incessant decay. These two great subjects of the ode are given immortal shame or disgrace, which is, in a sense, similar to the "everlasting shame"(43) given to England in Burn's "Ode: For General Washington's Birthday."

Shuster points out that "Byron contributes little to the history of the ode."[35] Just like Cowper, Collins, and Burns, Byron could not go farther than the harsh criticism on the conventional ode of praise, nor could he find a new theme of his own. It may be said that the ironical reference to the loss of glory is the only characteristic of his odes. The glory in his ode is quite different from the glory in the odes of Wordsworth or Coleridge. It has nothing to do with his mind, his imagination or with his inner crisis. What he attempts to sing in his ode is not the loss of

inner glory, but the loss of public, or universal glory of someone great or something great. And in his odes he seldom depicts nature which directly responds to his mind. Furthermore, though he sometimes refers to immortality, it is the immortality of shame and disgrace, which is quite different from the immortality of glory frequently celebrated in the traditional ode. His immortality is not the conventional, honorable immortality given to the victors and nobles, nor the personal, inner immortality earnestly sought after by other Romantic poets. After Byron, it was Shelley who again attempted to sing about immortality, about a relief from inner death in the ode.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) was a devoted admirer of Greece and he wrote several odes. His strong consciousness of Greek influence is clearly expressed in his preface to *Hellas*:

> We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their roots in Greece. But for Greece—Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters.[36]

As critics call him "a tremendous reader" and "the result of an excellent classical education,"[37] he zealously read many Latin and Greek books in the original. Therefore, it is very natural that his odes, which are often called "the most Pindaric of our lyric poets,"[38] have some characteristics of the conventional classical odes. "Ode to Naples," "the most consummately crafted of all English odes,"[39] is strictly written in the traditional triadic form with strophe, antistrophe and epode. "Ode to Liberty" also follows the tradition of the ode to praise or hymn some great men and their achievements.

Among these traditional odes, "Ode to the West Wind" is the only

one that laments over the poet's total loss of inspiration, and craves for energy, life, and rebirth to get over his present state of spiritual death as Wordsworth and Coleridge attempt in their odes. Shelley gives the following note to this ode:

> This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

Under the stimulus of "a violent tempest of hail and rain," the poet's depressed spirit responded to nature around him, and the poem was born. As Coleridge attempts to find a relief from dejection in the tremendous power of a gathering storm, Shelley searches for energy, life, a relief from spiritual death in the power of the west wind.

Shelley attempts to directly respond to the natural phenomena and get a salvation in this poem, which is a rather new theme among his conventional odes. The first three stanzas are written, however, in the very conventional style of invocation, beginning with "O WILD West Wind" and "Thou," and ending with "oh, hear!" Throughout the poem, Shelley depicts the power of the west wind with high praise and prayer, following the tradition of the ode of praise. He repeats "rhapsodic addresses"[40] such as "O uncontrollable!"(47) and "impetuous one!"(62). These rhapsodic callings to the subject of the ode are one of the important characteristics of the classical ode of praise.[41] While following the tradition of the ode in this way, Shelley attempted a new theme, that is, a relief from his stagnant state of mind through the correspondence with nature, which had just germed in the odes of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

In the first three stanzas Shelley praises the great power and the influence of the west wind exerted upon the earth, the sky, and the ocean. Then, in the latter two stanzas he prays the wind for life and energy, that is to say, a relief from the state of spiritual death from which the poet and the whole universe are suffering now. From the beginning, the contrast between death and life is very clear. By the "unseen presence"(2) of the west wind, "the leaves dead are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeting"(2-3). The wind has not only the overwhelming power to disperse death from the earth. It also has the supreme revivifying power to change death into life:

> O thou,
> Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
>
> The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
> Each like a corpse within its grave, until
> Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
>
> Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
> (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
> With living hues and odours plain and hill. (5-12)

The wind puts the seeds in "their dark wintry bed" to revive them again in spring. To the poet, the west wind is both a severe destroyer of the dead old season and a tender preserver of the lively new season. It completely drives death away and benignantly revives everything.

In the sky, the "loose clouds"(16) are dispersed by the west wind. Just like the wind in the opening stanza of Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode," here the gathering powerful wind is now foretelling "the approaching storm"(23), making the poet expect his hoped-for relief. The wind is called a "dirge of the dying year"(23-24), and is loudly praised for its overwhelming power to completely drive and disperse all the dead things.

After these high praises to the west wind, the poet begins his prayer. What he ardently wants to do now is "to pang beneath thy power, and share / The impulse of thy strength"(45-46). He hopes to make his dejected mind respond to the strong wind and share its energy. All his prayers in "sore need"(52), such as "Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud"(53) and "Make me thy lyre"(57), are for relief and a rebirth from his present state of spiritual death, from his inner pain and dejection. He is now falling "upon the thorns of life!"(54) and bleeding. With his prayers and rhapsodic addresses which are growing fervent more and more as the outer wind gathers its force, the poet now begins to identify with natural phenomena and finally becomes a part of the impetuous west wind itself. He says, "Be thou, Spirit fierce, / My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!"(61-62). Completely identified with the fierce wind, he now aspires to "quicken a new birth"(64) to the "unawakened earth"(68) just like the west wind has revived him in dejection. He uses his personal inner suffering as an occasion of universal renewal, and attempts to revive the universe and give it blissful immortality with the help of the overwhelming power of the west wind.

This ode may seem to have something in common with Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode" because they both begin with the discrepancy between a powerless speaker and some elemental forces. However, while Coleridge cannot find any final salvation, here the division between the poet and the elemental forces is gradually erased. And finally the poet becomes the vital power itself. The ode ends by giving the poet a relief, though the final part of this poem is often criticized as a too" joyful conclusion" or "optimistic resolution."[42] James Benziger points out the

"distinctly orthodox affinities" in the lines such as "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"(70) or in the poet's thoughts expressed in the first and the second stanza which assert that "the seed must die if the new plant is to germinate" and "the cloud must be dispersed if the earth is to be watered."[43] It is true that these lines are based on a rather orthodox, moralistic truism. But the important point to be noticed here is that at least they suggest the eternal cycle of seasons, or the coexistence of life and death in nature. Shelley praises and aspires after the impetuous power of the west wind that incessantly changes death into life, and gives immortal energy both to him and to the universe. He attempted an ode to praise and seek after the immortal enlivening power in nature.

Thus, in an age when the ode had already become synonymous with an elegy or a dirge to gloomily meditate on mortality and death, Wordsworth wrote his own ode as a suitable vehicle to praise and seek after immortality. Coleridge and Shelley also wrote their own odes by using their dejected condition as a kind of stimulus. They ardently praised and sought after life and energy in nature to be released from their present state of inner death. In other words, what they aspired after in their own odes was the immortality of their inner power and imagination, the immortal ability to directly respond to the external world. Through their struggle to get over their dejection, the Romantic poets dispersed death and revived immortality and glory in their odes.

Then, how about the odes of Keats? How did he treat these two main themes, immortality and death, in his odes? He never tells about any personal crisis, spiritual death, or total loss of inner glory in his odes.

Of course, he too sings and praises immortality just like the other Romantic poets. But, unlike them, his immortality has nothing to do with his inner conflict. It is far from being any final relief from dejection. For Keats, immortality simply represents his blissful world of imagination itself, and at the same time, it conceals a horrible shadow of death and reveals it to him all of a sudden. Blissful immortality and horrible death are closely connected with his world of imagination, reflecting its complicated characteristics. They coexist in his odes, at once fascinating and flatly rejecting the poet's mind. In the following chapters, we will examine how the opposition between immortality and death are depicted, and how they finally come to be reconciled in the odes of Keats.

## Notes to Chapter III

1. George N. Shuster, *The English Ode from Milton to Keats* (Cloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964), p. 243.

2. For example, J. A. K. Thomson points out, "There is perhaps no direct influence of Pindar on either Coleridge or Wordsworth; by their time the elaborately constructed ode had been acclimatized in England and had almost forgotten its origin," *Classical Influence on English Poetry* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1951) p. 146.

3. George N. Shuster, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

4. M. H. Abrams says, "When the Romantic poet confronted a landscape, the distinction between self and non-self tended to dissolve." See his *The Correspondent Breeze* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), p. 102.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

6. George N. Shuster, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

7. William H. Race, about the difference between the traditional public ode and the odes of the Romantic poets, says, "The subjective Romantic lyric is at the opposite end of the spectrum from Pindar's public celebratory poetry. Furthermore, Coleridge and Wordsworth did not really want to "Pindarize," a notion that had thoroughly exhausted itself in the poetry of Cowley, Collins, and Gray," *Pindar* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986) p. 128.

8. Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influence on Western Literature* (1949. New York: Galaxy Book, 1957), p. 409.

9. John D. Jump, *The Ode* (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 38.

10. All the works of William Wordsworth are extracted from Thomas

Hutchinson, ed., *Wordsworth Poetical Works* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

11. Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 79.

12. Paul H. Fry, *The Poet's Calling in the English Ode* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 143.

13. Many critics call this disappearance of glory in the poem "loss." For example, Thomas Weiskel says that the ode turns "on loss particularized in one way or another," *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 139, and J. R. Watson says that "the process is one of loss and gain," *English Poetry of the Romantic Period 1789-1830* (London: Longman, 1985), p. 146, while Lionel Trilling, mainly focusing on the "gain" in the latter part of the poem, says that it is "a poem about growing," *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1955), p. 131.

14. Paul H. Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

16. James Benziger calls this interchange "a symbolic relation between outer and inner in which first one and then the other would dominate with 'interchangeable supremacy.'" See his *Images of Eternity: Studies in the Poetry of Religious Vision, from Wordsworth to T. S. Eliot* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962), p. 69.

17. For example, George N. Shuster says, "It was Keats's guiding star, and it will remain a beacon to poets centuries hence," George N. Shuster, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

18. Antony H. Harrison, *Victorian Poets and Romantic Poems* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), p. 178.

19. About the dark side of the immortality in these lines, Paul H. Fry says, "Immortal regions are suddenly as much like prisons as mortal ones," Paul H. Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

20. Earl Leslie Griggs, ed., *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 6vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956-1971), I, 470, II, 713-714.

21. T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933. London: Faber & Faber, 1980), p. 67. Many critics often point out the self-revelational character of this ode. For example, George N. Shuster asserts that the poem is "the expression of autobiographical meditation," George N. Shuster, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-248.

22. Marilyn Gaull says that this ode is "a dirge over the loss of the 'shaping spirit of Imagination,'" *English Romanticism* (New York: Norton, 1988), p. 308.

23. A. B. Friedman tells about the origin of this ballad. "The chronicles fail to mention Sir Patrick Spens, though his mission seems to have been the high matter of transporting a Scottish princess to Norway or a Norwegian princess to Scotland. A daughter of Alexander III was married to Eric, King of Norway, in 1281. The courtiers who accompanied to the new queen to Norway in August of that year were drowned on the returned voyage." See A. B. Friedman, ed., *The Viking Book of Folk Ballads of the English-Speaking World* (New York: The Viking Press, 1956), p. 297.

24. All the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge are extracted from

Earnest Hartley Coleridge, ed., *Coleridge Poetical Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

25. M. H. Abrams, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

26. T. S. Eliot, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

27. George Dekker, *Coleridge and the Literature of Sensibility* (London: Vision, 1978), p. 32.

28. M. H. Abrams, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

29. George Watson ed., *Biographia Literaria* (London: Dent, 1967), p. 167.

30. About the two poets's different attitude toward the immortality, Paul H. Fry asserts, "Whereas Wordsworth defers the immortality he claims to desire, Coleridge puts off a wedding he claims to desire" and Coleridge believes that "the sphere of immortality is intact and exciting. But he himself is barred," Paul H. Fry, *op. cit.*, p. 163. And about the final failure of the ode, J. R. Watson says, "The interaction between the self and the external world now only serves to illuminate the face of failure," J. R. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

31. J. R. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

32. About Byron's classicism, Gilbert Highet remarks that "there was a conflict within him about his attitude to the classics: a mingled attraction and repulsion," Gilbert Highet, *op. cit.*, p. 413.

33. All the works of George Gordon Byron are extracted from Frederick Page, ed., *Byron: Poetical Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

34. Stuart Curran, *op. cit.*, p. 79. Curran points out that the "both odes threaten the integrity of the traditional progress piece."

35. George N. Shuster, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

36. All the works of Percy Bysshe Shelley are extracted from *Selected Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

37. Gilbert Highet, *op. cit.*, p. 418. Highet regards Plato as one of Shelley's favorite prose authors and remarks that Shelley was greatly "impressed by the fine idea [of Plato] that the immortality of the soul can be proved by the child's recollections of hi antenatal life in heaven," (pp. 419-420).

38. J. A. K. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

39. Stuart Curran, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

40. John D. Jump, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

41. Stuart Curran argues that alone "among the English Romantics, Shelley reverts to the rhapsodic element that the previous century had claimed a distinguishing mark of the ode," Stuart Curran, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

42. Laura Claridge, *Romantic Potency: The Paradox of Desire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 136.

43. James Benziger, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

# CHAPTER IV

## IMMORTALITY AS AN ELYSIUM:
## IMMORTAL BOWER IN KEATS'S EARLY ODES AND "ODE TO PSYCHE"

When we speak of the odes of John Keats, probably what first comes into our mind will be his five great odes that began with "Ode to Psyche" in April, 1819. Of course these odes are really fine ones, but they are not his only odes, nor did they come into being all of a sudden in his rather short career as a poet. Previous to "Ode to Psyche," Keats wrote "Ode to Apollo" in May, 1815, "To Apollo" in the spring of 1817, "Ode to May" in May, 1818, and "Ode" or "Bards of passion and of mirth" in December, 1818. These earlier odes of Keats were written, as it were, as a study, and they only paved the way for his later great odes. Needless to say, these odes are far form completion and sophistication, and too immature to be compared to his later great ones. However, they seem to deserve more attention here when we attempt to examine how Keats recognized the ode as one of the important traditional poetic forms and, upon that recognition, how he came to write his own odes later. Though they are quite immature, his early odes indicate that, just like many other English poets previous to him, he too realized the various conventions of the traditional ode and considered the ode as a suitable poetic form for praise and immortalization. Under the influence of such rather conventional characteristics of his early odes, "Ode to Psyche" follows the tradition of the ode most faithfully among his five odes and, at the same time, it attempts to shed the tradition and create originality. After "Ode to Psyche," Keats begins to write his really original ode. In the following,

before examining "Ode to Psyche," we will start with the four early odes of Keats to consider how he essentially regards the ode and how his early odes are developed into his later great ones.

As far as his early odes are concerned, Keats seems to have expected them to fulfill a very traditional function which can be found in many of the Greek and Roman odes, and had been followed, as we have already seen, by many of the English poets previous to him. Keats considered it an essential role of the ode to praise and immortalize the honor of the subject. John Barnard regards "Ode to Psyche" as a kind of "hymn" which was once dedicated to the gods. He points out the germ of such hymnal characteristics in the early odes of Keats:

> Keats's prayer to Psyche bring together *Endymion*'s bowers of imaginative and sensual fulfillment and a recurrent feature of Keats's earlier poetry, the hymn to a god. It is a "pagan act of worship" with its antecedents in the very early odes to Apollo, the "Ode to May."[1)]

"Ode to Apollo," one of his two odes dedicated to Apollo which Barnard indicates above, was written in 1815 and the earliest ode of Keats. It depicts the six "Bards, that earst sublimely told / Heroic deeds and sang of fate"(3-4).[2)] These great poets of yore, that is, Homer, Virgil, Milton, Shakespeare, Spenser, and Tasso, are now enjoying immortality and blissfully singing in "thy western halls of gold"(1). Keats tells about the great songs of these poets rather minutely one by one, and ends his ode with a praise to Apollo.

First appears Homer. In heaven, he gains "renovated eyes"(12) and sings his great songs quite powerfully:

> There Homer with his nervous arms
> Strikes the twanging harp of war,
> And even the western splendour warms,
> While the trumpets sound afar. (7-10)

Next Virgil comes and his "sweet majestic" song enraptures all the souls in heaven:

> Then, through thy temple wide, melodious swells
> The sweet majestic tone of Maro's lyre.
> The soul delighted on each accent dwell—
> Enraptured dwells—not daring to respire. (13-16)

Then, when all the great poets, "the laurelled peers"(20) in heaven, are awaiting in great expectation, Milton's solemn song begins to sound and the "ravished heavens" listen in a reverent silence:

> 'Tis awful silence then again;
> Expectant stand the spheres,
> Breathless the laurelled peers,
> Nor move till ends the lofty strain;
> Nor move till Milton's tuneful thunders cease,
> And leave once more the ravished heavens in peace. (18-23)

After Milton, Apollo calls out Shakespeare as a master of passions:

> Thou biddest Shakespeare wave his hand,
> And quickly forward spring
> The Passions—a terrific band—
> And each vibrates the string
> That with its tyrant temper best accords,
> While from their Master's lips pour forth the inspiring words.
> (24-29)

Following Shakespeare, Spenser appears and dedicates a hymn to Chastity in order to give high praise, which is one of the essential functions of the traditional ode:

> A silver trumpet Spenser blows,
> And, as its martial notes to silence flee,
> From a virgin chorus flows
> A hymn in praise of spotless of Chastity. (30-33)

And finally Italian poet Torquato Tasso appears, filling all the heaven with pity and love:

> Next thy Tasso's ardent numbers
> Float along the pleased air,
> Calling youth from idle slumbers,
> Rousing them from Pleasure's lair:--
> Then o'er the strings his fingers gently move,
> And melt the soul to pity and to love. (36-41)

After these songs of the great poets of old are thus finished, Apollo

himself appears with the nine Muses:

> But when thou joinest with the Nine,
> And all the powers of song combine,
> We listen here on earth.
> The dying tones that fill the air
> And charm the ear of evening fair,
> From thee, great God of Bards, revive their heavenly birth.
> (42-47)

With the benignant help of Apollo who is the "great God of Bards," the "dying tones" of the songs of the great poets can gain "heavenly birth," that is to say, they gain immortality. Without Apollo, all the great poems are doomed to be "dying," only to vainly vanish into the air. Apollo has the power to give immortality to the songs of the really great poets.

As we have already seen in the preceding chapter, Gray repeatedly praises the great poets of old in "The Progress of Poesy. A Pindaric Ode" by calling Shakespeare an "immortal boy," and depicting the poetry of Milton and Dryden as the "field of glory."[3] In the traditional ode, poets repeatedly praise and immortalize the great poets of yore. In this early ode of Keats too, the mighty poets are highly praised and they enjoy immortality in heaven by the grace of Apollo. They sing their immortal songs for us who "listen here on earth." As has been pointed out in the first chapter, to immortalize someone's name in order to give high praise, that is, to praise someone great by means of immortalization, is a very important, essential function of the ode. "Ode to Apollo" attempts to depict and praise Apollo's power of immortalization and the immortal songs of the great poets of old. It is a very orthodox, though immature, ode, faithfully following the convention of the ode of praise.

"To Apollo," which was also dedicated to Apollo in 1817, is a

fragmentary ode of only 24 lines. One day in the spring of 1817, Keats enjoyed wine with Leigh Hunt after dinner. In a really playful mood, they crowned themselves with laurel after the fashion of Apollo and the bards of old. And what was more, Keats wrote two sonnets in a good humor, "On receiving a Laurel Crown from Leigh Hunt" and "To the Ladies who Saw Me Crowned," on his playful behavior of that night. But soon he deeply regretted his foolish conduct. In his letter to George Keats, he says, "I hope Apollo is not angered at my having made a Mockery of him at Hunt's."[4] As Richard Woodhouse regards this ode as "an apologetic ode to Apollo,"[5] it was written as an apology to the great god of poetry and music for insulting him. Here, the hymnal characteristic is expressed more clearly than in the previous ode to Apollo.[6] The opening lines loudly call to Apollo:

> God of the golden bow,
> And of the golden lyre,
> And of the golden hair,
> And of golden fire,
> Charioteer
> Of the patient year. (1-6)

The repeated adjective "golden" and the image of the god as a charioteer of the sun, or a bard strumming the "lyre," these are very conventional attributes of Apollo, which can be found in various invocations to this god in the traditional ode. After these callings, Keats begs Apollo's pardon for putting on a laurel crown just for fun:

> Where, where slept thine ire,
> When like a blank idiot I put on thy wreath,
> Thy laurel, thy glory,
> The light of thy story?
> Or was I a worm, too low-creeping for death?
> O Delphic Apollo! (7-12)

"Delphic Apollo" is also a very conventional phrase. And furthermore, in the following description of Jupiter's wrath aroused by the insult to

Apollo, conventional, or even stale attributions such as "Thunderer" and "eagle" are repeated:

> The Thunderer grasped and grasped,
> The Thunderer frowned and frowned.
> The eagle's feathery mane
> For wrath became stiffened. (13-16)

This ode, written as an apology full of conventional callings and attributions, follows in fact the tradition of a palinode (*palinodia*), a poem of recantation to withdraw what a poet wrote before in his poem. Horace too wrote this kind of poem in his *Carmina*:

> O Maiden, fairer than thy mother fair,
> Make any end thou wilt
> Of my abusive lines, be it with fire
> Or in the waters of the Adriatic! ("Book I, ode 16, 1-4)[7]

Horace once injured a woman's honor in his poem. So he wrote this ode as a palinode to ask her forgiveness. Though a quite incomplete fragment, Keats's "To Apollo" may be also called a kind of a "palinode." He attempts to follow the convention of the ode both in its form and in its contents.

"Ode to May," which was written after these two odes to Apollo, is also a fragment much shorter than the previous one. This is an ode dedicated to Maia, one of the Pleiades and mother of Hermes. It begins with a loud calling to the goddess, expressing the poet's intention to give a hymn of praise to her:

> Mother of Hermes! And still youthful Maia!
> May I sing to thee
> As thou was hymnèd on the shores of Baiae? (1-3)

Though the reference to the ancient and now totally forsaken worship of Maia in Baiae, and its revival in this poem are left unfinished after all, here too Keats follows the tradition and attempts to write a conventional hymn to the goddess by using the form of an ode.

It is in "Ode" ("Bards of passion and of mirth") written about six months later that we can find a subtle change in Keats's thus faithful attitude toward the tradition of the ode. About this ode, he says that "now I will copy the other Poem—it is on the double immortality of Poets."[8] This is an ode written to praise the blissful double immortality exclusively enjoyed by the great poets. It sings that even after death the really great poets can enjoy immortality in heaven, and at the same time, they can leave their immortal name to the mortal men on earth. Like "Ode to Apollo," this is an ode which highly celebrates the great poets of old. Unlike the previous ones, however, there is no reference to Apollo in this ode. It begins not with a conventional calling to Apollo, the great patron of poetry, but with a direct calling to the great poets themselves:

> Bards of passion and of mirth,
> Ye have left your souls on earth!
> Have ye souls in heaven too,
> Double-lived in regions new? (1-4)

Needless to say, the answer to this question is "yes," because the great poets are all destined to enjoy double immortality both on earth and in heaven after death. Then, the ode depicts the heaven, the blissful immortal abode of the bards. It is a kind of Elysium filled with sweet flowers, cool fountains, and verdurous recesses:

> Yes, and those of heaven commune
> With the spheres of sun and moon;
> With the noise of fountains wondrous,
> And the parle of voices thund'rous,
> With the whisper of heaven's trees,
> And one another, in soft ease
> Seated on Elysian lawns
> Browsed by none but Dian's fawns,
> Underneath large blue-bells tented,
> Where the daisies are rose-scented
> And the rose herself has got
> Perfume which on earth is not. (5-16)

The bards of old are now sitting peacefully on the "Elysian lawns" under the immortal bower surrounded by many fountains, the whisper of heavenly trees, "large blue-bells," "rose-scented" daisies, and perfumed roses. These blissful images may be compared to the image of the immortal lovers, Psyche and Eros in "Ode to Psyche," who are peacefully sleeping in each other's arms upon the grass surrounded by leafy trees and various sweet flowers in the fertile ideal world that can be called "an Eden-like retreat."[9] What should be noticed here is that all the great poets who are now enjoying their immortal Elysium are totally lacking in definite character. Compared to Milton and Spenser, whose names and characteristics as a great poet are expressed minutely in "Ode to Apollo," here the poets remain anonymous to the last. Instead, their immortal world, resplendent with flowers and leafy trees, comes to the fore as an essential element to enhance the greatness of the poets. Keats spends most of the lines of this ode depicting the immortal blissful Elysium. Now his interest is not in a conventional high praise of the great poets of old and their honor, but in the description of the immortal world, or rather, immortality itself.

Thus, judging from his earlier odes written from February, 1815 to December, 1818, it is clear that Keats was greatly influenced by the traditional ode as a proper poetic form to hymn or praise someone great. Because of such faithful realization of the tradition and the convention of the ode, he attempted to praise the gods, Apollo and Maia, or the great poets of old, such as Virgil and Shakespeare, and their excellent works. In order to give the highest praise to their names and their honor, he referred to immortality and immortal world that these really great men

were to gain. But Keats's immortality and immortal world, though they had been nothing but a mere means of giving a high praise to the great subject, began to stand out more prominently than the great, main subject of the ode itself. As the word "double-immortality" in his letter indicates, Keats gradually began to be fascinated not by the subjects of his conventional praise, but by the immortal world and immortality itself which his subjects were to enjoy. Therefore, in "Bards of passion and of mirth" Keats devotes himself to depicting the happy immortal world itself rather than to praising the greatness of each poet. At present, his immortal world is still equal to a happy Elysium filled with trees, flowers, and fountains. It is the supreme world where the great poets cheerfully sing their songs forever. Such fertile, immortal world appears again and more vividly in "Ode to Psyche" where lovers are enjoying their supreme love forever.

"Ode to Psyche" was written in April, 1819. As Cedric Watts says, "Of Keats's odes, 'To Psyche' is in the tradition of irregularity established by Cowley and Dryden,"[10] among his five great odes this is the only one written with irregular stanzas. Just at that time Keats was just experimenting with the sonnet for the ideal poetic form of his own.[11] Therefore, it may be said that this ode is one of such experimental works. As for the poetic form, it is, as it were, a transitional ode that is to gain more fixed regular stanzas of his own later. Furthermore, it has some transitional characteristics not only in its form but also in its contents. The poem, as it were, connects his earlier conventional odes of praise, where immortalization is used as a means of celebration, with his later original odes where he creates his own immortal world.

In his journal letter of April, 1819 to the George Keatses, he copies this ode and says:

> You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apuleius the Platonist who lived after the Augustan age, and consequently the Goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervour—and perhaps never thought of in the old religion—I am more orthodox tha[n] to let a he[a]then Goddess be so neglected.[12]

This declaration of his own orthodoxy, asserting that he cannot be indifferent to the long-neglected worship, is, in other words, the declaration of his resolve to give the proper praise and worship to the neglected pagan Goddess by using the conventional form of an ode. He attempts to follow the tradition of the ode as a suitable poetic form for high praise. In the same letter, however, he Keats also argues that this ode is quite different from his earlier ones:

> The following Poem—the last I have written and the first and the only one with which I have taken even moderate pains—I have for the most part dash'd of[f] my lines in a hurry—This I have done leisurely—I think it reads the more richly for it and will I hope encourage me to write other thing[s] in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit.[13]

"Ode to Psyche" is "the first and the only one." It is endowed with totally new characteristics quite different from those in his earlier odes. And now he wants to "write other things in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit." After completing this ode dedicated to Psyche, he will continue to write more odes with new characteristics of his own. In this poem Keats attempts to shed tradition or orthodoxy in order to create originality.

Some critics like T. S. Eliot set a high value on "Ode to Psyche."[14] But generally speaking, as Kenneth Allott says that "'To Psyche' is the Cinderella of Keats's great Odes,"[15] compared to his other odes, especially "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn," fewer

critics treat this ode and that they tend to criticize it for its rather ambiguous or strained elements. For example, Sidney Colvin says:

> There is certainly something strained in the turn of thought and expression whereby the poet offers himself and the homage of his own mind to the divinity he addresses, in lieu of the worship of antiquity for which she came too late.[16]

Colvin senses "something strained" in the worship that Keats attempts here in his own original way instead of the traditional worship which has been repeated in the conventional ode of praise. Colvin's reproachful remark is aimed at the incompleteness of the poet's resolution to break tradition and create originality as Keats expresses in his letter. While hoping to break the convention of the traditional ode, Keats still uses the form of an ode as a proper poetic form to hymn and worship a deity, though the goddess here has been neglected for a long time. About the unfavorable reviews of this ode, Barnard argues:

> The "Ode to Psyche" has been frequently under-valued because it is the predecessor of the greater "Ode to a Nightingale," and "Ode on a Grecian Urn," but also because it deals openly with a classical goddess.[17]

This poem has been under-valued mainly because Keats "openly" and yet incompletely chose a rather obscure classical goddess as its theme in order to shed the tradition of the ode. At this period in his career, Keats had not completely broken tradition, nor definitely established his own ode yet. This ode reveals the transitional state of the poet, which critics often point out and reproach.

As we have already seen, in Keats's early odes immortality is used as an important means of a praise, and the immortal world is equal to the blissful Elysium where beautiful flowers are always in full bloom and the great poets are happily singing forever under the evergreen leafy trees. "Ode to Psyche" also depicts such immortal world in order to praise the

ancient goddess. Psyche, who was originally a beautiful mortal woman, fell in love with Eros. After the great hardship imposed on Psyche, Jupiter granted her immortal life and enabled the lovers to enjoy immortal love. As is well known, in Greek, the word "Psyche" has various meanings such as "butterfly," "soul," "life," and "breath." As Thomas Blufinch remarks, "There is no illustration of the immortality of the soul so striking and beautiful as the butterfly,"[18] the image of a butterfly, together with its repeated metamorphosis, often reminds us of eternal life, or immortality of the soul. Endowed with such an image of a butterfly and the famous mythical episode about the blissful immortalization of a mortal woman, the word "Psyche" came to represent immortality itself.[19]

Taking such background into consideration, we may say that, by writing an ode on Psyche, Keats attempted not only to praise an ancient deity, but also to praise the blissful immortality itself. In this ode, the praise of immortality is not sung aloud to a large audience, but is secretly whispered by the poet into the ear of the goddess herself, and her temple is also secretly built within the mind of the poet. Immortality is taken into the poet's mind and exclusively, secretly enjoyed by him alone. The ode represents the poet's quite personal, monopolized, internalized world of immortality. The immortal world, which has belonged to the far western sky or supreme heaven reigned by Apollo or Jupiter in the traditional public ode, begins to undergo internalization. In the following, we will see how "Ode to Psyche," while following the style of the traditional praise of a goddess, attempts to praise, internalize, and monopolize the immortal world. Unlike in "Ode to a Nightingale" and

"Ode on a Grecian Urn," here the immortal world still keeps the characteristics of a fertile Elysium which can be found in his earlier immature odes.

