

KEATS AND THE DREAM TRADITION

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AND THE  
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By  
JANE DROVER, B.A.

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AUTHOR: Jane Drover, B.A.

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Donald Goellnicht

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is designed to increase our understanding of Keats's use of dreams, first by placing him in the context of the dream tradition, and then by illustrating his own contribution to dream literature.

Chapter One is devoted to a survey of the literary treatment of dreams in the writings prior to the Romantic period, in particular those works which Keats mentions specifically in his letters.

Chapter Two consists of two sections. The first section outlines the theories of Empiricism and German Idealism and applies these theories to dreams. The second section examines the literary treatment of dreams in the works of Keats's contemporaries.

Chapter Three examines Keats's use of dreams and the parallels between his treatment of dreams and that of other dream writers. Although in his early verse Keats treats dreams conventionally, he gradually departs from tradition, developing his own use of the dream by presenting it as a metaphor of a specific approach to life. Tracing this aspect of dreams in Endymion and the poems which follow, we discover a growing mistrust of dreams which culminates in the condemnation of the escapist dreamer.

Chapter Four focuses entirely on The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream and illustrates a new type of dream in Keats's canon. This chapter also functions as a conclusion to the study of dreams as in The Fall of Hyperion Keats defines various types of dreams and thus provides his readers with the necessary criteria for assessing both this dream and those in his previous works.

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I wish to dedicate this thesis to my family, especially my mother and my father.

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CHAPTER 1  
LITERARY BACKGROUND

On 30 September 1820 Keats wrote to his friend  
Charles Brown:

Is there another Life? Shall I awake and find all  
this a dream? There must be we cannot be created  
for this sort of suffering.<sup>1</sup>

These words, which come at the end of both a career and a  
life, illustrate for the last time Keats's interest in dreams  
-- an interest which persisted in his writings from beginning  
to end.

The dream motif first appears in "To Hope" and  
Calidore and although in these early poems dreams play a minor  
role, that role would change. Gradually dreams figure more  
prominently in Keats's verse, and in the narrative poems  
Endymion, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Lamia a dream  
is fundamental to the development of the plot. Indeed, in the  
late work The Fall of Hyperion, Keats bases the entire poem  
on one of his own dreams.

The motif of the dream is hardly new but Keats does  
reveal, throughout his career, a sustained interest in dreams  
which sets him apart from most other dream writers. His study  
of dreams and the "kind of imagination that he took them to  
represent"<sup>2</sup> led him into untrodden regions and ultimately

forced him to question the value of dreams. The certainty of his 1817 speculation that "the Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream -- he awoke and found it truth" (Letters, I, 185) gave way to doubts which, although barely audible, could be heard faintly in the early work Endymion. Although Endymion pledges to talk "no more of dreaming", claiming that he was at fault to have "bent/His appetite beyond his natural sphere",<sup>3</sup> his dream visions seemed to have whetted Keats's appetite to such an extent that the question of the veracity of dreams became one of Keats's major themes.<sup>4</sup>

A similar questioning occurs throughout English literature and had become by Keats's period a well-established literary tradition. Thus to see Keats in the context of this tradition demands a knowledge of the dream studies which preceded his works. We know from Keats's letters and poetic allusions something of the extent of his reading and, for brevity's sake, I have limited my examination of dreams and dream-visions to those authors cited by either Keats or his correspondents. Further, although Keats himself did not follow any such order, for the purpose of clarity I have chosen to survey authors chronologically. Whenever possible, references will be made to specific works that directly influenced Keats, but the primary intent of this chapter is to provide a summary of the dream literature with which Keats was familiar.

One of the earliest writers Keats mentions is Dante.

He is first referred to on 10 June 1818, in a letter to Benjamin Bailey, as a source of reading for the Scottish walking tour and then mentioned again in September 1819.<sup>5</sup> In Dante's Divine Comedy, which "purports to be a vision",<sup>6</sup> Keats encountered one of the earliest uses of the poetic trance and the visionary flight. Of further significance, however, are the episodes in the Divine Comedy in which Dante experiences dreams as in these passages he incorporates theories on both the causes and significance of dreams.

The Inferno begins with an allusion to the paradox of wakeful sleep -- a conceit which originated from The Song of Songs.<sup>7</sup> Like the speaker in the Bible, Dante falls asleep and 'wakes' to see a vision or high phantasy which is so vivid that it defies description.<sup>8</sup> This vividness stems from a heightened consciousness experienced during sleep which presents a world that is "fresher and livelier than that of waking life."<sup>9</sup> Dante's dream-vision may have been divinely inspired but his depiction of the paradoxically heightened consciousness during sleep appealed to secular writers, including Keats, who not only questioned "Do I wake or sleep" in his "Ode to a Nightingale"(l. 80), but also asserted a year earlier in "O thou whose face" that "he's awake who thinks himself asleep"(l. 14).

Dante's vision eventually "loses power and breaks off" (Paradise, XXXIII, 142) but not before he had described various swoons and prophetic dreams within the vision itself. In words anticipating Coleridge's Preface to "Kubla Khan",

Dante compares the effect of the vision on him to a dream:

As from a dream one may wake to find  
Its passion yet imprinted on the heart,  
Although all else is cancelled from the mind,  
So of my vision now but little part  
Remains, yet in my inmost soul I know  
The sweet instilling which it did impart.  
(Paradise, XXXIII, 58-63)

Both writers are aware of the haunting quality of dreams, which stems from the 'heart's' ability to remember what the conscious mind cannot. Keats voiced a similar complaint when referring to a dream which ironically he experienced after reading Dante:

I dreamt of being in that region of Hell. The dream was one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life -- ... I tried a Sonnet upon it -- there are fourteen lines but nothing of what I felt in it -- O that I could dream it every night.  
(Letters, II, 91)

Keats, then, like Coleridge and Dante, is aware of the difficulty of articulating the feelings which linger after a dream has passed, aware, as was Dante, that upon waking 'all else is cancelled from the mind.' Indeed, articulating a dream experience was of particular interest to Keats and, as we will see in Chapter Four, he explores this idea once again in The Fall of Hyperion.

As I mentioned earlier, Dante experiences prophetic dreams and, like Adam, he awakes to find them true. In Canto XXVI of The Inferno, "in a semi-proverbial expression, [Dante alludes to the] common belief that those dreams that occur just before waking fortell the future".<sup>10</sup> The

proverb, "But if toward the morning men dream true"  
 (XXVI, 7), foreshadows the three morning dreams that Dante  
 would experience in Purgatory, as in these dreams he would be  
 told of something that was about to occur.

The first of these dreams occurs:

About the hour when the sad swallow, drawn  
 In memory, maybe, to her old woes,  
 Pipes out her mournful lay to greet the dawn,  
 And when the pilgrim in soul a-roving goes  
 So far from flesh and thought's entangling snare  
 That half-divine her dreaming vision grows,  
 (Purgatory, IX, 13-18)

He recalls:

I dreamt I saw an eagle in mid-air,  
 Plumed all in gold, hovering on wings outspread  
 As though to make his swoop he poised him there.  
 .....  
 Then, in my dream, he wheeled awhile and came  
 Down like lightning, terrible and fast,  
 And caught me up into the sphere of flame,  
 .....  
 The visionary fire so seared me through,  
 It broke my sleep perforce, and the dream passed.  
 (Purgatory, IX, 19-33)

Dante's description of his dream not only introduces into  
 literature the dream of being transported by an eagle -- one  
 which both Chaucer and Keats borrow<sup>11</sup>-- but also includes  
 theories on dream psychology. When the speaker wakes to  
 discover that he has indeed been transported to the Gate of  
 Purgatory, Dante is illustrating the relationship between  
 external sensations and dreams: "the dream is induced by a  
 reality ... he has actually been carried up the face of the  
 Mountain by St. Lucy, and this movement both induces and fulfills  
 the dream which symbolizes it."<sup>12</sup>

While recounting his second dream, Dante again engages in dream psychology, but whereas earlier he focused on the role of sensations in dreaming, here he examines the effects of the conscious mind on dreams. During a dream he sees a Siren who is

halt of speech,  
 Squint-eyed on maimed feet lurching as she stept,  
 With crippled hands, and skin of fallow bleach.  
 (Purgatory, XIX, 7-10)

Eventually, however, by gazing upon her he

unloosed the string that kept  
 Her utterance captive, and right quickly drew  
 Upright her form that all misshapen hung,  
 And stained her withered cheek to love's own hue.  
 (Purgatory, XIX, 12-15)

Evidently, her metamorphosis and subsequent power stem from the dreamer himself. As Dorothy Sayers has commented, the Siren is

the projection upon the outer world of something in the mind: the soul, falling in love with itself, perceives other people and things, not as they are, but as wish-fulfilments of its own: its love for them is not love for a 'true other' ... but a devouring egotistical fantasy, by absorption in which the personality rots away into illusion.<sup>13</sup>

Sayers' words here not only apply to Dante's dream of the Siren but also aptly describe the siren figures in Keats's works. Although the knight in "La Belle Dame" and Lycius do not encounter their enchantresses while dreaming, as we will see the belle dame and Lamia symbolize a type of dream-state characterized by escapism and wish-fulfilment and, like Dante's Siren, these enchantresses can be seen as projections of the mind.

Dante also includes, in his work, a description of the emotional state that occurs just prior to the reception of visions. In Canto XVII of the Purgatory this state is one during which the "mind is caged and so remote/Within itself that outside things pass by/And it receive[s] them not and [takes] no note"(22-24). Dante's experience anticipates that of Madeline and Lycius and, moreover, that of Keats himself. Like Madeline who "heeded not at all"(The Eve of St. Agnes, l. 59), and Lycius whose "mind [was] wrapp'd like his mantle" (Lamia, I, 242), Keats in both the "Ode to a Nightingale" and the "Ode on Indolence" describes a semi-conscious state in which he is 'numb' to external sensations. In the Nightingale ode, Keats presents a previsionary state as one in which "a drowsy numbness pains"(l. 1) the sense. A similar 'numbing' occurs in the "Ode on Indolence" as here, while experiencing a "blissful cloud of summer-indolence"(l. 16), the speaker's "pulse grew less and less/Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower"(ll. 17-18). Like Dante, then, Keats is also aware of the suppression of the senses when the mind is 'caged and remote".

During this state, however, the mind is not entirely inactive and although it does not receive sense impressions, nonetheless, it may 'see' images. Dante, aware of this inner sight, explains :

Then, when the shades so far from us had passed  
That nothing could be seen of them, there rose  
New fancies in my mind, whence thick and fast

Sprang others, countless, various, and from those  
 To these I drifted, down so long a stream  
 Of rambling thought my lids began to close,  
 And meditation melted into dream.

(Purgatory, XVIII, 139-45)

This passage is doubly revealing as it not only anticipates, in its metaphor of the stream, the Associationist philosophy prominent during Keats's period, but it also resembles rather strongly one of Keats's own poems. In "To J.H. Reynolds, Esq." he describes a similar experience to the one Dante recalled:

Dear Reynolds, as last night I lay in bed,  
 There came before my eyes that wonted thread  
 Of shapes, and shadows, and remembrances.

(ll. 1-3)

Similarly, Keats also recognized the streamy nature of day and night dreams and, like Dante, utilized the metaphor of the stream:

The Morphean fount  
 Of that fine element that visions, dreams,  
 And fitful whims of sleep are made of, streams  
 Into its airy channels.

(Endymion, I, 747-50)

As well as Dante, Boccaccio -- another author whom Keats read -- also had an interest in dreams. In fact, Keats and John Reynolds had planned to write together a volume of poems based on Boccaccio's tales.<sup>14</sup> Although the volume was never completed, Keats did write one poem on Boccaccio's story of Isabetta -- a story which, significantly, focuses on a dream. In Boccaccio's tale a despondent Isabetta "fell into a Trance or Sleep, and dreamed that the Ghost of Lorenzo

appeared unto her'."<sup>15</sup> Upon awaking, "she believed in the vision" and was "determined to go to the place mentioned ... to see whether her dream was true"(p. 278). Keats follows Boccaccio fairly closely and in his poem *Isabella*, like her predecessor, discovers that her dream spoke the truth.

The tale in The Decameron which follows *Isabetta*, the story of *Gabriotto*, also concerns dreams but as *Pamfilo* explains "contains two dreams relating to future happenings, as the dream in the former related to the past"(p. 280). Moreover, whereas in *Isabetta's* there were no doubts as to the veracity of dreams, in this tale *Pamfilo* raises the question of the value of dreams. He asserts:

And yet, amorous ladies, you must know that everybody living sees various things in dreams which seem quite true when he is asleep, but when he awakes he thinks some true, some probable and some quite beyond the truth; and yet many are found to come true.

(p. 280)

He further advises that we should be selective in our belief in dreams and "not fear any dream which is contrary to virtuous life and actions ... nor believe or take comfort from dreams which favour perverse and wicked deeds; yet give complete faith to dreams which are contrary to such things" (p. 280). *Pamfilo's* tale then goes on to illustrate the appropriate and inappropriate responses to prophetic dreams.

The dreams that he rehearses, however, are not simple dreams in which a clear meaning is readily apparent, and not surprisingly *Gabriotto* fails to discern his dream's significance.

His wife, on the other hand, believed that her dream presaged some danger. Like Isabetta, she believed her dream "and although on awakening she was happy to find it was only a dream, yet it made her afraid"(p. 281). Her husband, however, after hearing her dream, experienced a contrary emotion: "he laughed, and said it was great folly to put any faith in dreams, because they were the result of excess or lack of food while every day showed how false they were"(p. 281). As other dream theorists would later, Boccaccio has recognized the role of the bodily humours on dreams -- for Gabriotto, dreams have no further significance than indigestion. Unfortunately for him, however, this was not the case with his wife's dream and had he known Macrobius' classification of dreams, as Chaucer had, he would have discovered that her dream was a somnium, ambiguously foretelling his death. Keats also experienced a somnium, as his dream of Hyperion's fall involves much more than a history of the evolution of the gods.

The last reference to dreams in Boccaccio again poses the question of the value of dreams. In the Seventh Tale on The Ninth Day, Pampinea begins "Fair ladies, we have spoken before of the truth of dreams, which many people laugh at" (p. 549) and then in her tale recalls a dream which her neighbour failed to heed. In her tale a husband dreams that his beautiful but petulant wife is permanently disfigured by a wolf. He believes that his dream is a warning and begs his wife, Margarita, not to go out. She has a contrary opinion

on the meaning of his dream, and, in words anticipating Freud's theory on wish-fulfilment dreams, replies "those who wish ill, dream ill"(p. 550). Evidently this early dream theorist has recognized the interrelationship between the conscious and the unconscious -- a theme which is also evident in Keats. Like Boccaccio, and the writers who came later, Keats also acknowledges that "our dreamings all of sleep or wake ... shadow our own soul's daytime"("To J.H. Reynolds", ll. 66, 70). Further, Keats, especially in Endymion and The Eve of St. Agnes, also illustrates that we dream of what we desire.

Boccaccio had recognized that dreams often veil their true meaning but as yet he did not have the terminology to explain various types of dreams. Chaucer, however, did and in his Proem to Book I of the House of Fame he explains that there are various "gendres"<sup>16</sup> of dreams. His classification of dreams is generally believed to have stemmed from Macrobius' commentary on Cicero's Somnium Scipionis. As James Winny, in Chaucer's Dream Poems, explains, "throughout the Middle Ages ... Macrobius' commentary on a dream described in Book VI of Cicero's De re publica on the different kinds of dream and their significance was universally respected."<sup>17</sup> Chaucer, in fact, makes various references to Macrobius in his dream-vision poems,<sup>18</sup> which support Winny's claim.

We know from his letters that Keats owned a collection of Chaucer's works,<sup>19</sup> and in reading Chaucer, he would have

been introduced to various categories of dreams and their causes. The "gendres" of dreams are listed in the Proem to Book I in which, after acknowledging the existence of both morning and evening dreams, Chaucer goes on to claim that he does not know

Why that is an avisioun,  
 And this a revelacioun,  
 Why this a dreme, why that a swevene,  
 .....  
 Why this a fantome, why these oracles  
 (I, 7-11)

Although it is "not easy to equate all of Chaucer's terminology with Macrobius' classification",<sup>20</sup> such a passage "could only have been written by someone familiar with the categories -- broadly prophetic and fantasmal -- devised by Macrobius."<sup>21</sup>

In the fantasmal category, Macrobius identifies two types of dreams -- the nightmare or insomnium and the apparition or visum or phantasma. Neither type has any prophetic significance and consequently, according to Macrobius, they do not merit interpreting.<sup>22</sup> He does, however, provide the causes of these non-prophetic dreams. The nightmare may be caused by "mental or physical distress, or anxiety about the future: the patient experiences in dreams vexations similar to those that disturb him during the day".<sup>23</sup> The nightmare, then, is an associative dream, induced by the activities or preoccupations of the sleeper's waking experience, or by physical needs which present themselves to his sleeping mind.<sup>24</sup> Thus, as Chaucer explains in his Parliament of Fowls:

The juge dremeth how his plees been sped;  
 The cartere dremeth how his carte is gon;  
 .....  
 The syke met he drynketh of the tonne;  
 The lovee met he hath his lady wonne.  
 (Parliament of Fowls, ll. 101-05)

But, as Winny has commented, Chaucer's associative dreams

are much more than fantastic mental collages. They embody in bizarre and cryptic form aspects of truth hidden from waking consciousness, in which the dreamer may recognise his problems or his personal situation represented.<sup>25</sup>

These words are not only a perceptive analysis of Chaucer's dream-visions but, as we will see in Chapter Four, also aptly describe another dream-vision, The Fall of Hyperion, in which Keats, like Chaucer, reenacts in a dream his personal situation.

The apparition or visum is another meaningless dream but, as the following explanation of its origin will show, it undoubtedly appealed to Keats. The visum

'comes upon one in the moment between wakefulness and slumber, in the so-called 'first cloud of sleep'. In this drowsy condition a person thinks he is still awake, and imagines he sees spectres rushing at him or wandering vaguely about, differing from natural creatures in size and shape, and hosts of diverse things, either delightful or disturbing'.<sup>26</sup>

Since such a dream could be "explained in naturalistic terms either psychologically or physiologically",<sup>27</sup> it too had little significance. But as Winny claims, "for the reader of medieval poetry [this] last type of dream is perhaps the most interesting; though it revives the question whether any underlying meaning should be looked for in the random happenings

of the dream-poem."<sup>28</sup> The same question is later asked by Keats when, at the conclusion of his "Ode to a Nightingale", he asks "was it a vision, or a waking dream?" (l. 79) In the draft version of this poem Keats had originally written "was it a vision true"<sup>29</sup> -- a more emphatic distinction between a visionary experience and Macrobius' 'first cloud of sleep'. Like his medieval predecessors, he does not offer a definite answer to this difficult question.

Keats's question, however, does introduce the other category of dreams -- those of prophetic significance. Dreams in this group include the somnium or enigmatic dream; the visio or prophetic vision; and the oraculum or oracular dream.

The somnium

'conceals with strange shapes and veils with ambiguity the true meaning of the information being offered, and requires an interpretation for its understanding'; the visio or prophetic vision shows something which 'actually comes true'; and the oraculum or oracular dream, is one in which a 'parent, or a pious or revered man, or a priest, or even a god' appears and gives information or advice.<sup>30</sup>

Chaucer seems to have been less interested in the oraculum, as in "the two dream-poems whose guides transport and instruct the dreamer in the general manner of the oraculum [he] obviously does not intend to invoke a sense of solemnity for the Eagle and the Africanus of The Parlement of Foules are both jovial figures, disrespectful towards the dreamer".<sup>31</sup> Keats's dream-vision poem, The Fall of Hyperion, is, however, particularly solemn in tone, suggesting perhaps that Moneta's

advice warrants serious respect and attention.

That Keats could have read of the various types of dreams is suggested by his numerous references to Chaucer. He quotes from Troilus and Criseyde--where he would have discovered Pandarus's advice on dreams (V, 358-378)--in letters to both J.H. Reynolds and Fanny Brawne.<sup>32</sup> But perhaps a more important proof is Keats's use of language "more ancient than Chaucer himself" (Letters, II, 204) in the fragment The Eve of St. Mark. Here, Keats not only utilizes the medieval term "swevenis" but also employs a similar structure to that of Chaucer's dream-vision poems. Bertha, like the speaker in The Parliament of Fowls, is reading an old book which tells of swevenis and, like the poet in The Book of the Duchess, reads well into the night. Having adopted this Chaucerian opening, however, Keats promptly abandoned the poem, but he did not abandon the dream-vision form and, as we will see later, he returned to use Chaucerian techniques in The Fall of Hyperion.

But Chaucer's dream-visions provided Keats with more than just a listing of various kinds of dreams: they also raised the question of the relationship between dreams and truth,<sup>33</sup> and more significantly, they suggested, with respect to the phantasma, a parallel to the poet's creative state. During these dreams "the mind [which] is still half-conscious of the real world but absorbed by the strange behaviour of spectral figures seems to offer a parallel to the state of imaginative excitement in which the poet apprehends, or is

given, the matter of his poem."<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the diverse creatures seen during a phantasma may actually serve as a source of poetic inspiration. Keats also recognized the potential of images in dreams or daydreams to inspire poetry and not only entitled one of his early works Sleep and Poetry but in The Fall of Hyperion discusses at great length the relationship between dreams and poetry.

Similarly, Keats also describes an emotional state during which he apprehended the matter of his "Ode on Indolence". Although as William Ober has claimed, Keats's state was probably opium-induced,<sup>35</sup> nonetheless while under the influence of opium, he saw dream-like images which served as a source of poetic inspiration. In a letter to the George Keatses 19 March 1819, Keats wrote:

My passions are all asleep from my having slumbered till nearly eleven and weakened the animal fibre all over me .... Neither Poetry nor Ambition, nor Love have any alertness of countenance as they pass by me: they seem like three figures on a greek vase.  
(Letters, II, 78-79)

The effects of the opium eventually wore off, but the images' effects did not, as Keats remembered the images of Poetry, Ambition and Love vividly enough to compose his ode on them.

The study of the value of dreams continues in Edmund Spenser. In The Faerie Queene,<sup>36</sup> Spenser illustrates two different types of dreams: one is a prophetic dream in which Arthur sees the "royall Mayd"(I, ix, 13, 7); and the other is a false erotic dream sent from Morpheus to the Red Cross

knight. In the first dream, Arthur falls in love with that "face diuine"(I, ix, 15, 5) and upon waking, vows never to cease searching for his vision. The promise to search for a vision seen in a dream implies a faith in the authenticity of dreams and anticipates Endymion's quest for his beloved in Keats's poem. Although, as Newell Ford argues, "Arthur's dream may be only an artistic device and does not indicate that Spenser regarded dreams or imagination as veracious . . . , it may have helped to confirm Keats in his faith, just as he accepted Adam's dream in Paradise Lost, as a conviction that happy dreams come true in heaven."<sup>37</sup> As Chapter 3 will show, Spenser did influence Keats and in Spenser he would also find a "false dreeme"(I,i,43,9) in opposition to Arthur's prophetic one. In language echoing Chaucer and foreshadowing Keats, Spenser compares Morpheus's soft mumbling to "one then in a dreame whose dryer braine/Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weake"(I,i,42,7-8). Here, rather than prefigure truth, a dream can delude the sleeper and with "false shewes abuse his fantasy"(I,i,46,4).

Spenser, like Chaucer, was aware of the phantasma and alludes to it in Book III, canto viii. Here a fisherman "droncke with drowsiness"(22,1) woke, but upon seeing "that blazing beauties became"(22,5), he

... marueild more, and thought he yet did dreame  
 Not well awakt, or that some extasie  
 Assotted had his sense, or dazed was his eie.  
 (III,viii,22;7-9)

In this instance, however, the fisherman is awake and contrary to Keats's speaker in the Nightingale ode, he can affirm that it was "no vision, nor fantasticke sight"(23,2).