First, we will examine the original Psyche image for Keats. In "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill" written in 1816, Psyche appears for the first time in his works.:

> So felt he who first told how Psyche went
> On the smooth wind to realms of wonderment;
> What Psyche felt, and Love, when their full lips
> First touched; what amorous and fondling nips
> They gave each other's cheeks; with all their sighs,
> And how they kissed each other's tremulous eyes;
> The silver lamp—the ravishment—the wonder—
> The darkness—loneliness—the fearful thunder;
> Their woes gone by, and both to heaven upflown
> To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne. (141-150)

At this rather early stage, what first attracts Keats's mind must be, of course, the physical and erotic love between Psyche and Eros. But Keats is also very much interested in the lovers's feeling of "gratitude" to Jove, that is to say, the immortality granted to Psyche by Jove. And even in these pretty few lines, he refers to the great hardships endured by the lovers, which is expressed in "darkness," "loneliness," "the fearful thunder," and "their woes." Here he attempts to tell the famous mythical episode in full. In "Ode to Psyche," however, he never tells about the fatal curiosity of Psyche, who desires to see her husband in the light, or the innumerable tasks and hardships that Venus imposes upon her. Instead, what Keats depicts in this ode are Psyche who has already gained immortality to be called a goddess, and the blissful immortal love of the immortal lovers. This is an ode completely free from any gloomy, sorrowful images and ideas. It is really filled with a "happy mood"[20] and a "happy tone."[21]

It is said that Keats came to know the famous myth of Psyche and Eros by reading John Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary* and Lucius Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* translated by William Adlington. In *The Golden Ass*, this story is minutely told. But its three chapters on the myth mainly depict their love in darkness, curiosity of Psyche, and her great hardships and severe wanderings. Immortalization of Psyche and the immortal love of the happy lovers in heaven, which must have much attracted Keats's mind, are told briefly in the final part of this rather long story:

> Jupitor . . . toke a potte of immortalitie, and said: Hold Psyche and drinke to the ende thou maist be immortal, and that Cupide may be thine everlastinge husbande. By and by the great bankette and marriage least was sumptuously prepared, Cupide satte downe with his deere spouse betweene his arms. . . . Their Drinke was Nectar the wine of the goddes, Vulcanus prepared supper, the howers decked up the house with Roses and other sweete smelles, the Graces threwe about baulme, the muses sange with sweete harmony, Apollo tuned pleasauntly to the Harpe, Venus daunsed finely: Satirus and Paniscus plaide on their pipes: and thus Psyche was married to Cupide, and after she was delivered of a childe, whom we call Pleasure.[22]

In this closing part, Keats's imagination must have been very much aroused by "a potte of immortalitie" and the immortal, blissful world of heavenly love between Psyche and Cupid celebrated with "roses and other sweete smelles," "baulme," "sweete harmony," "Harpe," dance, and "pipes." Ian Jack points out that only the final part of this long story must have attracted Keats's interest:

> The first thing that strikes one, on setting the "Ode to Psyche" against the background of the story and its interpreters, is that whatever significance Keats saw in the fable he here concerns himself only with the happy ending.[23]

In his ode, Keats tells about only the "happy ending" of this famous long myth. He makes his own image of Psyche a little bit different from her traditional fixed image as a woman enduring great hardships, severe

tasks, and wanderings.

From the beginning, it is clear that Keats follows tradition to some extent while attempting to break it:

> O Goddess! Hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
> By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
> And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
> Even into thine own soft-conchèd ear. (1-4)

These opening lines, as Helen Vendler calls them "a formal liturgical beginning,"[24] follow the convention of the traditional ode as a hymn dedicated to a deity.[25] The classical hymn usually begins with a fervent direct calling to a god or a goddess, that is to say, an invocation, which is often followed by a similarly ardent request or a command to the deities.[26] "Ode to Psyche" attempts such a conventional hymnal form, by beginning with a fervent calling to a deity, "O Goddess!" which is soon followed by some requests such as to "hear" and "pardon." What is more, the vocative "O" follows, as Gordon Williams remarks that "it is normal in hymnic address to gods,"[27] the conventional style of address to the god. Such a vocative is an indispensable element in the traditional hymnal ode.[28] Therefore, reading these rather conventional opening lines, one may expect that the rest of the poem would attempt to create a traditional hymnal ode suitable for the conventional worship of the goddess.

The poet's first request that follows the opening conventional calling to the goddess is to "hear these tuneless numbers." Of course, "tuneless" means "unmusical" and "unpleasant to listen to." The word reveals the poet's really modest feeling on his ode dedicated to the goddess. As we have already seen, such modest feelings were often expressed in the classical ode in order to evade the anger or envy of the deities. However, "tuneless" can also mean "not producing any music or

sound." In that case, it asserts that this ode is quite different from the occasional choral odes which were always sung aloud in public. There exists no audience. The poet is alone with the goddess Psyche.[29] He is now trying to forsake tradition and internalize the worship to praise the goddess in his own way. The word "wrung" and "enforcement" suggest his reluctance to begin the ode with a conventional style of an invocation, though, of course, they also reveal his modest feeling about his own poor ability as a poet who cannot sing a song without being wrung or enforced.

The second request is to "pardon" the poet's revealing the "secrets" of Psyche. According to the myth, Psyche and Eros had to keep their love secret from Venus until Jupiter immortalized Psyche before the gods in heaven in the end. Therefore, it is, in a sense, quite orthodox to regard the revelation of their love in this ode as some fatal revelation of a secret. However, as Jennifer Farrell asserts, "What the poet is about to reveal has not been recorded by mythology,"[30] the word "secrets" also indicates what has not been told in the myth, or what has not been known except to the poet alone. The poet refers to the originality of his story which cannot be found in any myths or fables.

These "tuneless numbers" and "secrets" are told not to a large audience but to Psyche's "own soft-conchèd ear." The poet does not loudly sing. He secretly whispers in her ear. He is alone with the goddess and there exists no audience. It may seem a little bit fetishistic to give such a rather tactile description of one ear as "soft-conchèd." As Harold Bloom calls Psyche "a sexual goddes,"[31] in this invocation, the holy goddess looks rather voluptuous, which foretells the later erotic scene where Psyche and Eros are lying side by side on the grassy bed.

After the invocation, the poet tells how he came to dedicate this ode to the goddess:

> Surely I dreamt today, or did I see
> The wingèd Psyche with awakened eyes?
> I wandered in a forest thoughtlessly,
> And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
> Saw two fair creatures, couchèd side by side. (5-9)

It is quite conventional to dedicate a hymn or an ode to a deity after one sees, in a totally thoughtless mood, the deity quite unexpectedly. For example, Horace wrote an ode to praise Bacchus after he saw the god all of a sudden (*Carmina*, "Book II, ode 19).[32] Just like Keats who, at the sudden sight of the "two fair creatures couchèd side by side," fainted "with surprise," Horace suddenly saw Bacchus on distant crags, and he says, "Evoe! My heart thrills with fear still fresh, and tumultuously rejoices, since my breast is full of the god"(5-7). Of course, compared to Horace, Keats's "surprise" reveals a little bit more erotic or ecstatic feeling which he expresses as "fainting." It is quite different from Horace's really awful and pious feeling to the deity which he expresses as "fear."[33]

After the invocation to the goddess and the description of such an abrupt encounter with her and her lover, the ode depicts the natural world that surrounds Psyche and Eros:

> In deepest grass, beneath the whispering roof
> Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
> A brooklet, scarce espied.
> 'Mid hushed, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
> Blue, silver-white and budded Tyrian,
> They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass. (10-15)

Here, we see nothing but luxuriantly growing plants. The lovers are now lying side by side on the "deepest" and "bedded" grass, under the "whispering roof" of "leaves and trembled blossoms," surrounded by

various "fragrant-eyed" flowers. The trees and grasses are growing very thick, but they don't create a dense, stifling, or gloomy atmosphere at all. Instead, there flows "a brooklet," and the "hushed, cool-rooted flowers" tinted with cool colors such as "blue," "silver-white," and "Tyrian" are blooming, which produce a really cool, refreshing atmosphere. The scenery bears some resemblance to the nature described in *The Golden Ass* where poor Psyche, left alone on the top of a mountain as a sacrifice to a deity and carried by the gentle Zephyr, wanders before she finds the palace of Eros:

> Thus poor Psyche being left alone, weeping and trembling on the toppe of the rocke, was blowne by the gentle aire and of shrilling Zephyrus, and carried from the hill with a meek winde . . . and by little and little brought her down into a deep valley, where she was laid in a bed of most sweet and fragrant flowers.
> Thus fair Psyches being sweetly couched among the soft and tender hearbs, as in a bed of sweet and fragrant flowers . . . was now well reposed. And when she had refreshed her selfe sufficiently with sleepe, she . . . fortuned to espy a pleasant wood invironed with great and mighty trees. She espied likewise a running river as clear as crystall.[34]

Though until the fourth stanza, the ode does not clearly refer to "Zephyrus" or "a meek winde" of the original story, several words in the first stanza such as "whispering" and "trembled" may imply the "gentle air" that carried away Psyche in the original myth. In both natural descriptions, a cool river is running and verdant trees and fragrant flowers surround Psyche. They really create "an Eden-like retreat" or a "natural paradise."[35] As Vendler remarks that the luxuriant nature in the ode creates an immortal bower,[36] the thick-growing grasses, exuberant trees and flowers fill the whole place with inexhaustible life.

This bright ever-growing bower is quite different from the dusky bower described in the fifth stanza in "Ode to a Nightingale." The night

bower in the latter poem, though filled with various fragrant flowers similar to those in this ode, reminds us of the withering of the flowers and the transience of the seasons, as is revealed in its reference to the "fast fading violets." On the other hand, the cheerful bower here does not refer to such an incessant change in nature at all. The cool river is perpetually flowing and flowers and trees are perpetually growing. It is really an immortal bower. In the middle of this lively bower, the "calm-breathing" lovers too are filling the place with life by their warn breathing. Now they are lying on the "bedded grass." Nature offers a bed for them to make love and generate more lives. For the moment, however, the lovers are not making love but sleeping:

> Their arms embracèd, and their pinions too;
> Their lips touched not, but had not bade adieu,
> As if disjoinèd by soft-handed slumber,
> And ready still past kisses to outnumber
> At tender eye-dawn of aurorean love. (16-20)

Here, not only Eros but also Psyche has pinions. She has already gained immortality and become a goddess. Of course, it is a modification of the original story to describe Psyche as a pinioned figure from the very beginning in this way.[37] But her winged figure is more suitable for the origin of her name, that is, a "butterfly" or a "soul." Her pinions give her more appropriate figure as a symbol of immortality.

Now their pinions and arms are embraced. Their lips do not touch each other, but are not completely parted. Like the earlier reference to an ear of Psyche, the subtle description of their lips seems rather erotic and a little bit fetishistic. Their lips "still" attempt to "outnumber past kisses." The lovers would kiss over and over again. The "tender eye-dawn of aurorean love" suggests the persistence, or immortality of

their love. As every morning the sun rises for ever in the future, so every time they wake up, they kiss again and make love again forever in the future.[38] In the middle of the cheerful world thickly filled with ever-growing plants, the lovers forever outnumber their past kisses and forever make love.[39]

The immortal lovers in this ode may remind us of Hermes and a nymph in *Lamia*. With the help of Lamia, Hermes found again his beloved nymph who nearly fainted with great surprise:

> But the God fostering her chillèd hand,
> She felt the warmth, her eyelids opened bland,
> And, like new flowers at morning song of bees,
> Bloomed, and gave up her honey to the lees.
> Into the green-recessèd woods they flew;
> Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do. (*Lamia*, I, 140-145)

As Hermes is a "ever-smitten"(I, 7) god, his love for the nymph cannot be so sincere as to be compared to the love between Psyche and Eros. But even so, their love is also quite different from that of "mortal lovers." Like Psyche and Eros, Hermes and the nymph can forever enjoy their immortal world of their love in "the green-recessèd woods."

All this while, the name of Psyche has not been revealed. In the last few lines of the first stanza, she is called by her real name for the first time, "But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove? / His Psyche true!"(22-23). As has been mentioned above, a calling to a deity with vocative "O" is an indispensable element of the traditional hymnal ode. Although Keats uses this element in the opening line, he defers revealing the name of the deity. First he asks, "Who wast thou?" and then only calls her a "dove," as if he really does not know who she is at all. As Ian Jack points out, it is rather unconventional to conceal the name of a deity in a hymn and, what is more, to call Psyche a "dove," because dove

is traditionally an important attribute of Venus.[40] Thus, the first stanza at once follows and rejects the tradition of the hymnal ode. It describes the immortal love under the happy immortal bower in order to praise the winged Psyche, a symbol of immortality. Here, the immortal world is a fertile, lively world filled with thick flowers and grasses similar to the Elysium in Keats's early odes.

The opening lines in the second stanza, too, have the characteristic of the conventional hymnal ode:

> O latest born and loveliest vision far
> Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
> Fairer than Phoebe's sapphire-regioned star,
> Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky. (24-27)

With the vocative "O," Psyche is praised for her beauty. There can be found no request from the poet to the goddess such as "hear" or "pardon" in the first stanza. With a simple apostrophe, he devotes himself to the high praise of the beautiful goddess. Needless to say, the phrase "latest born" suggests that Psyche is the last to be given immortality among the Olympian gods. Here too, Psyche and immortality are closely connected. She is the "loveliest" among the "faded" Olympians. "Faded" means "forgotten" or "disappeared," indicating the great distance between the ancient gods and the poet. At the same time, as Barnard remarks that "the Olympians are faded because they have been surpassed by Psyche's beauty,"[41] "faded" may also imply that the Olympians were eclipsed by the beauty of Psyche. Moreover, in beauty Psyche surpasses both "Phoebe's sapphire-regioned star" and "amorous glow-worm of the sky." The goddess is fairer than Phoebe and even Venus who has been traditionally the most beautiful goddess among the Olympians.

Originally Psyche had to suffer and endure great hardships because

of her beauty that eclipsed even Venus. As is minutely told in *The Golden Ass*, people praised too loudly the beauty of Psyche, who was still a mortal woman at that time, and that they neglected the temple of Venus. Therefore, Psyche incurred the wrath of Venus to undergo painful ordeal. As has been mentioned above, however, this ode is really filled with a happy mood, and never refers to her agonizing hardships. Despite the convention of the ode to avoid divine wrath aroused by overweening praises for the greatness of mortal man, the poem loudly praises the surpassing beauty of Psyche and attempts to break the convention.

After the praise of her beauty, a "catalogue of loss"[42] is revealed:

Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heaped with flowers;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours—
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming. (28-35)

The repetition of negatives, such as "none," "nor," and "no," emphasizes the fact that now the beautiful goddess is not praised nor worshipped at all, and severely criticizes such improper negligence. Here, Psyche is identified "in terms of what she lacks,"[43] as Daniel P. Watkins points out. Along with her surpassing beauty, her utter lack of proper praise becomes one of her important attributes in this ode.

In this catalogue of loss, some erotic elements can be found which are similar to whose we have seen in the amorous bower in the first stanza. The "virgin-choir," making "delicious moan" at midnight, creates a sacred atmosphere suitable for the worship of the goddess. At the same time, however, it may sound voluptuous and remind us of La Belle Dame sans Merci who tempts the knight-at-arms to "her elfin grot" with a "sweet

moan."[44] The rapid, or rather impetuous references to various things indispensable for religious ceremonies, such as the altar heaped with flowers, the delicious moan of virgin-choir, the sound of lute and pipe, the sweet incense from a swinging censer, create a very voluptuous fertile atmosphere.

Vendler calls the structure of this ode "a Reduplication-shape" or a "mirror shape."[45] She points out the similarity, both in the form and in the contents, between the first and the fourth stanza, and the second and the third stanza. As she asserts, the structure of the second stanza, beginning with a calling to the goddess and revealing a catalogue of loss and negatives, is reflected in the third stanza with a slight modification:

> O brightest, though too late for antique vows!
> Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
> When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
> Holy the air, the water and the fire. (36-39)

This opening with the vocative "O" resembles that of the previous stanzas. Compared to their rather tedious callings with various praises of the beautiful goddess, however, here the calling is quite simple, "O brightest," which is immediately followed by the repetition of "too late." While in the previous stanza, the repetition of "none," "nor," and "no" emphasizes the total lack of proper worship of the goddess, here the repetition of "too late" emphasizes the distance between the ancient pious days of the goddess Psyche and the present. It reveals the "belatedness" of Psyche.[46] Of course, the stanza does not end with a mere yearning for the ancient pantheistic days. Soon the poet says, "Yet," and turns his eyes from the far past to the present:

> Yet even in these days so far retired
> From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
> Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
> I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired. (40-43)

"I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired" is a very confident declaration of the poet's resolution to break tradition and create his own praise of Psyche. After the declaration, he puts much stress on "I," and begins to show his originality in this ode of praise. The distance of time between Psyche and the poet comes to be positively accepted, for he can create his own ode of praise because of this great distance. Here too, the Olympians are all "faint." They belong to the ancient times are utterly eclipsed by the surpassing beauty of Psyche. In this original praise, still we can see Psyche's "fluttering" "lucent fans." Again, her immortality is emphasized. Psyche is not a mortal woman but has already gained immortality. It may be said that her pinioned figure like a butterfly or a soul, which can be seen over the great distance of time, is really a symbol of immorality itself.

After the declaration of originality, a catalogue is revealed which is similar to the one in the previous stanza:

> So let me be thy choir and make a moan
> Upon the midnight hours—
> Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
> From swingèd censer teeming;
> Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
> Of pale-mouthed prophet dreaming. (44-49)

Though there is a slight modification, almost everything indispensable for religious ceremonies is used again. But all the negatives in the previous stanza, such as "none," "nor," and "no," are here replaced by "thy." Now Psyche gains what she needs for her proper worship. In this original praise, what has been lost or lacking comes to be recovered.

In the final stanza, the poet's decision to break convention becomes all the more clear. In the opening lines, there is no calling to a deity by using a traditional vocative "O" as we have seen in the previous three

stanzas. Instead, what first appears here is "Yes," which reveals the poet's confidence in his originality. He says, "Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane / In some untrodden region of my mind"(50-51). The change from "let me be" in the previous stanza into "I will" indicates his positive will to praise the goddess in his own way without any help. Psyche's "fane" will be built in "some untrodden region" of the poet's mind, not in some familiar, conventional place suitable for the Olympians, for example, in Tempe or in Arcadia. The poet has seen Psyche and Eros in a forest and depicted their immortal love in nature, in their immortal bower. So far the praise of immortality has been sung, as it were, in the open air, though with no audience. But from now on, the praise will be given in the more private, closed space. The poet is alone with Psyche in his mind. To praise the goddess, who is a symbol of immortality, in one's own mind suggests the internalization or the exclusive possession of immortality itself.

Then the rest of the final stanza give a minute description of the inward fane for the original worship. Beginning with "I *will* be thy priest," the poet's firm resolution and confidence are revealed in "branchèd thoughts *shall* murmur," "trees *shall* fledge," "Dryads *shall* be lulled," "I *will* dress," "there *shall* be all sorts of delight" (italics are mine). Though the fane exists in the mind of the poet totally severed from the external world, it is depicted with various concrete images of natural world such as "branched," "dark-clustered trees," "wild-ridgèd mountains." This inner place of praise spreads out boundlessly in his mind:

> Far, far around shall those dark-clustered trees
> Fledge the wild-ridgèd mountains steep by steep;

And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lulled to sleep;
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. (54-63)

As Bloom points out that it "takes an effort to recollect that these mountains and other phenomena are all within the mind,"[47] this inner sanctuary contains really concrete, rich images that should be suitable to depict the actual natural world. Here "zephyrs" are blowing, "streams" are flowing, "birds" are singing, "bees" are humming and "Dryads" are peacefully lying on the moss just like Psyche and Eros in the first stanza. Psyche's "rosy sanctuary" is dressed with innumerable flowers such as "buds, and bells, and stars without a name."

This inner sanctuary surrounded by fertile nature resembles the natural description in the first stanza and furthermore, the immortal Elysium in Keats's earlier odes. Here too, there exists no gloomy thought on transience. Like the pleasant immortal bower in the first stanza, the inner sanctuary is thickly covered with plants and filled with innumerable lives. The phrase "new grown with pleasant pain" reminds us of a birth with labor pains, and such words as "branched," "clustered," and "fledge" make us imagine the infinite lives of the prolific plants in nature which are perpetually germinating and rapidly growing. "Fancy" is "breeding flowers," and that she "will never breed the same," Various kinds of flowers are being born forever. In this inner world entirely filled with lives of the thickly grown plants, animals and insects, such as "birds" and "bees," there can be found no ominous shadow of death nor any gloomy contemplation on transience and mortality. This inner

sanctuary for Psyche, a symbol of immortality, exists with "no melancholy."[48] It blissfully abounds in immortal breeding and immortal life.[49]

The two final lines, "A bright torch, and a casement ope at night, / To let the warm Love in!"(66-67) are a little bit different from the original story, but they also imply immortal generation or breeding. Originally Psyche and Eros could meet only in darkness. She was forbidden to see her husband in the light. Therefore, a "bright torch" is taboo for their secret love. It is, as it were, a symbol of curiosity and betrayal of Psyche who foolishly ignored her husband's warning. But now that Psyche has already gained immortality and their love has been accepted by the Olympian gods, the lovers need no darkness. Therefore, here the bright torch is openly put in their bedroom.

In addition to this, there is one more modification of the original story. In the myth, Psyche was a rather passive woman who did nothing but wait for her lover to come to her bedroom in darkness every day. And at her betrayal, he deserted her by flying through a casement of the bedroom. The casement is, in a sense, a symbol of their broken love. But now Psyche widely opens the casement to meet her lover. She has been changed into a very active woman. As Anne K. Mellor remarks that "the poem ends with an affirmation of female sexuality, of a vaginal 'casement ope at night / To let the warm Love in!'"[50] her positive image gives an original erotic impression.

The ode ends with the simple reference to Psyche who is waiting for Eros to come without any description of their later bedroom scene. But the erotic atmosphere becomes all the more strong as the later scene is

left to the imagination of the readers. Ensured immortal marriage by Jupiter, they repeat kiss and make love forever in future. Their immortal love would produce immortal continuity of lives, just like the immortal breeding of plants and animals in their immortal bower.

Thus, the ode is filled with fertile natural scenery where various kinds of plants are growing and enjoying their immortal life. These thickly growing plants create the immortal bower suitable for the immortal love of Psyche and Eros. From the beginning, Psyche has wings. She has already gained immortality and has become a symbol of immortality itself. The ode praises beautiful Psyche and the blissful world of her immortal love. In other words, it attempts to celebrate immortality itself which is symbolized in the winged image of the goddess. As has been pointed out, in Keats's early odes, immortality or the immortal world is nothing but a convenient and conventional means to praise gods and great poets. But now the immortal world is internalized within the poet's mind and it becomes the primary subject of the ode.

Finally, we will devote a little more space to consider the meaning of the word "Psyche." As we have seen, "Psyche" means "soul" and "butterfly" in Greek, presenting an appropriate image of immortality. What should be noticed here is that the word was originally used only at someone's death. Robert Garland tells about the *psychê* painted on the ancient Greek lecythus:

> The predominant image of the ordinary Greek dead is of beings which evoke pity rather than fear. Their pathetic status vis-à-vis the living is pictorially conveyed in scenes on Attic white-ground *lêkythoi* of the fifth century where the *psychê* of the deceased takes the form of a diminutive winged creature hovering plaintively and ineffectually in the vicinity of the grave.[51]

The psyche, "a diminutive winged creature," leaves the body of the dead

and yet plaintively hovers over the grave, still attached to this world. Garland remarks that in ancient days *psychê* and death were closely associated. He draws an instance from Homer:

> In Homer the most characteristic notion is that death is ushered in by the departure of the *psychê* "lamenting its fate" either out of the mouth or from a gaping wound. This *psychê*, though denoting by its presence or absence in a man's body whether that man is alive, is certainly not synonymous with life, the life-instinct, consciousness or activity, and in fact only makes an appearance in the body when death is imminent.[52)]

Psyche latently exists in the body of a man who is still alive and active. Only when the man dies, it makes its appearance. While Psyche has an image of a butterfly that undergoes several metamorphosis and seems to have blissful immortal life, it is also associated with the gloomy graveyard and sad death.

In this ode the poet's "inspired eyes" see Psyche with fluttering "lucent fans." The winged figure may have something in common with the image of the ancient Greek *psychê* that is leaving the dying body and yet lingeringly hovering around the graveyard. Like this ancient *psychê*, in this poem too, Psyche is hovering around the dying "faint Olympians" as if she is reluctant to part from them. In the fourth stanza where the secret fane of the goddess is built within the poet's mind, we see "dark-cluster'd trees" and "wide-ridged mountains" in the "wide quietness." Though around the "rosy sanctuary," various plants are thickly and perpetually growing and enjoying their immortal life, it cannot be denied that the whole landscape in this overwhelming silence has a slight tinge of gloominess, or a dusky shadow, which cannot be seen at all in the Elysian world of Keats's earlier odes. Similarly in the first stanza, the peacefully sleeping lovers on the grass in the immortal bower

certainly give a quite peaceful impression. At the same time, they also create a little bit disquieting atmosphere. As Grant E. Scott asserts that they are in "cameo pose,"[53] the motionless figure of happy lovers may seem to be in a kind of petrifaction. The latent dark characteristics of the blissful immortal world, such as the disquieting, gloomy shadow of death and the fear of being immobilized or petrified, show themselves more clearly in Keats's later odes. But they are already beginning to appear in "Ode to Psyche," though still faintly.

Among Keats's great odes of 1819, "Ode to Psyche" is a rather traditional ode similar to his earlier ones. It celebrates a beautiful goddess and presents the immortal world of her love with Eros as a happy Elysium. But Keats begins to break tradition and, instead of praising Psyche loudly in public, he secretly sings her praise into the ear of the goddess alone. He makes her his only audience and attempts to build her shrine deep in his own mind. Immortality, which has been used as a conventional and convenient means of high praise, gradually becomes the primary theme of the ode. After this poem, Keats begins to create his own odes, that is to say, his original world of immortality. In his odes, Keats depicts his brief flight into the blissful immortal world. For him, the world of immortality is synonymous with the world of imagination, which he can enjoy through some intense aesthetic experience, for example, through the fascinating song of a nightingale or a beautiful ancient Greek urn, though only for a moment. As we have seen in "Ode to Psyche" and in his other earlier odes, the immortal world has been a blissful rich world full of life and spirit. However, a gloomy shadow of death, which has been lurking in that happy world, gradually manifests

itself. The dismal shadow slightly sensed in "Ode to Psyche" becomes more and more conspicuous and comes to the surface in "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

## Notes to Chapter IV

1. John Barnard, *John Keats* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 101.

2. All the works of John Keats are extracted from Miriam Allott, ed., *The Complete Poems of John Keats* (London: Longman, 1980).

3. Thomas Gray, "The Progress of Poesy. A Pindaric Ode," ll. 94, 104.

4. H. E. Rollins, ed., *The Letters of John Keats* 2vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), II, p. 106.

5. Miriam Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

6. About the essential characteristics of traditional hymns, see notes 26 and 28 below.

7. W. G. Shepherd, trans., *Horace: The Complete Odes and Epodes* (London: Penguin Books, 1983).

8. *Letters*, I, p. 25.

9. Jennifer Farrell, *Keats—The Progress of the Odes* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), p. 12.

10. Cedric Watts, *A Preface to Keats* (London: Longman, 1985), p. 114.

11. For further details of Keats's experiments on sonnet form, see Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 494-496.

12. *Letters*, II, p. 159.

13. *Ibid.*

14. T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933. London: Faber & Faber, 1980), p. 100.

15. Kenneth Allott, "The 'Ode to Psyche,'" Kenneth Muir, ed. *John Keats: a Reassessment* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1958), p. 74.

16. Sidney Colvin, *Keats* (1889. New York: AMS Press, 1968), pp. 171-172.

17. John Barnard, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

18. Thomas Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1948), p. 95.

19. About the various meanings of this word, see, for example, Cedric Watts, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

20. Miriam Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 515.

21. Cedric Watts, *op cit.*, p. 116.

22. Ian Jack, *Keats and the Mirror of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 206-207.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Helen Vendler, *The Odes of John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 53.

25. Many critics regard this ode as a "hymn." See, for example, *ibid.*, p. 47, G. W. Knight, *The Starlit Dome* (1941. London: Methuen, 1959), pp. 301-302, C. I. Patterson, Jr., *The Daemonic in the Poetry of John Keats* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970), p. 157.

26. For further details of the traditional forms of classical hymns and their essential elements, see William H. Race, *Pindar* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), pp. 26-27.

27. Gordon Williams, *The Third Book of Horace's Odes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 88.

28. Andrew Bennett regards the opening of this ode as "the apostrophic anthropomorphism of address," *Keats, Narrative and Audience: The Posthumous Life of Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 130. About the "apostrophic" address, see Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), pp. 138, 140, 143.

29. Vendler regards Psyche as "Keats's only audience," *op. cit.*, p. 55.

30. Jennifer Farrell, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

31. Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company* (1961. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 405.

32. "*Bacchus I saw* on distant crags—believe me, ye of after time—teaching hymns and *I beheld* the nymphs his pupils, and the goat-footed satyrs with their pointed ears. Evoe! *My heart thrills with fear still fresh, and tumultuously rejoices, since my breast is full of the god.* Evoe! Liber! Spare me, oh, spare me, thou god to be dreaded for thy mighty thyrsus! 'Tis meet for me to sing of the streams of milk, and the honey distilling from hollow tree-trunks"(1-12). (Italics are mine.)

33. In the word "fainting," Allott points out the "erotic romantic fantasy" which often can be seen in Keats's earlier poems, Miriam Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 516.

34. Kenneth Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

35. Jennifer Farrell, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

36. Helen Vendler, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

37. Many critics have pointed out Keats's modification of the legend of Psyche and Cupid. See, for example, Cedric Watts, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

38. Allott remarks, "The renewal of their love each time they awake is like the daily visiting of the sun," Miriam Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 516.

39. For detailed arguments about the immortality of their love, see Mario L. D'Avanzo, *Keats's Metaphors for the Poetic Imagination* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1967), p. 204, Hermione de Almeida, *Romantic Medicine and John Keats* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 97.

40. Ian Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 211-212.

41. John Barnard, ed., *John Keats: The Complete Poems* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1983), p. 646.

42. Helen Vendler, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

43. Daniel P. Watkins, *Keats's Poetry and the Politics of the Imagination* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989), p. 99.

44. Bloom points out the similar sexual ecstasy in the "heat" of the "pale-mouthed prophet dreaming." See Harold Bloom, *op. cit.*, pp. 400-401.

45. See Helen Vendler, *op. cit.*, pp. 47, 49, 61.

46. For further arguments about the "belatedness" of Psyche and the poet himself, see Harold Bloom, *op. cit.*, p. 42, Martin Aske, "Silent Forms: The 'Ode to Psyche' and the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn,'" Harold Bloom, ed., *The Ode of Keats* (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), p. 112.

47. Harold Bloom, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

48. Kenneth Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

49. Vendler calls the rich natural world of this ode "the world of life," Helen Vendler, *op. cit.*, p. 69, and Karla Alwes calls the relationship

between the poet and Psyche a "procreative" one, Karla Alwes, *Imagination Transformed: The Evolution of the Female Character in Keats's Poetry* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p. 116.

50. Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism & Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 181.

51. Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 12.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

53. Grant E. Scott, *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekpharasis, and the Visual Arts* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994), p. 71.