Although Spenser is often credited with inspiring Keats to write,<sup>38</sup> Shakespeare -- another writer of dreams -- was a more powerful influence on his work. The two plays which Caroline Spurgeon claims Keats read by far the most were The Tempest and A Midsummer Night's Dream, and in both plays Keats marked passages that concerned dreams.<sup>39</sup> In The Tempest Prospero exclaims that "like the baseless fabrick of this vision,/... we are such stuff/As dreams are made on".<sup>40</sup> These lines echo loudly in Peona's words when, in admonishing her brother, she talks "Of that fine element that visions dreams/And fitful whims of sleep are made of"(Endymion, I, 747-749). Further, Shakespeare's allusion to man's life being a dream here, and in Measure for Measure:

Thou hast nor youth nor age;  
But as it were, an after-dinner's sleep  
Dreaming on both  
(III, i, 32-34)

is echoed in Keats. Like Dante who first raised the question and Shakespeare who repeats it, Keats also suggests that 'reality' is one long dream, at least for the gods who "smoothly pass/Their pleasures in a long immortal dream" (Lamia, I, 127-128).

As I mentioned above, Peona's advice to her brother echoes Prospero's speech on dreams, but in her assertion she



Throughout the play characters experience dreams that are so life-like that 'reality' is called into question. Demetrius is so confused that after waking he asks:

Are you sure  
That we are awake? It seems to me  
That yet we sleep, we dream.  
(IV,i,192-94)

Similarly, Bottom, another dreamer, wakes and claims:

I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream,  
past the wit of man to say what dream it was.  
Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this  
dream. Methought I was -- there is no man can  
tell what. (IV,i,203-206)

Endymion faces a similar problem and, like Bottom, awakes stating:

Ah, can I tell  
The enchantment that afterwards befel?  
Yet it was but a dream: yet such a dream  
That never tongue, although it overteem  
With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring,  
Could figure out and to conception bring  
All I beheld and felt.  
(Endymion, I, 572-578)

This theme of articulation is one which Keats and Shakespeare share. In A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare acknowledges that "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet/Are of imagination all compact"(V,i,4-5) but then goes on to claim:

The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.  
(V,i,12-17)

Keats, in The Fall of Hyperion, his own midsummer-night's

dream, makes similar claims. He also admits that "every man whose soul is not a clod/Hath visions"(I, 13-14) and then echoing Shakespeare sets the poet apart from other men:

For poesy alone can tell her dreams,  
With the fine spell of words alone can save  
Imagination from the sable charm  
And dumb enchantment.

(The Fall of Hyperion, I, 8-11)

The articulation of the dream, a theme to which I will return, is what ultimately gives it value and significance for both Keats and Shakespeare.

A distinction between reason and the imagination outlined in A Midsummer Night's Dream is also evident in Robert Burton's The Anatomy of Melancholy. Like Chaucer and Boccaccio, Burton also recognized that "sabini quod volunt somniant ... they dream of that they desire"<sup>41</sup> and, like Pertelote, acknowledged the role of the body's humours in inducing "fearful and troublesome dreams"(II, 2, 101). But Burton, in his discussion of the inner senses of the brain pan -- common sense, phantasy, and memory (I,i,159) -- presented new theories on dreams. He explains:

common sense is the judge or moderator of the rest  
.... Phantasy, or imagination ... is an inner sense  
which doth more fully examine the species perceived  
by common sense, of things present or absent, and  
keeps them longer, recalling them to mind again,  
or making new of his own .... Memory lays up all the  
species which the senses have brought in, and records  
them as a good register.

(I,i,159-60)

After defining these three senses, he subsequently applies them to the state of dreaming. During sleep the phantasy

is free to roam and "his commander, reason: as appears by those imaginary dreams, which are of divers kinds, natural, divine, demoniacal"(I,i,160) is no longer operating. Since we know that the phantasy can create new species, in sleep then we can "open wide the mind's cage-door"("Fancy", 1.7) and create. The creative power of sleep is an idea which Keats also acknowledges, and it emerges very early in his career when he illustrates the connection between sleep and creativity in Sleep and Poetry.

Burton also questions the authenticity of dreams. Natural dreams are of no significance because they stem from either diet or a preoccupation with daytime concerns. Divine and demoniacal dreams, however, are of significance but unfortunately they are difficult to distinguish from one another. In his section on Religious Melancholy -- a section which Keats marked -- Burton illustrates that dreams may be falsely interpreted, and claims that "those prophecies and monks' revelations, nuns' dreams, which they suppose come from God, do proceed wholly ... by the devil's means"(III,iv, 344, Keats's emphasis). Since the devil "in several shapes" talks to men "sometimes by dreams"(III,iv,325), the dream may in fact deceive the dreamer, revealing not Keats's 'truth', but rather a falsehood.

The same antithetical nature of dreaming appears in Milton's Paradise Lost -- the source for Keats's speculation on the imagination. The dream he refers to in his letter to

Bailey of 22 November 1817 is Adam's prophetic love-dream found in Book VIII in which Adam awakes to behold Eve just as he had seen her in his dream.<sup>42</sup> The use of a prefigurative dream, however, is not unique to Milton; earlier writers had included prophetic dreams in their works, but what Keats found in Milton was an analogy for the working of the imagination. The source for Keats's assertion that the imagination can reveal truth is quite possibly Milton's description of the actions of fancy in sleep. Adam, after all, had claimed:

sleep, which instantly fell on me, call'd  
By Nature as in aid, and clos'd mine eyes.  
Mine eyes he clos'd, but op'n left the Cell  
Of Fancy my internal sight.

(VIII, 458-461)

It is fancy or the imagination, then, that reveals truth.

But Keats also claimed in the Nightingale ode that "fancy cannot cheat so well/As she is fam'd to do" (ll. 73-74), implying the deceptive nature of fancy. Keats would have discovered this contradictory aspect of fancy in the same work that inspired his speculation on the imagination, as here Milton included the opposite of a divinely inspired dream. As Burton had claimed, the devil in several shapes talks to men in dreams, and in Milton's work, Burton's assertion is proved true. Satan, we are told,

Squat like a Toad, close at the ear of Eve;  
Assaying by his Devilish art to reach  
The Organs of her Fancy, and with them forge  
Illusions as he list, Phantasms and Dreams.

(IV, 800-803)

In a work which Keats thought "every day a greater wonder" (Letters, II, 139), Milton had illustrated that in dreams, fancy is equally susceptible to truth and deception. The question which arises and which Keats eventually addressed is whether or not the dreaming imagination is analogous to Adam's dream or to Eve's.

Milton also discussed the relationship between dreams and poetry. In his "L'Allegro" Milton claims, in language anticipating Keats's early verse, that in sleep images of "Knights and Barons bold, . . . pomp, and feast, and revelry" (ll. 19,28) are such sights "as youthful poets dream"(l. 129). Indeed, Milton's words here aptly describe many of Keats's poems themselves. But Milton provides more than a synopsis of Keats's poems: he also presents in "Il Penseroso" a description of an idle brain. Echoing Mercutio's speech on dreams, Milton claims that "vain deluding joys"(l. 1) cannot fill the fixed mind, but in an idle brain, fond fancies -- analogous to "hovering dreams"(l. 9) -- can fill the brain with "gaudy shapes"(l. 6). Once again, then, Keats would have encountered the relationship between dreams and the fancy.

"Il Penseroso" also includes a description of sleep which foreshadows a similar description in Keats's Endymion. Milton describes sleep thus:

And the Waters murmuring  
With such consort as they keep  
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep;  
And let som strange mysterious dream  
Wave at his Wings in Airy stream,  
Of lively portraiture display'd,  
Softly on my eye-lids laid.

(ll. 144-50)

Keats elaborates on Milton's description of feathery sleep, and, in words strongly reminiscent of the Holy Ghost in Paradise Lost, describes sleep as a "comfortable bird/That broods o'er the troubled sea of the mind" (Endymion, I, 443-44). Similarly, Keats also links sleep with the movement of water -- a metaphor which began as early as Dante, and, as we will discover, emerges again in the theory of Associationism.

The study of dreams continues in John Dryden. Like Keats, he was also interested in medieval works and in 1699 versified tales by Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Ovid in his Fables: Ancient and Modern.<sup>43</sup> One of Dryden's works which is of particular significance to a study of dreams is his re-telling of Chaucer's "Nun's Priest's Tale." Following Chaucer, he too claims that dreams are from "Repletion and Complexion bred" (l. 141) and also that morning dreams "foreshow/Th' event of things" (ll. 205-06). But whereas Chaucer was not concerned with the functioning of reason during sleep, Dryden, like Burton, theorizes on the mechanics of sleep. Echoing Burton, he claims :

Dreams are but Interludes which Fancy makes,  
When Monarch Reason sleeps, this Mimick wakes.  
(ll. 324-25)

Further, in lines anticipating Keats's "To J.H. Reynolds" Dryden claims that in sleep the fancy

Compounds a Medley of disjointed Things,  
A mob of Cobblers, and a Court of Kings:  
Light Fumes are merry, grosser Fumes are sad;  
Both are the reasonable Soul run mad.  
(ll. 327-30)

Keats also acknowledges the incoherent nature of dreams, explaining, like Dryden, that while dreaming "Things all disjointed come from north and south" ("To J.H. Reynolds", l. 5). This idea particularly appealed to Keats who, a year later, in a letter to Fanny Brawne explained that, in his dreams, events "fall out by contraries" (Letters, II, 129). Like Dryden, he was aware that in sleep the fancy "compounds a medley of disjointed things."

Dryden goes on to claim that in sleep "Many monstrous Forms ... we see/That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be" (ll. 331-32). Like Burton, then, he too asserts that during sleep 'new species' can be created. But also, like Burton, Dryden is aware of the role of memory in dreams since during sleep "Sometimes, forgotten Things long cast behind/Rush forward in the Brain, and come to mind" (ll. 333-34). Thus, dreams may be either a recalling of images stored in the memory -- Keats's "wonted thread/Of shapes, and shadows, and remembrances" ("To J.H. Reynolds", ll. 2-3) -- or entirely new creations that "never tongue ... Could figure out and to conception bring" (Endymion, I, 575-77).

In his version of the Flower and the Leaf, Dryden also utilizes the age-old motif of the bardic trance. His poem entitled The Flower and the Leaf: Or, The Lady in the Arbour. A Vision includes a luxurious description of nature and its intoxicating effect on a poet. In the poem the speaker becomes "intranc'd" (l. 119) and, like the speaker in The Fall

of Hyperion, experiences a vision within a vision which allegorically reveals to him a truth. Similarly, during the vision Dryden, like Keats, illustrates that his senses continue operating, enabling him to be "Single and conscious to [his] Self alone,/Of Pleasures to th' excluded World unknown"(ll. 142-43). The vividness of the vision raises once again the theme of the paradoxical wakefulness of sleep and illustrates the relationship between visions and creativity. Dryden eventually awakes and, like Chaucer in his dream-vision poems or Keats in The Fall of Hyperion, rises to rehearse his "visionary Vigils of the Night"(l. 614).

From Dante to Dryden, the interest in dreams led to various speculations on both the causes and significance of dreams. Also emerging were the motif of the bardic trance, synonymous with the state of dreaming, the paradox of wakeful sleep, and the role of dreams in creativity. The interest in the etiology of dreams, whether mental or physical, led, in later writers such as Burton and Dryden, to investigations of the creative faculty. In dreams the fancy or imagination is unrestrained and the subsequent question which both writers and philosopher-psychologists now began to address was whether dreams could reveal hidden truths or whether

The dreams which mock us with fleeting shadows  
are sent neither from the shrines of the gods nor by  
the gods themselves, but each of us make his own.  
(The Anatomy of Melancholy, II,ii,102)

Keats takes up and develops a number of these issues.

## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 1

<sup>1</sup>Keats's letter of 30 September 1820 to Charles Brown in The Letters of John Keats, ed. Hyder E. Rollins (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), II, 346. Cited hereafter as Letters. The original spelling is maintained throughout.

<sup>2</sup>Jack Stillinger, Introduction to John Keats: Complete Poems, edited by Jack Stillinger (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1982), p. xv.

<sup>3</sup>John Keats: Complete Poems, ed. Jack Stillinger (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard Press, 1982), p. 154, IV, 669. All subsequent quotations are from this edition; book, canto, and line number are given in the text.

<sup>4</sup>Jack Stillinger, Introduction to John Keats: Complete Poems, p. xvi.

<sup>5</sup>Letters, I, 294. See also Letters, I, 343, 361, and Letters II, 32, 91, 212.

<sup>6</sup>Archibald T. MacAllister, Introduction to The Inferno, trans. John Ciardi (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1954), p. ii. See also A.C. Spearing, Medieval Dream-Poetry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 2. He claims that the "Divine Comedy is widely referred to as a dream poem, even though the narrator does not represent himself as falling asleep and experiencing his story in a dream."