# CHAPTER V

## CHANGE OF THE NIGHTINGALE IN "ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE": FROM AN ENCHANTING IMMORTAL BIRD INTO A BIRD OF DEATH

In *British Birds* William Henry Hudson, an ornithologist, complains that most people who have never seen a nightingale or heard its song before are almost always very much disappointed when they see the real bird and hear its real song for the first time. Hudson says that it is because the bird has existed only in their mind for too long a time:

> The nightingale is the only songster that has been too much lauded. . . . It was the maker of ravishing music, and a type, just as the pelican was a type of parental affection and self-sacrifice. . . . Only, when he actually hears it for the first time, the hearer makes the sad discovery that the bird he has for long years been listening to in fancy . . . was a nightingale of the brain, a mythical bird, like the footless bird of paradise and the swan with a dying melody. Beautiful, nay, perfect, the song may be, but he misses from it that human feeling which makes the imperfect songs so enchanting.[1)]

One of the various possible causes that have changed this simple little bird into a mysteriously fascinating songbird is the long literary tradition, which has been giving the bird too much laud. When people hear the song of the nightingale for the first time, most of them feel greatly disappointed at its real song because they have expected too much of the bird and, its real song is not so fascinating as they have imagined for a long time. Of course, some people may find it a more enchanting bird than their all expectations. In either case, they usually remember, consciously or not, the long literary history of the nightingale which began with the familiar Greek myth of poor Philomela.

Glancing over the English poetry from the twelfth century débat *The Owl and the Nightingale*[2)] to the poetry of the twentieth century poets

like T. S. Eliot and Dylan Thomas, we can find innumerable nightingales. The nightingale has been sung by numerous poets in their numerous poems and has already become a stock theme of poetry. Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" is one of these various nightingale poems that follow the long literary tradition.

It is said that Keats wrote this ode in a few hours in May 1819, while really listening to the song of a nightingale. About the composition of the poem Charles Armitage Brown, one of Keats's friends, remarks about twenty years later:

> In the Spring of 1819 a nightingale had built her nest in my house. Keats felt a continual and tranquil joy in her song; and one morning he took a chair from the breakfast-table to the grass-plot under a plum-tree where he sat for two or three hours. When he came into the house, I perceived he had some scraps of paper in his hand, and these he was quietly thrusting behind the books. On inquiry, I found these scraps, four or five in number, contained his poetic feeling on the song of the nightingale. The writing was not well legible; and it was difficult to arrange the stanzas on so many scraps. With his assistance I succeeded, and this was his "Ode to a Nightingale," a poem which has been the delight of everyone.[3)]

Keats was greatly fascinated by the bird's song and he felt "a continual and tranquil joy" in it. So he wrote a poem on the bird, using the traditional poetic form, ode, a suitable vehicle to praise someone and immortalize his name. Judging from these facts, we may expect from the beginning that this ode will praise the fascinating immortal song of a nightingale, just like "Ode to Psyche" highly praises beautiful Psyche and immortality that the goddess and her lover represent.

In "Ode to a Nightingale," however, there is no loud calling to the subject of the praise like "O Goddess!" in the opening line of "Ode to Psyche." Deeply fascinated by the enchanting song of a nightingale, the poet gradually identifies with the bird and leaves the actual world,

though only for a moment. A little mortal bird innocently singing in the spring garden is transformed into an "immortal bird," a symbol of immortality itself, and by the overwhelming charm of its song enables the poet to see and experience the immortal world. Like "Ode to Psyche," this ode attempts to loudly praise both the beauty of the subject and the immortality that it represents. And here too, the poet secretly leaves the actual world alone with the nightingale "unseen" by anybody, and experiences the immortal world all alone, just like the poet in "Ode to Psyche" who secretly builds a fane for the goddess within his mind all alone. Here immortality is not used as a conventional and convenient means for high praise in public. It is internalized, monopolized, and enjoyed by the poet alone. It is a familiar pattern in Keats's many poems to be enticed by something intensely fascinating to leave the actual world and experience the blissful world of imagination only for a moment. Here the immortal world that the poet experiences with the fascinating song of the nightingale is the world of imagination. At first, the immortal world in this poem seems really blissful and fertile just like the immortal Elysium in Keats's early odes including "Ode to Psyche," and furthermore, like the ideal immortality praised in various traditional odes of the poets before Keats.

But "Ode to a Nightingale" does not end with an innocent praise of the nightingale and immortality that the bird represents. The blissful immortal world gradually presents a desolate forlorn landscape, and a shadow of death comes up to the surface. The fertile blissfulness and the barren desolation of immortality are two essential forces that drive the poet to the immortal world and, again drive him back to the actual

world.[4] And these two opposite aspects of immortality clearly reflect the characteristic of the bird's image. The nightingale is a popular bird known as a cheerful songbird of spring. But at the same time, it has an image of a bird of sinister death. In this chapter we will see these two different images of the bird in various English poetry and then consider why Keats finally buries deep the bird's song and leaves the world of immortality in the last stanza. Immortality, which so far has been quite desirable and suitable for high praise, comes to present two opposite aspects. It becomes an enticing Elysium that is concealing an ominous shadow of death. By using the nightingale as its subject, the ode can present two opposite characteristics of immortality all the more effectively.

As has been mentioned, the nightingale is a bird with the long literary tradition. About the nightingale in this ode too, critics often point out the influence of tradition. For example, David Perkins remarks that the seventh stanza embraces all the nightingales from the ancient times to our day.[5] Beth Lau points out numerous poets previous to Keats, including Wordsworth and Coleridge, who seem to have given birth to the nightingale of this poem. Lau says, "'Ode to a Nightingale' reflects not recent reading of Wordsworth, but Keats's entire past reading digested and incorporated into his own thoughts and feelings."[6]

Like many critics, Cedric Watts regards the nightingale as "a bird with a long literary pedigree." As he points out Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as an important origin,[7] probably the earliest image of the nightingale can be traced back to poor Philomela in the Greek myth. In *Metamorphoses* Ovid minutely tells about this miserable story which

Keats knew very well. Philomela, a daughter of the king of Athens, was raped and had her tongue cut out by Tereus, the king of Thrace and husband of her sister Procne. In revenge for this really cruel act, she killed Tereus's son Itylus and served him up as food for the cruel king in conspiracy with Procne. Pursued by the infuriated king, Philomela was changed into a nightingale. Hence the bird came to be called "Philomela" or "Philomel" associated with an image of a plaintive bird that sings mournfully at night. For a long time, the image of this miserable, and in most cases, female nightingale has been sung in numerous literary works. The Roman poets, Horace and Virgil, and the troubadours of the Middle Ages all loved this image of a poor bird with beautiful voice and often used it in their poems. In English poetry too, the plaintive image of the bird frequently appears:

> What Bird so sings, yet so dos wayle?
> O 'tis the ravish'd Nightingale.
> Lug, lug, lug, lug, tereu, she cryes,
> And still her woes at Midnight rise.
> (John Lyly, *Campaspe*, V, I, 32-35)[8]

> Every thing did banish mone,
> Save the Nightingale alone.
> Shee (poore Bird) as all forlorne,
> Leand her breast up-till a Thone,
> And there sung the dolefulest Ditty
> That to hear it was great Pitty.
> (Richard Barnfield, "An Ode," 7-11)[9]

> Night shades the groves, and all in silence lie,
> All but the mournful Philomel and I:
> With mournful Philomel I join my strain,
> Of Tereus she, of Phaon I complain.
> (Alexander Pope, *Sappho to Phaon*, 175-178)[10]

Some poets refer to the Greek myth with the words "ravishment" or "Tereus," others do not mention it at all. Suggesting its miserable mythic episode or not, the image of a poor female bird mournfully singing

at night has been favored by a lot of English poets from John Gower to T. S. Eliot and Dylan Thomas.

Apart from this sorrowful image, the nightingale also frequently appears in the religious poems of the Middle Ages as a sacred bird, though this image is rare in the English poetry.[11] John Pecham, a Latin poet of the thirteenth century, sings like this:

> Know that this bird is the likeness of the soul
> Who puts all its effort into loving God;
> Who, from its great height, remembering the great blessing
> Composes a song of beautiful music. (*Stanza 12*)[12]

Beryl Rowland asserts that, besides the image of a mournful bird derived from the famous story of rape and revenge, "the nightingale sings of Christ's death and resurrection and is itself the symbol of the greatest love."[13] The nightingale was often used in some kind of poetry as a symbol of Christian soul in the Middle Ages.

Thus the bird has gained numerous images, but it must be an image of a cheerful songbird of spring that appears most frequently in poetry and is most familiar to everyone. As is well known, the bird's popular name, "Philomel," is composed of *philo* and *melos*, which means "one who loves a song." The image of the nightingale, who sings, just as its name tells, fascinatingly with all its heart among the spring flowers and in the green woods, is one of the most popular stock themes of poetry. Provence, which is referred to in the second stanza of this ode, was where the troubadours of the Middle Ages sung about their love and the joy of spring by using various images of the nightingale. Gauselm Faidit, one of the popular troubadours of the twelfth century sings:

> By the joy of the season which has flowered,
> The nightingale rejoices
> And is joyful,
> And courts its mate in the bushes. (*Poem 12*, 1-4)[14]

Originally, to the poets of the Middle Ages, that is to say, the troubadours in Provence, the trouvères in the northern part of France and the minnesingers in Germany, listening to the nightingale had a certain special meaning. In the breeding season, the male nightingale sings very beautifully and cheerfully all night long. Therefore, the bird was often referred to when a poet told about love or about a man smitten with love.[15] In the literature of the early Middle Ages, "listening to the nightingale" usually implied "a secret rendezvous with someone." J. M. Telfer points out that in *Decameron* "listening to the nightingale" is used as "a euphemism for the sexual act."[16] In some anonymous ballads of the Middle Ages, the nightingale often appears to represent a young cheerful girl who attracts many men:

> I am brown as brown can be,
> My eyes as black as a sloe;
> I am as brisk as a nightingale,
> And as wilde as any doe. ("The Brown Girl," 1-4)[17]

Of course, these popular images of a fascinating songbird as a harbinger of spring or a messenger of love appear very frequently in the poetry of the English poets. The earliest example after *The Owl and the Nightingale* of the thirteenth century may be found in Geoffrey Chaucer. In *The Romaunt of the Rose*, Chaucer depicts a nightingale that lives in the "Garden of Mirth" and enjoys a sweet song:

> There is no place in Paradys
> So good inne for to dwelle or be,
> As in that gardyne, thoughte me.
> For there was many a bridde syngyng,
> Through-oute the yearde al thringyng,
> In many places were nyghtyngales,
> Alpes, fynches, and wodewales,
> That in her swete song deliten
> In thilke places as they habiten. (652-660)[18]

And in "Spring," Thomas Nashe attempts to depict the nightingale as a

harbinger of sweet spring by the bird's song, "jug-jug" alone:

> The field breathes sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
> Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
> In every street these tunes our ears do greet,
> Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
> Spring! The sweet Spring! (9-13)[19]

Similarly, Milton uses the nightingale as a songbird of love. In "Sonnet I," the "liquid notes" of the nightingale are regarded as a good "propitious" omen of success in love:

> O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray
> Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
> Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
> While the jolly hours lead on propitious May,
> Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
> First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill
> Portend success in love. (1-7)[20]

Needless to say, Keats himself also wrote various nightingales in his thirteen poems or so. Most of them were written before "Ode to a Nightingale." His earliest image of the nightingale is a songbird singing tenderly "in the moonbeamy air":

> Why linger you so, the wild labyrinth strolling?
> Why breathless, unable your bliss to declare?
> Ah! You list to the nightingale's tender condoling,
> Responsive to sylphs, in the moonbeamy air.
> ("To Some Ladies," 9-12)

Most of the nightingales in his poems are depicted as a sweet songbird that sings fascinatingly in leafy recesses. The only exception can be found in *The Eve of St. Agnes*. In this poem Keats refers to "a tongueless nightingale." The image of Philomel is used to express the painful panting of Madeline who, following the superstition, won't speak a word to meet her future husband in her dream:

> Out went the taper as she hurried in;
> Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died.
> She closed the door, she panted, all akin
> To spirits of the air, and visions wide—
> No uttered syllable, or woe betide!
> But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
> Paining with eloquence her balmy side,

As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell. (199-207)

Katharine M. Wilson remarks that in his early poems, "literary influences contaminated his references to them [nightingales]; they betray his immaturity."[21] As she asserts, in Keats's early poems, the nightingale gains only a hackneyed common image. But it may be said that the fact suggests that like other English poets Keats too knew well and favored very much the traditional image of the nightingale which had already become a stock theme of poetry in his days.

Then, how does "Ode to a Nightingale," within the conventional frame of the ode whose essential function is praise and immortalization, treat the bird that has already gained a traditionally fixed image? All of our expectations that a loud conventional praise will be given to this sweet songbird are completely failed from the beginning. There exists no excited invocation like "Oh, Goddess" in "Ode to Psyche," or no placid calling to the subject like, as we will see later, "Thou still unravished bride of quietness" in "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" in "To Autumn." Instead, "Ode to a Nightingale" suddenly begins with "My heart aches," a kind of "hammer beats"[22] and a "shock"[23]:

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. (1-4)

The abrupt reference to the pains in his heart and senses sounds rather strange for the opening of an ode. Contrary to the public and extrovert nature of the traditional ode, here the poet keeps his eyes on himself alone, on his body and his mind alone. He refers to "hemlock" and "opiate," a kind of a sedative or a sleeping pill, and the "Lethe" whose

waters make us totally forget whatever we have done before. These are, as it were, the preparation for the momentary oblivion of this actual world and the later brief flight to the world of imagination. At the same time, "hemlock" is also a fatal poison which Socrates took to kill himself. In ancient Greece, it was used to execute criminals.[24] And the "Lethe" is a river running through Hades, the hell. Only the dead can drink the water of this river to forget their former lives. Though the title makes us expect that it will praise a cheerful songbird of spring, this ode creates an ominous deathly atmosphere from the very beginning without any reference to the famous bird.[25]

Then, the cause of these pains are revealed:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness—
That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease. (5-10)

The poet feels pains because he is too happy with the song of the nightingale. Critics often point out the coexistence of pain and pleasure in Keats's poems, and we can find its typical example in this ode.[26] Here the nightingale, a "light-wingèd Dryad of the trees," gains the traditional image of a fascinating songbird of spring. Her song is now coming from "beechen green" and numberless "shadows." They are very conventional and suitable settings for listening to the nightingale as the bird usually sings hidden among the green trees, in the dusk of the evening or under the shadows of night. The transferred epithet, "melodious," also befits this sweet songbird. As in *The Compleat Angler* Izaak Walton states, "The Nightingale breathes such sweet musick out of her little instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think Miracles are

not ceased,"[27] the bird's song with "full-throated ease" really sounds like a miracle completely ignorant of mortal pains.

In this blissful green recesses of early summer filled with the pleasant song of the nightingale, the poet attempts to forget and leave the actual world temporarily. Now he won't receive assistance from hemlock, some dull opiate, or the waters of the Lethe. Instead, "a draught of vintage" and "a beaker full of the warm South" will help his flight:

> Oh, for a draught of vintage that hath been
> Cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,
> Tasting of Flora and the country green,
> Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
> Oh, for a beaker full of the warm South,
> Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
> With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
> And purple-stainèd mouth. (11-18)

On seeking for wine, the poet begins to imagine the warm cheerful southern country, Provence, and the "blushful Hippocrene" flowing from Mt. Helicon in the southern part of Greece one after another. Provence is famous for its good wine and troubadours of the Middle Ages who passionately sung about love, spring and, as we have seen, nightingales in their poems. Hippocrene is a fountain in Greece sacred to the Muses, which is often regarded as a symbol of poetic inspiration. All these are referred to in preparation for the "viewless wings of Poesy" in the fourth stanza which is the final and the most important means of his flight to the world of imagination. The "sunburnt mirth" with dance and song in the "country green," and the red wine of the "warm South" bubbling as if it were alive, these cheerful, lively, happy settings are all aroused by the fascinatingly pleasant song of the nightingale alone.

In the middle of this cheerful atmosphere, however, an ominous

shadow of death appears. It can be found in the twelfth line, "the deep-delvèd earth." Of course the line refers to the quality of the wine kept long in a cool wine cellar. But the repeated d's in "deep-delvèd" sound too heavy, which may remind us of a kind of burial.[28] And it is true that "purple-stainèd mouth" tells about the vividly beautiful color of the red wine left on the mouth of a beaker. But as *OED* says, the color "purple" also means "the color of blood," or "bloody, blood-stained."[29] Likewise, the word "stained" first means "colored," but it may also mean "discolored with blood." The phrase, though it should depict a beaker full of red wind of high quality, reminds us of something bloody and creates an ominously vivid image of a mouth, especially of a man not of a beaker, stained with blood.

The happy atmosphere aroused by the sweet song of the nightingale thus gradually becomes ponderous with a sign of death. Then the poet says, "That I might drink, and leave the world unseen, / And with thee fade away into the forest dim—"(19-20). With the help of wine made in cheerful warm countries, he wishes to "leave the world unseen" all alone with the nightingale. In a sense, it is a suicidal act to drink bloody red wine buried deep in the earth like a dead body in order to secretly leave this actual world, to melt into the dim forest like a ghost.

The third stanza relates at length various pains that mortal men are all doomed to suffer, and the whole atmosphere becomes all the more oppressive. The stanza gives, as it were, a catalogue of mortal pains:

> Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
> What thou among the leaves hast never known,
> The weariness, the fever, and the fret
> Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
> Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
> Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow. (21-30)

What the poet, fascinated by the song of the nightingale, has been attempting to forget with the help of hemlock, opiate, and wine, is revealed here at one stroke. He wants to completely forget all mortal pains, that is, the helplessness of men who cannot but "sit and hear each other groan," sickness and death that visit everyone both young and old alike, sorrow and "leaden-eyed" despairs, and the transience of beauty and love. Such contemplation of mortal pains and mortality has been often repeated, as we have already seen in the previous chapters, in many odes that follow the tradition of *carpe diem* ode of Horace. Therefore, it is reasonable that F. R. Leavis severely criticizes this stanza for its too many conventional mortal pains which he calls "prosaic matter-of-fact."[30] But at least, this tedious catalogue of conventional mortal pains is necessary here in order to make a clear contrast between the painful actual world and the blissful, ideal immortal world which the sweet nightingale comes to represent later.

After the reference to various mortal pains, the poet cries, "Away! Away!" to make the bird to fly away and lead him on, and also to make the wine to disappear now that Poesy will help his flight. At the same time, he cries so to make the catalogue of mortal pains disappear because now it becomes too ponderous for him to bear, though such reference to mortality is one of the conventions of the ode:

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. (31-34)

It seems strange that "the dull brain perplexes and retards" when,

forgetting all the mortal pains and that without any help of wine, the poet is at last flying to his longed-for blissful world of imagination with the nightingale alone. Probably the brain perplexes because the poet is still halfway between the actual world and the world of imagination. But we may also say that the perplexity is caused because the brain has already sensed, whether the poet realizes it or not, a sign of death in the pleasant song of the nightingale.

However, the charm of the bird's song is by far greater than such perplexity. At the poet's declaration, "Already with thee!" his dependence on wine and gloomy contemplation of mortal pains completely disappear. Now the poet comes more closer to the bird. Under the sky heavily sprinkled with stars and the moon, he is left alone with the nightingale. Everything is ready for forgetting the actual world for a moment and experiencing the world of imagination with the bird's enchanting song. In contrast with the bright moon and the numerous shining stars in the upper sky, "there is no light" where the poet is listening to the song in raptures.[31] He says, "But here there is no light, / Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown / Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways"(38-40). The nightingale sweetly singing in the darkness of night is a conventional image that many poets have favored and used in their poems. Here it is not completely dark. Dim light is sent from heaven, so we can see "mossy ways" in "verdurous glooms." The dusky recesses covered with rich trees and plants are suitable for the nightingale to sing as much as she pleases. The description of this verdurous bower continues:

> I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
> Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,

But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild—
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. (41-50)

It is a bower entirely covered in "embalmèd darkness." The poet's senses of smell and hearing now become keen all the more because he cannot see well in the darkness. By his guess, various kinds of flowers in the bower are revealed, such as white hawthorn with sensual smell, pastoral eglantine, violets among leaves, and sensual musk-rose full of dewy honey. The bower filled with verdurous trees and stiflingly sweet smell of flowers is a really befitting place for lovers to meet secretly, for the nightingale to sing passionately, and for the poet to listen to the bird's enchanting song.

But here again death appears. It is true that the word "embalmèd" means "perfumed" or "fragrant." But "embalm" also means the preservation of a corpse from decaying by using sweet-smelling plants and spices. The word makes us imagine a dead body.[32] Likewise, the words "glooms" and "mossy" in the fourth stanza are suitable for the description of graves, and "winding" may remind us of a winding sheet covering a dead body at burial. The bower is fragrant with stiflingly sweet smell of flowers and, at the same time, it is full of ominous smell of death. To guess in the darkness at what is happening on earth by using every sense except for the sense of sight, is a typical behavior in ballads where the dead, still attached to this world, often guess what the living are doing from within their dark graves. Even in the ballads of the modern poets, we can find some examples. In the ballads of A. E.

Housman and Thomas Hardy, the dead are eager to know what their acquaintances and even their cattle and dogs are doing now. They try to guess and ask in the embalmed darkness of their graves:

"Is my team ploughing,
  That I was used to drive
And hear the harness jingle
  When I was man alive?"

Ay, the horses trample,
  The harness jingle now;
No change though you lie under
  The land you used to plough.
(Housman, "Is My Team Ploughing," 1-8)

"Ah, are you digging on my grave,
  My loved one?--planting rue?"
--"No: yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred.
. . . . . .
"Then, who is digging on my grave?
  Say—since I have not guessed!"
--O it is I, my mistress dear,
Your little dog, who still lives near."
(Hardy, "Ah, Are You Digging On My Grave?" 1-22)[33]

Furthermore, the bower in this embalmed darkness with innumerable sweet flowers at the poet's feet or hanging above his head resembles, in a sense, Lorenzo's burial place told by his ghost to Isabella:[34]

Isabel, my sweet!
  Red whortle-berries droop above my head,
And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet;
  Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed
Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheep-fold bleat
  Comes from beyond the river to my bed.
Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
And it shall comfort me within the tomb. (*Isabella,* 297-304)

Above the head of the ghost whortle-berries are drooping, and beech trees and high chestnut trees are casting shadows. Unlike the ghost of Lorenzo and the dead in the ballads who feel lonely and long for their former home, the poet is now blissfully listening to the bird's song under cover of sweet flowers and darkness. At the same time, it seems that he

is gradually embalmed and buried deep under the earth or in the darkness. The embalmed darkness may also seem to be the darkness of a grave. The blissful bower in "Ode to Psyche" where Psyche and Eros are blissfully lying is an immortal Elysium filled with flowers and leafy trees.[35] At first sight, the bower of the nightingale seems very fertile and alive with numerous flowers just like the bower of Psyche. But in fact it has a smell of a grave and, as the phrases such as "fast-fading violet" and "coming musk-rose" reveal, it conceals the incessant change of seasons, that is to say, mortality.

Thus from the very beginning, the sweet song of the nightingale has been suggesting death. But so far death has not been directly referred to except in the catalogue of mortal pains in the third stanza. Instead, death has lurked behind the pleasant surface filled with the bird's sweet song and various fragrant flowers. The sixth stanza, however, directly refers to death for the first time. Listening to the nightingale that is now singing in "such an ecstasy," suddenly the poet wishes for death:

> Darkling, I listen; and, for many a time
> I have been half in love with easeful Death,
> Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,
> To take into the air my quiet breath;
> Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
> To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
> While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
> In such an ecstasy. (51-58)

As Leavis says, "Keats is strictly only half in love with death,"[36] the word "half" is very important here. The "Death," which the poet ardently wishes for as an escape from reality because he is too happy in the happiness of the sweet songbird, is "easeful" and "rich." Like one's beloved sweetheart, it is so dear as to be called by "soft names." Spelt with a capital, it is personified and totally differs from the "death" with

a small letter in the opening line of the seventh stanza. About "Death" in this stanza, E. R. Wasserman points out, "We can now see the position of death in the pleasure thermometer. . . . Death is not an event which divides two existences, but the meeting point at which the ladder of intensities enters heaven's bourne."[37] As Wasserman precisely asserts, "easeful Death" is quite different from actual harsh death in that the former gives no pain and does not divide two existences at all. It is the highest point of pleasure, which is often referred to in Keats's poems and letters. For example, in "Why Did I Laugh Tonight?" Keats says, "Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed, / But Death intenser—Death is Life's high meed"(13-14). To the poet, the intensity of easeful Death is equal to the intensity of pleasure or ecstasy that the fascinating song of the nightingale arouses in his mind.

But all these are only half revealing the poet's feeling about death. The other half, that is, his feeling about actual physical death soon appears. He says to the nightingale, "Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain-- / To thy high requiem become a sod"(59-60). When he thinks of actual painful death that will deprive him of all senses and make him mere "sod," the sweet song of the nightingale, though she is still singing among fragrant flowers and leafy trees as before, begins to sound like a "high requiem." The bird, utterly indifferent to the poet, will keep on singing in ecstasy forever. From the beginning, the poet has been attempting to fly with the bird to the blissful world of immortality. But now the sweet benignant bird begins to change into very oppressive, ponderous and, in a sense, cruel being to the mortal poet.

Thus the alluring song of the nightingale and the thought of actual

death gradually become too heavy for the poet to bear, and the ode reaches the climax. The little mortal songbird is now called "immortal bird": "Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird! / No hungry generations tread thee down"(61-62). As Vendler acutely points out, "The nightingale reaches the status of divinity as it is hailed as immortal, and the poem most fully becomes an ode, rather than an idyll, in these lines,"[38] here the ode finally begins to immortalize its subject and really becomes, in a traditional sense, an ode of praise. The "death" with a small letter signifies actual death accompanied by physical pains, which is quite different from the personified "easeful Death" in the previous stanza. Now the nightingale transcends this actual world and gains immortality that no future "hungry generations" can tread down. The word "generate" means incessant reproduction of lives in the future. The bird's immortality surpasses even the immortality of succeeding innumerable generations. The "immortal bird" at "this passing night" then gradually traces back to remote antiquity, changing from a familiar sweet songbird into some ominous primitive being:

> The voice I hear this passing night was heard
> In ancient days by emperor and clown:
> Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
> Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
> She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
> The same that oft times hath
> Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn. (63-70)

The phrase "ancient days of emperor and clown" refers to the Middle Ages when troubadours made numerous songs with various images of nightingale as a sweet cheerful songbird of love and spring. And in the far more remote antiquity when Ruth "amid the alien corn" in Bethlehem longed for her home in Moab, the nightingale was given an image of poor

helpless Philomel by the Roman poets. And now the immortal bird is enticing the poet to a strange lonely fairyland surrounded by foaming "perilous seas." We cannot see where it exists nor how far we should trace back. It is an utterly desolate world far more remote than the days of Ruth told in the Old Testament, where only the dead silence is absolute all round.

In these rapidly changing scenes, what is noticeable is that liveliness and activities are gradually vanishing. In the description of the old days of kings and clowns, various human lives and activities in various human relationships such as of lord and vassal, or master and servant, can be imagined. In the reference to Ruth "in tears," however, who is longing for her home in Moab, any liveliness or human activities cannot be found. She is totally alone and only surrounded by "alien corn." And finally in the strange fairyland, the magic casements stand still. Of course there is no sign of life at all. It is an utterly deserted "forlorn" land. The ominously foaming sea also seems to stand still without changing its surface any more as if it were painted on a canvas. Vigor and life are completely lacking here. In the middle of this overwhelming tranquillity where everything is at a standstill, only the lively song of the nightingale is triumphantly resounding. As is well known, Keats favored windows, especially those opening on the sea or the lake.[39] About the charmed magic casements in this ode, critics often point out its similarity with a line from "To J. H. Reynolds, Esq.," "The windows as if latched by fays and elves"(50). Also the influence of Claude Lorraine's famous painting, "The Enchanted Castle" is often asserted.[40] Just like the windows in the painting of Claude, the

casements here won't be fanned by a wind, and the perilous-looking sea won't change the look of its surface nor resound the roar of its waves. This eternally silent static world bears some resemblance to a mariner's ship stuck on a wide ocean which looks as "idle as a painted ship / Upon a painted ocean"(117-118) in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It is really a dreary, fearful world petrified forever without any breath or motion.

Thus, the desirable ideal world of immortality, that is, his world of imagination, which the poet has so far experienced with the nightingale, has been a truly fascinating faraway world that makes him temporarily forget in ecstasy the actual world full of mortal pains. Unexpectedly, however, it has also turned out to be a "forlorn" desolate world with no sign of life. When the poet realizes these two aspects of the immortal world, he poignantly feels "forlorn."[41] The immortal world is no more a fertile lively Elysian world. Now it is a dead world where everything seems completely petrified and deprived of life except for the song of the immortal bird.

The shadow of death that has been lurking and suddenly appears in the ideal immortal world tolls the poet back to his "sole self." It may be said that the isolation and loneliness of Ruth and her homesickness in the previous chapter foretold, in a sense, the poet's final feeling of isolation and his return to the actual world. The phrase "sole self" signifies his isolated state of mind in the middle of this really desolate world and, at the same time, it tells about his final parting from the nightingale to be alone again:

> 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. (75-78)

The song of the nightingale now no more sounds happy but "plaintive." In the very prosaic common scenery with "near meadows," "stream," "hill-side," and "near valley-glades," which is totally deprived of any mysterious fascinating elements and quite different from the embalmed bower filled with fragrant flowers and leafy trees in the previous chapters, the bird's song does not disappear somewhere in the upper sky. In stead, it is buried deep in the earth. In the sensuously perfumed darkness of the fifth and the sixth stanzas, the poet has come near being buried by the enchanting song of the nightingale. Now he buries the bird in turn.[42] It may be said that his behavior is a kind of requital for the deceit by the "deceiving elf" who has quite unexpectedly shown him another ominous aspect of blissful immortal world.

Immortality has been very fertile, blissful, and desirable in Keats's early odes and in "Ode to Psyche." But now it is revealed that in fact it conceals death. Here the important point to note is that the two aspects of immortality are reveled by the nightingale. From the very beginning, the bird has been arousing both pleasure and ominous thought of death in the poet's mind. This is caused partly by Keats's own character to feel pleasure and pain at once in everything that gives him intensity. But it is also caused by the image of the nightingale itself which suggests death in its sweet song. As has been mentioned above, the bird has gained various images, such as a cheerful songbird of spring, and a poor helpless female bird, in the long literary history. In addition to these popular images, the nightingale has another important image. It is the image of a bird of death.

From ancient times birds in general, including the nightingale, have been regarded as a symbol of the soul leaving the body when man dies because birds can fly high in the sky so easily as they please. As an example of this kind of attribution of birds, Leonard Lutwack quotes a few lines from Keats's early sonnet:[43]

> As from the darkening gloom a silver dove
> Upsoars and darts into the Eastern light
> On pinions that naught moves but pure delight;
> So fled thy soul into the realms above,
> Regions of peace and everlasting love.
> ("As from the Darkening Gloom," 1-5)

In this sonnet written on the death of his beloved grandmother, her soul flying toward heaven is compared to a silver dove that soars high into the sky. Lutwack remarks that from time immemorial birds have been poised "at the point of contact between man and immortal gods." They have been closely connected with both "underworld" and "upperworld." Among them, nocturnal birds like the nightingale and the owl, and those with black wings like the crow, have been usually regarded as able to foresee the future, especially death:

> In addition to their use in the formal practice of augury, birds were assumed to utter warnings and prophecies, a power derived not only from their access to omniscient gods but from their association with the dead, who were supposed to have the privilege of foreseeing the future. Night birds and large, black-plumaged birds were the favorite prophets of doom.[44]

The nightingale sings very passionately and beautifully all night long in the breeding season. Therefore, this bird has been often regarded as a bird that benignantly attends the soul of the dead all night long with a sweet requiem. In the southern countries of Germany, some people still believe that the nightingale brings a peaceful death to a patient on the deathbed with its sweet song, or tells about someone's death in a far foreign land by tapping on the window of his home. In the folklore, the

bird is often associated with graves.[45] Hans Biedermann says that "it [the nightingale] was interpreted as a cry for help from some 'poor soul in purgatory' or as a plaintive warning of an impending death." Biedermann points out the image of the nightingale as an ill-omened prophet of death or as death itself.[46] In the phrases like "Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain--/ To thy high requiem become a sod," or "thy plaintive anthem," we can find some resemblance to the ancient image of the nightingale as an ominous prophet of death.

As has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, in the English literature from the Middle Ages, the nightingale had been almost always depicted either as a sweet songbird of spring or as an image of poor helpless Philomel. From about the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the bird came to appear in some poems as a bird associated with death. Such an image is quite different from its previous images and similar to those told in folk tales. In "The Nightingale," for example, Gerard Manley Hopkins tells about the nightingale that sings as if prophesying the death of a lover "in the frothy deep":

> 'You know you said that the nightingale
> In all our western shires was rare,
> . . . . . .
> And now I wish that it were true.
> For he began at once and shook
> My head to hear. . . .
> . . . . . .
> With no a thing to make me fear,
> A singing bird in morning clear
> To me was terrible to hear.
> . . . . . .
> But that sweet sound which I preferred,
> Your passing steps, I never heard
> For warbling of the warbling bird.'
> Thus Frances sighed at home, while Luke
> Made headway in the frothy deep. (22-51)[47]

Here the nightingale is depicted as male, not female, and it is singing

in the clear morning, not at night nor in the evening, which is contrary to the bird's image in the long literary tradition as a poor Philomel or a sweet female songbird of spring. Hopkins's nightingale is associated with an ominous prophecy of death and given an image rather new or rare in the English literature in his day. Also in T. S. Eliot's "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," the nightingale appears in the final lines:

> The host with someone indistinct
> Converses at the door apart,
> The nightingales are singing near
> The Convent of the Sacred Heart,
>
> And sang within the bloody wood
> When Agamemnon cried aloud
> And let their liquid siftings fall
> To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud. (33-40)[48]

The reference to the nightingales in this poem are based on a legend that the nightingales were singing when Agamemnon was killed by his wife Clytemnestra and her adulterer Aegisthus with a stroke of a hatchet and he cried, "Ah, I am struck a death-blow, deep within!"[49] Here too, at the final tense scene where Sweeney is about to be killed, the nightingales are singing, resounding the ancient bloody legend of Agamemnon. Their song portends impending betrayal and ominous death.

Furthermore, in the poetry of Dylan Thomas, the nightingale is more directly connected with "the towering dead," "the graveyard," and death itself:

> Not for the proud man apart
> From the raging moon I write
> On these spindrift pages
> Not for the towering dead
> With their nightingales and psalms.
> ("In my craft or sullen art," 12-16)[50]
>
> Over the graveyard in the water
> Mountains and galleries beneath
> Nightingales and hyena
> Rejoicing for that drifting death

Sing and howl through sand and anemone
Valley and sahara in a shell.
("Ballad of the Long-legged Bait," 85-90)

These images of the nightingale, sweetly and benignantly attending "the towering dead" with "psalms," or cruelly singing and rejoicing with hyena at the "drifting death," do not belong to the familiar world of literary tradition at all. Rather, they belong to more ancient world of folklore where the bird was believed to be a harbinger of death. The nightingale of Keats, utterly indifferent to the joy and agony of a mortal poet, sings in ecstasy in a totally desolated "fairy lands forlorn" and gradually changes into an immortal bird. His nightingale seems to have something in common with an ancient image of the bird of death depicted both in the ancient anonymous folk tales and in the poetry of the nineteenth and the twentieth century poets. In a sense, his nightingale was a forerunner of such a primitive anonymous image of the bird that revived later in literature.

Listening to the nightingale, John Crowe Ransom laments over the dullness of his sensibility that cannot feel the sound of long literary history in this famous bird's "classics":

Out of the darkness where Philomela sat,
Her fairy numbers issued. What then ailed me?
My ears are called capacious but they failed me,
Her classics registered a little flat!
I rose, and venomously spat. ("Philomela," 31-35)[51]

About this poem Thornton H. Parsons says, "'Philomela' has the retroactive impact that Ransom values."[52] Driven by this impact, innumerable poets have made poems on the nightingale, remembering the bird's conventional various images written by the former poets. Under the influence of such literary tradition, Keats too wrote a familiar image

of the bird as a sweet songbird of spring in his early poems. But in this ode, while at first sight the nightingale is truly a conventional common songbird, its enchanting song incessantly bears a shadow of death. And the bird finally gains immortality to be a totally unfamiliar being in a strange forlorn land. The poet's final cry, "The fancy cannot cheat so well / As she is famed to do, deceiving elf," expresses his final realization of this completely unfamiliar, ominous image of the bird which cannot be found in the long literary history. Many poets, including Keats, have been cheated "so well" by the bird's too conventional various images, and unable to see its another face as a bird of death. Apparently, this ode seems to praise both the fascinating song of the nightingale and the blissful ideal world of immortality that the bird represents. Quite unexpectedly, however, this Elysian world of immortality conceals death in fact, which is revealed by the second image of the nightingale, that is, a bird as a harbinger of death. Because of this sudden appearance of death in the middle of the fertile immortal world, the nightingale is flatly rejected and finally buried deep, and the poet bids farewell to the bird.

## Notes to Chapter V

1. William Henry Hudson, *British Birds* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1923), pp. 89-90.

2. Generally, the nightingale in this poem is regarded as a very popular and secular love poet, while the owl is a stern and meditative religious poet. About the image of the bird in this poem, see J. M. H. Atkins, *The Owl and the Nightingale* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), pp. lv-lxi.

3. H. E. Rollins, ed., *The Keats Circle: Letters and Papers 1816-1879* 2vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), II, p. 65. But Brown's story has been called into doubt by many critics. See, for example, John Barnard, ed., *John Keats: The Complete Poems* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1983), p. 653.

4. Many critics attempt to explain the development of Keats's imagination in this poem by referring to these three processes. For example, see Bernard Blackstone, *The Consecrated Urn: An Interpretation of Keats in Terms of Growth and Form* (London: Longmans, 1959), p. 370, Katharine M. Wilson, *The Nightingale and the Hawk: A Psychological Study of Keats' Ode* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), p. 130, Helen Vendler, *The Odes of John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 86.

5. David Perkins, *The Quest for Permanence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 254.

6. Beth Lau, *Keats's Reading of the Romantic Poets* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 28.

7. Cedric Watts, *A Preface to Keats* (London: Longman, 1985), p.

126.

8.R. Warwick Bond, ed., *The Complete Works of John Lyly* vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902).

9. Edward Arber, ed., *The English Scholar's Library* vol. III (New York: AMS Press, 1967).

10. G. R. Dennis, ed., *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope* vol. I (London: George Bell & Sons, 1891).

11. In *The change of Philomel: The Nightingale in Medieval Literature* (New York: Peter Lan, 1985), Wendy Pfeffer says, "One can see the transformation of the nightingale over the thousand years of its existence in religious poetry. Although there was a continuous flirtation with the ideas associated with the bird in secular works, the songbird in devotional material remained distinct. It was associated with God and with love of God, with the light that God brings. The bird is rarely the representative of the poet, rarely a sign of spring"(p. 49). About the religious image of the bird, see also Jan M. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry, 750-1150* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 159, 186, 246.

12. Wendy Pfeffer, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

13. Beryl Rowland, *Birds with Human Souls: A Guide to Bird Symbolisms* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978), p. 106.

14. Wendy Pfeffer, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

15. For example, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Valentine says, "Except I be by Silvia in the night, / There is no music in the nightingale," (III, I, 178-179).

16. J. M. Telfer, "The Evolution of a Medieval Theme," *Durham*

*University Journal*, vol. 45, December, 1952, p. 29.

17. F. J. Child, ed., *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* vol. V (New York: Dover, 1965), p. 295.

18. Richard Morris, ed., *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* vol. VI (London: George Bell & Sons, 1891).

19. Stanley Wells, ed., *Thomas Nashe* (The Stratford-upon-Avon Library 1) (London: Edward Arnold, 1964).

20. John Carey, ed., *John Milton Complete Shorter Poems* (London: Longman, 1989).

21. Katharine M. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

22. Harold Bloom, ed., *The Odes of Keats* (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), p. 8.

23. Katharine M. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

24. About hemlock, see Ivor H. Evans, ed., *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (London: Cassell, 1989), pp. 538, 1035.

25. About the song of the nightingale from the very beginning of the poem, Bloom remarks that the "effect of the song on Keats is dual and strongly physical, indeed almost deathly," *op. cit.*, p. 8.

26. Many critics point out the coexistence of pleasure and pain in Keats's poems. See, For example, Barnard Blackstone, *op. cit.*, p. 324, G. M. Knight, *The Starlit Dome* (1941. London: Methuen, 1959), p. 298, E. R. Wasserman, *The Finer Tone: Keats's Major Poems* (1953. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1967), p. 180.

27. Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 26-27.

28. Stuart A. Ende points out the image of burial here. He says,

"'Deep-delved' suggests the cultivation of the soil, and the cellars used for aging Keats's favorite wine, claret. But it suggests too the ritual of burial, of continual burials and of generations gone before, all of them Into that earthly resting place," "Identification and Identity: The 'Ode to a Nightingale,'" Harold Bloom, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 67.

29. As an example of "purple" with the meaning of "bloody," *OED* derives from *The Eve of St. Agnes*, "Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose, / Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart / Made purple riot"(136-138).

30. F. R. Leavis, *Revaluation* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1936), p. 247, Cedric Watts, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

31. Concerning the lines from "But here there is no light" in the fourth stanza to the end of the sixth stanza, Bloom says that they depict "the inner world of his poem, that highest state of the imagination," which he compares to Blake's "Eden," and asserts, "What for Blake is a state of greater *vision* is for Keats the realm of the *viewless*," *op. cit.*, p. 9.

32. David Perkins, *op. cit.*, p. 251. He says, "The primary sense of the word in this context is 'perfumed,' but there is also the suggestion of death, as though to be in the forest were a scented hushed burial."

33. A. E. Housman, *A Shropshire Lad* (New York: The World Publishing, 1947). Samuel Hynes, ed., *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), vol. II.

34. Vendler says, "The poet's position in embalmed darkness, with flowers at his feet, makes him a tomb-effigy," *op. cit.*, p. 84.

35. Vendler compares this bower to the bower in "Ode to Psyche," and regards the latter as "the timeless mythological bower," *ibid.*, p. 91.

36. F. R. Leavis, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

37. E. R. Wasserman, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

38. Helen Vendler, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

39. In his letters, Keats often tells about his romantic delight in windows looking out over water. For example, he tells Fanny Keats, "I should like the window to open onto the Lake of Geneva—and there I'd sit and read all day like the picture of somebody reading," *Letters* II, p. 46.

40. For further details of Keats's knowledge of, and fondness for, Claude Lorraine's painting, see Ian Jack, *Keats and the Mirror of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 67-68.

41. About the two meanings of the word "forlorn," that is to say, the desolation of the immortal world and the isolation of the poet, see, for example, Cleanth Brooks, *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939), p. 31.

42. Morris Dickstein remarks, "It is rather the immortal nightingale who paradoxically dies," "The Fierce Dispute: The 'Ode to a Nightingale,'" Harold Bloom, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 39.

43. Leonard Lutwack, *Birds in Literature* (Crainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), pp. 120-121.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

45. About the nightingale associated with death or grave, see, for example, Beryl Rowland, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109, H. W. Garrod, "The Nightingale in Poetry," *The Profession of Poetry and Other Lectures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), pp. 134, 136.

46. Hans Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism: Cultural Icons & the Meanings behind Them*, trans. J. Hulbert (New York: Facts on File,

1992), p. 237.

47. Robert Bridges and W. H. Gardner, eds., *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

48. T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969).

49. Gilbert Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (1949. New York: Galaxy Book, 1957), pp. 513-514.

50. Walford Davies and Ralph Maud, eds., *Dylan Thomas: Collected Poems 1934-1953* (London: J. M. Dent, 1988).

51. John Crowe Ransom, *John Crowe Ransom: Selected Poems* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969).

52. Thornton H. Parsons, *John Crowe Ransom* (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 125.

# CHAPTER VI

## ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION OF CIRCULARITY IN "ODE ON A GRECIAN URN" AND "ODE ON INDOLENCE"

"Ode on a Grecian Urn" was written in the spring of 1819 immediately after "Ode to Nightingale," though the precise date of composition is conjectural. This time the theme of the ode is not a deity nor a living creature, but one lifeless object, a marble urn. Keats seems to have a liking for such words as "urn" and "vase." They often appear in his early works. And as we will see soon, in "Ode on Indolence" the word "urn" is also used. At first sight, it may seem that Keats uses these two words without any clear distinction. But in fact there is a subtle difference between them. Let us consider following quotations from his works to see how Keats uses these words:

> Aye, 'bove the withering of old-lipped Fate
> A thousand powers keep religious state,
> In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne,
> And, silent as a consecrated urn,
> Hold sphery sessions for a season due. (*Endymion* III, 29-33)

> Oh, let me hear thee speak, for Cupid's sake!
> I am so oppressed with joy! Why, I have shed
> An urn of tears, as though thou wert cold-dead.
> (*Endymion* III, 430-432)

> "I have no friends," said Lamia, "no, not one;
> My presence in wide Corinth hardly known
> My parents' bones are in their dusty urns
> Sépulchred, where no kindled incense burns,
> Seeing all their luckless race are dead, save me,
> And I neglect the holy rite for thee." (*Lamia* ii, 92-97)

> The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings—
> Fair dewy roses brush against our faces
> And flowering laurels spring from diamond vases;
> O'er head we see the jasmine and sweetbriar,
> And bloomy grapes laughing from green attire.
> ("I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," 132-136)

> From his right hand there swung a vase, milk-white,
> Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous light;
> And in his left he held a basket full
> Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull—
> (*Endymion* I, 153-156)

Of course there may be some exceptions. But in general in the poetry of Keats, "vase" is usually used as a luxurious ornament, while "urn" is often associated with holiness, gloominess, sorrow, and especially with death. Concerning Keats's devotion to "urn" as one of the precious antiquities of ancient Greece, James Dickie remarks after some of the quotations from Keats poems:

> That Keats was an urn-addict is sufficiently apparent from the quotations already cited, but were additional proof required, it lies to hand in a drawing by the poet's own hand of the Sosibios Vase in the Louvre. This drawing, now in the Keats-Shelley Memorial House at Rome, though not of the urn which figures in the ode, is nevertheless of transcendent importance in the identification of the real urn.[1)]

The Sosibios Vase that Dickie points out here is an antique Greek vase exhibited at that time in the Musée Napoléon in Paris. It is well known that Keats himself made a drawing of the engraving of this vase which was introduced by Henry Moses in his *A Collection of Antique Vases, Altars, Patterae, Tripods, Candelabra, Sarcophagi, etc. from Various Museums and Collections*(1814). To identify the real urn addressed by Keats in this ode, many critics have pointed out various possible sources in vain, such as the Townley Vase, the Borghese Vase, the Elgin Marbles and of course, the Sosibios Vase. In those days, a lot of books on the precious antique art works were published, in which a lot of Greek vases were introduced through engravings. Keats must have seen some of them and made a drawing of his own, though a clumsy one.

In March 1817, Keats went to the British Museum with Benjamin R.

Haydon to see the Greek antique sculptures which Thomas Bruce Elgin had brought back from the Parthenon in Athens and were purchased by the nation in 1816. Keats was greatly moved to see the Elgin Marbles for the first time. In his two sonnets, "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles" and "To B. R. Haydon, with a Sonnet Written on Seeing the Elgin Marbles," he relates his first impression and excitement at them. He compares the "Grecian grandeur," that is, the immortal Greek antiquities, with a poor mortal poet on whom "mortality / Weighs heavily" "like unwilling sleep." His devotion to the antique Greek art works is proved by his friends. For example, Joseph Severn says that Keats "went again and again to see the Elgin Marbles, and would sit for an hour or more at a time beside them rapt in revery."[2] And Haydon records in his diary for December 17, 1824, that Keats has "passed an hour in the evening devouring on [sic] two or three of my Elgin fragments, the solace of my melancholy fits."[3] Just like the nightingale in the garden whose fascinating song Keats listened to for hours in ecstasy, the ancient Greek art works, especially antique Greek urns, were very fascinating to give him infinite intense joy.

However, it was not Keats alone that was fascinated by the Greek antiquities, especially by its urns and vases. As Ian Jack points out, "No product of 'Attic Muse' made a deeper appeal at this time than the vases and urns which had been so assiduously collected in the previous century,"[4] in Keats's day many people took great interest in the Greek urns and vases. Concerning the popularity of the Greek art works at this time George R. Levine remarks, "This period abounds in poems inspired by ancient vases as well as in illustrated books and essays on Greek art and sculpture."[5] It became really popular to enjoy ancient Greek vases

and urns, and furthermore, various paintings of various artists, and to write poems on them. Walter Jackson Bate remarks that such a way of writing poetry follows the *ut pictura poesis* tradition:

> The poet simply addresses the figures without seeking to identify them. He adopts, in other words, the conventional romantic form of the *ut pictura poesis* tradition, in which the poet contemplates the work of art, often while directly addressing it, and derives from it a subject for meditation.[6]

This convention may be found already in the poetry of the eighteenth century, such as Matthew Prior's "Picture of Seneca Dying in a Bath: By Jordain" and Edward Young's "On Michael Angelo's Famous Piece of the Crucifixion," and of course in some of the poetry of the Romantic poets. Wordsworth's "Upon the Sight of a Beautiful Picture" may be called one of these "picture-poems"[7]:

> Praised be the Art whose subtle power could stay
> Yon Cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;
> Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
> Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
> . . . . . .
> Soul-soothing Art! Which Morning, Noon-tide, Even
> Do serve with all their changeful pageantry!
> Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
> Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
> To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
> The appropriate calm of blest eternity. (1-14)

Beth Lau regards the theme of this poem of Wordsworth as the "permanence of art contrasted to flux and mortality of natural life."[8] The poet praises the power of art that can "fix" the "glorious shape" "caught from fleeting time," and make "mortal man" feel the "calm of blest eternity." As Bate states, to the poet the picture becomes "a subject for meditation." The immortality of art that can give mortal man really blissful consolation is highly praised in a rather didactic tone.

Likewise, in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" an art work becomes a subject for meditation, on which the poet writes a poem. In a sense, this poem

belongs to the genre of "picture-poetry" or "urn-poetry" that were very popular at that time. In this poem, however, Keats does not simply and formally follow the *ut pictura poesis* tradition to praise the immortality of art and didactically meditate on mortality. He does not attempt to calmly or philosophically appreciate the urn as an excellent work of art. Instead, he becomes really identified with the urn, and directly or physically experiences the attractive immortal world that the urn represents without any didactic meditation. He enjoys its intense, blissful immortality to the full by totally forgetting the actual world for a moment. Then all of a sudden in the midst of this great enjoyment, death appears. Immediately the poet is forced to return from the blissful joy to the actual world, and the urn turns again into a lifeless art work. Again in this ode, the two aspects of immortality appear. The lively fertile world on the urn conceals the ominous shadow of death in fact.

Because of such "excursion-return structure"[9] or "flight from reality and a return to it"[10] pattern enacted in this poem, critics often point out the similarity between this ode and "Ode to a Nightingale."[11] As we have seen in the previous chapter, in "Ode to a Nightingale," the two aspects of immortality are revealed by the two images of the nightingale, that is, a cheerful songbird of spring and an ominous bird of death. In "Ode on a Grecian Urn," the two aspects of immortality are reveled by the two different pictures depicted on the two opposite surfaces of the urn. The one is the picture of cheerful happy world filled with immortal love and music depicted in the second and the third stanza. And the other is the picture of serene world with the procession of pious

people coming to the sacrifice and the immortally desolate town depicted in the fourth stanza.[12] Moreover, the two different aspects of immortality are revealed not only by these two different pictures on the urn, but also by the two opposite essential characteristics that the urn itself possesses in general. Originally the urn involves both fertile immortality and barren death in its rounded shape. Like in "Ode to a Nightingale," the poet is fascinated by the intense beauty of the urn and enjoys its immortal world for a moment only to see latent death quite unexpectedly in the midst of its fertility.

In the following we will examine how the two aspects of immortality are revealed. What should be noticed is the last stanza of the ode. Unlike "Ode to a Nightingale" which ends with a strong hatred and flat rejection of the shadow of death lurking in the blissful immortal world, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" does not end with the outright rejection of the urn that conceals death. The last stanza refers to the inscription of the urn. The inscription suggests the circular shape of the urn and the possible repetition of the experience even after the final appearance of death in the blissful immortal world. It seems that the poet is to be again fascinated by the urn and again to experience its immortal world just as he has done now. So far the immortal Elysian world in Keats's early odes has gradually turned into the detestable world concealing death. But here the two opposite aspects of immortality begin to be reconciled or accepted. Later in "To Autumn," we will see their final reconciliation. In "Ode on a Grecian Urn," we must examine its sign.

The ode begins with an apostrophe:

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,

Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme! (1-4)

An address to the subject and the reference to its special ability are very conventional for the opening of the ode. The urn is a "bride" and a "historian," though it is "still unravished" and a "foster-child of silence." As many critics have pointed out, the ode begins with "a note of paradox" and "apparent contradiction."[13] The contradictory character of the urn is reflected in the two different pictures of the urn depicted in the following three stanzas. Being addressed in rapid succession as "bride," "foster-child," and "Sylvan historian," the lifeless marble urn is quickly vivified. The importunate question after question with the repetition of "what" in the latter half of the fist stanza depicts one of the two pictures on the urn, as Sidney Colvin remarks that they are "interrogatories which are at the same time picture."[14] The question, "What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape"? (5) suggests the voluptuous roundness of the urn like a woman's body. By the various images of "growing things"[15] or thickly generating plants suggested in "Sylvan," "flowery," and "leaf-fringed," and by the various sexual connotations in "ravish," "maidens loth," "mad pursuit," "struggle to escape," and "wild ecstasy,"[16] the inanimate marble urn gradually gains fertile liveliness and voluptuousness, which develop into the blissful happy world filled with immortal love and music.

The two following stanzas depict the lively immortal world and celebrate the joy of permanence. They form a marked contrast with the fourth and the fifth stanza that question such joy. The opening lines of the second stanza attempts a kind of conventional address or invocation:

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;

Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone. (11-14)

While tradition is followed to a certain degree, the reference to "unheard melodies" and "ditties of no tone" suggests that no one can hear the music. In other words, it implies the total lack of audience and the monopolization of the blissful immortal world by the poet alone, which is quite different from the public and extrovert characteristic of the traditional ode of praise. He asks the "soft pipes" to pipe not to "the sensual ear" but to "the spirit." He wants to monopolize the music in his own inner ears alone. Just like in "Ode to Psyche" where the poet secretly builds the shrine of the goddess in his own mind, and in "Ode to a Nightingale" where the poet leaves the actual world to be totally alone with the nightingale, here too the poet attempts to monopolize and internalize the immortal world in his own ode. He asserts that these internalized "unheard melodies" in his mind are sweeter than the heard melodies in public. In a sense, the assertion reveals his pride in the superiority of his ode over the conventional public ode.

With such confidence, the poet depicts the rich immortal world on the surface of the Grecian urn:

Fair youth beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet do not grieve:
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs, that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearièd,
For ever piping songs for ever new!
More happy love, more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting and for ever young-- (15-27)

The trees never become bare, the boughs never shed their leaves, and the

spring never bids adieu. This leaf-fringed bower of immortal spring is similar to the immortal bower where Psyche and Cupid are peacefully sleeping among the innumerable flowers and trees. The bower represents the fertility of the blissful immortal world full of life. Under the evergreen trees, the fair youth is singing forever and the bold lover is forever running after the sweet maiden to kiss her, who is young forever. And the happy melodist is forever playing songs which are forever new. As Grant F. Scott remarks, "The third stanza finds the observer at the acme of his optimism, closer to an absolute empathy with the urn than he has been or will be,"[17] the poet is now enjoying the immortal world depicted on the run to the full. The blissfulness of this world filled with immortal love, song, beauty, youth, and spring, is reflected in the repetition of the word "happy" in the third stanza.

Apparently, the bold lover and the maiden who are thus enjoying blissful immortality resemble Psyche and Eros, or Hermes and his sweet nymph. But in fact the lovers depicted on the urn are decidedly different from the other two couples. Needless to say, Psyche, Eros, Hermes, and the nymph, are all immortal beings from the beginning. They all belong to the world totally different from the world of mortal man and live in the hierarchy of gods in ancient myth. On the other hand, it is not clear whether the lovers on the urn have already gained immortality and belong to the divine order, or they are definitely mortal beings. Though the poet asks whether they are "deities or mortals, or of both," the question remains unanswered.[18] Therefore, while the third stanza depicts blissful immortal world, it cannot end with an innocent praise of immortality. In the midst of this immortal bower, mortality is

referred to. The immortal love depicted on the urn stands:

> All breathing human passion far above,
> That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
> A burning forehead, and a parching tongue. (28-30)

In order to emphasize the immortality of love, various pains of mortal love are related. The words such as "breathing," "passion," a "high-sorrowful" heart, a "burning forehead," and a "parching tongue," refer to the unbearable pains of passionate love of mortal man. But at the same time, they remind us of the pains of sickness, or even the pains of death. As we have already seen, the catalogue of mortal pains in "Ode to a Nightingale," though it is related to emphasize the immortal charm of the song of the nightingale, unexpectedly reveals mortal, physical pains too much. Here too, the reference to the pains of mortal love reveals ponderous shadow of mortality in the midst of the praise of immortal love.

Such a tinge of gloominess appears already in the previous stanza which tells about the immortal pleasures under the immortal bower. The second stanza praises the immortal love, immortal youth, immortal trees, and immortal songs to emphasize the blissful immortality. But in fact the praise is all based on negative affirmations. The young man "canst not leave" his song, even if he wants to stop singing, and the trees cannot be bare, even if they want to be. The bold lover "never, never canst" kiss, and the maiden cannot grow old. The comforting words to the happy lover who lives in the immortal world, "yet do not grieve," suggest the essential grievance lurking in the joy of immortality. Likewise in the third stanza, the boughs "cannot shed" their leaves, the spring cannot bid adieu, and the melodist cannot stop piping new songs. All are negatively affirmed. The repeated references to immortality, such as "for ever," "still," and

"ever," sound a sense of increasing crisis. When a subtle distance between the blissful immortal world on the urn and the poet comes to be revealed, or the "nostalgia of the outsider"[19] thus appears, the urn suddenly changes its picture as if to deny such a gloomy shadow.

The forth stanza depicts a serene procession of pious people who, lead by a "mysterious priest," are going to offer a sacrifice to a deity:

> Who are those coming to the sacrifice?
> To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
> Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
> And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed? (31-34)

Critics often point out the similarity between this sacrifice scene and the lines in "To J. H. Reynolds, Esq.," "The sacrifice goes on; the pontiff knife / Gleans in the sun, the milk-white heifer lows, / The pipes go shrilly, the libation flows"(20-22). And the "heifer" lead by the priest resembles the young cow that is sadly lowing at the sky and led by three men on the Elgin Marbles (South Frieze). It is true that the phrases like "lowing at the skies," and "silken flanks," vividly depicts the picture of the serene, pious world of immortality on the urn, as Cedric Watts says that these phrases "perform the trick of investing with audible, tangible life the urn's world."[20] And there must exist not a few pious people led by the priest to the altar, and we can find the reference to plants such as, "green," and "garlands." The silent picture, however, has an atmosphere quite different from the immortal world of love and music depicted in the previous chapters filled with lively men and plants. Though the altar is covered with plants and the heifer is dressed with garlands, there exists no sense of teeming life such as aroused by soft-breathing lovers and thickly growing plants in "Ode to Psyche." Jack Stillinger remarks that the mysterious procession of pious people is in "perpetual

midwayness."[21] This immortally silent world totally lacks the sense of life and activity. It is far from fertility and only makes us feel that something is wanting or left incomplete.

So far the poet has depicted the picture sculptured on the urn in front of him, whether it is a real art work or not. Now in the latter half of the stanza he depicts a picture of a faraway little town that exists not on the surface of the urn but only in his own imagination. For the first time, the poet turns his eyes from the urn in front of him and begins to imagine a distant town that must have been deserted by the pious people:

> What little town by river or sea shore,
> Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
> Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
> And, little town, thy streets for evermore
> Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
> Why thou art desolate can e'er return. (35-40)

The little town which the pious folk in perpetual midwayness left behind remains deserted for ever. At first sight, the town may seem peaceful. But it is reigned by a kind of ominous "unfathomable silence."[22] As the words such as, "emptied," "desolate," suggest, rather than the peacefulness of silence, its negative attributes, that is, the sense of desolation, loneliness, and barrenness come to the surface. By the phrase "this pious morn," it is clear that the pious procession to the sacrifice synchronizes with the desertion of the little town. Far away from the people who are perpetually going to the green altar, there now really exists a desolate little town where not a soul can be seen, nor can ever return for ever. Here the shadow of death appears for the first time, which has lurked in the ideal immortal world depicted in the previous stanzas.

As Grant F. Scott remarks that "the urn shares a number of

attributes with Medusa,"[23] it is possible to find "the fear of castration" or petrifaction in the figure of these pious people. They are sculpted on a marble urn to be immobilized and lose their voice for ever, unable to go back to their native town for ever. Such a fear of eternal petrifaction is precisely a fear of death. On a pious morning in the peaceful silent world where pious folk go to the green altar in procession to offer a sacrifice to a deity, death appears quite unexpectedly. Immortality that should be a blissful, lively, and longed-for world conceals death or "the knowledge of death"[24] in fact.

Such a shadow of death, however, has already existed from the beginning of the fourth stanza. The word "sacrifice" itself may suggest something that reminds us of death. Of course, to make a sacrifice on the altar is a really religious, solemn rites. At the same time, it cannot be denied that the behavior in the ceremony itself is nothing but a bloody slaughter. The silken flanks of the heifer are dressed with garlands. Its lowing at the skies sounds quite plaintive as if the heifer has a premonition that its time to go has come. Such an ominous premonition of death, which lurks in the pious procession led by a mysterious priest, immediately makes the poet imagine the desolate town that the people left behind to participate in the religious slaughter. The overwhelming sense of desolation begins to reign the peaceful immortal world.

As is well known, many paintings, urns, and vases depict the scene of sacrifice, especially of the famous ancient sacrifice to Apollo. Critics often point out that not only the ancient Greek vases, such as the Holland House Vase that depict some sacrifice scenes, but also Claude Lorrain's painting, "Landscape with the Father of Psyche Sacrificing at the Temple

of Apollo," which was exhibited at the British Institution in 1816, must have influenced the reference to sacrifice in this ode. *Lemprière's Classical Dictionary*, one of Keats's favorite books, tells about the ancient religious rites performed for Apollo and Hyacinthus:

> [Hyacinthia was] an annual solemnity at Amyclae, in Laconia, in honour of Hyacinthus and Apollo. It continued for three days, during which time the grief of the people for the death of Hyacinthus was so great that they did not adorn their hair with garlands during their festivals, nor eat bread. . . . On the second day of the festival there were a number of different exhibitions. Youths, with their garments girt about them, entertained the spectators by playing sometimes upon the flute, or upon the harp, and by singing anapestic songs, in loud, echoing voices, in honour of Apollo. . . . The city began then to be filled with joy, and immense numbers of victims were offered on the altars of Apollo, and the votaries liberally entertained their friends and slaves. During the latter part of the festivity, all were eager to be present at the games, and the city was left almost without inhabitants.[25]

In this religious ceremony, people lamented the miserable death of poor Hyacinthus, while they enjoyed dance and music. Just like the description in the ode, the "immense numbers of victims were offered on the altars of Apollo" and "the city was left almost without inhabitants." Here too, a sacrifice was offered and the town became deserted. Behind a pious rites, a desolate town without a soul existed in remote antiquity.