<sup>7</sup>Solomon's Song 5:2. "I sleep, but my heart waketh."

<sup>8</sup>Dante Alighieri, The Comedy of Dante Alighieri The Florentine \* Cantica I Hell (L'Inferno), trans. Dorothy Sayers (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1981), I, 4-7. All subsequent references to Hell are from this edition and will be identified within the thesis by canto and line number. References to Purgatory and Paradise are from the following editions and will also be identified within the thesis by canto and line number: The Comedy of Dante Alighieri The Florentine \* Cantica II Purgatory (Il Purgatorio). Trans. Dorothy Sayers (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1981). The Comedy of Dante Alighieri The Florentine \* Cantica III Paradise (Il Paradiso). Trans. Dorothy Sayers and Barbara Reynolds (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1982).

<sup>9</sup>A.C. Spearing, Medieval Dream-Poetry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 118. Hereafter cited as Spearing.

<sup>10</sup>Ciardi, p. 224.

<sup>11</sup>Spearing, p. 76. See also The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. John Fisher (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1977), p. 583. Fisher claims that Chaucer's golden eagle resembles the eagle in Dante's Purgatory. Compare Keats's Endymion:

To cloud-borne Jove he bowed, and there crost  
Towards him a large eagle, 'twixt whose wings,  
Without one impious word, himself he flings.  
(II, 657-59)

<sup>12</sup>Purgatory, p. 138.

<sup>13</sup>Purgatory, p. 220.

<sup>14</sup>Letters, I, 274. See also Rollins' footnote.

<sup>15</sup>Jack Stillinger, "The 'Reality' of Isabella" in The Hoodwinking of Madeline (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 39. Stillinger identifies Keats's source as The Novels and Tales of the Renowned John Boccaccio, 5th ed. (London, 1684), pp. 182-85. References in this thesis are from The Decameron, trans. Richard Aldington (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1971). All quotations will be identified by page number within the text of the thesis.

<sup>16</sup>John H. Fisher, ed., House of Fame in The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1977), p. 584, I, 18. All references to Chaucer are from this edition and will be identified by line number. John Fisher's notes on this edition are hereafter cited as Fisher.

<sup>17</sup>James Winny, Chaucer's Dream-Poems (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), p. 20. Hereafter cited as Winny.

<sup>18</sup>Book of the Duchess, p. 548, ll. 284-85; Parliament of Fowls, p. 568, ll. 110-11; "Nun's Priest's Tale", p. 301, ll. 3123-24.

<sup>19</sup>Letters, I, 276.

<sup>20</sup>Fisher, p. 584.

<sup>21</sup>Winny, p. 20.

<sup>22</sup>Spearing, p. 10 and Winny, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup>Spearing, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup>Winny, p. 26.

<sup>25</sup>Winny, p. 19.

<sup>26</sup>Spearing, pp. 9-10.

<sup>27</sup>Spearing, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup>Winny, p. 27.

<sup>29</sup>Robert Gittings, The Odes of Keats & Their Earliest Known Manuscripts in Facsimile (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1970), p. 42.

<sup>30</sup>Spearing, p. 10.

<sup>31</sup>Winny, p. 26.

<sup>32</sup>Letters, I, 404 and Letters, II, 294.

<sup>33</sup>Spearing, p. 74.

<sup>34</sup>Winny, p. 31.

<sup>35</sup>William Ober, "Drowsed with the Fume of Poppies: Opium and John Keats," Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine 44 (July 1968): 862-81, cited in Donald C. Goellnicht, The Poet-Physician: Keats and Medical Science (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984), pp. 204-05.

<sup>36</sup>Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene, ed. Thomas P. Roche (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978). All subsequent quotations are from this edition and will be identified within the thesis by canto, verse, and line number.

<sup>37</sup>Newell F. Ford, The Prefigurative Imagination of John Keats (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Book, 1966), p. 91.

<sup>38</sup>Claude Lee Finney, The Evolution of Keats's Poetry (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1936), vol. 1, 24-34. On p. 26 Finney quotes Charles Brown's letter to Lord Houghton in which Brown wrote: "Though born to be a poet, he [Keats] was ignorant of his birthright until he had completed his eighteen year. It was the Faerie Queene that awakened his genius. In Spenser's fairy-land he was enchanted, breathed in a new world, and became another being; till enamoured of the stanza, he attempted to imitate it, and succeeded."

<sup>39</sup>Caroline Spurgeon, Keats's Shakespeare: A Descriptive Study (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 5.

<sup>40</sup>The Tempest in William Shakespeare: The Complete Works, ed. Alfred Harbage (New York: Viking Press, 1969), IV,i,151,156-57. All quotations from Shakespeare's plays are from this edition.

<sup>41</sup>The Anatomy of Melancholy, ed. Holbrook Jackson (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1978), I, iii, 425. All quotations are from this edition and will be identified within the thesis by Partition, Section, and page number.

<sup>42</sup>Paradise Lost in John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey Press, 1957), VIII, 452-90. All quotations from Milton's poems are from this edition. See also:

whereat I wak'd, and found  
Before mine Eyes all real, as the dream  
Had lively shadow'd.

(PL, VIII, 309-11)

Compare to Keats's Endymion: "A hope beyond the shadow of a dream"(I, 867) and "Beheld awake his very dream"(IV, 436).

<sup>43</sup>The Poems and Fables of John Dryden, ed. James Kinsley (London: Oxford University Press, 1962). All quotations are from this edition and will be identified within this thesis by line number.

## CHAPTER 2

### PHILOSOPHICAL AND ROMANTIC BACKGROUND

Romantic writers, with their interest in the powers of the mind, naturally continued the study of dreams, with investigations of conscious and unconscious states and the shadowy realms in between. Once again the question of the significance of dreams was raised, but unlike Macrobius or the medieval dream theorists who focused primarily on prophetic dreams, the Romantics were interested in all types of dreams. Consequently, new theories on dreams emerged. These theories, which re-examine older ones but also go in new directions, fall into two general categories. One is that dreams stem from bodily sensations and only recall images which are stored in the memory; the other is that dreams may provide new insights as yet unknown to the dreamer and perhaps function as presentiments of the future.

A similar dichotomy is evident in philosophical writings and since, as is often the case, philosophical theories enter into literature, a better understanding of Keats's treatment of dreams demands a knowledge of both the literary and the philosophical-psychological writings on dreams. During the Romantic period the writings of two major philosophical schools -- empiricism and 'metaphysics' -- were

common knowledge among intellectuals, and, like any other member of the educated class, Keats would have been familiar with them. What follows is, first, a representative sampling of the major philosophical works in acceptance during Keats's time, and then a survey of the treatment of dreams in the works of his contemporaries.

Thomas Hobbes, a member of the empirical school, believed in a mechanical theory of the mind and stressed the primary role of sensation in the acquisition of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> He explains that the "cause of Sense, is the Externall Body, or Object, which presseth the organ proper to each Sense"(I,i,3). This pressure on the nerves leaves impressions in the brain which can be retrieved by "consequence, or Trayne of Thoughts" (I,iii, 18). His words here not only point ahead to the "wonted thread" in Keats's "To J.H. Reynolds", but also describe the loose associative structure of Sleep and Poetry in which, not insignificantly, Keats describes "trains of peaceful images" (l. 340).

Applying his theories to dreams -- what he calls the "imagination of them that sleep"(I,ii,15) -- Hobbes claims that "like all other Imaginations, Dreams have been before, either totally, or by parcels in the Sense"(I,ii,15). Further, since "in sense, the Brain and Nerves, which are the necessary Organs of sense are so benumbed in sleep, as not easily to be moved by the action of External Objects, there can happen in sleep no Imagination; and therefore no Dream, but what

proceeds from the agitation of the inward parts of man's body" (I,ii,15). Both ideas -- the benumbing of the senses and the body's role in generating dreams -- surface again in Coleridge's comments on stage illusion, illustrating the close relationship between philosophy and literature.

Echoing medieval dream-theorists, Hobbes acknowledges the physiological causes of dreams and claims that they stem from the "distemper of some of the inward parts of the Body" (I,ii,16). Fearful dreams are induced by cold, angry ones by heat (I,ii,16), and anticipating Freud, Hobbes attributes "dreams of lust" to sexual desire.<sup>2</sup> Since dreams are nothing more than "the reverse of our waking Imagination"(I,ii,16), they provide no new knowledge to the dreamer and, indeed, a failure to distinguish "Dreams and other strong Fancies from Vision and Sense [can lead to a belief in] Ghosts and Goblins" (I,ii,17) or Keats's "vulgar superstition" ("Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition").

The empirical tradition continues in the writings of John Locke. We know from Keats's letters that one of his possessions was Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding<sup>3</sup> in which is evident a rationalistic approach to the mind. According to Locke, since we are born without any ideas, the only means of acquiring knowledge is through experience. The effect of Locke's writings was widespread: reason became the new monarch, private inspiration was an impossibility, and the only response to the actual world was an empirical one.<sup>4</sup>

Not surprisingly, dreams felt reason's tyranny. For Locke, the "dreams of sleeping men ... are all made up of the waking man's ideas, though for the most part oddly put together."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, as he rationally explains, it is impossible to discover anything new from dreams:

It is strange if the soul has ideas of its own, that it derived not from sensation or reflection (as it must have if it thought before it received any impressions from the body) that it should never, in its private thinking ... retain any of them, the very moment he wakes out of them, and then make the man glad with new discoveries.

(II,i,93)

Locke acknowledges that during sleep there are "sometimes instances of perception" which we retain in our memory but they are for the most part "extravagant and incoherent ... little conformable to the perfection and order of a rational being"(I,i,92).

David Hume, another empiricist, applied the principle of association to dreams. In his Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, he explains, in words reminiscent of Hobbes, that "even in our wildest and most wandering reveries, nay in our very dreams, we shall find, if we reflect, that the imagination ran not altogether at adventures, but there was still a connexion upheld among the different ideas".<sup>6</sup> Although Hume was later attacked by critics such as Coleridge for having "pulverized or atomized the mind,"<sup>7</sup> his belief in an organizing principle in dreams and reveries anticipated the Associationist psychology prominent during Keats's time.

One of the major proponents of Associationism was David Hartley. His influence, and that of his descendents, the Common Sense School, was widespread among Romantic writers. Hazlitt mentions him in his "Essay on the Principles of Human Action ... To Which Are Added Some Remarks on the System of Hartley and Helvetius". Hunt refers to him in The Round Table; Wordsworth's poetry illustrates principles of association, in particular early childhood associations; and Coleridge's early belief in Hartley's theories is extensive.<sup>8</sup>

Although Coleridge later attacked Hartley's theories in his Biographia Literaria,<sup>9</sup> his own essay on dreams in "Stage Illusion", as we will see later in this chapter, loudly echoes Hartley's comments in his Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations (1749). In this work Hartley, like Hobbes, claims that "dreams are nothing but the Imaginations, Fancies, or Reveries of a sleeping man"<sup>10</sup> and derive from impressions lately received; the state of the body, particularly the stomach and brain; and association (III,v,384). He explains, as Coleridge would later, that we take scenes in dreams to be real because "we have no other Reality to oppose" them (III,v,385); and, as Hazlitt would later, blames the wildness and inconsistency of dreams on the absence of a mental invigilator (III,v,385). This invigilator explains why morning dreams are remembered since "towards the Morning ... the Brain begins to approach to the State of Vigilence, or that in which the usual

Associations were formed and cemented"(III,v,388).

Hartley's assertion that dreams originate from vibrations emanating from the "Stomach, Brain, or some other part"(III,v,365) added nothing new to dream studies, recalling, as it did, medieval dream theories. He did, however, contribute the following ideas to the study of dreams: they consist chiefly of visible Imagery; fictitious places in dreams are actually real places seen in youth; and the strange feeling of being in two places at once, in dreams, is the consequence of associations merging together (III,v,386-88).

Hartley also acknowledged the value of dreams. Since they originate from bodily vibrations, they may be an indication of a person's health and temper (III,v,389); in addition,

The Wildness of our Dreams seems to be of singular Use to us by interrupting and breaking the Course of our Associations. For, if we were always awake some accidental Associations would be so much cemented by Continuance, as that nothing could afterwards disjoin them; which would be Madness.