The moment the poet imagines a deserted town at a faint smell of death, the urn loses its life and turns again into its original figure, a lifeless marble object at a stroke. The immortal world that the poet momentarily enjoys on the surface of the urn offers only "a tentative ideal."[26] The final return to the actual world is often compared to the similar return in the last part of "Ode to a Nightingale." As the word "forlorn" had a marked impact to make the poet return to the actual in "Ode to a Nightingale," here the phrase "not a soul can ever return" becomes a decisive stimulus to the final return. While Keats ardently

desires to fly from the actual world to fully enjoy the world of imagination, he often fears that he may never return to the actual. The conflicting feelings, the longing for flight and the fear of never returning, appear in many of Keats's poems. For example, in "Lines Written in the Highlands after a Visit to Burns's Country," he says:

> Scanty the hour and few the steps beyond the bourn of care,
> Beyond the sweet and bitter world—beyond it unaware;
> Scanty the hour and few the steps, because a longer stay
> Would bar return, and make a man forget his mortal way.
> Oh, horrible to lose the sight of well-remembered face,
> Of brother's eyes, of sister's brow, constant to every place.
> . . . . . .
> No, no, that horror cannot be, for at the cable's length
> Man feels the gentle anchor pull and gladdens in its strength.
> (29-40)

While he wants to go beyond "the bourn of care," beyond this "sweet and bitter world," it would be "horrible" and really a horror to be unable to feel the strength of "the gentle anchor" "at the cable's length." This fear of losing the contact with the actual, the fear of never return, is precisely the fear of death. So far the poet has been fascinated by the blissful immortal world depicted on the surface of the urn and enjoyed it to the full. But in fact it has concealed the shadow of death which arouses the fear of never return in the poet's mind.

Thus, the poet quite unexpectedly finds death in the midst of his longed-for immortal world, which arouses a strong note of disenchantment. The final stanza begins to distance "the urn to its proper sphere."[27] First, it follows tradition and addresses the urn by various names just as we have seen in the first stanza:

> O Attic shape! Fair attitude! With brede
> Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
> With forest branches and the trodden weed—
> Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
> As doth eternity. Cold pastoral! (41-45)

Quite contrary to the process in the first stanza where the lifeless urn is called in various names such as, "bride," "foster-child," and "historian," and is rapidly personified and vivified, here the urn is changed into a cold still life, an inanimate object again at a stroke. It is addressed, "shape," "attitude," "silent form," and "Cold pastoral" with a bewildering rapidity. As *OED* says that in fine arts, the word "attitude" means the disposition or the posture of a figure in statuary or painting, all these words of address suggest an art work totally deprived of life.[28)]

Furthermore, the "marble men and maidens" sculpted on the surface of the urn are also deprived of life. Now they do not play music or fall in love with someone else. Their stiff figures resemble those who are petrified by Medusa. And such a petrified figure is also, in a sense, the figure of the poet himself who has been fascinated by the blissful immortality depicted on the surface of the urn to come near to being left alone in the horrible, desolate, immortal world where death lurks. These marble men and maidens cannot fascinate him any more. Instead, they arouse fear and a sense of desolation to make him detest and flatly reject them. Now the urn is "overwrought" with these detestable fixed men and women. The word "overwrought" may have various meanings. It means, for example, "figured or decorated the surface of," "excited to the point of forgetting one's manners," and "inlaid and intertwined."[29)] But here it seems that "overrepresented" is the most suitable meaning of the word, as Martin Aske suggests.[30)] The word "overwrought" suggests that the urn not only represents blissful immortal world, but also the latent shadow of death in the midst of the world. The urn is so

overrepresented as to reveal what the poet need not see.

The latent shadow of death can be found also in "forest branches" and "trodden weed." Compared to the reference to "flowery tale" and "leaf-fringed legend" in the first stanza, and the happy trees and boughs that will never shed their leaves in the second and the third stanza, here the trees of the forest have only bare branches. They are barren, skeletal, and create an eerie atmosphere without vitality or liveliness. Furthermore, the place is not alive with flowering plants. Instead, only the weeds are vainly trodden down and all the plants seem to be virtually dead. Of course, the "weed" means "plant that grows wild and rank and is often regarded as hindering the growth of superior vegetation." But at the same time, it may remind us of "mourning apparel." The pastoral scene thus represented by the lifeless, petrified "marble men and maidens," by the eerie skeletal "forest branches," and by the flowerless "trodden weed," is described as "cold," which is also a common epithet of death.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, in "Ode to a Nightingale," the nightingale, who sings a fascinating song and allows the poet to see the fertile immortal world, turns out to be a sinister deceiving songbird who makes him experience the desolation of death. Similarly, now it is clear that the urn, which allows the poet to see the lively immortal world, turns out to be a really teasing being. Just like the nightingale, the two opposite characteristics of the urn reveal the two essential characteristics of immortality for Keats. The urn quite unexpectedly betrays death that lurks in the middle of its fertile immortality. It is, as it were, the *memento mori*, similar to the nightingale. What should

be noticed here, however, is that while the previous ode ends with the final burial of the nightingale as a sinister bird of death, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" ends by only changing the urn to its original figure, an inanimate art work. It does not end the longed-for flight to the immortal world by flatly rejecting and burying the urn deep:

> When old age shall this generation waste,
> Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
> Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
> 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all we need to know. (46-50)

Though the urn betrays ominous death in immortality, still it will transcend all future generations. The ode ends by praising the transcendental immortality of the urn and describing the inscription on its surface. In "Ode to a Nightingale," the "hungry generations" attempt to tread down the nightingale. But here the "generation" is not hostile to the urn at all. Instead, it is doomed to be wasted by "old age." Generations are perpetually changing and every generation perpetually has its own woe. On the other hand, the urn exits for ever in the midst of the woe of every generation, concealing an ominous shadow of death within it. The last stanza does not end with a flat reject of the urn. Instead, it attempts to admit the superiority of the immortal urn.

Concerning the last five lines, especially the last two, a lot of critics have given various interpretations.[31] For example, T. S. Eliot regards the last two lines as meaningless and a blemish, and I. A. Richards calls them "pseudo-statement."[32] Some editors like H. W. Garrod give no quotation marks to the last two lines, others enclose only the phrase "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" as we see in this edition of Miriam Allott, or enclose the whole two lines in quotation marks as the

edition of John Barnard. By whom, and to whom, are these two lines addressed? Critics have variously argued about this point and yet have not come to a conclusion. Among these critics, the punctuation by Cedric Watts seems rather proper. He uses double quotation marks in the last two lines, "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." He asserts that "the whole of the last two lines is an utterance by the urn. The poet introduces the urn's statement."[33] They represent the inscription of the urn which is similar to those often carved on the ancient urns and vases.[34] What is important and should be noticed here is not the argument about the author and the content of the last two lines on truth and beauty, but the fact that the ode ends by introducing the inscription of the urn. And it makes this ode quite different from "Ode to a Nightingale," though the similarity between these two odes is often pointed out. It suggests that the characteristic of the immortal world has greatly changed for Keats.

On the frieze of the Socibios Vase, which is the source of Keats's drawing of an ancient Greek vase introduced above, an inscription "Socibios made me" was carved. It was on the opposite side to the one Keats really saw and made a sketch of. It was an important convention in ancient Greece to carve an inscription on one's own art works when it was finished. About these ancient inscriptions George F. Levine remarks, "What these inscriptions clearly establish is the intent of the potter or painter to imbue the vase (or urn, cup, plate, etc.) with a quasi-animate presence." He points out that the ancient Greek artisans were thought to have some divine power to give life to inanimate things:

> This is quite consistent with the consciousness of the ancient Greek of the role that art played in transforming the inanimate into the

> animate, in breathing life and being into the very clay upon which they walked. It is significant that potter is one of only two craftsmen (the other being the blacksmith) to whom the ancient Greeks attributed god-like powers of creativity, including the power to animate the inanimate.[35]

Of course Keats must have known about this ancient tradition, and he must have really seen some of such inscriptions, as he was deeply fascinated by the Greek antiquities including the Elgin Marbles. It may be said that when finishing an ode on a Grecian urn, Keats as a potter attempted to follow the ancient convention and made his work "a quasi-animate presence" by carving an inscription on it. By the introduction of an inscription that can vivify an inanimate art work, the urn gains life again at the end of the ode, though it has been already returned to a cold, lifeless, marble art work. About the word "legend" in the first stanza, Jerome McGann says that "it means both a particular story from ancient myth or history, as well as an inscription."[36] The reference to an inscription in the last two lines may suggest that the urn has been just turned around. That is to say, first we begin to enjoy the urn from its "inscription" or "legend," then we turn it or walk around it in one direction, and finally we end enjoying it with the "inscription" that we saw first. If it is moved a little more, the same picture that was seen a little while ago will appear again. Then we can enjoy again the fertile immortal world where the trees never shed their leaves and bold lovers run after their beautiful maidens forever. The inscription suggests not only the circular shape of the urn, but also the immortal repetition or circularity of the process of the blissful flight from the actual to the immortal world. And of course it also suggests that the ominous shadow of death will suddenly appear again in the midst of the peaceful immortal

world. It may be said that in the last stanza, the possibility of perpetually repeated emergence of death and fertile immorality is suggested.

In this way, it is now revealed that the urn is "Janus-faced,"[37] which, enchantingly beckoning the poet, flatly dismisses him just like the nightingale does. The urn exists, involving both blissful fertility and sinister death in the immortal world that it depicts on its own surface. And these two aspects, that is, fertility and death, exactly characterize the immortality of Keats. Just like in "Ode to a Nightingale," here too, the essential characteristics of the urn quite unexpectedly reveal the two contradictory aspects of Keats's immortal world after all.

About the two contradictory characteristics that the urn essentially involves, we should consider a little. As has been mentioned in the first chapter, in ancient Greece every art work was created in order to give immortality to a fleeting moment. Judging from such a conception of art in general, and the fact that the ancient Greek artisans often carved inscriptions on their works, originally the urn enjoyed or was expected to enjoy blissful, fertile immortality.

On the other hand, however, the urn was firmly associated with ominous, actual, physical death. The word "urn" derives from a Latin word *urna* which means a vessel of baked clay for drawing water, drawing lots, or keeping the ashes of the dead. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, before giving a very common meaning, "an oviform pitcher or vessel," explains that the urn is "an earthenware or metal vessel or vase of a rounded or ovaloid form and with a circular base," which was used by various peoples especially in former times (notably by the Romans and

Greeks) to preserve the ashes of the dead." Hence the word has been vaguely used for "a tomb or sepulchre, the grave." Originally the urn was used mainly as a container of the ashes of the dead. Probably it was an essay by Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia or Urn-Burial* (1658), that made the word "urn" very popular as an ancient container of the ashes or the bones of the dead:

> In a field of old Walsingham, not many months past, were dug up between forty and fifty Urns, deposited in a dry and sandy soil, not a yard deep, not far from one another. . . . Some containing two pounds of bones, distinguishable in skull, ribs, jaws, thigh-bones, and teeth, with fresh impressions of their combustion.[38]

It is well known that Keats too read this essay on ancient urns. R. M. Cook, a scholar of ancient Greek urns and vases, argues that ancient pots which have been long preserved in a state of perfection come mostly from graves today because such burial pots as Browne explains in his essay were usually buried deep with much care as an eternal resting place for the dead.[39] Originally the urn was associated with graves, the ashes and bones of the dead. John Barnard calls the inscription on the urn of this ode a "funerary inscription," and points out that Keats knew very well about the ancient use of urns to hold the ashes of the dead.[40] The fact may be clear from his reference to "dusty urns" in *Lamia* (II, 94). The urn was made to fulfill its essential function as a blissful resting place for the dead forever. It exists, involving both death and fertile immortality together within it.

In *Isabella* which was written a few months before this ode, a "pot" appears, which involves fearful death and fertile immortality together in itself just like the urn. The cruel brothers of Isabella kills her lover Lorenzo. Isabella digs out his body, cuts his head, and brings it home

to put it into a pot of basil with much care:

> She wrapped it [Lorenzo's head] up, and for its tomb did choose
> A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,
> And covered it with mould, and o'er it set
> Sweet basil, which her tears kept ever wet.
> . . . . . .
> And so she ever fed it with thin tears
> Whence thick and green and beautiful it grew,
> So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
> Of basil-tufts in Florence, for it drew
> Nurture besides, and life, from human fears,
> From the fast mouldering head there shut from view. (413-430)

The pot is chosen and used as a "tomb." The basil, taking nourishment from "the fast mouldering head" of the dead, grows "thick and green and beautiful." It consoles grief-stricken Isabella as a symbol of immortal love. Though before long her ruthless brothers steal the pot from her, it involves death or the "human fears," and fertile immortality of love together.[41)]

The urn, which at first seems to allow the poet to enjoy the ideal immortal world, in fact reveals "the sense of the thinness and lack of vitality " in the happy world.[42)] The fertile, lively world suddenly turns into "an embodiment of the terrible, cold immortality of art."[43)] But the ode does not end with the flat rejection of immortality that conceals these two contradictory aspects. Instead, it attempts to positively affirm these two aspects. As has been pointed out above, the reference to the inscription in the last stanza suggests such a positive attitude. The ode ends by suggesting the acceptance of immortality as it is, and the possibility of the repeated experience of the immortal world which involves death and fertility together. This ending gives the ode "satisfying circurality,"[44)] and some endless, imperishable character. It implies that, like the rounded shape of the urn itself, the ode may

roundly return to the beginning and unfold the immortal world again and again.

Bernard Blackstone remarks that originally the urn was fashioned from earth and it was regarded as a storehouse of energy, therefore the urn is at once a "creative womb of all manifestations" and a "tomb into which all manifestations descend." He thus admits the two contradictory aspects of the urn and asserts, "It reconciles, moreover, the dead with the living. It provides a vehicle of continuity."[45] To contain both fertility and death together is the essential characteristic of the urn itself, and also it is the essential characteristic of the immortal world for Keats. And furthermore, it is the essential quality of the ode in general whose original function was to give fertile immortality to the dead. About the last stanza of this ode, C. I. Patterson, Jr. remarks that "in the last stanza the speaker simply accepts them [contradictory elements of immortality] in serene resignation."[46] But what is stated in the last stanza cannot be some negative resignation at all. Instead, it is the positive realization of the contradictory aspects of immortality. As we have seen in his early odes, at first the immortal world was an Elysium for Keats. But in "Ode to a Nightingale," ominous death began to appear all of a sudden in the midst of this happy world. And in this ode again death appears, but at the same time, the coexistence of sinister death with blissful fertility in the immortal world begins to be suggested, though still quite vaguely. It is in "To Autumn" that these two contradictory aspects really come to be reconciled and the poet truly realizes that their coexistence itself is the essential attribute of immortality for him.

In the spring of 1819, "Ode on Indolence" and "Ode on Melancholy" were written after "Ode on a Grecian Urn." These two odes are fairly different from the three previous odes written in the spring. As we have already seen, in "Ode to Psyche," "Ode to a Nightingale," and "Ode on a Grecian Urn," the poet is fascinated by some concrete, beautiful object and its intensity. Following his familiar flight-return pattern, he becomes identified with his fascinating object for a moment and leaves the actual world to enjoy the blissful immortal world. On the other hand, "Ode on Indolence" and "Ode on Melancholy" do not address any concrete object, such as a deity, a bird, and an art work. Instead, they attempt to treat some abstract state of mind, some feelings. They totally lack such dramatic tension, or sharpness of imagery as we have seen in the dynamic development of imagination from the reality to the immortal world and again back to the reality in the other three odes. So far in the odes of Keats, the immortal world has been constantly changing. The early innocent blissful Elysium turned into an ominous world concealing death, and then it began to present the possibility of coexistence with death. Now this steady evolution comes to be suspended for a while. "Ode on Indolence" and "Ode on Melancholy" are, as it were, a kind of transitional odes in the development of the immortal world of Keats.

Before turning to the final reconciliation between barren death and the fertility of immortal world in "To Autumn," we must draw attention to, as it were, its preparatory stage. Of the two odes, "Ode on Indolence" bears more similarities to "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Therefore, in the rest of this chapter a few remarks should be made concerning this ode, especially its reference to circularity. In "Ode to a Grecian Urn," the

circularity is suggested in the last stanza as an important element that may reconcile the two contradictory aspects of the immortal world. In "Ode on Indolence," however, circularity is detested and flatly rejected.

"Ode on Indolence" was omitted by Keats himself from his *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and other Poems* (1820). Even after his death in 1821, it was not published for a long time. In fact it remained obscure until 1848. Concerning the stanzaic order[47] and the precise date of composition of this ode, opinions differ among critics. As Charles Dilke regards this ode as "a sort of study" for "Ode on a Grecian Urn," some critics assert that it was written after "Ode to Psyche" and before "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn." On the other hand, many critics remark that it was written after the three great odes of spring. For example, John Barnard says that "the 'Ode on Indolence''s mockery of the spring odes has an ironic pathos," and Walter Jackson Bate asserts that it "languidly echoes phrases and images from" his other odes of spring.[48]

In his letter to Sarah Jeffrey, 9 June, 1819, Keats tells about this poem, "You will judge of my 1819 temper when I tell you that the thing I have most enjoyed this year has been writing an ode to Indolence."[49] It seems that he enjoyed writing this ode and was satisfied with it. However, as Jack Stillinger points out that this letter "does not, even if intended seriously, mean that he considered the poem a success,"[50] the fact that the poet himself omitted the poem from his volume of 1820 reveals that he did not regard it as an excellent ode equal to his other ones. Concerning the subject matter of the ode, critics are generally in agreement with each other. Ian Jack severely comments on this poem,

remarking that "it is clearly an inferior poem, characterized by repetitions of word and image from other poems which give it the air of being the work of some gifted imitator of Keats."[51] In general the poem is regarded as stylistically inferior to the other five odes of Keats.

At that time, Keats was distressed with various personal affairs, such as the hopeless fame as a poet, financial straits, and his love and marriage with Fanny. Bate regards this poem as far "below the standard of the other odes" and severely says that "its value is primarily biographical."[52] The poem has been often caustically criticized or left neglected because it is an unsuccessful private poem which directly reflects the private affairs and inner conflicts of the poet. The biographical element retards the dynamic development of the ode. While the other odes of the spring are all dramatically developed with the poet's strong desire for something intense as their powerful inducements, in this ode we can find only a very passive motive, a very negative desire to retreat from everything. Just before writing this ode, on 19 May, 1819, Keats says in his journal-letter to his brother that he detests an energetic, positive way of life and wants to momentarily escape from all the troubles in his life, to totally indulge in indolence:

> This morning I am in a sort of temper indolent and supremely careless: I long after a stanza or two of Thomson's Castle of indolence—My passions are all a sleep from my having slumbered till nearly eleven and weakened the animal fivre all over me to a delightful sensation about three degrees on this side of faintness—if I had teeth of pearl and the breath of lilies I should call it langour—but as I am—I must call it Laziness—In this state of effeminacy the fibres of the brain are relaxed in common with the rest of the body, and to such a happy degree that pleasure has no sow of enticement and pain no unbearable frown.[53]

Then, he describes his present state of mind by using the "three figures on a greek vase" similar to those in this ode, which, he says, no one but

he can distinguish "in their disguisement":

> Neither Poetry, nor Ambition, nor Love have any alertness of countenance as they pass by me: they seem rather like three figures on a greek vase—a Man and two women—whom no one but myself could distinguish in their disguisement. This is the only happiness, and is a rare instance of advantage in the body overpowering the Mind.

Karla Alwes regards this letter as "a prosaic summary of the poem itself," and says that it "adds to the theme of lethargy that informs the ode."[54] The repeated reference to the total lack of energy, such as "indolent temper," "langour," "Laziness," "state of effeminacy," often appears in his letters around this time. For example, in his letter of 17 May, 1819, he says, "I do not know what I did on Monday—nothing—nothing—nothing—I wish this was any thing extraordinary," and in the letter of 31 May, 1819, "I would rather conquer my indolence and strain my ne[r]ves at sine grand Poem."[55] "Indolence" was the state of mind that attracted Keats very much at that time, which he attempted to use as the best theme for "some grand Poem."

As is well known, James Thomson's "The Castle of Indolence"(1748), which Keats refers to in his letter, is based on Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Book II, Canto vi. It is a story about "bold Cymochles"[56] who is invited by Phædria, "the wanton Damzell," to swerve from his onward movement of the quest for Guyon, to withdraw from the world of fruitless toil, and to imitate the careless ease of the lilies of the field. The frivolous lady takes him to "an Island, waste and voyd" floating in the midst of the "*Idle lake,*" where Phædria says:

> The lily, Ladie of the flowering field,
> The Flowre-deluce, her louely Paramoure,
> Bid thee to them thy fruitless labours yield,
> And soon leaue off this toylesome wearie stoure;
> Loe loe how braue she decks her bounteous boure,
> With silken curtens and gold couerlets,

Therein to shrowd her sumptuous Belamoure,
Yet neither spinnes nor cardes, ne cares nor frets,
But to her mother nature all her care she lets.
(Book II, Canto vi, stanza 16, 1-9)

As an epigraph for his ode, Keats uses a quotation from the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter vi, verse 2, "They toil not, neither do they spin," which appears in the Phædria's words of temptation. In this ode on indolence, however, he does not attempt to invite us to leave "fruitless toil" and choose some other "present pleasure" like Phædria, nor he himself is inclined to do so. The epigraph only introduces a general image of "indolence," to make it easy to imagine and understand. The "indolence" in this ode simply signifies doing nothing at all, without even leaving fruitless toil and enjoying some present momentary pleasure.

Many critics point out that some other works, such as the above-mentioned stanzas of Spenser, Joseph Michell's "The Charms of Indolence"(1729), and William Shenstone's "Ode to Indolence"(1750), may have influenced the poem.[57] But it seems almost impossible to trace any apparent influence from some other works in this ode, though Keats must have known various images of "indolence" in the previous literary works. Judging from his reference to the "greek vase" in his letter about this ode, however, it may be said that the ode is influenced at least by his own other works, especially by "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Just as he has praised an ancient goddess, a nightingale, and a Grecian urn in his own way and made an original ode on them, here again Keats attempts to write an original ode to seek and praise indolence of his own. But, unlike his other odes, this poem totally lacks the familiar dynamic movement and does not depict the fertile immortal world at all. The poet only hates and rejects the endless circular appearance of the three

figures, though in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" the "satisfying circularity" is accepted as a token of the positive affirmation of the "Janus-faced" immortal world. .

In "Ode on Indolence," there is no conventional address to the subject, or some deities. Its opening line, "One morn before me were three figures seen," sounds rather prosaic and may make us expect the "most overtly narrative ode":[58]

> One morn before me were three figures seen,
> With bowèd necks, and joinèd hands, side-faced;
> And one behind the other stepped serene,
> In placid sandals, and in white robes graced;
> They passed, like figures on a marble urn,
> When shifted round to see the other side;
> They came again; as when the urn once more
> Is shifted round, the first seen shades return. (1-8)

Just like the first stanza of "Ode on a Grecian Urn" which depicts the many figures sculpted on the urn, these lines describe the three figures that appeared in the poet's mind one morning. Their totally "serene" and "placid" images decorated with "sandals" and "white robes" are similar to those often painted or sculpted on ancient marble urns. Their ancient images and the reference to Phidias (c. 490- c. 448 B. C.) in "Phidian lore"(10), who was a sculptor of the Periclean age and is said to be one of the sculptors of the Elgin Marbles, reveal that the poet is still very much fascinated by the ancient Greek world. Also, their "side-faced" figures with "bowèd necks" and "joinèd hands" are similar to the common figures on the ancient Greek urns. Considering his fondness for Greek antiquities, critics often attempt to point out their visual sources just as they do concerning the possible sources of the urn in "Ode on a Grecian Urn.[59]

These three figures do not stand still. They "pass" and "come

again" just like the figures on the urn when it is shifted round. To shift round the urn in order to see its other side and make the first seen figures return, is a typical way of enjoying an run, which is suggested, as we have already seen, in the reference to the inscription on the urn in the last stanza of "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Here too, the circularity of the urn is suggested.

Unlike the first stanza of the previous ode where, after the description of the figures, the lifeless marble urn comes to be vivified and fully presents the blissful immortal world, the three figures in this poem gain no sense of life at all in spite of their movement, as Bernard Blackstone remarks, "No Attic lucidity shines here."[60] Instead, their images become more and more ambiguous, which is suggested in the rapidly changing addresses to them, from "figures" in the opening lines to "shades" in the second stanza and to the more insubstantial address, "Shadows." At the sight of these serene, lifeless shadows, the poet seeks for indolence in order to feel "nothingness." It is the ripe hour and ideal state of mind for him:

> Ripe was the drowsy hour;
> The blissful cloud of summer indolence
> Benumbed my eyes; my pulse grew less and less;
> Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower:
> Oh, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense
> Unhaunted quite of all but—nothingness? (15-20)

As Harold Bloom points out "sensuous concreteness of indolence"[61] in these lines, the failing eyesight, the sinking pulses, and the insensibility to pains and pleasures which accompany "summer indolence," are quite physical, sensuous and concrete, similar to the "drowsy numbness" in "Ode to a Nightingale." To be unable to feel any sting nor pleasure suggests that the poet's mind is now in a state of complete indifference.

He is now utterly unable to feel any intensity. Such total loss of sympathy with the outer world is similar to, as Mario L. D'Avanzo points out, the state of mind of the poet in "Dejection: An Ode."[62] For both poets, seeing and feeling are now totally dissociated. But in fact, their attitude toward their dejection is different. In "Dejection: An Ode," though in vain, the poet ardently seeks for a relief from his dejected mind, for his wonted energetic, lively power of imagination. On the other hand, in "Ode on Indolence," the poet only wants to stay in his present indifferent state of mind, at the total loss of sympathy with the outer world without seeking for any relief. Now indolence alone can give him the same bliss as intensity and immortality can give him in his other odes.

Then the three "strange" shadows are identified. These side-faced figures suddenly turn their faces defiantly to the poet, which is quite unusual for the figures on antique urns, as Scot remarks, "Until now, no figures in an artwork have ever stared back at the speaker. Subjected him to the same intense scrutiny that he has leveled at them."[63] Turning their faces, they again pass by and then fade. Here too, the circular movement is implied. These shadows are Love, Ambition, and Poesy. Just like the poet in "Ode to a Nightingale" who seeks for "a draught of vintage" and the "viewless wing" in order to follow the fascinating nightingale, now the poet burns "to follow them" and aches "for wings." Here the ached-for figures, the "fair maid" Love, the pale-cheeked and "ever watchful" Ambition with "fatiguèd eye," and the "demon" Poesy, are depicted with the "common stock of emblematic moral iconography."[64] Unlike the nightingale with enchanting voice, or the urn with overwhelmingly fertile Greek world, the three shadows here are too

common and stale to entice the poet into the immortal world with their intensity.

As Bloom points out, at first, the three "serene" "graced" figures may seem to be the three Graces, but in fact they are, as it were, the ominous three Fates for the poet. The phrases given to Ambition, such as "pale of cheek," "ever watchful," and "fatiguèd eyes," have a note of reproach or hatred. Ambition is, in other words, the poet's strong desire for fame. It may be said that to reproach and reject fame is to reproach and reject the essential attribute of ode itself, because originally the ode was written to satisfy the strong ambition of men who ardently sought for immortal fame. To detest and reject ambition in the frame of an ode is, in a sense, quite anti-odic.

In addition to Ambition, Love and Poesy are also rejected in the fourth stanza:

> What is Love? And where is it?
> And, for that poor Ambition—it springs
> From a man's little heart's short fever-fit.
> For Poesy! No, she has not a joy—
> At least for me. (32-36)

Now Love is worthless and Poesy gives no joy. Ambition is "poor" and it is nothing but a "short fever-fit." The circular appearance of these three detestable beings should be flatly rejected. In the framework of an ode, one of its essential attributes, that is, the ambitious search for fame, is severely reproached.

Before "Ode to Psyche," Keats wrote two sonnets on fame, "Fame like a wayward girl will still be coy" and "How fevered is the man who cannot look." Miriam Allott remarks that the former sonnet is "a half-serious, half-playful comment on the inequalities of fame."[65] "Fame" seems to

have been always in Keats's mind at that time like "indolence." Fame is, he says, really "like a wayward girl" who "still will be coy" to men "who woo her with too slavish knees." Therefore, men should "scorn" fame and "bid adieu" to it:

> Ye love-sick bards, repay her scorn for scorn;
> Ye lovelorn artists, madmen that ye are,
> Make your best bow to her and bid adieu—
> Then, if she likes it, she will follow you. (11-14)

The last line, "if she likes it, she will follow you," reveals his still lingering desire for fame. Similar inner conflict between hatred and desire for fame often appears in his letters, which have been repeatedly referred to by many critics to point out the biographical characteristics of "Ode on Indolence":

> I have been very idle lately, were averse to striving; both from the overpowering idea of our dead poets and from abatement of my love of fame. I hope I am a little more of a Philosopher than I was, consequently a little less of a versifying Pet-lam.
>
> Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic of his own Works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what Blackwood or the Quarterly could possibly inflict and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary reperception & ratification of what is fine.[66]

While declaring "abatement" of his "love of fame," he was still deeply attracted by the thought of immortal fame:

> "If I should die," said I to myself, "I have left no immortal work behind me—nothing to make my friends proud of my memory . . . and if I had time I would have made myself remember'd." Thoughts like these came very feebly whilst I was in health and every pulse beat for you—now you divide with this (may I say it?) "last infirmity of noble mind" all my reflection.[67]

Keats still desired to leave "immortal work" behind him, to make his friends "proud" of his work, to be remembered forever in their mind. He called his irresistible desire for fame as "last infirmity"(*Lycidas*, 71)[68] To leave immortal work behind, to be remembered forever in the mind of

other men after death, these are precisely what the ancient ode poets ardently desired. To satisfy such an unquenchable desire was the essential function of the ode whose raison d'être was death.

Love, Poetry, and Ambition cause the poet serious inner conflict and distress, and they torment him more and more. Therefore, it is quite painful and loathsome for him to see these three figures reappear endlessly and circularly like the familiar figures on an ancient urn. The lines, "Of, for an age so sheltered from annoy / That I may never know how change the moons, / Or hear the voice of busy common-sense!"(38-40) reveal his strong desire for escape from the present pains, from the endless circular appearance of Love, Ambition and Poetry. He knows very well, however, that it is impossible for him to escape from afflicting reality, so he ardently seeks for indolence which would make him feel "nothingness" alone.

Again in the fifth stanza, the circular movement of the three shadows is emphasized, "a third time came they by." Then the poet's soul is compared to "a lawn besprinkled o'er" with flowers which seems similar to the flowering fertile field in "Ode to Psyche." However, the description of nature here is quite different from the natural scenery where the immortal happy lovers are sleeping surrounded by lively flowers and leafy trees. On the lawn, there are "stirring shades, and baffled beams," which create a disquieting atmosphere. The sky is clouded, not clear. Though there falls no shower, "sweet tears of May" are lurking in the lids of the morning, threatening a heavy rain. The "open casement" lets in "the budding warmth and throstle's lay," and at the same time it is pressing "a new-leaved vine" to stifle its newly

budding life. Everything in nature seems to be concealing something gloomy and threatening. In such a gloomy state of mind the poet now cries, "O Shadows, 'twas a time to bid farewell!" to reject their ominous circular appearance and make them vanish. As has been pointed out, however, the enchanting intensity of the three figures has not been clear enough to entice the poet and make him leave the hard actual world to experience blissful immortal world just as he has done in his other odes. Therefore, at the end of this ode we cannot find any dramatic, dynamic return to reality at all as we have seen in "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

The final stanza repeats again the rejection of the circular appearance of the three. The poet cries, "So, ye three Ghosts, adieu!" "Fade softly from my eyes, and be once more / In masque-like figures on the dreamy urn. / Farewell!" "Vanish, ye Phantoms, from my idle sprite / Into the clouds, and never more return!" Beginning with a comparatively moderate parting word, "adieu," he decisively tells the three to "fade," and then more peremptorily to "vanish" and "never more return." The strong hatred for them is revealed downright. In the whole ode, Love, Ambition and Poetry are called by various names such as, "figures," "shades," "shadows," "ghosts" and "phantoms." As their name changes, the three become more and more insubstantial and odious, deathly beings. The ode ends with a strict peremptory tone, "never more return," a flat refusal of the disgusting endless circularity of the three.

Vendler calls this ode "a poem of recurrence" and remarks that "the stronger shape in the poem is the shape of recurrent return" and that the "whole poem is constructed upon their steady reappearances."[69)]

Similarly, G. W. Knight calls such recurrence "circularity," or "revolving movement."[70] This biographical, second-rate ode, written by a poet in inertia who wants "nothingness" alone, only emphasizes circularity and repeatedly refers to it. The endless circularity of the three figures is, in other words, the endless circularity of the inner conflict and affliction of the poet, which he persistently attempts to refuse. Ironically, however, this "poem of recurrence," while severely reproaching the endless barren circularity of Love, Ambition and Poetry, ends in revealing its own endless, barren circularity by obstinately repeating the selfsame pattern and refusal.

Watts remarks that the three characters in this ode are all "in search of a Grecian Urn."[71] Though "Ode on Indolence" attempts to treat circularity just as "Ode on a Grecian Urn" does, it only emphasizes its barren negative characteristics. The similar notion of such an endlessly changing cycle, that is to say, the notion of transience, appears again in Keats's final two odes. This time the circularity is not flatly rejected, but is finally accepted as an essential element that reconciles barren death and fertility in Keats's immortal world.

## Notes to Chapter VI

1. James Dickie, "The Grecian Urn: An Archaeological," *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* vol. 52, no. 1 (Autumn, 1969), p. 9.

2. William Sharp, *Life and Letters of Joseph Severn* ( 1892), p. 32, Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 247.

3. Ian Jack, *Keats and the Mirror of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 216.

4. *Ibid.*, p. p. 215.

5. George R. Levine, "The Arrogance of Keats's Grecian Urn," *Essays in Literature* 10, no. 1(1983), p. 40.

6. Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 512.

7. Grant F. Scott remarks that "Although the eighteenth century cannot boast any great meditations on urns, it is surprisingly well stocked with picture-poems and verse essays ("poetical essays") on painting." He regards Matthew Prior's "Picture of Seneca Dying in a Bath: By Jordain"(1720) as one of its earliest examples. Furthermore, he points out that this trend can be found in Keats's days, "Testament to the persistence of this popularity into the early years of the nineteenth century is the fact that Wordsworth, Shelley, and Hunt all wrote poems on pictures." Grant F. Scott, *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekpharasis, and the Visual Arts* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994), pp. 121-122.

8. Beth Lau, *Keats's Reading of the Romantic Poets* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 61.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

10. Miriam Allott, ed., *The Complete Poems of John Keats* (London: Longman, 1980), p. 533.

11. See, for example, C. Maurice Bowra, *The Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 136, F. R. Leavis, *Revaluation* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1936), p. 252.

12. Many critics have attempted to find the real urn which has the same two pictures depicted on its surface as presented in this ode. But now it is well known that such an urn with two different pictures does not exist. Bowra remarks, "Now it is clear that, if Keats describes a marble vase, it must be of the neo-Attic kind which had so wide a vogue in the Greco-Roman world. . . . But the difficulty arises that these neo-Attic marble vases portray not two separate scenes, as do black-figured and red-figured vases of the classical age, but a single scene which goes round the circumference and makes a continuous design," C, Maurice Bowra, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

13. Cleanth Brooks says that "the poem begins on a note of paradox . . . Keats . . . begins his poem by emphasizing the apparent contradiction," Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 155.

14. Sidney Colvin, *Keats* (1889. New York: AMS Press, 1968), pp. 172-173.

15. David Perkins, *The Quest for Permanence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 233.

16. About the sexual connotations of the scene and its potential "power," Harold Bloom remarks, "Reluctant maidens flee the mad pursuit

of men or gods, but the struggle and reluctance are only part of a myth of pursuit, a ritual of delayed rape spurred on to wild ecstasy by pipes and timbrels. The sexual power of the depicted scene is one with the aesthetic; it depends on potential, on something ever more about to be," Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company* (1961. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), pp. 416-417.

17. Grant F. Scott, *op. cit., p. 137.*

18. About the ambiguity of the immortality of the marbled lovers, Hermione de Almeida says, "The 'more happy love' of the callow lovers on the Grecian urn is of a different order from the immortal love of Eros and Psyche (or Hermes and the nymph), and of a different degree from mortal love," Hermione de Almeida, *Romantic Medicine and John Keats* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 97.

19. Walter Jackson Bate, *op. cit.*, p. 513, David Perkins, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

20. Cedric Watts, *A Preface to Keats* (London: Longman, 1985), p. 133.

21. Jack Stillinger, *The Hoodwinking of Madeline and Other Essays on Keats's Poems* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 108.

22. David Perkins, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

23. Grant F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

24. About the death concealed in the urn, Tilottama Rajan remarks, "The scene is slowly replaced by a scene of sacrifice and emptiness, and a sense of desolation even at the heart of a perfect culture. The urn no longer appears as a closed and completed form, but as one which discovers within itself a vital crevice, which is the knowledge of death," Tilottama

Rajan, *Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 134.

25. John Lemprière, *Lemprière's Classical Dictionary* (1788. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, revised ed.), p. 288/

26. Jack Stillinger, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

27. John Barnard, *John Keats* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 107.

28. About the word "attitude," Barnard says, "The modern meaning of 'attitude,' that is, a 'habitual mode of regarding anything,' only developed in the mid nineteenth century," John Barnard, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

29. For the possible meanings of this word, see David Bromwich, "Keats," *Critical Essays on John Keats*, ed., Hermione de Almeida (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1990), p. 205), Hermione de Almeida, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

30. Martin Aske, "Silent Forms: 'Ode to Psyche' and the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn,'" *The Odes of Keats*, ed., Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), p. 127.

31. For the various interpretations on these two lines, see Miriam Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 538, John Barnard, ed., *John Keats: The Complete Poems* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1983), p. 652-653.

32. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), pp. 231-232, I. A. Richards, *Science and Poetry* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1926), pp. 58-59.

33. Cedric Watts, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

34. About these two lines, Jack remarks, "Keats decided to give his Urn a moral sentiment," Ian Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 223. But here, these lines are not such simple morals as can be found in the odes of Gray or Jonson.

Here Keats attempts to give his urn an inscription based on the ancient convention of the Greek artists.

35. George R. Levine, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

36. Jerome McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 448.

37. Scott says that "the urn is maddeningly Janus-faced; it coyly beckons with one hand, curtly dismisses with the other," Grant F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

38. Thomas Browne, *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne* vol. 4, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1929), p. 14.

39. R. M. Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery* (London: Methuen, 1960), pp. 217, 220.

40. John Barnard, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

41. Rajan points out that this ode has something in common with *Isabella* because, she says, both of them secretly contain the dead," Tilottama Rajan, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

42. Miriam Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 536.

43. Michael O'Neill, "'When this warm scribe my hand': writing and history in *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*," *Keats and History*, ed., Nicholas Roe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 163.

44. John Barnard, *op. cit.*, p. 105, G. W. Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

45. Bernard Blackstone, *The Consecrated Urn: An Interpretation of Keats in Terms of Growth and Form* (London: Longmans, 1959), pp. 331-332.

46. C. I. Patterson, Jr., *The Daemonic in the Poetry of John Keats* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970), p. 177.

47. This paper will use the stanzaic order adopted in the volume of 1848 which corresponds with the manuscripts belonging to Richard Woodhouse.

48. John Barnard, *op. cit.*, p. 118, Walter Jackson Bate, *op. cit.*, p. 528. For further discussions about the date of the odes' composition, see C. I. Patterson, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 158, Grant F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 198, Helen Vendler, *The Odes of John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 300.

49. *Letters*, ii, p. 116.

50. Jack Stillinger, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

51. Ian Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

52. Walter Jackson Bate, *op. cit.*, p. 528.

53. *Letters*, ii, pp. 78-79.

54. Karla Alwes, *Imagination Transformed: The Evolution of the Female Character in Keats's Poetry* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p. 134.

55. *Letters*, ii, pp. 77, 113.

56. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed., A. C. Hamilton (New York: Longman, 1987).

57. Grant F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

58. Andrew Bennett, *Keats, Narrative and Audience: The Posthumous Life of Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 133.

59. As the most likely visual source, for example, Jack points out the engraving from Piranesi's *Vasi e candelabri.* He says, "This sculptured urn or vase portrays a bearded man, with a staff, leading two

young women. The second women holds the wrist of the first. Their feet appear to be bear, not sandalled. As the engraving is uncoloured, and shows a marble urn, it is natural to think of the robes as white. The figures are 'side-faced,' though their heads are not bowed. Their robes are finely depicted, and the procession has a mysterious air," Ian Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

60. Bernard Blackstone, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

61. Harold Bloom, *op. cit.*, p. 421.

62. Mario L. D'Avanzo, *Keats's Metaphors for the Poetic Imagination* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1967), p. 13.

63. Grant F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

64. Helen Vendler, *op. cit.*, p. 27. She argues, "These emblems evoke in every case Keats's feeblest diction precisely because they are representative of fixed and received ideas" (p. 33).

65. Miriam Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 512.

66. *Letters,* ii, pp. 116, 373-374.

67. *Letters,* ii, p. 394.

68. As a nearer parallel contributed to this line, John Carey takes a passage from Tacitus's *Historiae*, "even with wise men the desire for glory is the last to be abandoned"(iv, 6) and Silius Italicus's *Punica*, "fame, the torch of a noble mind"(vi, 332-333), John Carey, ed., *John Milton Complete Shorter Poems* (London: Longman, 1989), p. 245.

69. Helen Vendler, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

70. G. W. Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

71. Cedric Watts, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

# CHAPTER VII

## FINAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN IMMORTALITY AND DEATH IN "ODE ON MELANCHOLY" AND "TO AUTUMN"

"Ode on Melancholy" is assigned to May in 1819, about the same time when Keats wrote "Ode on Indolence."[1] As we have already seen, most critics hold similar views concerning his other odes. In general, "Ode to Psyche," "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and, as we will see, "To Autumn" have been highly praised, while "Ode on Indolence" has been often regarded as an inferior ode. When it comes to "Ode on Melancholy," however, opinions differ. For example, Walter Jackson Bate says, "This poem matches the 'Nightingale' and the 'Grecian Urn' in restrained intensity of language and versification."[2] Similarly, many critics regard the poem as "the most logically constructed of the odes,"[3] equal to "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn." On the other hand, the poem is often regarded as an inferior "fragmentary ode,"[4] unequal to the other great odes of 1819. Cedric Watts, though admitting that the poem is one of the great poems of Keats, remarks that "the logical structure is not always clear, and the commentator may find himself nudging, prodding and pulling at the sense here and there in order to increase the validity of the poem's reasoning."[5] Critics tend to feel discontented with the poem's unclear logical structure, comparing it with the familiar dynamic structures and patterns in Keats's other odes.

Such rather severe criticism on the lack or the ambiguity of its logical structure is probably caused by the fact that the poem does not share the same pattern with other odes, especially with "Ode on a

Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn." As Jennifer Farrell asserts, "In contrast to 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn,' the lyrical subject in 'Ode on Melancholy' wages no inner struggle,"[6] this ode totally lacks the familiar "flight-return pattern" caused by some "inner struggle" of the poet. This pattern repeatedly appears in many of Keats's poems, and especially in "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn" the pattern is presented quite clearly. On the contrary, in "Ode on Melancholy" we cannot find any strong desire of the poet for the temporal flight from hard reality into blissful world of imagination. Without any "inner struggle," "Ode on Melancholy" presents no dramatic, dynamic development, which makes us feel something wanting.

Instead of the familiar flight-return pattern, the ode attempts to present the reality as it is. Without longing for the momentary flight into the ideal immortal world, it gazes on fleeting beauty in the actual world. For the first time in his odes, the poet attempts to fix his eyes on transient beauty alone and accept it. As we have seen in the odes of the eighteenth century poets, transient beauty often causes some gloomy morbid contemplation of mutability and death in the mind of the poets. However, "Ode on Melancholy" never directly refers to death, nor gloomily meditates on it. And moreover, it never longs for blissful immortality far beyond the transient hard reality. The ode asserts that, by gazing on transience alone and accepting it without any dismal contemplation of death or any strong desire for the temporal flight into the blissful immortal world, one can experience true melancholy. Judging from its lack of familiar flight-return pattern, and its "focus on a single emotional state,"[7] that is "melancholy," "Ode on Melancholy" may seem to resemble

"Ode on Indolence" which also attempts to gaze on a single emotional state, that is, "indolence." But in fact, they greatly differ. As we have seen in the previous chapter, "Ode on Indolence" hates and flatly rejects the perpetual circularity of the three figures, Love, Ambition and Poesy. It rejects the perpetually changing, transient reality where Love, Ambition and Poesy are harassing the poet forever. On the other hand, "Ode on Melancholy" tries to gaze on and accept transience and change in the actual world.

Thus "Ode on Melancholy" is quite different from Keats's other odes in that it places the focus on reality alone without any dramatic development or blissful experience of immortality. As Bate says,[8] the focus on reality and its acceptance anticipate his next great ode "To Autumn," where the focus on reality and its acceptance are to appear again in more sophisticated and more complete way. "To Autumn" gazes on reality more calmly and generously. The transience, which is partially realized and accepted in "Ode on Melancholy," comes to be recognized and accepted as a part of the great cycle in nature. "To Autumn," beginning with the intent gaze on the perpetual change in natural world, finally realizes the immortal cycle of life and death. In this final ode, the two aspects of immortality that have been opposing finally come to be reconciled. Bernard Blackstone regards "Ode on Melancholy" as an important preparatory ode for "To Autumn." He remarks, "The symphonic movement of the Odes has now passed the narrows of *On Melancholy* to widen into the placid lake of this great choric song ["To Autumn"]."[9] In the following, before examining the final reconciliation between immortality and death in "To Autumn," we will see

how Keats accepts transience and experiences true melancholy in his own way in "Ode on Melancholy." For him, melancholy is not some negative feeling which arises from the moralistic or gloomy contemplation of a fleeting moment. Instead, melancholy is the very positive feeling which arises from the voluptuous, aggressive and greedy gaze on transience and its acceptance.

"Ode on Melancholy" is composed of three stanzas. But at first Keats added another additional stanza to the present poem:

> Though you should build a bark of dead men's bones,
> And rear a phantom gibbet for a mast,
> Stitch creeds together for a sail, with groans
> To fill it out, blood-stained and aghast;
> Although your rudder be a dragon's tail
> Long severed, yet still hard with agony
> Your cordage large uprootings from the skull
> Of bald Medusa, certes you would fail
> To find the Melancholy—whether she
> Dreameth in any isle of Lethe dull . . .

This canceled opening stanza of "Gothic claptrap"[10] is filled with a lot of "stock properties"[11] such as "dead men's bones," "phantom gibbet," "groans," "blood-stained" and "skull." Here Keats attempts to create more hackneyed, morbid atmosphere than the present stanza. He attributes a dismal atmosphere to conventional false melancholy which is quite different from true melancholy of his own, and he flatly rejects such a gloomy, conventional image of melancholy. On this canceled stanza, Ian Jack points out the influence of the "Cave of Despair" which once Treuisan flies from and revisits with the Redcross knight in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (Book I, ix, 33-36).[12] It is true that their dark doleful atmosphere filled with a lot of stock dreary epithets and expressions may seem to have something in common. But Spenser only creates a dismal, morbid atmosphere without directly referring to

melancholy. We can find more direct and conspicuous influence on this stanza from Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, which depicts various morbid images of melancholy.

As is well known, Keats loved and repeatedly read this book. Miriam Allott remarks that this poem is not only influenced by the book of Burton but also it is "in effect a reply" to Burton.[13] In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* Burton attempts to analyze melancholy psychologically and psychopathologically. It is especially in "Prognostics of Melancholy" (vol. I, pt. 1, sect. iv, memb. i) that the characteristics of Burton's melancholy are clearly depicted. He asserts that melancholy is an incurable malady that never fails to make men kill themselves. Those who are suffering from this malady are to be perpetually tormented. Before long, they come to realize that "death alone can ease" them and long for death. Burton describes in detail how these afflicted men really killed themselves:

> And in the midst of these squalid, ugly, and such irksome days, they seek at last, finding no comfort, no remedy in this wretched life, to be eased of all by death. . . . As Seneca notes, "one hanged himself before his own door; another threw himself from the house-top, to avoid his master's anger; a third, to escape return from exile, plunged a dagger into his heart." . . . 'Tis a common calamity, a fatal end to this disease.[14]

Burton's melancholy is quite pessimistic and negative. It arouses a strong desire for escape from hard reality, a strong longing for gloomy and easeful death. It is totally different from Keats's melancholy that he seeks and experiences in his own way in "Ode on Melancholy."

Though Keats finally canceled, he once attempted to create a gloomy, morbid atmosphere in this additional stanza, which means that for him melancholy was still closely connected with a strong desire for death or

its gloomy contemplation. Therefore, he had to flatly reject such a conventional image of melancholy to create his own one. As is well known, there are two origins for the conventional images of melancholy. The first one is the ancient theory about the four principal humours in human body. Of the four humours, phlegm, blood, choler, and black bile, the black bile was regarded as indicative of melancholy, and its superfluity was said to cause melancholy. As Milton drives away melancholy with the famous phrase, "Hence loathed Melancholy / Of Cerberus, and blackest Midnight born,"[15] melancholy was first regarded as a negative, pensive and loathed state of mind. Then in the late fifteenth century, this gloomy melancholy gained another image. The negative temper began to be regarded as the creative melancholy of a genius, which is often identified with Saturn. It became an ideal state of mind for some intelligent and creative activity whose best image may be found in Albert Dürer's famous engraving, *Melencolia I*.

From these two conventional images of melancholy, an attenuated literary figure appeared. In Keats's days, the popular image of melancholy was a pensive, gloomy one that was preferred especially by the eighteenth century poets. In "Ode on Melancholy" Keats tries to present his own melancholy that is quite different from conventional one. Judging from its title, one may expect that the ode will follow the convention and highly praise either gloomy melancholy or creative melancholy. But in fact the poem praises neither of them.[16] What the ode attempts to present is melancholy of Keats's own, which can be experienced through positive acceptance of transience alone. The ode begins with an "admonition" not to be deceived by conventional "false

melancholy."[17]

There is no conventional calling or invocation in the opening lines. The poem never addresses its presiding deity nor some aesthetic object. It begins with "No, no," an abrupt protest or exhortation. The first stanza tries to thoroughly get rid of the conventional image of melancholy as a negative dismal temper. The repeated "no," "not," and "nor" reject various conventional morbid images and the dismal longing for death because they are improper means to experience true, ideal melancholy of Keats's own. However, the first whole stanza only presents a catalogue of various gloomy ominous images which accompany conventional melancholy:

> No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
> Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
> Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed
> 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. (1-8)

Lethe is the river in hell. The "wolf's-bane" is a kind of aconite, a poisonous plant, which is said to grow at the entrance to hell.[18] As we have seen "cool-rooted flowers" in "Ode to Psyche," Keats seems to have peculiar fondness for "root." Here his eyes are turned on the latent root of the poisonous plant deep in the ground and he senses its potential power. Of course, to "twist" the plant to get "poisonous wine" suggests the preparation for suicide. Just as told in Burton's book, those who are suffering from melancholy often attempted to commit suicide in various ways to escape from their incurable illness.

The "nightshade" or belladonna is also a poisonous plant, appropriate for Proserpine, the queen of hell. To put this poisonous

plant on the "pale forehead" also suggests suicide. And the "yew" is often regarded as a symbol of sadness and death, which is commonly planted at cemetries.[19] Its leaves and berries are poisonous and can paralyze the heart. The Celtic soldiers are said to have dipped the tips of their spears in its poison. To make a rosary of "yew-berries" and use it in prayer is the ominous behavior to invite death.

Both "beetle" and "death-moth" are also closely associated with death. The "beetle" is the "deathwatch beetle" that makes a clicking sound, which is supposed to portend death. And the "death-moth" is also called "death's-head moth" or "death-head moth" that has markings on the back of the thorax resembling the figure of a skull. The wings of these ominous insects bring up the image of "mournful Psyche" who is usually depicted as a butterfly. As has been pointed out in the fourth chapter, the winged Psyche generally represents the soul that leaves the dying body and lingeringly hovers over the grave. The exhortation not to let the ominous insects be your mournful Psyche is, in other words, the exhortation not to mourn over someone's death too deeply, and not to be seized by the gloomy thought of death too long. Also, the "downy owl" is a sinister bird, considered an evil omen, which is said to foretell death. To make this evil death bird a partner is also prohibited. Thus in this catalogue of ominous death images, the gloomy contemplation of death, and the longing for death or suicide are rejected by repeating "no," "not" and "nor."

In the first stanza, there are some words usually associated with religious rites of worship such as "wine," "rosary" and "mysteries." In general, "mysteries" mean some secret religious rites only admitted to

those who are elected, that is to say, the initiated. In this ode, the initiated are those who can experience true melancholy. For that experience, they need no sinister, gloomy image of death often associated with conventional melancholy because, the poet says, "shade to shade will come too drowsily, / And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul"(9-10). The "wakeful anguish of the soul" depicts true, ideal melancholy for Keats. The word "wakeful" suggests the character of melancholy of his own very well. True melancholy can be experienced, as the second stanza reveals, only through the intense, greedy, full enjoyment of transience. It is quite different from dismal and morbid melancholy that comes "too drowsily" without intensity. The "shade" suggests some gloomy thoughts such as the longing for death or suicide which, as we have seen in Burton's book, always accompany conventional melancholy. And at the same time, as John Barnard interprets this line as "You will become a ghost (exactly the wrong kind of 'shade')," [20] the "shade" may also mean a lifeless ghost, spirit or phantom of a man who committed suicide and is now totally lacks substance, intensity and vigor.

Thus in the opening stanza, all the Burtonian gloomy longings for death are rejected. However, though the negatives such as "no," "not" and "nor" are repeated, they are far from persuasive because the reason for rejection is revealed only in the last two lines of the stanza. Instead, what should be flatly rejected, that is, the catalogue of ominous things associated with the conventional image of melancholy, seems excessively conspicuous. As William Empson points out "the pathological splendours" in "this introduction," [21] the conventional association between melancholy and death is still undeniably strong.

The second stanza is "a notable turn into 'realism'"[22] from such a gloomy shade of death. True melancholy does not come drowsily, but suddenly descends from heaven:

> But when the melancholy fit shall fall
> Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
> That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
> And hides the green hills in an April shroud. (11-14)

Though the stanza begins to reveal the character of true melancholy of Keats's own, the word "fit" still implies "a sudden attack of illness." The conventional image of melancholy as an irrecoverable malady still lingers. Such words as "weeping" and "shroud" are also associated with the morbid thought of death. However, the stanza attempts to remove such pathological characteristics by attributing benignant revivifying power to melancholy. Melancholy fosters flowers and the green hill in April to reveal its positive, vigorous characteristic.

Then, a few ways to experience true melancholy are related, which present, as it were, a catalogue of transient beauty. True melancholy exists in the full enjoyment of transience:

> Then glut they sorrow on a morning rose,
> Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
> Or on the wealth of globèd peonies;
> Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
> Imprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
> And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes. (15-20)

The peculiar characteristic of melancholy of Keats's own and his way of enjoying fleeting beauty are well revealed in the words "glut" and "feed." The experience is really strenuous, vigorous and even greedy, and it has quite sensuous concreteness. What is thus vigorously "glutted" and "fed" is beauty in this actual world where everything is subject to transience and totally foreign to immortality. As has been mentioned above, however, seeing fleeting beauty, the poet gives no moralistic,

didactic contemplation of mortality, nor does he turn away from transient beauty to temporarily fly to the blissful immortal world. Instead, he fixes his eyes on transience to glut and feet it, and shows "an unreserved and intense involvement in process."[23] Beauty in nature and beauty in human beings, which are to be glutted and fed to the full, are similarly governed by transience. Not to mention the famous *carpe diem* poems of Herrick, the rose repeatedly appears in literature as a symbol of transient beauty.[24] The "morning rose" in this ode too is doomed to wither in the evening, though it is now beginning to beautifully come out.

Similarly, "the rainbow of the salt sand-wave" also represents fleeting beauty seized by quite sensitive eyes. When the sun glints on the moisture in the sand-waves on the beach, it makes them appear like rainbow. This rainbow, or quasi-rainbow, exists only while the wave rises to its crest and breaks. Ii is destined to disappear when the next wave comes. The time from the culmination of beauty to its turning to dust is by far shorter than the life of the morning rose. In "The Rainbow" Wordsworth says, "My heart leaps up when I behold / A rainbow in the sky"(1-2). What he saw is a magnificent rainbow hanging in the sky. He was greatly moved not by its transient beauty but by the awe-inspiring grand beauty of nature. His heart was really filled with joy and leaped up with "natural piety." The small delicate rainbow of Keats on the salt sand-wave is quite different from Wordsworth's great one. His eyes are not turned to the great blue sky, but to the minute, short-lived rainbow on the beach. He is not moved by magnificent, awe-inspiring beauty of nature to experience pious joy like Wordsworth. Instead, he is greatly inspired by really delicate, transient beauty of nature and feels aesthetic,

sensuous joy by greedily tasting it.

The "peony" is a benignant good flower that is said to have a great variety of beneficial medical effects. It was often used as a protection against storms by ancient sailors. It is also called a "rose without thorns." Like a morning rose, it is doomed to wither quickly. To "glove" the flower suggests strong imprisonment. The hands are around the peony, cupping it completely and dearly, in order to enjoy its transient beauty to the full even for a moment. The "gloving" is, as Watts says, "three-dimentional."[25] It is really a tactual way of tasting beauty. This rather fetishistic fingering implies the very greedy and sensuous joy in tasting mortal beauty to satiety, which is quite different from contemplative, moralistic attitude to it.

In addition to such momentary beauty in nature, the "peerless eyes" in "rich anger" of a mistress also present transience. It is not the transience of beauty of a young woman like an ephemeral morning rose repeatedly referred to in the *carpe diem* poems, but the transience of the intensity of her short-lived anger. The momentary intensity exists in strong anger or passion that is to be quelled soon. Such fugitive raving anger seems "rich" and presents more energetic, "animated beauty"[26] than the innocent attractive smile of a gentle woman. To be fascinated by the intensity of anger of a mistress and devotedly "feed upon" it without soothing her seems quite egoistic. The similar sadistic joy in the affliction of others can be found in *Lamia*. Lycius feels luxurious delight in the deep sorrows of Lamia when she is greatly afflicted with his proposal for holding a showy wedding:

> Besides, for all his love, in self-despite,
> 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. (*Lamia*, II, 72-76)

Similar fascination by the effusion of some violent intense feeling appears in Keats's letter where he tells about "a quarrel in the streets":

> May there not be superior beings amused with any graceful, though instinctive attitude my mind may fall into, as I am entertained with the alertness of a Stoat or the anxiety of a Deer? Though a quarrel in the streets is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine; the commonest Man shows a grace in his quarrel.[27]

To imprison the hand of an angry mistress and "feed deep, deep upon her peerless" raging eyes suggests the desperate and even egoistic attempt to devour her momentary but intense anger to the full.

In this way, the poet first gazes on a morning rose, a conventional symbol of transience. Then he fixes his eyes on the short-lived rainbow on the beach and imprisons peonies in his cupped hands, and finally he sadistically feeds on the fugitive anger of a mistress. True melancholy exists, he asserts, in such physical, strenuous and greedy appreciation of transience and its positive acceptance. Melancholy always exists with transient Beauty, Joy and Pleasure:

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

Beauty instantly withers, Joy disappears in a moment and Pleasure immediately turns to poison. Such inseparability of pleasure and pain, or indivisibility of joy and sorrow, often appears in Keats's poems. For example, "Ode to Psyche" refers to "pleasant pain," and in *Isabella* he says, "Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers, / Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers"(103-104). It is the realization of transience in the midst of enjoying Beauty, Joy and Pleasure. What should be noticed here is that, unlike his other works which only refer to transience, this

poem shows how to accept such transient beauty, joy and pleasure, and puts stress on its positive acceptance. The ode asserts that true melancholy exists only in gazing on transience, and greedily and aggressively accepting it without any gloomy lamentation or morbid contemplation.

Now it has been revealed how to experience true melancholy. The third stanza presents "architectural conclusion"[28] by depicting the temple of melancholy:

> Aye, in the very temple of Delight
> Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
> Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
> Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine. (25-28)

"Aye" expresses the poet's firm conviction of the existence of melancholy and his ability to experience it. Melancholy has "her sovran shrine" in "the very temple of Delight" and furthermore, she is veiled. Melancholy quietly exists deep in the mind of man, within his very private feelings of delight, completely veiled from the public. Just as Psyche has her secret fane built deep in the poet's mind, so Melancholy has her temple veiled and internalized in the mind of man. And only a few can monopolize and worship the goddess. Only the initiated, that is, those who are admitted to the mysteries and really taste the transience of beauty and intensity, are permitted to see the goddess. They must be able to "burst" Joy against their fine palate with their "strenuous tongue." The words "burst against" and "strenuous" suggest a sort of collision or fight. The true enjoyment of transient Joy should not be meditative, mild nor contemplative, but quite aggressive and violent.