(III,v,389)

The mechanistic approach to dreaming evident in all of these early 'dream psychologists' reduces dreams to a collection of already existing ideas, connected by the principles of association and induced by bodily sensations. This approach, however, will fail to explain Shelley's visitations from an "unknown omnipotence",<sup>11</sup> Byron's "heralds of eternity"<sup>12</sup> or Endymion's prophetic dream of Cynthia in Endymion, as these dreams represent more than the mere re-enactment of stored associations.

Perhaps the source for these dreams is the influence of the philosophies of the German Idealists. In writers such as Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Schelling, the mind is much more than a machine cataloguing recorded images. According to Kant, sensations are again the starting point of understanding, but contrary to the empiricist theory, the external world, instead of operating on our sensations, is rather the product of them. Time and space exist but only as forms of our consciousness<sup>13</sup> -- an idea also asserted by Keats. In his journal of the Scottish walking tour Keats writes: "I merely put pro forme, for there is no such thing as time and space" (Letters, I, 298). Similarly, Keats acknowledges:

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

(Letters, I, 243)

Moreover, a greeting of the spirit enabled Keats to defy spatial and temporal boundaries. In a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, he wrote:

here I am with Brown -- sometimes I fancy an immense separation, and sometimes, as at present, a direct communication of the spirit with you.... I shall read a passage of Shakespeare every Sunday at ten o'clock -- you read one at the same time and we shall be as near each other as blind bodies can be in the same room.

(Letters, II, 5)

Further, although Keats acknowledged and often delighted in the sensory experiencing of Kant's "world of appearances"<sup>14</sup>

or phenomena, he also attributed to the mind the power to create:

almost any Man may like the Spider spin from his own inwards his own airy Citadel -- the points of leaves and twigs on which the Spider begins her work are few and she fills the Air with a beautiful circuiting: man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine Webb of his soul and weave a tapestry empyrean -- full of Symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wandering.

(Letters, I, 231-32)

Applying his theories to dreams, or what he termed the ideas that one remembers upon waking,<sup>15</sup> Kant explains that while dreaming man is not wholly asleep since "he perceives to a certain degree clearly and weaves the actions of his spirit into the impressions of the external senses" (p. 234). Further, Kant, while focusing on day and night dreams, introduced the term "waking dreamer" (p. 235) -- an appropriate appellation for the speaker in Keats's odes. To Kant, he is someone who "while awake becomes so absorbed in the fancies and chimeras created by his ever-active imagination as to pay little attention to the sensations of the senses" (p. 234); or as Keats would later claim, during a waking dream, "a drowsy numbness pains/...[the] senses" ("Ode to a Nightingale", ll. 2-3) while the imagination or fancy wanders freely.

Another philosopher interested in the shadowy realm of the unconscious was Friedrich Schelling. His studies led to the assertion of an animated nature which in its totality

strives towards consciousness.<sup>16</sup> Such an idea is perhaps behind the somewhat strange tendency in both Keats and Shelley to attribute to natural objects the human ability to dream. Shelley's "dreaming earth" in his "Ode to the West Wind"(l. 10) or Keats's dreaming twilight in Endymion (II,73) most certainly did not stem from the Empirical tradition.

Also interested in the shadowy realm of the unconscious was Friedrich von Hardenberg -- also known as Novalis -- who attributed to dreams the ability to "reveal a profounder stratum of universal experience."<sup>17</sup> Moreover, and of particular interest with respect to Keats's early verse, is that Novalis, as M.M. Colum explains, "conceived of a prose literature which would not be logically joined together but where the connection would be through the association of ideas, as in dreams".<sup>18</sup> Novalis not only anticipated Keats's Sleep and Poetry and "I Stood Tip-Toe..." but also the stream-of-consciousness literature of the twentieth century.

Along with an awareness of the philosophical theories on dreams, Keats was also familiar with the literary treatment of dreams in the works of his contemporaries. Keats's indebtedness to Wordsworth has long been acknowledged and need not be repeated here.<sup>19</sup> What is significant to this study is Wordsworth's references to dreams and their possible influence on Keats. Although as The Prelude illustrates, Wordsworth was interested in the subconscious and its relation to dreams, because of its late publication this major

repository of his theories would not have been available to Keats. In the works which Keats did know, Wordsworth presented dreams traditionally. He mentions the medieval "phantasm" and the phantastical dreams of "restless sleep" in The White Doe of Rylstone;<sup>20</sup> the "sweet dreams" of wish fulfilment in "Strange Fits of Passion";<sup>21</sup> and the vividness or "freshness of a dream" in "Ode: Intimations of Immortality."<sup>22</sup> Further, in the poems which Wordsworth contributed to the Lyrical Ballads dreams play a minor role as his intent was "to give the charm of novelty to things of everyday."<sup>23</sup>

His partner, Coleridge, however, whose focus in the Lyrical Ballads was the supernatural, not surprisingly turned to explore the unconscious world of dreams. Indeed, we are told that The Rime of the Ancient Mariner was "founded on a strange dream".<sup>24</sup> A dream, however, was not only the impetus for the poem; it functions prominently within the poem itself. The mariner is sent "gentle sleep from Heaven"(V,295) during which he experiences both a prefigurative dream and an associative insomnium combined: his dream not only presages rain, but since he "had drunken in [his] dreams"(V,303), also satisfies his conscious needs.

Dreams also figure in Coleridge's Christabel. Bracy, like Boccaccio's Gabriotto, has a somnium or an enigmatic dream which reveals symbolically Geraldine's relationship with Christabel and which he misinterprets. He believes that the dream prefigures danger and vows to "wander through the

forest ... Lest aught unholy loiter there"(II,562-63). Further, in his description of both Bracy's and Cristabel's dreams Coleridge captures the lasting effect of dreams. Both characters wake "with such perplexity of mind/As dreams too lively leave behind"(II,385-86), haunted by a dream which seemed to live upon the eye (II,559). Moreover, both dreams suggest supernatural sources: Bracy dreams of a lamia figure with which Geraldine has much in common, and Christabel is entranced by Geraldine who for "one hour"(I,305) had her will. During that hour when the "night-birds ... were still" (I, 307) Christabel slept "With open eyes ... Fearfully dreaming"(I, 292,294). The lamia figure and the dreams which she induces must have appealed to Keats and, as we will see, they surface in his Lamia and to some extent in "La Belle Dame sans Merci."

Coleridge's interest in dreams was evident not only in his poetry but also in his prose writings, and in his Preface to "Kubla Khan" he provides firsthand information on an opium-induced dream. Here, Coleridge explains both the cause of his dream and the relationship between dreams and creativity. Although Coleridge claims that the poem came to him during sleep and that upon "awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved"(p. 296), it is doubtful that the poem appeared ready-made in his sleep. In his Preface,

Coleridge explains in words reminiscent of Chaucer's claim in the Parliament of Fowls or Mercutio's speech in Romeo and Juliet that the dream was induced by his conscious concerns. He had been reading "Purchas's Pilgrimage" and, after falling asleep, dreamt of what he was last thinking. This claim is credible as it is indeed "a psychological curiosity" as common then as it is today, but his assertion concerning the automatic writing of the poem seems little more than accepted Romantic theory on the inspiration of dreams.

Also evident in his Preface is an early theory on the mechanics of dreaming -- a theory which he would later develop when he examines stage illusion. Coleridge claims that during his profound sleep his external senses were not functioning and, further, that "all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort"(p. 296). Upon being interrupted, Coleridge found that except "for eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest" had vanished and, recalling a metaphor which we have already noted, he compares the fading of his dream to "the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast"(p. 296).

Coleridge's linking of dreams to creativity in "Kubla Khan" and in the companion poem "The Pains of Sleep" points ahead to Keats's Sleep and Poetry and "To J.H. Reynolds", as Keats also acknowledges the creative role of dream images in the composition of poetry. Moreover, both poets describe

the images which pass before the eye during opium-induced dreams, and although in his letter on the Indolence ode Keats does not claim to have received his poem already composed, like Coleridge's dream, "the images rose up before him as things". Similarly, Keats and Coleridge also recognize the role of nightmares in inspiring poetry. In "The Pains of Sleep" Coleridge presents a "fiendish crowd/Of shapes and thoughts that tortured"(ll. 16-17) him and to which he responded with desire and loathing "strangely mixed"(l. 23). Keats describes a comparable state in his nightmarish poem "To J.H. Reynolds" where the thread of shapes, shadows, and remembrances "every other minute vex and please"(ll. 2-4). As it was for Coleridge, sleep for Keats in this poem was not a blessing but rather "Distemper's worst calamity"(l. 36).

We know from his letter of 15 April 1819 to the George Keatses that Keats met and talked with Coleridge. Among the "thousand things" discussed were:

Poetical sensation -- Metaphysics -- Different genera and species of Dreams -- Nightmare a dream accompanied with a sense of touch -- single and double touch -- A dream related -- First and second consciousness -- the difference explained between will and Volition -- so many metaphysicians from a want of smoking second consciousness ... A ghost story.

(Letters, II, 88-89)

The idea of single and double touch in dreams is not explained in the letter but does occur in Coleridge's Anima Poetae, when, in discussing nightmares, he "explains how a limb deadened by some interruption of the circulation 'transmits

double touch as single touch, to which the imagination, the true inward creatrix instantly out of the chaos of elements or shattered fragments of memory, puts together some form to fit it'".<sup>25</sup> In layman's terms, Coleridge is explaining that during sleep the conscious and the unconscious interact and, thus, the "conscious mind will present the unconscious with a shaping hint and instantly the pieces fall together"<sup>26</sup> into the non-layman's Gestalt.

Coleridge's interest in dreams led him to propose devoting

an entire work to the subject of Dreams, Visions, Ghosts, Witchcraft, etc. in which I might first give and then endeavor to explain the most interesting and best attested fact of each ... I might then explain in a more satisfactory way the mode in which our thought in states of morbid slumber, became at times perfectly dramatic (for in certain sorts of dreams the dullest Wight becomes a Shakespeare) and by what law the Form of the vision appears to talk to us in its own thoughts in a voice as audible as the shape is visible; and this too oftentimes in connected trains.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, his preoccupation with dreams led to assertions such as: "My Dreams become the Substances of my Life",<sup>28</sup> and "Dreams have nothing in them absurd or nonsensical."<sup>29</sup>

Dreams even provided him with an explanation for Hazlitt's dislike of the preternatural stories in the Arabian Nights -- "That is because [he] never dream[s]".<sup>30</sup>

Although Coleridge did not write his proposed volume on dreams, he did attempt to explain the mechanics of dreaming in his notes on stage illusion. Here he refutes the common belief that "we take our dreams for realities" during

sleep, arguing that "this is irreconcilable with the nature of sleep which consists in a suspension of the voluntary, and therefore of the comparative power".<sup>31</sup> His lecture also refers to the action of images on the mind during sleep -- an idea which he had explained earlier in a letter to Daniel Stuart.<sup>32</sup> In this letter Coleridge asserts that "Images and Thoughts possess a power in and of themselves independent of that act of the Judgment or Understanding by which we affirm or deny the existence of a reality correspondent to them" (p. 641). Further, "the strong feelings at times apparently connected with them are in point of fact bodily sensations, which are the causes or occasions of the Images, not (as when we are awake) the effects of them"(p. 642). As he explains with respect to stage illusion, "dream-images are caused by the sensations, and with these the emotions and passions which they counterfeit"(p. 499). The sensations, too, are much more acute during sleep because of the exclusion of outward impressions acting on the organs of sense. Consequently, images in sleep are more vivid.

Coleridge, then, has explained what Chaucer and the earlier writers had only experienced -- the vividness of dreams. Also significant is his reference to the exclusion of outward impressions as it looks forward to Keats's "drowsy numbness" and his "Benumbed" eyes in "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on Indolence". Keats, too, experiences his most vivid dreams or visions when the outward senses are laid asleep.

Although we know only the barest of details concerning Keats's conversation with Coleridge, we can surmise from Keats's early poems, at least, that they must have often agreed with one another. Like Coleridge, Keats in Sleep and Poetry at "least partly owed to sleep what was worthy in his rhymes" and again like Coleridge, in "To J.H. Reynolds" he recognized the associative nature of the "wonted thread" of dream-images. But whether Keats would continue to agree that dreams had nothing absurd or nonsensical in them is yet to be seen.

Among the younger Romantic poets, Shelley, with his references to dreams, phantasms, and visions, illustrates once again a strong interest in unconscious states. In Queen Mab, Shelley, following literary tradition, employs the motif of the poet-dreamer, claiming that "not the visioned poet in his dreams ... Hath ever yet beheld"(I,68,75) so wild and so bright a shape "As that which reined the coursers of the air" (I,76). Further, although he acknowledges the dream's failure, he does admit that the sight of lovely and grand images in dreams astonishes, enraptures, and elevates the dreamer (I,71). Later in the poem, Shelley asks, in words reminiscent of Demetrius, "Do I dream? Is this new feeling/But a visioned ghost of slumber"(I,163), raising once again the question of the difference between dreams and reality.

A dream-vision appears again in Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude but, whereas in Queen Mab the dreaming poet only

combines the "wondrous and the beautiful"(I,73), the poet in Alastor attributes a greater power to dreams. Unconscious states such as "incommunicable dream/And twilight phantasms, and deep noon-day thought"(ll. 39-40) provide the poet with intimations of the "Great Parent"(l. 45) and suggest to him a possible harmony with both nature and mankind. Not only the speaker experiences a dream, but also Alastor whose "vision on his sleep"(l. 149) is a "dream of hopes that never yet/Had flushed his cheek"(ll. 150-51). His dream of a veiled maid is, as Shelley explains in his Preface, a wish-fulfilment dream during which Alastor "images to himself the Being whom he loves"(p. 33). After picturing to himself his ideal lover, he sets out on a quest in which he "eagerly pursues/Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade"(ll. 205-06). His quest is not only reminiscent of that made by Spenser's Arthur but also anticipates Endymion's quest.

There are more similarities between Endymion and Alastor:<sup>33</sup> two of particular significance are the effect of deep sleep on the dream vision and the delusory power of dreams. As to the former, Shelley writes:

blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night  
Involved and swallowed up the vision; sleep,  
Like a dark flood suspended in its course  
Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.  
(ll. 187-90)

Keats has a similar opinion of sleep and illustrates its ability to "overpower" (Endymion, I,672). Like Alastor, Endymion embraces his vision but, as happens to Alastor,

his "sweet dream/Fell into nothing -- into stupid sleep" (Endymion, I, 677-78). Yet both Endymion and Alastor see enough of their visions to believe in them, which introduces the second similarity -- dreams can be self-destructive. Alastor's quest for his dream ends tragically when he "sought in Nature's dearest haunt ... his sepulchre" (ll. 429-30), and although Endymion is reunited with his goddess, it is not before he has renounced his dream:

I have clung  
 To nothing, lov'd a nothing, nothing seen  
 Or felt but a great dream!  
 .....  
 Against his proper glory  
 Has my own soul conspired: so my story  
 Will I to children utter, and repent.  
(Endymion, IV, 636-45)

He has recognized the danger inherent in those dreams that lead one beyond the natural bourn and, in a passage that could apply equally well to Alastor, claims "There never liv'd a mortal man, who bent/His appetite beyond his natural sphere/But starv'd and died" (Endymion, IV, 646-48). Both poets are acutely aware of the dangers inherent in dreaming.

Shelley continues to examine dreams in The Revolt of Islam. Here, he includes a divine dream, a premonitory dream, and monstrous and foul dreams. But he also illustrates the operation of the mind during sleep, and, echoing Coleridge, reveals both the 'streamy' nature of the unconscious and its limitless potential. The thoughts in his dream seemed

As if they did ten thousand years outnumber  
 Of waking life, the visions of a dream  
 Which hid in one dim gulf the troubled stream  
 Of mind; a boundless chaos wild and vast,  
 Whose limits yet were never memory's theme.  
 (III,i,3-7)

Shelley's interest in the unconscious led to speculations on a dream's ability to reveal knowledge as yet unknown to the dreamer. There is, for example, the "antenatal dream" in Episychidion (l.456); the "shadow of a dream/Which the veiled eye of Memory [Keats's Moneta] never saw"(I,i,98-99) in Prince Athanase; and the following assertion made by a dream in Marianne's Dream:

I know the secrets of the air  
 And things are lost in the glare of day  
 Which I can make the sleeping see.  
 (I,3-5)

Marianne wakes and, like Adam, walks about as one who knew "That sleep has sights as clear and true/As any waking eyes can view"(XXIII,6-7).

Further, Shelley illustrates in Marianne's Dream a theory on the source of images in dreams which recalls the claims made by Coleridge in his "Stage Illusion". In the poem Shelley questions whether Marianne actually heard the sound of an anchor clanging or of her own blood pulsing through her veins. Her dream-image, then, may have been nothing more than the result of bodily sensation. But if this is true of all dreams, it runs counter to Shelley's aforementioned speculations on the ability of dreams to reveal sights "clear and true". Shelley's antithetical approaches to dreams recall

the contrary theories on dreams evident in the philosophical writings of the eighteenth century. He was aware of the philosophical debates on the nature of the soul and had illustrated the Dualist theory quite early in his Queen Mab (I,139-56). But he also alludes to Locke's theory on the passivity of the mind in Mont Blanc when he refers to "My own mind, my human mind, which passively/Now renders and receives fast influencings"(II,37-38). Do "gleams of a remoter world/Visit the soul in sleep"(III,49-50) or is man merely a "machine"(Queen Mab,I,155) that mechanically records sense impressions? Although in Mont Blanc Shelley does not claim that he sides with those"some"(III,49) who have glimpses of a remoter world, we know from works such as the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" and A Defense of Poetry that he did believe in the possibility of visionary ascents to an eternal reality and "the visitations of the divinity in man".<sup>34</sup> One of these visitations may indeed come in the form of a dream.

Shelley's speculations are shared by Byron. He also recognized the power of dreams to reveal new creations and in The Dream claims :

Sleep hath its own world,  
 And a wide realm of wild reality,  
 And dreams in their development have breath,  
 And tears, and tortures, and the touch of joy;  
 They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,  
 They take a weight from off our waking toils.  
 (I,3-8)

He also asserts that dreams become "A portion of ourselves/  
 And look like heralds of eternity"(I,10-11), speaking to us

as "Sibyls of the future"(I,13). But, like Shelley, Byron questions the source of dreams and, in words anticipating Keats's letter on the spider and its "airy citadel", replies that they are

Creations of the mind? -- The mind can make  
Substance, and people planets of its own  
With beings brighter than have been, and give  
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.  
(I,19-22)

Similarly, since the poem itself originated from "a vision which [he] dreamed/Perchance in sleep"(I,23-24), Byron once again illustrates the role of dreams in creativity.

In The Dream, Byron associates the "dread of vanished shadows"(I,17) with the past and asks "Is not the past all shadow"(I,18)? A similar association is evident in Charles Lamb who claims in his essay "Witches and Other Night Fears"<sup>35</sup> that children's nightmares are not caused by the association of daytime concerns but rather pre-exist in their minds. In terminology antedating Carl Jung, Lamb writes that "Gorgons ... Hydras, and Chimeras dire ... [are] transcripts, types -- the archetypes are in us and eternal"(pp. 79-80). He further argues that since nightmares predominate in sinless infancy, children's fears must be purely spiritual and, if we were to search for the solution to such fears, we might gain "some probable insight into our ante-mundane condition, and a peep at least in the shadow land of pre-existence"(p. 80). A similar idea is evident in Keats's Hyperion in which Apollo professes to have known Mnemosyne before, if not consciously

then at least in a dream. Exemplifying Keats's "grand march of the intellect", Mnemosyne, an image of a world memory or a type of reservoir of the collective unconscious, bestows on Apollo, in the form of visual recordings, "knowledge enormous"(III,113) of all that has previously existed. Keats may well have discussed such ideas with Lamb when they were both members of the Hunt circle.<sup>36</sup>

Lamb continues in his essay to illustrate the relationship between dreams and creativity and, echoing Coleridge, posits that the "degree of soul's creativeness in sleep might furnish no whimsical criterion of the quantum of poetical faculty resident in the same soul waking"(p. 81). He also claims that dreams are more than a gauging of creativity and, like Shelley, admits that they have the power to teach, declaring in "The Child Angel: A Dream" that he learned a lesson "not to be understood but by dreams"(p. 286).

The ability of dreams to reveal new lessons interested William Hazlitt but, contrary to Lamb, he asserts that because dreams stem from "a vapor, a fume, the effect of a 'heat-oppressed brain',"<sup>37</sup> we should dismiss the "power of prophesying or foreseeing things in our sleep"(p. 22). Hazlitt, whose theories owed much to Locke's empiricism,<sup>38</sup> describes in words that recall Dryden, that in dreams there is a "tyranny of the imagination over the judgment; that is the mind has slipped its cable, and single images meet, and jostle and unite suddenly" (p. 21). Applying this theory to "profundity in sleep"(p. 23),

he concludes that when the voluntary power is suspended -- Coleridge's comparative power -- "things come upon us as unexpected revelations, which we keep out of our thoughts at other times"(p. 23). Consequently, sleep may be a means of discovering "our tacit, and almost unconscious sentiments with respect to persons or things"(p. 23). Anticipating Freud, Hazlitt states that during sleep, a "curb is taken off from our passions"(p. 23) which in our waking hours continually functions. A truth, then, may be revealed in dreams but, according to Hazlitt, dreams can only reveal a truth which subconsciously we already know; or as Spenser's Margarita had explained, "those who wish ill, dream ill".

Evident in both philosophy and literature are two different approaches to dreams. In the writings of empiricists such as Hobbes, Hartley, and Hazlitt, dreams are merely associated images recalled from memory and by no means prophetic. But dreams may also reveal archetypes that are eternal or, indeed, may be divinely inspired. Since dreaming is a universal experience, the question arises of what function dreams serve. Do they carry the dreamer beyond the phenomenal to an absolute truth or are they merely states of temporary madness during which the mind has slipped its cable? Keats asked himself the same question but, as we will see, did not always give a consistent answer.

## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 2

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Hobbes, Hobbes's Leviathan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), I,i,11. All subsequent quotations are from this edition and will be identified within the thesis by Part, Chapter, and page number.

<sup>2</sup>James Volant Baker, The Sacred River: Coleridge's Theory of the Imagination (Louisiana: State University Press, 1957), p. 46. Hereafter cited as Sacred River.

<sup>3</sup>Letters, II, 102. See Rollins' footnote in which he states that a copy of Locke's Concerning Human Understanding occurs in Brown's list of Keats's books.

<sup>4</sup>Geoffrey Tillotson, General Introduction to Eighteenth Century English Literature, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson et al (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1969), pp. 3-4.

<sup>5</sup>John Locke, The Works of John Locke (London: Printed for Thomas Teggatal, 1823; reprinted ed., Germany: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1963), vol. 1, II,i,93. All quotations from Locke are from this edition and this volume and will be identified within the thesis by Book, Chapter, and page number.

<sup>6</sup>David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding and Selections from A Treatise of Human Nature (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1927), p. 21.

<sup>7</sup>Sacred River, p. 53.

<sup>8</sup>James Rolston Caldwell, John Keats' Fancy (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), pp. 70-80. For Coleridge, see Biographia Literaria, Vol. 1, Chap. V.

<sup>9</sup>Samuel T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), I,VI-VII, 74-88.

<sup>10</sup>David Hartley, Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations (London: Printed by S. Richardson, 1749; reprint ed., New York: Grand Publishing, Inc., 1971), Vol. 1,III,v,384. All subsequent references to Hartley are from this edition and volume and will be identified within the thesis by Chapter, Section, and page number.

<sup>11</sup>Mont Blanc in The Poetical Works of Shelley, ed. Newell F. Ford (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), III, 53. All subsequent quotations from Shelley are from this edition and will be identified within the thesis by line number.

<sup>12</sup>The Dream in The Poetical Works of Byron, revised by Robert F. Gleckner (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), I, 11. All subsequent quotations from Byron are from this edition and will be identified within the thesis by line number.

<sup>13</sup>John Kemp, The Philosophy of Kant (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 16-18. Hereafter cited as Kemp. See also Sacred River, pp. 29-30.

<sup>14</sup>Kemp, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup>Immanuel Kant in Dreams of a Spirit Seer (England: New Church Press Ltd., n.d.), quoted in The World of Dreams, ed. Ralph L. Woods (New York: Random House, 1947), p. 234. All subsequent quotations are from Woods' edition and will be identified within the thesis by page number.

<sup>16</sup>Sacred River, p. 83.

<sup>17</sup>Sacred River, p. 173.