As a result of such strenuous devouring and acceptance of transience, "His soul shall taste the sadness of her might, / And be among

her cloudy trophies hung"(29-30). At last the initiated come to know true melancholy. In general, the "trophy" consists of arms or spoils taken from the enemy and was often hung up in Greek and Roman temples as a memorial of a victory of war. The word suggests the aggressive war-like characteristic of the melancholy experience. Empson regards the trophy in this poem as the "votive tablet" often dedicated to the temple of Neptune by the Greek and Roman sailors as a token of prayer or gratitude for a safe voyage.[29] Of course, by doing so, they could leave their name forever in the temple. As an example of such a trophy or a votive tablet, Empson quotes Horace's "Book III, ode 1." But in "Book I, ode 5" we can find a better example:

> Ah, wretched they
> To whom thou, untried, dost now appear so dazzling!
> As for me, the temple wall with its votive tablet
> Shows I have hung up my dripping garments
> To the gods who is master of the sea. (12-16)

In this ode Horace dedicates a votive tablet to the temple of Neptune as a token of gratitude because, while many men have been ruined by the charm of flirt Pyrrha, Horace alone had a narrow escape from being drowned. As Empson asserts, the trophy in Keats's ode too may have a suggestion of such an ancient conventional votive tablet. Considering the aggressive violent characteristic of melancholy experience related in this poem, however, it seems more appropriate to regard the trophy not as a simple token of peaceful gratitude but as a kind of spoil that melancholy has gained after a fierce battle. The trophy announces that the victor is Melancholy and the loser is the "soul" of a man. Though finally lost, the loser is one of those who has really experienced true melancholy by devouring transient beauty to the full. The soul of the

loser is hung up high as a trophy or a spoil of the victor Melancholy in her temple. His soul and his name will be kept and remembered forever as a memorial to her victory. It may sound strange but by becoming a loser, he can "attain honor among her 'cloudy trophies.'"[30] The trophy presents perpetual honor both to Melancholy and to those who have experienced true melancholy. In the final stanza the immortalization of honor, which is one of the essential functions of the traditional ode of praise, is performed.

Thus for Keats, true melancholy is closely connected with transience. However, there can be found no didactic, moralistic and gloomy contemplation of transience or mortality as we have already seen in the odes of the eighteenth century poets. What Keats attempts here is the aggressive, positive and quite strenuous acceptance of transience and change, without turning his eyes from reality toward ideal world of imagination. As has been examined, "Ode to Psyche," "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn" repeatedly depict ideal immortal world and present Keats's familiar flight pattern. Through the flight, the poet leaves reality to enjoy blissful immortal world and then, all of a sudden, he finds death lurking in the midst of the bliss to be driven back into reality again. But "Ode on Melancholy" never refers to such blissful immortality. If it is still attached to immortality, it makes, as it were, "an attempt at permanence through change."[31]

Blackstone finds in this ode "an element of the macabre, recognizable even if we take no account of the canceled first stanza with its dead men's bones and phantom gibbet." He says, "This ode is decidedly in a minor tone."[32] Though the poem attempts to positively

accept transience, it cannot be denied that it is in fact filled with "a minor tone" and "a smell of tomb." As has been examined, the first stanza presents a lot of ominous things such as "wolf's-bane" and "downy owl." The second stanza refers to the shroud-like "weeping cloud" which covers up the lively natural world of spring as if it covers up the dead. And the final stanza announces that Beauty, Joy and Pleasure are all equally subject to transience and death. The aggressive, war-like way of enjoying transient beauty reveals, in a sense, the poet's desperate struggle against such a lingering "smell of tomb" which the conventional image of melancholy must have given him. A few months later, "To Autumn" was written. In this ode, Keats does not desperately attempt to accept transience and death, nor does he struggle against the ominous smell of tomb any more. It is in this final ode of Keats that the longtime opposition between blissful ideal immortality and ominous death finally comes to be reconciled.

About the title, "To Autumn," Farrell remarks:

> Unlike the other poems its title does not indicate that Keats considered this an ode. . . . If "To Autumn" is to be regarded as an integral part of the ode sequence this must be justified on the basis of a continuity of concern.[33)]

It is true that "To Autumn" is generally regarded as the last of Keats's major odes, but, as Farrell points out, it is not entitled "Ode" as his other odes of 1819. However, it is no doubt "an integral part of the ode sequence" on the grounds of the continuity of concern. Needless to say, the continuous concern is the opposition between immortality and death which runs through his odes from the early fragmentary ones to the later great ones. In his ode sequence, immortality at first appears as an Elysium without any ominous shadow. Then, it is revealed that the

fertile immortality conceals death in itself. For a while, longing for immortality disappears form his ode and, in place of that, transience comes to the front. Finally in "To Autumn" the immortal cycle of death and life appears, and the longtime opposition comes to be reconciled. Barnard says, "'To Autumn' gives a naturalistic answer to the questions posed about the inevitability of change and death by the spring odes and *The Fall of Hyperion*.[34] "To Autumn" gazes on nature with placid generous eyes and gives "a naturalistic answer" to the opposition between immortality and death. It draws a conclusion to the question posed by the ode sequence of Keats's.

"To Autumn" never attempts to fly to immortal world. The poet's eyes are always fixed on reality and never turned away from the natural scenery of autumn in front of him. The ode shows no dramatic, dynamic movement. Because of this, as Jack Stillinger remarks that "To Autumn" and "Ode on Melancholy" are "intimately related in theme and imagery," critics often point out the similarity between these two odes.[35] Like "Ode on Melancholy," "To Autumn" presents the acceptance of impermanence by gazing on reality alone.

Though they are alike in some points, "To Autumn" does not show such strenuous, greedy, war-like way of enjoying transient beauty to the full as "Ode on Melancholy" presents. Nor does it have the gloomy, ominous, morbid elements and the smell of tomb which are aroused by conventional melancholy. "To Autumn" presents no gloominess or deep lamentation, though it really gazes on the season when all things in nature are ripening toward decay and death. There exists no horror of death that the poet has experienced in the fertile immortal world in "Ode

to a Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn." The whole ode is covered up, as it were, in benevolent warmth. Furthermore, the poet never attempts to desperately identify with the declining natural scenery in front of him, nor does he greedily devour it. Instead, he always tries to keep a certain distance. Critics often use "impersonality" as an appropriate definitive when they talk about the perfection of this ode. The first person has been banished from its diction and there exist no exclamation marks. As Blackstone says that "To Autumn" is "the product of Keats's own bid for detachment,"[36] it is an ode of impersonality. In a really serene, placid atmosphere, "To Autumn" brings a conclusion to the ode sequence. It is really filled with a sense of perfection. Because of this, the ode is generally highly praised, as Harold Bloom observes, "'To Autumn' is the subtlest and most beautiful of all Keats's odes, and as close to perfection as any shorter poem in the English language."[37]

Keats wrote this ode on 19 September, 1819 in Winchester, where he liked to stroll through the meadows by the River Itchen. Two days later, he wrote to J. J. Reynolds:

> How beautiful the season is now—How fine the air. A temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather—Dian skies—I never lik'd stubble fields so much as now—Aye better than the chilly green of the spring. Somehow a stubble plain looks warm—in the same way that some pictures look warm—this struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it.[38]

In Winchester, Keats saw stubble plains and loved them so much for the first time. In the third stanza of "To Autumn," similar "stubble-plains" appear, and the whole ode is covered up with the same strange warmth as he felt in Winchester.

Keats was deeply struck by the natural scenery of autumn in Winchester, especially by the warmth of stubble plains on which he

composed a poem. But "autumn" is not an original theme of Keats own. Like "nightingale" and "melancholy," it is a common, popular theme of poetry. Grant F. Scott points out that "there is an abundant crop of autumnal elegies and odes to be found. . . . Autumn was as popular a subject as Melancholy, to which it bears a keen resemblance, or the ubiquitous Nightingale." Concerning the characteristics of the poetry on autumn in general, he remarks:

> Most of the poems in this genre offer variations on the theme of the dying year and make the conventional association between autumn and old age. The speaker's melancholy is often inseparable from the season's, as he wanders pensive and brooding through the stricken landscape.[39]

The conventional image of autumn tends to create a pensive, melancholic atmosphere by the conventional association between the season and decay or death. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* Burton says, "Of the seasons of the year, the autumn is most melancholy"(volume, 1, part 1, section I, member iii, subsection ii). In James Thomson's *The Seasons*, autumn is apostrophized as the time "Of Philosophic Melancholy"(*Autumn,* 1005). In Thomas Hood's "Ode: Autumn," the personified autumn herself meditates on "the dead and gone" quite melancholically:

> But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,
> And sighs her tearful spells
> Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.
> Alone, alone,
> Upon a mossy stone,
> She sits and reckons up the dead and gone
> With the last leaves for a love-rosary,
> Whilst all the withered world looks drearily,
> Like a dim picture of the drownèd past. (36-44)[40]

Conventionally, autumn was closely connected with melancholic meditation on decay and death as a gloomy season of the dying year.

Then, what did Keats himself think of autumn that had been one of the conventional themes of poetry? He seems to have had a quite

traditional image of autumn, but he never regarded it as a melancholic season suitable for morbid contemplation of decay and death. For him, autumn was above all things the fertile harvest season. This image of autumn as a season of rich harvest and ripeness often appears in his many works:

> So she[Peona] was gently glad to see him[Endymion] laid
> Under her favorite bower's quiet shade
> On her own couch, new made of flower leaves
> Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves
> When last the sun his autumn tresses shook,
> And the tanned harvesters rich armfuls took.
> (*Endymion*, I, 436-441)

> [Albert says that the Emperor has been]
> More generous to me than autumn's sun
> To ripening harvests. (*Otho the Great*, IV, I, 166-167)

> Which of the fairest three
> Today will ride with me
> Across the gold autumn's whole kingdom of corn?
> ("Apollo to the Graces," 4-6)

> Autumn's red-lipped fruitage, too,
> Blushing through the mist and dew,
> Cloys with tasting. ("Fancy," 13-15)

In addition to these images of autumn as the harvest season of abundant ripeness and fruitage, Keats often depicts autumn as one of the four seasons with stock epithets:

> He blows a bugle—an ethereal band
> Are visible above: the Seasons four—
> Green-kirtled Spring, flush Summer, golden store
> In Autumn's sickle, Winter frosty hoar—
> Join dance with shadowy Hours. (*Endymion*, IV, 420-424)

> Four seasons fill the measure of the year;
> There are four seasons in the mind of man.
> . . . . . .
> Quiet coves
> His soul has in its autumn, when his wings
> He furleth close, contented so to look
> On mist in idleness—to let fair things
> Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
> ("Four seasons fill the measure of the year," 1-12)

It is very common to thus compare human life to the change of the seasons. Keats often depicted each season with very conventional simple attributes. At this point, he could not take a broad view yet. He could not regard the change of the seasons as one great cycle which perpetually brings about ripeness, death, rebirth, and ripeness again. About the sonnet mentioned above, Helen Vendler remarks, "Keats's own fears prohibited both the deathly vision beyond the last gleaning and the reassuring cyclicity of the spring."[41] In Keats's works before "To Autumn," the "deathly vision" beyond autumn and the assurance of the perpetual return of spring do not exist yet.

John Middleton Murry says that "To Autumn" is "the perfect and unforced utterance of the truth contained in the magic word: 'Ripeness is all.'"[42] The whole ode is predominated by a sense of ripeness, one of the conventional attributes of autumn. It depicts the ever-ripening present by intensely gazing on the actual world alone. In addition to this, in the midst of the ripeness of autumn where "consummation is the rule,"[43] the ode presents a sense of inevitable change and decay. Keats does not end this poem by simply depicting autumn as a conventional abundant harvest season. For the first time, he finds immortal "reassuring cyclicity" of ripeness, death and rebirth in the natural scenery of autumn.

The unfolding of the three stanzas itself presents the natural growth of autumn. Bloom calls the sequence of the three stanzas "pre-harvest ripeness, late-harvest repletion, and post-harvest natural music"[44] respectively. The first stanza presents the "pre-harvest" scenery of autumn where all things in nature are toward maturity.

Everything here is filled with overwhelming abundance. The opening lines quietly address autumn without any loud prayer or invocation, "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, / Close bosom friend of the maturing sun"(1-2). Then, the various acts of autumn are revealed, but they are not highly or loudly praised. Instead, the maturing power of autumn is related quietly and continuously, which virtually offers a serene praise and a deep sense of gratitude.

The following description of autumnal maturing acts presents the fertile natural scenery of autumn. Now everything in nature is toward "mellow fruitfulness" in "the bounty of the time."[45] The phrase "maturing sun" suggests that not only fruit but also the sun is undergoing similar maturing process. Like autumn, the sun has the power to bring fruit to maturity. At the same time, like fruit, the sun itself is also gradually maturing. Now the bounteous autumn is:

> Conspiring with him[the sun] how to load and bless
> With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run:
> To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
> And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
> To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
> With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
> And still more, later flowers for the bees,
> Until they think warm days will never cease,
> For summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells. (3-11)

The conspiracy between the maturing season autumn and the maturing sun is "to load and bless with fruit," "to bend with apples," "to fill all fruit with ripeness to the core," "to swell the gourd," "to plump the hazel shells" and "to set flowers budding more and more." All these are the acts to bring about "edible plenitude."[46] The word "plump" and "swell" are associated with a quite physical or tactual sense, which Richard Macksey calls "palpable pleasure of abundance."[47] They also have

sexual connotations, suggesting consummation.

The beneficent agricultural conspirator, autumn, works, as it were, both from within and from without everything in nature. It brings about ripeness from without by "loading and blessing with fruit," or" bending with apples." At the same time, it promotes latent ripeness from within by "filling all fruit with ripeness to the core," "swelling the gourd,2 or "plumping the hazel shells with a sweet kernel." The "core" and the "kernel" suggest the inner, hidden life in nature. Like the "cool-rooted flowers" in "Ode to Psyche" and the "tight-rooted wolf's-bane" in "Ode on Melancholy," Keats here senses the latent life which is also undergoing the maturing process of autumn. The similar latent ripeness, hidden abundance can be found in the "o'er-brimmed clammy cells of a honeycomb." Within a honeycomb, every small sell, which cannot be seen from without, is over-brimmed with clammy honey. The word "clammy" suggests the extreme thickness and tenacity of the abundant honey, and of the abundant season.

Under the continuous and thorough ripening process of autumn, all things in nature are toward the apex of maturity. The round apples and gourd and hazel shells are infinitely swelling bigger and rounder, emitting a voluptuous spark of life. And later flowers are budding more and more. Not only bees but everything in nature seems to be firmly convinced that "warm days will never cease."

However, in the midst of this extremely fertile season when everything is ripening to the core, totally unaware of the passage of time, the next phase of the ripening process is awaiting all. Within the fruit that now seems to be infinitely maturing, withering and decay are lurking.

All are deceived to think that warm days will never cease. Too much palpable pleasure and too much intensity of fulfillment produce illusions of timelessness and immortality. After the loading, bending, swelling, plumping and budding, the falling, breaking, decaying and withering begin without fail. Autumn is a boundary season. It stands between summer and winter, between growth and decay, showing "contradictory aspects."[48] Autumn is the season of mellow fruitfulness and, at the same time, it is the season of mists. The "mists" suggest not only the familiar autumnal haze, but also the ambiguity and indeterminacy of autumn as a boundary season. Moreover, as Robin Mayhead points out,[49] they also hint at the chill of the coming season.

The maturing sun and its close bosom friend autumn, are also undergoing the inevitable aging process. Now it is the height of the day and the season, which suggests that the sun and the season are both beginning to grow old, to decay and decline toward the end of the day and the season. Their conspiracy contains, as Scott asserts, "a residue of guilt."[50] Their acts of "loading" and "bending" sound like a kind of compulsion. Their insidious ripening procedure gives illusions of immortality to all things in nature and also to themselves.

Without referring to decay and death that lurk in the ripening process, the first stanza ends by creating illusion of immortality. About the second stanza, C. I. Patterson says, "Seldom before in a lyric poem has a second major section been so distinctly different and yet so indissolubly related to the first."[51] As he asserts, the second stanza presents a quite different scene from the first. It depicts the rich harvest process by using the four personified autumnal figures, winnower,

reaper, gleaner and cyder-presser. Blackstone calls these figures "the greatest personification in English poetry."[52] Though they all look like farm workers, none of them are working hard. Instead, they seem to be lazy and only idle away their time without any brisk movement. As Sidney Colvin finds "the touches of literary art and Greek personification,"[53] they are like four painted figures of some ancient goddess. Their static lazy figures among the rich harvest create an illusion of immortality of the fertile harvest time. Many critics assert that they are really conventional figures derived from some literature and myth. For example, Northrop Frye sees them as a corn goddess.[54] Similarly, Jack regards them as Ceres, and Kenneth Muir remarks that they are "Quasi-Ruth figures."[55] Or, as Barnard points out "an androgynous tutelary spirit" in their figures,[56] they also seem some strange sexless beings. In any case, they give a benevolent, tutelary, mother-like image of the fertile harvest season.

First appears a winnower:

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
  Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
  Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind. (12-15)

Karla Alwes says that the first line "leaves no doubt of the reality that informs the work."[57] As Alwes asserts, this line puts stress on the appropriateness and naturalness of the following activities of the four nonhuman, goddess-like figures. It shows that their activities as farm workers are really similar to those of human beings. The following phrase, "whoever seeks abroad may find thee," suggests that internalization or monopolization of the subject of the ode, which Keats repeatedly attempts in "Ode to Psyche," "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode

on Melancholy," will never be done in this poem. That is to say, autumn, the subject of this ode, is now presented "abroad," in the open air, in front of the public. It is depicted as a really familiar figure that can be seen not only by the poet, but by everyone. Now the winnower is not eagerly winnowing. Instead, it is sitting careless on a granary floor surrounded by rich store. Jack compares this lazy winnower to "Psyche asleep among the Grain."[58] The granary is already filled with abundant corn and there is really no need to work hard. The leisurely winnowing seems to continue forever.

The second figure is a reaper:

Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers. (16-18)

Like the winnower, now the reaper is not working at all, but "sound asleep" comfortably on "a half-reaped furrow." Jack regards this sleeping reaper as a very conventional feature of autumn. He remarks, "A presentation of harvesters resting during the heat of the day is a common feature of pictures of Autumn" and he calls it "Reaper's Repose."[59] The reaper is now soundly sleeping, sparing the next swath. There is no knowing when the reaper will wake up and finish reaping. It seems that the reaper is not simply reposing for a while but being drowsed endlessly by the strange fume of the "poppies." When Pluto carried away Proserpina, the daughter of Ceres, she was gathering poppies. The flower may suggest, in a sense, the relation between the reposing reaper with the Goddess of fertility or, with the queen of the infernal regions.

The third figure is a gleaner:

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook. (19-20)

Generally, a gleaner picks up the bits and pieces left behind in the reaped field when the crop has been carted away. The "laden head" of the gleaner shows that the gleaner is now carrying a basket full of corn. The crop has been reaped and carted away from the field, and also the gleaning has been already done. But the gleaner has not yet finished carrying away the crop picked up in the reaped field. As Macksey remarks that the gleaner is "marvelously arrested by the line break,"[60] by the enjambment, "keep / Steady," the gleaner seems to be perpetually carrying corn, just like the procession of pious people is on perpetual midwayness toward the green altar in "Ode on a Grecian Urn." It is impossible to tell when the gleaner will end its journey.

Finally appears a cyder-presser:

> Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
> Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours. (21-22)

The apples have been gathered from "the mossed cottage-trees," and apparently the pressing has been almost done. However, the presser is still patiently waiting for the final trickles of juice from the crushed apples, which suggests the extremely slow lapse of time. We cannot know when the pressing will be really done. The two phrases, "last oozings" and "hours by hours," imply that the "last" drop is falling down "endlessly," which is really a contradictory statement. Here, the infinite strangely and impossibly coexists with the finite. The figure reveals an impulse to prolong the rich harvest season as long as possible and to create an illusion of immortality.

Thus the second stanza presents fertile harvest time by using four personified figures of autumn. They are all depicted as farm workers, but they are not working busily at all. Instead, they are idling away

their time as if to delay finishing their work, as David Perkins points out that "autumn suggests precisely that lengthening out of fulfillment."[61] While in the first stanza, the ripening process seemed endless, now the time has finally come to harvest all "mellow fruitfulness." But even so, the second stanza attempts to prolong the end of the harvest and create an illusion of immortality. In order to produce an atmosphere of immortal harvest time, the personified autumnal figures are all posing silently and statically as if they were painted figures on a tableau. The charmed magic casements in fairy lands forlorn in "Ode to a Nightingale" and the peaceful but desolate little town in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" also present static, serene, picture-like world. Compared to them, the landscape with the four motionless figures does not seem threatening, nor does it strike the terror of desolation, petrifaction or of death. Though the figures seem nonhuman and rather lazy, they are all engaged in some familiar human activities, which gives a sense of relief and mother-like warmth.

Even in this seemingly immortal harvest time, however, the inevitability of decay, decline and death is already lurking and awaiting all, which is expressed in the reaper's "hook." The "hook" is a harvest tool like scythe and sickle. Originally it was the attribute of fertility god, Cronus. But later his name became confused with the name of the personification of time, Chronus, and it also became the attribute of time, Grim Reaper. The hook is a symbol both of fertility and of death. Macksey remarks that "absence and death" are "prefigured in the reaper's hook."[62] But at first sight, the reaper is leisurely sound asleep on a half-reaped furrow, assuming a conventional figure of autumn, that is,

Reaper's Repose. It is at once a symbol of fertile peaceful harvest time and, as Perkins says, "another reaper, death itself."[63] In the middle of the whole ode where the seemingly immortal rich harvest is depicted, the reaper appears with a hook, suggesting the inevitable end of all, though the reaper holds its use for the moment.

In this way, the inevitable end of all is now drawing near and near. And yet an irresistible impulse to delay the end and the longing for fertility are effused a moment in the opening line of the third stanza:

> Where are the songs of spring? Aye, where are they?
> Think not of them, thou hast thy music too—
> While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
> And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue. (23-26)

In the first line, Arnold Davenport finds "an indisputable note of the sad longing for what was lovely and is gone."[64] Though so far the autumnal landscape has been depicted quite objectively, here the passionate yearning for the immortal ripening and harvest, and for the warm revivifying season is temporarily revealed for the first time. The effusion resembles, in a sense, the passionate temporal yearning for the flight into the ideal immortal world which repeatedly appears in Keats's other odes. Patterson calls this first line "the *ubi sunt* question." He remarks that it is a stock question "that has rung down the centuries since the Latin lyricists."[65] And the expected stock reply to such a question will be, as Patterson suggests, "Gone with the snows of yesteryear."

Here, instead of such a conventional reply, the poet says, "Think not of them, thou hast thy music too." Like "forlorn" and "never return" in the previous odes, these two lines make a turning point in the whole ode. By these words, the yearning for immortal ripening, or for the warmer season is decisively abandoned. And the second line suggests the

acceptance of autumnal music as it is without detesting and rejecting the decaying season, or blindly longing for the songs of spring as a kind of escape from reality. The following autumnal music variously presents decay, death, birth, growth and maturing. With the final twitter of the swallows, they are all made into one immortal cycle that brings about ripeness, decay, death, and then rebirth and ripeness again. In the final stanza, the immortal cyclicity of fertility and death comes to be realized.

The poet's eyes, which have been directed on the personified autumnal figures, are again turned on the broader landscape. The prospect reaches to the very horizon and suggests infinity. First, "stubble-plains" appear. Now evening is coming and the day is "soft-dying." Yet the clouds are still "blooming" the dying day, reflecting the blazing red of the setting sun. As Allott says that "the 'dying day' has paradoxically some of the characteristics of youth,"[66] the strange but peaceful coexistence of life and death can be found here. The "stubble-plains" are lifeless fields where all the crops have been reaped and carried away. As Keats says in his letter from Winchester, "a stubble plain looks warm," the lifeless plains now present lively warmth, "rosy hue." Now everything in nature is really toward decay and death, but the fact does not create any gloomy, morbid atmosphere. The "idea of death is not treated with horror or resentment," as Mayhead says,[67] here exists "soft," "rosy," "bloomy" death. It is embracing a warm sense of life within itself.

Following such warmth of stubble-plains, various autumnal music depicts the after-harvest scenery. In the first stanza, the ripening process is presented by the tactual sense, and in the second stanza, the

harvest scene is presented by the visual sense. Now in the third stanza, the auditory sense presents the landscape after harvest:

> Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
> Among the river sallows, borne aloft
> Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
> And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourne;
> Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
> The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
> And gathering swallows twitter in the skies. (27-33)

All the autumnal music of "gnats," "full-grown lambs," "hedge-crickets," "red-breast" and "gathering swallows" embraces death and life, or a sense of change and cycle. Usually gnats swarm over a river at sunset, telling the change of the seasons. As we have seen in the second chapter, in Gray's "Ode on the Spring," the "busy murmur" of the "insect youth" leads the poet into didactic contemplation of mortality of "the race of Man." Of course in "To Autumn," there is no such moral, and the "choir" of gnats is depicted objectively as one of the various autumnal music. However, as the word "wailful" suggests, their choir may sound like a kind of dirge over the shortness of their own life and the lateness of the season. But the dirge does not simply grow fainter and completely disappear in the end. Instead, it is born "aloft and sinking" as the wind" lives and dies." Announcing the change of the season, the wailful choir of gnats exists between life and death, embracing both of them in their dirge.

From the faraway "hilly bourne," the bleating of the lambs is resounding. The phrase "full-grown lambs" suggests the lambs of the previous spring. They are not so old as to be called "sheep," yet they are now too big to be simply called "lambs." The phrase appropriately expresses their ambiguous transitional state between maturity and immaturity. But it is impossible to stay in perpetual infancy. The

lambs that are now loudly bleating and innocently gamboling will become full-grown sheep in spring. The phrase "full-grown lambs" suggests that before long the lambs will be ready for breeding, for a shearing shed or for a slaughter house. Their bleating sounds the slow but incessant passage of time.

Then from the hedge, crickets sing. Generally the male cricket sings a beautiful song in summer and autumn. But in Keats's sonnet "On the Grasshopper and Cricket," the cricket sings even in the middle of winter:

> The poetry of earth is ceasing never.
> On a lone winter evening, when the frost
> Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
> The cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
> And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
> The grasshopper's among some grassy hills. (9-14)

In this sonnet, Keats compares the immortality of poetry to the immortal song of grasshopper and cricket. As the cricket lives in the warmth of a stove, it can sing even in winter. The cricket often stays over the coldest season in this way. The crickets in this ode, however, live somewhere in the field. They stay on the edge of a garden, field, road or the like. At the same time, they live on the edge of the changing season, enjoying the rest of their own short life. In folklore, the cricket was often regarded as an omen of death. Even when the cricket living long in one's house suddenly disappeared, it was regarded as a bad omen. Such a cricket as a death omen often appears in literature. For example, in *Macbeth*, when Macbeth kills Banquo and comes out of his room, Lady Macbeth says, "I heard the owl scream, and the cricket cry"(II, ii). Their shrill from somewhere in the field reminds us of the change of the season and of death.

Next comes the whistle of the "red-breast." The bird is also called "robin red-breast" and has melodious songs. It is a hardy bird that either migrates to warm regions or winters in cold areas. In England the bird usually stays over the coldest season. Therefore, it is generally regarded as a winter bird. Its whistling suggests the change of the season. Furthermore, like the cricket, the red-breast is also closely associated with death. But it presents not an ominous omen of death. It is more benignantly or mildly related to death. It is said that, when the red-breast once covered Christ's body, its breast touched his blood and it has ever since been red. In many ballads, the bird benignantly covers the dead with leaves. In "The Children in the Wood," the "Robin-red-breast" piously covers the bodies of the poor children:

> Thus wandered these poor innocents,
> Till deathe did end their grief,
> In one anothers armes they dyed,
> As wanting due relief:
> No burial 'this' pretty 'pair'
> Of any man receives,
> Till Robin-red-breast piously
> Did cover them with leaves. (121-128)[68]

Similar bird appears also in John Webster's *The White Devil*:

> Call for the robin-red-breast and the wren,
> Since o'er shady groves they hover,
> And with leaves and flowers do cover
> The friendless bodies of unburied men. (V, iv, 100-103)[69]

The bird's whistling mildly sounds the change of the season and death, though the bird stays over the coldest season and again enjoys warm spring.

Finally, the "twitter" of the "gathering swallows" resounds in the sky. The swallows are now gathering for their oncoming departure. Before long, they are leaving for warmer southern countries because winter is coming and it is getting colder and colder. However, their

twitter does not end in only suggesting the coming of winter or the longing for the warmer season. In spring, they will come back again to breed, and in autumn, with their young birds they will leave for the warmer south again to return the year after next again. Though their generations should change, their fundamental regular life pattern shows endless cyclicity. For them, the end of harvest and the coming of cold winter are not an end, but a part of one greater immortal cycle that revolves around all creatures, perpetually working growth, fertility, decay and death. What should be noticed here is that, unlike the song of the nightingale that is rejected and finally buried deep into the earth as a reminder of ominous death in the last stanza of "Ode to a Nightingale," the twitter of swallows is not buried deep, but resounds high up in the sky. The end of the ode suggests final acceptance of the twitter of swallows and, furthermore, the acceptance of whole autumnal music performed by the wailful choir of small gnats, the loud bleating of full-grown lambs, the song of hedge-crickets and the whistling of red-breast. These various notes of autumn peacefully resound the mild transition from maturity to decay and, to maturity again. The autumnal music quietly performs the immortal cyclicity of death and birth.

As has been already pointed out, "To Autumn" is one of the conventional poems that treat autumn as their themes. Therefore, it is natural that the poem should have been influenced by various preceding literary works on autumn. For example, minor influence may be found from Chatterton, "When the fayre apple, rudde as even skie, / Do bend the tree unto the fructyle ground"(*Aella,* 184-185) and Thomson, "These roving mists that constant now begin / To smoke along the hilly

country"(*The Seasons, Autumn,* 736-737) and Wordsworth, "mellow Autumn charged with bounteous fruit"(*The Excursion,* V, 400). But these suggest only a partial influence on several words of the poem. Needless to say, it is Collins's "Ode to Evening" that is often pointed out as having a strong resemblance to "To Autumn" or exercising a great influence on the whole atmosphere of the poem.

We have already seen in the second chapter that, though Collins was still greatly affected by classical models, he changed the conventional public ode of praise into a kind of dirge or elegy. His odes created a morbid, gloomy atmosphere. "Ode to Evening" is a descriptive ode which devotes itself to depicting the evening natural scenery and changes the landscape into "a sequence of tableaux and brief allegories."[70] Without directly referring to death and mortality, or morbidly meditating on them, it produces an elegiac mood of its own. It is true that Collins's fine description of the picturesque landscape of evening and his thoroughly impersonal tones are similar to "To Autumn." And he also refers to the four seasons:

> While *Spring* shall pour his Show'rs, as oft he wont,
> And bathe thy breathing Tresses, meekest *Eve*!
> While *Summer* loves to sport,
> Beneath thy ling'ring Light:
> While sallow *Autumn* fills thy Lap with Leaves,
> Or *Winter* yelling thro' the troublous Air,
> Affrights thy shrinking Train,
> And rudely rends thy Robes. (41-48)

But here Collins only describes the conventional evening scenery of each season with stock epithets. There exists no sense of transition of the seasons or realization of a great cycle that works the transition. In "To Autumn," such realization of immortal cyclicity comes to be revealed after the sudden temporal effusion of feelings in the final stanza.

Geoffrey Hartman calls such latent or sudden realization "the epiphany proper," and he remarks that it is the "one feature conspicuously absent" in "Ode to Evening,"[71] which makes a great difference between "To Autumn" and "Ode to Evening." As M. H. Abrams asserts,[72] Keats revitalized and modified in his ode the famous ode of Collins who devoted himself to thoroughly impersonal description of picturesque elegiac scenery of evening. By doing so, Keats found an answer to the question posed by the odes of his own.