<sup>18</sup>Mary M. Colum, From These Roots (New York, 1937), p. 332 quoted in Sacred River, p. 173.

<sup>19</sup>See James Caldwell, p. 81; also Sidney Colvin, John Keats (1917), pp. 127-128 and E. de Selincourt, ed. The Poems of John Keats (1951), p. xxxix for parallels between Keats's 'Apartment Letter' and Wordsworth's stages of man. See also C.L. Finney, The Evolution of Keats's Poetry (1936), Vol. 1, 73-77; and Keats's comments on Wordsworth Letters, I, 169, 278-81.

<sup>20</sup>The White Doe of Rylstone in The Poetical Works of Wordsworth, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 316, II, 424. "Restless sleep" occurs in the Dedication, l. 42.

<sup>21</sup>"Strange fits of passion I have known" in Wordsworth: Poetry & Prose, ed. W.M. Merchant (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 164, l. 17.

<sup>22</sup>Wordsworth: Poetry & Prose, p. 576, l. 5.

<sup>23</sup>Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross (Oxford, 1973), Vol. II, XIV, 6.

<sup>24</sup>David Perkins in his preface to The Rime of the Ancient Mariner in English Romantic Writers, ed. David Perkins (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1967), p. 404. References to Coleridge's poems are from Coleridge: Poetical Works, ed., Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) and will be identified within the thesis by line number. Coleridge's Preface to "Kubla Khan" is also from this edition and will be identified by page number.

<sup>25</sup>Sacred River, p. 158.

<sup>26</sup>Sacred River, p. 159.

<sup>27</sup>S.T. Coleridge, The Friend (London, 1818), I, 246-47, quoted in Sacred River, p. 155.

<sup>28</sup>S.T. Coleridge in his Letter to Thomas Poole, Oct. 3, 1803, Unpublished Letters, I, 286, quoted in Sacred River, p. 155.

<sup>29</sup>S.T. Coleridge in Table Talk, May 1, 1832, quoted in Sacred River, p. 156.

<sup>30</sup>William Hazlitt, "On Dreams" in The Complete Works of William Hazlitt, ed. P.P. Howe (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1931), vol. 12, 23.

<sup>31</sup>English Romantic Writers, p. 499. All other references to Coleridge's notes on stage illusion are from this edition and will be identified by page number.

<sup>32</sup>S.T. Coleridge, Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, edited by Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), vol. iv. All other references to Coleridge's Letter of 13 May 1816 to Daniel Stuart are from this edition and will be identified by page number.

<sup>33</sup>E.C. Pettet, On the Poetry of Keats (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), pp. 141-42. See also Leonard Brown "The Genesis, Growth and Meaning of Endymion", Studies in Philology, Vol. xxx (1933), 618-53.

<sup>34</sup>Percy Bysshe Shelley, A Defence of Poetry in The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, edited by Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck (New York: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1965), Vol. vii, 137.

<sup>35</sup>Charles Lamb in The Essays of Elia and the Last Essays of Elia, introduction by Robert Lynd (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1929), vol. I, 79. All subsequent references to Lamb are from this edition and volume and will be identified within the thesis by page number.

<sup>36</sup>Finney, Vol. I, 132-33.

<sup>37</sup>William Hazlitt, "On Dreams" in The Complete Works of William Hazlitt (London and Toronto, 1931), vol. 12, 22. All other quotations from "On Dreams" are from this edition and volume and will be identified within this thesis by page number.

<sup>38</sup>Perkins, Introduction to Hazlitt in English Romantic Writers, pp. 608-09.

### CHAPTER 3

#### KEATS 'S TREATMENT OF DREAMS

Keats, when referring to Endymion, claimed:

It is as good as I had power to make it -- by myself  
-- ... I have written independently Without Judgment  
-- I may write independently and with judgment  
hereafter.

(Letters, I, 374, Keats's emphasis)

The same wish to write independently lay behind his refusal to visit Shelley as he wanted his own "unfettered scope" (Letters, I, 170). While making these claims, however, Keats was reading both the writings of his contemporaries and his predecessors and consequently could not have failed to feel the "gentle anchor pull" of their influence. Not surprisingly, Keats's poems evidence both forces at work, and it is the intent of this chapter to illustrate both the ideas which Keats shared with others and those which he developed independently.

In his use of dreams Keats is often traditional, reiterating ideas on dreams which, by his time, had become commonly accepted. He includes dreams of poetic inspiration; Macrobius' nightmares and oracula; neoplatonic dreams; and Boccaccio's dreams of wish-fulfilment. Although Keats often presents conventional uses of dreams, he nonetheless departs from other dream writers by developing his own use of the dream.

An examination of Keats's depiction of dreams throughout his career reveals a change in his attitude towards dreams. In the early verses, up to and including the first two books of Endymion, dreams are presented as a positive experience. They transport the dreamer to a world of sensuous beauty far removed from the actual world of "leaden-eyed despairs" ("Ode to a Nightingale", 1.28). In fact, in Endymion a dream even promises immortality. But before completing Endymion Keats's view of dreams changed. He discovered the double-edged nature of dreams: by promising an existence of "unperplex'd delight", they create a dissatisfaction with the actual world and thus vex the dreamer's waking hours.

In Endymion, Keats also introduces Circe, the enchantress figure, whom he associates with a "long love dream"(III,440). He presents similar figures in "La Belle Dame sans Merci" and Lamia and, as he had in Endymion, associates these enchantresses with a dream-like existence. In these works, dreams take on a different role as rather than offer an escape from 'reality', they remind the dreamer of the actual world he has forsaken. Yet Keats is still concerned with the theme of escapism which began in his earlier works. The metaphor of escape changes but the problem remains the same -- the need to accept one's waking 'reality'. By focusing on the dream/Circe figure, what emerges in Keats's writing is both a condemnation of the escapist dreamer and a new type of dream -- one which not surprisingly prevents escapism.

Early in his writings, while strongly influenced by such works as the Faerie Queene, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Paradise Lost, Keats composed verses which, as C.L. Finney has commented, "conformed in thought, imagery, genre, metre and diction to the romantic poetry of the second half of the eighteenth century."<sup>1</sup> It seems, then, that at this stage of his career, Keats was more concerned with testing his power of imitation than that of invention. Moreover, Keats was apparently more interested in the beauty of composition<sup>2</sup> than in dreams, as his early poems make very few references to dreams. Further, and not surprisingly in a youthful poet, when Keats does mention dreams he conforms to dream convention. In "To Hope", for instance, a poem written on the death of his grandmother, Keats's lament that

When by my solitary hearth I sit,  
 And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom;  
 When no fair dreams before my "mind's eye" flit,  
(ll. 1-3)

illustrates a common dream theory. Like earlier dream theorists, Keats is aware of the relationship between dreams and daytime preoccupations and, although his reference to it here is brief, in his later poems he has much more to say on this idea.

Unlike "To Hope" in which he treats dreams conventionally, in Calidore Keats is somewhat unorthodox in his depiction of dreams. Here he ventures into untrodden regions by attributing to swans the human ability to dream "sweetly"(1. 62). Viewed

as an isolated occurrence, this reference may not seem all that significant and perhaps can be explained as a phenomenon belonging to Spenser's enchanted world, but Keats makes similar references in Endymion. Here, not only "sleeping kine/... dream of fields divine"(III,57-58), but a "sleeping lake"(II,833) learns of the myth through a dream. Keats's recognition of "some almost human vitality in vegetable and earthly life" has led G. Wilson Knight to assert:

poetry, sleep and dream, and a certain human, if sleepy, consciousness in nature are all entwined. Indeed, Keats's interest in sleep is one with his perception of a kind of consciousness only within manifestations, usually felt to be half-conscious or quite inanimate.<sup>3</sup>

Knight's claim recalls the writings of Schelling, outlined in the previous chapter, and although it is highly unlikely that Keats read Schelling, he does appear to share his predecessor's belief in a natural world striving towards consciousness. Similarly, as we will see in Endymion, Keats, like the German Transcendentalists, presents dreams which are much more than stored associations.

Although the full extent of Keats's knowledge of German philosophical writings is as yet unknown, we do know from his letters that Keats understood the principles of Associationism.<sup>4</sup> He explains in a letter to Reynolds:

This crossing a letter is not without association -- for chequer work leads us naturally to a Milkmaid, a Milkmaid to Hogarth, Hogarth to Shakespeare, Shakespeare to Hazlitt -- Hazlitt to Shakespeare and thus by merely pulling an apron string we set a pretty peal of chimes at work.

(Letters, I, 280)

Not only was he aware of Associationist principles but, like Novalis, he could see the role that "trains of peaceful images" (Sleep and Poetry, l.340) could play in literature. In both Sleep and Poetry and "I Stood Tip-toe ..." Keats appears to be virtually testing Novalis' theory by creating verses which consist of images linked together by the principle of associating ideas, "as in dreams". As Keats illustrates, one image leads to another:

Things such as these are ever harbingers  
 To trains of peaceful images: the stirr  
 Of a swan's neck unseen among the rushes:  
 A linnet starting all about the bushes:  
 A butterfly, with golden wings broad parted,  
 Nestling a rose, convuls'd as though it smarted  
 With over pleasure -- many, many more.  
 (Sleep and Poetry, ll.339-44)

Thematically in Sleep and Poetry Keats is following a much older tradition than Associationism as, like earlier writers, he associates sleep with creativity. Indeed, he illustrates his awareness of this literary convention in the epigraph to the poem. The lines are derived from The Flower and the Leaf -- a poem which during Keats's time was credited to Chaucer.<sup>5</sup> But the epigraph is not the only Chaucerian allusion in the poem. Irene Chayes has also recognized in Sleep and Poetry parallels to Chaucer's House of Fame<sup>6</sup>, claiming that Keats's allegorical Poesy -- a winged "feminine creature" (House of Fame, III,1365) sitting upon a throne (Sleep and Poetry, ll. 392-95) -- is an imitation of Chaucer's goddess Fame (House of Fame, III,1356-1418). Further, as we

saw in Chapter One, Dryden had also employed the dream-vision tradition in his version of The Flower and the Leaf, and thus in either writer Keats would have found a literary precedent for attributing poetic inspiration to dreams.

Following tradition, Keats describes sleep as not only "healthful"(l. 7) and "soothing"(l. 2) but "more full of visions than a high romance"(l. 10). He had already associated sleep with poetic inspiration in the title and later he claims that poetry itself is "might half-slumbering on its own right arm"(l. 238). Moreover, in a more explicit reference: Keats confesses:

yet I must not forget  
Sleep, quiet with his poppy coronet:  
For what there may be worthy in these rhymes  
I partly owe to him.

(ll. 347-50)

In this work and in "I Stood Tip-toe ...", "pleasant sleep" ("I Stood Tip-toe", l.109) induces only "lovely dreams" ("I Stood Tip-toe", l. 120), and, consequently, the poetry which it inspires is composed of soft and pleasing images befitting the realm of "Flora and Old Pan" (Sleep and Poetry, l. 103). Dreams in these works provide an escape from the pains and troubles of the actual world, offering instead a world of sensuous pleasure where Keats could

sleep in the grass,  
Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,  
And choose each pleasure that my fancy sees;  
Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady places,  
To woo sweet kisses from averted faces.

(Sleep and Poetry, ll.103-07)

Outlining the stages of his poetic growth, Keats plans to "bid these joys farewell" (Sleep and Poetry, l.122) to "find the agonies, the strife/Of human hearts"(l. 124-25), and when he does move on, his opinion of dreams inevitably will change as the escapist dreams in these works are by their very nature irreconcilable with the world of human hearts.

Although Keats planned to pass old Pan's world, in Endymion he has not progressed too far, for, as in Sleep and Poetry, the world here is a dream-world far removed from the fever and the fret. But, in Endymion, Keats does introduce a different type of dream from those in the earlier verses.

While commenting to Bailey on the poem, he writes:

The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream -- he awoke and found it truth. I am the more zealous in this affair because I have never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for truth by consequitive reasoning -- and yet it must be -- ... However, it may be, O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts. It is a 'vision in the form of Youth' a Shadow of reality to come -- ... Adam's dream will do here and seems to be a conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflection is the same as human Life and its spiritual repetition.