In "To Autumn," the poet finds decay, death, transition and transience in the apparently immortal maturing process of autumn. In "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode on Melancholy," he also finds death lurking in blissful immortality, or finds transience lurking in Beauty, Joy and Pleasure. What he finds in "To Autumn" is, however, totally different from what he found in his other odes. The death in this ode is not the ideal "easeful" death, nor is it the ominous death that always accompanies the unbearable sense of isolation, or the terror of petrifaction. Nor is it something intense that enables the poet to experience true melancholy. In this ode, death naturally and peacefully coexists with apparently perpetual maturing process in nature. As Macksey remarks, "death invades, inhabits, is even coextensive with" the "moment of life."[73] Here it is realized that death is not a mere end, and that maturity and birth are not a mere beginning or continuity. Instead, they are all included in one immortal cyclicity, each filling the part of "the cycle that creates immortality."[74] The realization suggests that the coexistence of maturity and death makes up immortality. About the final acceptance, Bate says, "Here at least is something of a genuine

paradise."[75] Beginning with an early Elysium, Keats's immortality was once rejected as an ominous world slyly concealing death. And now by the reconciliation between death and fertility, immortality is again accepted.

As has been pointed out in the first chapter, the ancient Greek people transformed hymn dedicated to the immortal gods into a new poetic form, ode, in order to praise mortal men and give them immortality. Death was the origin of the ode. The ode was written to reconcile the two incompatible elements, inevitable death and ideal immortality. Most English poets wrote odes either as the poetry to praise immortality, or as the poetry to meditate on death without attempting their reconciliation. Most of Keats's odes did not treat immortality and death separately. Though, at first, immortality and death seem totally incompatible with each other, they finally come to be harmonized. It may be said that the sequence of Keats's odes attempted to fulfill the original function of the ode.

White finds in this final ode the "Miltonic 'all passion spent,' Shakespearean 'full close' after the final words of a tragedy have been spoken."[76] But when we consider Keats's really "final" ode, it seems impossible to thus assert "full close" too positively. Strictly speaking, though "To Autumn" is certainly Keats's final ode of the 1819 odes, his really last one is "Ode to Fanny" which was written in February, 1820, one year before his death. As its opening line, "Physician Nature, let my spirit blood," suggests, it is, as it were, an utterly autobiographical, second-rate poem where he devotes himself only to pouring out his passion for Fanny, his effeminate jealousy and anger for her frivolous behavior.

It seems as if the ode were written by a totally different person. Far from impersonality, it is full of too much effusion of naked private feelings. Unfortunately, we cannot know how these new characteristics of his ode might change later. They only suggest that "To Autumn" may be called Keats's substantially final ode in that it effectuates a conclusion to his incessantly changing immortal world. By finally finding cyclicity, the sequence of his odes gives an answer to the longtime opposition between blissful immortality and death. As Blackstone remarks, his odes "form a unity."[77)]

## Notes to Chapter VII

1. About the date of composition, Jack Stillinger says that "there is actually no evidence for dating it except for its thematic and stylistic similarity to other work of the spring, summer, and autumn of 1819," Jack Stillinger, *The Hoodwinking of Madeline and Other Essays on Keats's Poems* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1871), p. 104.

2. Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 520.

3. Jack Stillinger, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

4. Sidney Colvin, *Keats* (1889. New York: AMS Press, 1968), p. 175.

5. Cedric Watts, *A Preface to Keats* (London: Longman, 1985), p. 118.

6. Jennifer Farrell, *Keats—The Progress of the Odes* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), p. 75.

7. Andrew Bennett, *Keats, Narrative and Audience: The Posthumous Life of Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 132.

8. Walter Jackson Bate, *op. cit.*, p. 522.

9. Bernard Blackstone, *The Consecrated Urn: An Interpretation of Keats in Terms of Growth and Form* (London: Longmans, 1959), p. 355.

10. Leslie Brisman, "Keats and a New Birth: The 'Ode on Melancholy,'" *The Odes of Keats*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), p. 76.

11. Kenneth Muir, ed., *John Keats: a Reassessment* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1958), p. 71.

12. In *The Faerie Queene,* the cave of *Despair* is described like this: "Ere long they come, where that same wicked wight / His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave, / Farre underneath a craggie clift ypight, / Darke, dolefull, drearie, like a greedie grave, / That still for carrion carcases doth crave: / On top whereof aye dwelt the ghastly Owle, / Shrieking his balefull note, which ever drave / Farre from that haunt all other chearefull fowle; / And all about it wandring ghostes did waile and howle"(Book I, ix, 33). Ian Jack remarks that these lines "may well have been at the back of Keats's mind as he wrote the rejected opening stanza of his 'Ode on Melancholy,' Ian Jack, *Keats and the Mirror of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 20.

13. Miriam Allott, ed., *The Complete Poems of John Keats* (London: Longman, 1980), p. 539.

14. Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London: Dent & Sons, 1932), vol. 1, p. 432.

15. *L'Allegro,* 1-2.

16. About the creative melancholy image, Muir remarks, "Keats presumably did not intend, that the melancholy fit is creative," Kenneth Muir, *op. cit.,* p. 72.

17. Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company* (1961. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 413.

18. Hermione de Almeida says, "Mythology has flowering wolfsbane growing at the entrance to the infernal underworld, for, when Cerberus's saliva fell to the ground, the 'witch-flower' aconite sprang forth," Hermione de Almeida, *Romantic Medicine and John Keats* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 168.

19. Tennyson says, "Old yew, which graspest at the stones / That name the under-lying dead, / Thy fibres net the dreamless head, / Thy roots are wrapt about the bones"(*In Memoriam*, 2, 1-5).

20. John Barnard, *John Keats* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 113.

21. William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930. London: Chatto & Windus, 1956), p. 215.

22. Helen Vendler, *The Odes of John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 174.

23. David Perkins, *The Quest for Permanence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 287.

24. About the transience of beauty in a rose, Keats wrote in his letter to the George Keatses, 21 April, 1819, "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 can not escape it, it cannot destroy its annoyance," *Letters* II, p. 101.

25. Cedric Watts, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

26. Harold Bloom, *op. cit.*, p. 415.

27. *Letters* II, p. 80.

28. G. W. Knight, *The Starlit Dome* (1941. London: Methuen, 1959), p. 298.

29. William Empson, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

30. G. W. Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

31. Karla Alwes, *Imagination Transformed: The Evolution of the Female Character in Keats's Poetry* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p. 137.

32. Bernard Blackstone, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

33. Jennifer Farrell, *op. cit., p. 88.*

34. John Barnard, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

35. Jack Stillinger, *op. cit.*, p. 2. Robin Mayhead points out the similarity between these two odes by comparing with Keats's other odes. He asserts, "Superficially altogether different from the *Ode on Melancholy, To Autumn* is profoundly related to that poem. As we have seen the *Melancholy* ode accepts the impermanence of beauty and joy as inevitable. Keats may not be particularly glad about this inevitability, but he does not cry out against it as he does in the *Ode to a Nightingale*, or, with far greater restraint, in the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. *To Autumn* goes further," Robin Mayhead, *John Keats* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 96.

36. Bernard Blackstone, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

37. Harold Bloom, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

38. *Letters,* II, p. 167.

39. Grant F. Scott, *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekpharasis, and the Visual Arts* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994), p. 164.

40. Thomas Hood, *The Poetical Works of Thomas Hood* (London: Frederick Warne).

41. Helen Vendler, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

42. John Middleton Murry, *Keats and Shakespeare* (1925. London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 189.

43. Grant F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

44. Harold Bloom, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

45. Sidney Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

46. Cedric Watts, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

47. Richard Macksey, "'To Autumn' and the Music of Mortality: 'Pure Rhetoric of A Language without Words," *Romanticism & Language*, ed., Arden Reed (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 294.

48. Miriam Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 651.

49. Mayhead points out two meanings in the word "mists," that is, the haze on a mellow day of autumn, and the chill of the cold day of coming winter. He remarks, "To one who knows the season of autumn in Europe, "mists" will recall most obviously the haze experienced on a mellow day of sunshine, or the mist with which a warm autumn day may begin. But the very word "mists" has among its associations a suggestion of chill, which hints, if only distantly, at the cold days of the coming winter, and death," Robin Mayhead, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

50. Grant F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

51. C. I. Patterson, Jr., *The Daemonic in the Poetry of John Keats* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970), p. 230.

52. Bernard Blackstone, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

53. Sidney Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

54. Northrop Frye, ed., *Romanticism Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 21.

55. Ian Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 236, Kenneth Muir, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

56. John Barnard, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

57. Karla Alwes, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

58. Ian Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 236-237.

60. Richard Macksey, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

61. David Perkins, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

62. Richard Macksey, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

63. David Perkins, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

64. Arnold Davenport, "A Note on 'To Autumn,'" *John Keats: a Reassessment*, ed., Kenneth Muir (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1958), p. 96.

65. C. I. Patterson, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 235.

66. Miriam Allott, *op. cit.*, p. 653.

67. Robin Mayhead, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

68. Thomas Percy, ed., *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (New York: Dover, 1966), III, BK. 2, xviii.

69. John Webster, *The White Devil*, ed. John Russell Brown (London: Methuen, 1960).

70. M. H. Abrams, *The Correspondent Breeze* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), p. 83.

71. Geoffrey Hartman, "Poem and Ideology: A Study of 'To Autumn,' *John Keats*, ed., Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1985), p. 98.

72. M. H. Abrams, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

73. Richard Macksey, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

74. Karla Alwes, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

75. Walter Jackson Bate, *op. cit.*, p. 581.

76. R. S. White, *Keats as a Reader of Shakespeare* (London: Athlone Press, 1987), p. 221.

77. Blackstone says, "The Odes form a unity, as the narratives did not. Keats is feeling his way towards an inclusive vision," Bernard

Blackstone, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

# Bibliography

Books

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* 5th ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1985.

---. *The Correspondent Breeze.* New York: W. W. Norton, 1984.

---. *The Mirror and the Lamp.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953.

Ainsworth, Edward Gay, Jr. *Poor Collins: His Life, His Art, and Influence* New York: Ithaca, 1937.

Alwes, Karla. *Imagination Transformed: The Evolution of the Female Character in Keats's Poetry.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1933.

Apuleius, Lucius. *The Golden Ass.* Trans. Robert Graves. London Penguin Books, 1990.

Arber, Edward, ed. *The English Scholar's Library* vol.III. New York: AMS Press, 1967.

Armstrong, Edward A. *The Folklore of Birds.* 1958. New York: Dover, 1970.

Arnold, Matthew. *The Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold.* Eds. C. B. Tinker and H. F. Lowry. London: Oxford University Press, 1950.

Baker, Jeffrey. *John Keats and Symbolism.* Sussex: The Harvest Press, 1986.

Barnard, John. *John Keats.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Bate, W. J. *John Keats.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963.

Bennett, Andrew. *Keats, Narrative and Audience.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Benziger, James. *Images of Eternity: Studies in the Poetry of Religious Vision, from Wordsworth to T. S. Eliot.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962.

Biedermann, Hans. *Dictionary of Symbolism: Cultural Icons & the Meanings behind Them.* Trans. James Hulbert. New York: Facts on File, 1992.

Blackstone, Bernard. *The Consecrated Urn: An Interpretation of Keats in Terms of Growth and Form.* London: Longmont, 1959.

Bloom, Harold, ed. *John Keats.* New York: Chelsea House, 1985.

---. *The Odes of Keats.* New York: Chelsea House, 1987.

---. *The Visionary Company.* 1961. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971.

Bolgar, R. R. *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954.

Bornstein, George, ed. *Ezra Pound Among the Poets.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Bowra, C. Maurice. *The Greek Experience.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1957.

---. *The Romantic Imagination.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950.

Brogan, T. V. F., ed. *The New Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Brooks, Cleanth. *Modern Poetry and the Tradition.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939.

---. *The Well Wrought Urn.* 1947. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975.

Browne, Thomas. *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne.* Ed. Geoffrey Keynes. London: Faber & Gwyer, 1929.

Bulfinch, Thomas. *The Age of Fable.* London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1948.

Burnett, Anne Pippin. *The Art of Bacchylides.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985.

Burns, Robert. *Burns: Poems and Songs.* Ed. James Kinsley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Burton, Robert. *The Anatomy of Melancholy* 3vols. London: Dent & Sons, 1932.

Byron, George Gordon Noel. *Byron: Poetical Works.* Ed. Frederick Page. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Carne-Ross, D. S. *Pindar.* Mew Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer.* Ed. Richard Morris. London: George Bell & Sons, 1891.

Child, F. J., ed. *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads.* New York: Dover 1965.

Claridge, Laura. *Romantic Potency: The Paradox of Desire.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Biographia Literaria.* Ed. J. Shawcross. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907.

---. *Collected Letters* 2vols. Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956.

---. *Coleridge Poetical Works.* Ed. Earnest Hartley Coleridge. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

---. *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* 6vols. Ed. Earl Leslie Griggs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956-1971.

Collins, William. *The Works of William Collins.* Eds. Richard Wendorf, and Charles Ryskamp. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.

---. *Poems of William Collins.* Ed. Walter C. Bronson. New York: Ginn & Company, 1898.

Colvin, Sidney. *Keats.* 1889. New York: AMS Press, 1968.

Commager, Steele. *The Ode of Horace: A Critical Study.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995.

Cook, R. M. *Greek Painted Pottery.* London: Methuen, 1960.

Cowley, Abraham. *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Abraham Cowley* 2vols. Ed. Alexander B. Grosart. New York: AMS Press, 1967.

Cowper, William. *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper* 2vols. Eds. James King, and Charles Ryskamp. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

---. *The Poetical Works of William Cowper.* Ed. H. S. Milford. London: Oxford University Press, 1950.

Crotty, Kevin. *Song and Action: The Victory Odes of Pindar.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.

Culler, Jonathan. *The Pursuit of Signs.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.

Curran, Stuart. *Poetic Form and British Romanticism.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

D'Avanzo, Mario L. *Keats's Metaphors for the Poetic Imagination.* Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1967.

Davis, Gregson. *Polyhymnia: the Rhetoric of Horatian Lyric Discourse.* Berkley: University of California Press, 1991.

Davison, Dennis, ed. *The Penguin Book of Eighteen-Century English Verse.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983.

de Almeida, Hermione, ed. *Critical Essays on John Keats.* Boston: G. K. Hall, 1990.

---. *Romantic Medicine and John Keats.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

de Man, Paul. *The Rhetoric of Romanticism.* New York: Columbia University

Press, 1984.

de Vries, Ad. *Dictionary of Symbolism and Imagery.* London: North-Holland, 1974.

Dekker, George. *Coleridge and the Literature of Sensibility.* London: Vision, 1978.

Donald, Ian, ed. *Ben Jonson.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Dryden, John. *John Dryden.* Ed. Keith Walker. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

---. *The Works of John Dryden.* Eds. Edward Niles Hooker, and H. T. Swedenberg, Jr. Berkley: University of California Press, 1964.

Eliot, T. S. *Selected Essays.* London: Faber and Faber, 1958.

---. *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot.* London: Faber and Faber, 1969.

---. *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism.* 1933. London: Faber & Faber, 1980.

Empson, William. *Seven Types of Ambiguity.* 1930. London: Chatto and Windus, 1956.

Evans, Ivor H., ed. *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable.* London: Cassell, 1989.

Evert, Walter H. *Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of John Keats.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965.

Farrell, Jennifer. *Keats—The Progress of the Odes. Unity and Utopia.* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989.

Finney, C. L. *The Evolution of Keats's Poetry* 2vols. 1936. New York: Russell and Russell, 1963.

Fitzgerald, W. *Agonistic Poetry: The Pindaric Mode in Pindar, Horace, Hölderlin and the English Ode.* Los Angeles: University of California, 1987.

Fowler, Alastair. *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Fraser, G. S., ed. *John Keats: Odes.* London: Macmillan, 1971.

Friedman, A. B. ed. *The Viking Book of Folk Ballads of the English-Speaking World.* New York: The Viking Press, 1956.

Fry, Paul H. *The Poet's Calling in the English Ode.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

Frye, Northrop, ed. *Romanticism Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1963.

Garland, Robert. *The Greek Way of Death.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Garrod, H. W. *Keats.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926.

---. *The Profession of Poetry and Other Lectures.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929.

Gaull, Marilyn. *English Romanticism.* New York: Norton, 1988.

Ghent, Dorothy Van. *Keats: The Myth of the Hero.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Goad, Caroline. *Horace in the English Literature of the Eighteenth Century.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918.

Goldhill, Simon. *The Poets's Voice: Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Gradman, Barry. *Metamorphosis in Keats.* New York: New York University Press, 1980.

Gray, Thomas. *The Works of Thomas Gray* 4vols. Ed. Edmund Gosse. New York: AMS Press, 1968.

Grimm, Jakob, and Wilhelm Grimm. *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm.* Trans. Jack Zipes. New York: Bantam Books, 1987.

Hardy, Thomas. *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy* 5vols. Ed. Samuel Hynes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

Harrison, Antony H. *Victorian Poets and Romantic Poems.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992.

Haydon, John O., ed. *Romantic Bards and British Reviewers.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.

Herrick, Robert. *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick.* Ed. F. W. Moorman. London: Oxford University Press, 1921.

Highet, Gilbert. *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature.* 1949. New York: Galaxy Book, 1957.

Hodgart, Matthew, ed. *The Faber Book of Ballads.* 1965. London: Faber and Faber, 1982.

Hood, Thomas. *The Poetical Works of Thomas Hood.* London: Frederick Warne.

Hopkins, Gerard Manley. *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins.* Eds. Robert Bridges and W. H. Gardner. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Horace. *Horace: The Complete Odes and Epodes.* Trans. W. G. Shepherd. London: Penguin Books, 1983.

---. *Horace: Odes and Epodes.* Trans. C. E. Bennett. London: William Heinemann. (Loeb Classical Library), 1914; revised. 1988.

Hudson, William Henry. *British Birds.* London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1923.

Jack, Ian. *Keats and the Mirror of Art.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

Jacobus, Mary. *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads (1798).* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.

Jones, John. *John Keats's Dream of Truth.* 1969. London: Chatto and Windus, 1980.

Jump, John D. *The Ode.* London: Methuen, 1974.

Kamenetsky, Christa. *The Brothers Grimm & Their Critics: Folktales & the Quest for Meaning.* Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992.

Keats, John. *John Keats: The Complete Poems.* Ed. John Barnard. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1983.

---. *The Complete Poems of John Keats.* Ed. Miriam Allott. London: Longman, 1980.

Kittredge, G. L., and Sargent H. C. eds. *English and Scottish Popular Ballads.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932.

Knight, G. W. *The Starlit Dome.* 1941. London: Methuen, 1959.

Kroeber, Karl, and Gene W. Ruoff, eds. *Romantic Poetry.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993.

Lau, Beth. *Keats's Reading of the Romantic Poets.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993.

Leach, Maria, ed. *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend.* 1949. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1972.

Leavis, F. R. *Revaluation.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1936.

Lemprière, John. *Lemprière's Classical Dictionary.* 1788. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.

Livens, Marjorie. *Keats's Life of Allegory.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988.

Lord, George de Forest. *Classical Presences in Seventeenth Century English Poetry.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.

Lutwack, Leonard. *Birds in Literature.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994.

Lyly, John. *The Complete Works of John Lyly.* Ed. R. Warwick Bond. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902.

MacNeice, Louis. *Collected Poems 1925-1948.* London: Faber & Faber.

Maddison, Carol. *Apollo and the Nine: A History of the Ode.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960.

Martindale, Charles, and David Hopkins, ed. *Horace Made New: Horatian Influences on British Writing From the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933.

Matthey, François. *The Evolution of Keats's Structural Imagery.* Bern: Francke, 1974.

Mayhead, Robin. *John Keats.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.

McGann, Jerome J. *The Beauty of Inflections.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.

Mellor, Anne K. *Romanticism & Gender.* New York: Routledge, 1993.

Milton, John. *John Milton: Complete Shorter Poems.* Ed. John Carey. London: Longman, 1989.

Miner, Earl. *The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

Muir, Kenneth, ed. *John Keats: a Reassessment.* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1958.

Mullen, William. *Choreia: Pindar & Dance.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.

Murry, John Middleton. *Keats and Shakespeare.* 1925. London: Oxford University Press, 1957.

Mustard, W. P. *Classical Echoes in Tennyson.* 1904. New York: Haskell, 1970.

Nashe, Thomas. *Thomas Nashe.* Ed. Stanley Wells. London: Edward Arnold, 1964.

O'Neill, Michael, ed. *Keats: Bicentenary Readings.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh Edinburgh University Press, 1997.

Ovid. *Metamorphoses.* Trans. Frank Justus Miller. 3rd ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977.

Panofsky, Erwin, Raymond Klibansk, and Fritz Saxl. *Saturn and Melancholy. Studies in History of Natural Philosophy.* London: Nelson, 1964.

Parsons, Thornton H. *John Crowe Ransom.* New York: Twayne, 1969.

Pater, Walter. *Marius the Epicurean.* London: Penguin Books, 1985.

Paterson, Linda M. *The World of the Troubadours.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Patterson, Jr., C. I. *The Daemonic in the Poetry of John Keats.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970.

Percy, Thomas, ed. *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry 3vols.* Ed. Henry B. Wheatley. New York: Dover, 1966.

Perkins, David. *The Quest for Permanence.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959

Pfeffer, Wendy. *The Change of Philomel: The Nightingale in Medieval Literature.* New York: Peter Lang, 1985.

Pindar. *Pindar: The Odes.* Trans. C. Maurice Bowra. London: Penguin Books, 1969.

---. *The Odes of Pindar.* Trans. Sir John Sandys. (Loeb Classical Library) London: William Heinemann, 1957.

---. *Pindar.* Ed. and trans. William H. Race. 2 vols. (Loeb Classical Library) Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1997.

Pope, Alexander. *The Poems of Alexander Pope.* 5vols. Ed. John Butt. London: Methuen, 1954.

----. *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope* 3vols. Ed. G. R. Dennis. London: George Bell & Sons, 1891.

Putnam, Michael C. J. *Artifices of Eternity: Horace's Fourth Book of Odes.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986.

Race, William H. *Classical Genres and English Poetry.* New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1988.

---. *Pindar.* Boston: Twayne, 1986.

Rajan, Tilottama. *Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980.

Ransom, John Crowe. *John Crowe Ransom: Selected Poems.* 3rd ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969.

Reed, Arden, ed. *Romanticism & Language.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.

Richard, I. A. *Science and Poetry.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1926.

Ridley, M. R. *Keats' Craftsmanship.* 1933. London: Methuen, 1963.

Rivers, Isabel. *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry.* London: Rutledge, 1994.

Roe, Nicholas. *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

---, ed. *Keats and History.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Rollins, H. E., ed. *The Keats Circle: Letters and Papers 1816-78* 2vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948.

---, ed. *The Letters of John Keats* 2vols. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Rowland, Beryl. *Birds with Human Souls: A Guide to Bird Symbolisms.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978.

Santirocco, Matthew S. *Unity and Design in Horace's Odes.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986.

Scott, Grant F. *The Sculpted World: Keats, Ekpharasis and the Visual Arts.* Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994.

Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It.* Ed. Agnes Latham. London: Routledge, 1991.

---. *Love's Labour's Lost.* Ed. Richard David. London: Routledge, 1994.

---. *Macbeth.* Ed. Nicholas Brooke. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Shuster, George N. *The English Ode from Milton to Keats.* Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964.

Simpson, David. *Irony and Authority in Romantic Poetry.* London: Macmillan, 1979.

Sowerby, Robin. *The Classical Legacy in Renaissance Poetry.* London: Longman, 1994.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene.* Ed. A. C. Hamilton. New York: Longman, 1987.

Sperry, Stuart M. *Keats the Poet.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.

Stallworthy, John, ed. *The Oxford Book of War Poetry.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Steiner, Wendy. *Pictures of Romance: From against Context in Painting and Literature.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Stillinger, Jack. *The Hoodwinking of Madeline and Other Essays on Keats's*

*Poems.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971.

Tennyson, Alfred. *In Memoriam.* Ed. Robert H. Ross. New York: W. W. Norton, 1973.

Thayer, Mary Rebecca. *The Influence of Horace on the Chief English Poets of the Nineteenth Century.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916.

Thomas, Dylan. *Dylan Thomas: Collected Poems 1934-1953.* Eds. Walford Davies and Ralph Maud. London: J. M. Dent, 1988.

Thompson, Stith, ed. *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* 6vols. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1955.

---. *The Folktale.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

Thomson, James. *The Complete Poetical Works of James Thomson.* Ed. J. Logie Robertson. London: Oxford University Press, 1951.

Thomson, James A. K. *Classical Influences on English Poetry.* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1951.

Trilling, Lionel. *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society.* London: Secker & Warburg, 1955.

Trimpi, Wesley. *Ben Jonson's Poems.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962.

Vendler, Helen. *The Odes of John Keats.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983.

Vernant, Jean-Pierre. *Mortals and Immortals.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Walker, Barbara G. *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets.* New York: Harper & Row, 1983.

Waller, Gray. *English Poetry of the Sixteenth-Century.* London: Longman, 1986.

Walton, Izaak. *The Compleat Angler.* London: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Wasserman, E. R. *The Finer Tone: Keats's Major Poems.* 1953. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1967.

Watkins, Daniel P. *Keats's Poetry and the Politics of the Imagination.* Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989.

Watson, J. R. *English Poetry of the Romantic Period 1789-1830.* London: Longman, 1985.

Watson, Robert N. *The Rest Is Silence: Death as Annihilation in the English Renaissance.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Watt, Cedric. *A Preface to Keats.* London: Longman, 1985.

Webster, John. *The White Devil.* Ed. John Russell Brown. London: Methuen, 1960.

Weiskel, Thomas. *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

Weller, Earle V., ed. *Keats and Mary Tighe.* New York: MLA, 1928.

White, R. S. *Keats as a Reader of Shakespeare.* London: Athlone Press, 1987.

Williams, Gordon. *The Third Book of Horace's Odes.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

Wilson, Katharine M. *The Nightingale and the Hawk: A Psychological Study of Keats' Ode.* London: Allen and Unwin, 1964.

Witke, Charles. *Horace's Roman Odes.* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983.

Wordsworth, William. *Poetical Works.* 5vols. Ed. Earnest de Selincourt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947-1954.

---. *William Wordsworth.* Ed. Stephen Gill. Oxford University Press, 1984.

---. *Wordsworth Poetical Works.* Ed. Thomas Hutchinson. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Ziolkowski, Jan M. *Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry, 750-1150.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

Articles and Periodicals

Beer, Gillian. "Aesthetic Debate in Keats's Odes." *Modern Language Review* 64(1969): 742-8.

Blunder, E. "Keats and his Predecessors: A Note on the Ode to a Nightingale." *The London Mercury* 20(July, 1929): 289-292.

Brown, Homer. "Creations and Destroyings: Keats's Protestant Hymn, The "Ode to Psyche." *Diacritics* 6(1976): 49-56.

Chandler, Albert R. "The Nightingale in Greek and Latin Poetry." *Classical Journal* 30(1934-5): 78-84.

Coolidge, John S. "Marvell and Horace." *Modern Philology* 63(1965): 111-120.

Coulter, Cornelia C. "Aeolian Strains on the Roman Lyre." *Classical Journal* 31(1936): 175-182.

Cummings, Robert. "Keats's Melancholy in the Temple of Delight." *Keats-Shelley Journal* 36(1987): 50-62.

Dickie, James. "The Grecian Urn: An Archaeological Approach." *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* vol. 52, no. 1 (Autumn, 1969).

Ellis, A. M. "Horace's Influence on Dryden." *Philological Quarterly* 4(1925): 39-60.

Frank, Teeny. "Horace's Definition of Poetry." *Classical Journal* 31(1936): 167-174.

---. "Horace on Contemporary Poetry." *Classical Journal* 13(1918): 550-564.

Green, E. L. "A Family of Athletes." *Classical Journal* 13(1918): 267-271.

Haight, Elizabeth Hazelton. "Cumae in Legend and History." *Classical Journal* 31(1918): 565-578.

---. "Robert Herrick: the English Horace." *Classical Weekly* 4(1911): 178-81. 186-189.

Harrison, T. P. "Keats and a Nightingale." *English Studies* XLI(1960): 353-359.

Hendrickson, G. L. "*Vox Vatis Horati.*" *Classical Journal* 31(1936): 189-200.

Kenny, Margaret. "The Critic Looks at Horace." *Classical Journal* 31(1936): 183-188.

Kramer, Lawrence. "The Return of the Gods: Keats to Rilke." *Studies in Romanticism* 17(Fall 1978): 483-500.

Laski, Marghanita. "The Language of the Nightingale ode." *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association* 19(1966): 60-73.

Levine, George R. "The Arrogance of Keats's Grecian Urn." *Essays in Literature* 10, no. 1(1983): 39-44.

Lord, Louis E. "Horace as an Occasional Poet." *Classical Journal* 31(1936): 152-166.

MacKendrick, Paul. "Kipling and the Nature of the Classical." *Classical Journal* 52(1956): 67-76.

Mason, H. A. "Living in the Present: Is Dryden's ' Horat Ode 29 Book 3' an Example of 'creative translation'?" *Cambridge Quarterly* 10(1981): 91-129.

---. "The Hallowed Hearth: Some Reflections on Dryden's Version of the Ninth Ode in Horace's First Book." *Cambridge Quarterly* 14(1985): 205-239.

McLuhan, Herbert Marshall. "Aesthetic Pattern in Keats's Odes." *The*

*University of Toronto Quarterly* 12(1943): 167-179.

Miller, Bruce E. "Does Critical Consensus Exist? The Case of Keats's Nightingale Ode." *Research Studies* 50(1982): 133-142.

Nitchie, Elizabeth. "Horace and Thackeray." *Classical Journal* 13(1918): 393-410.

Pierce, Robert B. "Ben Jonson's Horace and Horace's Ben Jonson." *Studies in Philology* 78(1981): 20-31.

Pope, Deborah. "The Dark Side of the Urn: A Re-Valuation of the Speaker in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn.'" *Essays in Literature* 10, no. 1(1983): 45-63.

Pound, Ezra. "Horace." *Criterion* 9(1930): 217-227.

Pritchard, J. P. "Aristotle, Horace and Wordsworth." *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 74(1943): 72-91.

Randel, Fred V. "Coleridge and the Contentiousness of Romantic Nightingales." *Studies in Romanticism* 21(1982): 33-55.

Regenos, Graydon W. "The Influence of Horace on Robert Herrick." *Philological Quarterly* 26(1947): 268-284.

Rudd. Niall. "Horace *Odes* and Tennyson's 'To the Rev. F. D. Maurice." *Hermathena* 150(1991): 5-19.

Ruggles, Melville J. "Horace and Herrick." *Classical Journal* 31(1936): 223-234.

Sato, Toshihiko. "'Nightingales': Coleridge's Challenge to a Future Poet and Keats's Probable Reply." *The University of Saga Studies in English* 13(March 1985): 11-24.

Schnier, Jacques. "The Symbolic Bird in Medieval and Renaissance Art." *American Imago* 9(1953): 89-117.

Shipley, Frederick W. "The University of Horace." *Classical Journal* 31(1936): 135-151.

Shippey, Thomas A. "Listening to the Nightingale." *Comparative Literature* 22(1970): 46-60.

Spens, Janet. "Ode to a Nightingale." *Review of English Studies* n. s. III(1952): 234-243.

Syfret, Rosemary. "Marvell's Horatian Ode." *Review of English Studies* 12(1961): 160-172.

Wilson, A. J. N. "Andrew Marvell: *An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland* the Thread of the Poem and its Use of Classical Allusion." *Critical Quarterly* 11(1969): 325-341.

Wormhoudt, Arthur. "The Unconscious Bird Symbol in Literature." *American Imago* 7(1950): 173-182.