(Letters, I, 185)

The dream now symbolizes the imagination's power to discover truth. The terms ("a shadow of reality to come", "truth", and "empyreal reflection") recall Spenser's and Shelley's neoplatonism<sup>7</sup> and suggest that Keats believed in the power of the imagination -- here analogous to dreaming -- to prefigure a reality to come. Indeed, in Endymion, the shepherd-prince does experience a prophetic dream, and, like Adam, he "Beheld

awake his very dream"(Endymion, IV, 436). But, as both Finney and Stillinger have remarked, Keats's comments in his letter on the role of sensation in acquiring knowledge also reveal his allegiance to the empirical philosophy of Locke and Hartley.<sup>8</sup> Thus Keats is apparently divided in his thinking, and, not surprisingly, a similar division occurs in the poem itself. The myth, which was based on a story about a shepherd carried away "while he was dreaming"(Letters, I, 154), demanded a conclusion in which Endymion is united with Cynthia, to which Keats complies. But, as both Stillinger and Glen O. Allen have acknowledged, before completing the poem Keats began to doubt the authenticity of the dreaming imagination.<sup>9</sup> As we will see, this doubt leads to an altered view of dreams both in the conclusion of Endymion and in the poems that follow.

In the first two books of Endymion, however, Keats depicts dreaming as a positive experience. Recalling Sleep and Poetry, Keats, in acknowledging the healthful effects of sleep, claims that it soothes "the troubled sea of the mind" (Endymion, I, 454). Moreover, sleep is a "great key ... to all the mazy world/Of silvery enchantment"(I, 456, 460-61). Indeed, the poem itself corresponds to the mind during sleep as we drift through a world of

golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,  
Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves,  
Echoing grottos, full of tumbling waves  
And moonlight

(I, 457-60)

with apparently no other unifying principle in effect than

that of Associationism.<sup>10</sup> Further, recalling Dante's and Chaucer's dream visions, Keats to a large extent eliminates the logical restraints, such as time and space, or cause and effect, and, instead, takes us into the labyrinthine world of dreams. Similarly, as in sleep when the dreamer confuses the dream with reality, Endymion, like Demetrius, questions "whether that ... night/Was passed in dreaming (I,860-61). In fact, the reader himself may confuse the boundary between sleep and consciousness as there are occasions in the poem when it is unclear whether Endymion is awake or asleep.<sup>11</sup> Keats himself claimed that when writing Endymion his mind was "like a pack of scattered cards" (Letters, II, 323) -- an apt assessment of the poem itself. But ironically the loose structure of the poem which Keats implicitly condemns succeeds in capturing the 'streamy' nature of dreams. Again, like Novalis, Keats has put into practice what we now know as stream-of-consciousness literature.

In Endymion Keats also describes the physical states prior to dreaming, but whereas Dryden, Kant, and Coleridge had described this state as one in which there is an exclusion of external sensations, Keats presents the exact opposite. After a Chaucerian eagle had transported Endymion to a jasmine bower and prior to his feeling "endued/With power to dream deliciously" (II, 707-08), Endymion's

every sense had grown  
Ethereal for pleasure; 'bove his head  
Flew a delight half-graspable; his tread

Was Hesperian; to his capable ears  
 Silence was music from the holy spheres.  
 (II,671-75)

Here Keats illustrates his loyalty to empiricists such as Hazlitt and Wordsworth as all three writers describe states during which "the sensations which a man receives from natural objects ... produce strong passions or emotions in him and induce a state of ecstasy in which his imagination, stimulated by his passions, apprehends or intuits truth."<sup>12</sup> Endymion's senses, rather than becoming numb to the physical world, have become highly sensitized, and it is this heightened awareness that precedes his dream of truth. Recalling Keats's "O for a Life of Sensations", Endymion by first experiencing the "real world" prepares himself for his "shadow of reality to come". Thus whether or not Keats himself was aware of it, he has introduced what would later become a major theme -- the need to accept the actual world rather than escape from it into dreams. Moreover, as Endymion would learn, this world involves both pleasure and sorrow.

In another pre-dreaming episode Keats describes visitations by Macrobius' phantasms. Just prior to his first dream of Cynthia, Endymion, in a 'twilight realm of consciousness', experienced:

visions all about [his] sight  
 Of colours wings, and bursts of spangly light;  
 The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,  
 And then were gulph'd in a tumultous swim.  
 (I,568-71)

Keats's words here both recall the "first cloud of sleep" of

the medieval dream theorists and the commonly used metaphor of the stream. Moreover, they also anticipate his "To J.H. Reynolds" in which he examines the effect of daytime concerns on dreaming. Although Keats elaborates on this idea in the later work, his thoughts on the role of the conscious in dreaming were already evident in Endymion. Following the tradition of previous dream writings, Keats compares Endymion's, Peona's and the Indian Maid's fears to those of a "dreamer what doth most create/His own particular fright"(IV,889-90). Like Pandarus, Keats is aware that "yf a wight hath faste a thing in mind/That therof cometh swich avysions"(Troilus and Criseyde, V, 373-74).

Although Keats alludes to the existence of nightmares, he does not describe any in the poem. Endymion, like Chaunticleer, recognizes the difference between an insomnium and a visio and can assert that his dream was "nothing base/No merely slumbrous phantasms"(I,770-71). Moreover, in words refuting Locke, Endymion argues that dreams can reveal truths as yet unknown to the dreamer. He explains to Peona:

Look not so wilder'd; for these things are true.  
And never born of atomies  
That buzz about our slumbers, like brain flies,  
Leaving us fancy-sick.

(I,850-53)

Peona, however, does not share her brother's faith in dreams and, echoing Pertelote, counters: "Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick/For nothing but a dream"(I,759-60)? Unlike her brother, she could not "espy/A hope beyond the

shadow of a dream"(I,856-57).

Peona's reply does not stem from her own inability to dream. She too had day-dreams of "palaces/And towers of amethyst"(I,744-45), but,unlike Endymion, she is aware that dreams are "more slight/Than the mere nothing that engenders them"(I,755-56). Consequently, rather than "tease"(I,745) her "pleasant days"(I,746) by dreaming of mounting "Into those regions"(I,746), she accepts the insubstantial nature of dreams. What she has recognized is the potential of dreams to venom the dreamer's waking hours. Dreams may promise a heaven, but upon waking the 'dreamer' may be left in a hell. Although in the happy and somewhat convenient ending of the poem Keats allows Endymion to be re-united with both Cynthia and the Indian Maid, it is not before he has introduced the dangers involved in escapist dreaming -- a theme which becomes a major preoccupation. This early in his career Keats evidences a split opinion of dreams -- one which is symbolically represented in the Endymion-Peona pairing. Moreover, Endymion and Peona represent an immature version of another Keatsian pairing -- the Moneta-Keats pairing in The Fall of Hyperion -- as in both works a female character admonishes an idle male dreamer.

As if succumbing to Peona's warning, both Glaucus and Endymion wake from paradisaal dreams to encounter a nightmarish reality. Glaucus returns to a world of desolation in which "disgust, and hate,/And terrors manifold divided [him]/A spoil amongst them"(III,562-64). Similarly, after Endymion

awakes from his first dream of Cynthia, he finds himself in a world in which:

all the pleasant hues  
Of heaven and earth had faded; deepest shades  
Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny glades  
Were full of pestilent light; our taintless rills  
Seem'd sooty, and o'er-spread with upturn'd gills  
Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown  
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns out-grown  
Like spiked aloe.

(I,691-98)

Once the dreamers wake, the beauty of their dreams destroys their waking world so that here, as in The Fall of Hyperion, these "dreamers weak" (The Fall of Hyperion, I,162) are left havenless where they can see "Nought earthly worth ... compassing" (Endymion, II,162). Moreover, Endymion's dream not only creates a feeling of dissatisfaction with his natural world, but the quest it induces leads him to forsake his fellow men.

Endymion, however, gradually learns to view dreams as his sister had. After returning from his quest, he accepts the "unconfined/Restraint" (I,455-56) of dreams as he has discovered that, although in a dream he can pass beyond "the fragile bar/That keeps us from our homes ethereal" (I,360-61), being mortal he cannot exist solely in dreams. Echoing Peona, Endymion claims:

I have clung  
To nothing, lov'd a nothing, nothing seen  
Or felt but a great dream.

(IV,636-38)

Further, he goes on to issue a warning about the danger of

travelling beyond one's natural bourn and, in words prophetic of both Lycius' and the knight at arms' fate, advises:

There never liv'd a mortal man, who bent  
His appetite beyond his natural sphere  
But starv'd and died.

(IV,646-48)

Endymion's change of heart as to the value of dreams has led to various critical interpretations of the poem.<sup>13</sup> But perhaps the best critic is Keats himself and the guidelines to the interpretation of dreams which he provides in The Fall of Hyperion:

Thou art a dreaming thing;  
A fever of thyself ...  
.....  
Only the dreamer venoms all his days  
Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve  
.....  
The poet and the dreamer are distinct,  
Diverse, sheer opposites, antipodes.  
The one pours out a balm upon the world  
The other vexes it.

(I,168-69, 175-76, 199-202)

Endymion, then, is first presented as a "dreaming thing" vexing his days because he could not successfully integrate his dreams into his waking 'reality'. But, paradoxically, through his dreams he learns the dangers of attempting to live only in dreams. Evident this early in Keats's career, then, although in an embryonic stage, is a new approach to dreams, as here the ability of dreams to warn against escapist dreaming not only foreshadows the dreams in "La Belle Dame sans Merci" and Lamia but also anticipates Keats's final words on dreaming in The Fall of Hyperion.

Moreover, via his dream quest, unlike Shelley's Alastor, Endymion learns the true meaning of sympathy.<sup>14</sup> His encounters with Alpheus and Arethusa, Glaucus, and the Indian Maid taught him that love and friendship are indeed "self-destroying"(I,799). Like Adam, Endymion woke to find truth -- "Life's self is nourish'd by his proper pith"(I,814). The shepherd-prince returns from his dream-quest to "the very stream/By which he took his first soft poppy dream"(IV,785-86), but he returns changed. His days of "glad animal movements" roaming the Latmian glades (I,477-86) have passed, and, as he resumes his rule, he is no longer a mere "dreaming thing" (The Fall of Hyperion,I,167) but a poet-prince. He has not forgotten the dream, or, more important, the lesson it taught him, and in the future he will tell his story to others. Further, through the "wonders" he "shall tell"(IV,862) the "shepherd realm shall prosper well"(IV,863) in "health perpetual"(IV,831). "Poesy alone can tell her dreams"(The Fall of Hyperion,I,8), and, as a member of the poet tribe, Endymion has learned how to save "Imagination from the sable charm/And dumb enchantment"(The Fall of Hyperion,I,10-11). Only now is he worthy of being immortalized.

Keats prefaced Endymion with comments on the healthy imagination, claiming that his own was in a "ferment"(Preface to Endymion, p.64), somewhere between the healthy imagination of a boy and the mature imagination of an adult. The hero of his poem experienced a similar state as, after awakening from

his dream of Cynthia, Endymion's feverish imagination transformed the natural beauty around him into grotesque shapes illuminated by "pestilent light"(I,694). The idea of an unhealthy imagination apparently appealed to Keats since in "To J.H. Reynolds" he returns to examine once again the effects of a "soul ... in a ferment"(Preface, p. 64).

The poem begins with a description of fantastic "shapes, and shadows, and remembrances/That every other minute vex and please"(ll. 3-4). As he would later in the "Ode on Indolence", Keats depicts a semi-conscious state during which images pass before his eyes. But, whereas in his earlier verses the "trains of peaceful images" led to daydreams "that seemed inspired or touched with sublimity ... now Keats finds that his dreams have become ugly nightmares".<sup>15</sup> Capturing the inconsistency of dreams, aware, as were Coleridge and Hazlitt, of the suspension of comparative powers in sleep, Keats presents "Things all disjointed"(l. 5). During this "first cloud of sleep" or what he later terms "some magic interval between the first and second cup of tea"(Letters,II,358), Keats presents images that "fall out by contraries"(Letters, II,129). Here the "thread" of associated images suggests that indeed, as Hazlitt had asserted, the speaker's mind has "slipped its cable".

Prior to writing "To J.H. Reynolds" Keats's thoughts focused on pleasant dreams but, like Endymion, Keats eventually acknowledged the existence of "cloudy phantasms"

(Endymion, IV, 651) with the result that his opinion of dreams fluctuates. While exploring the world of dreams, Keats cannot keep his thoughts on the harmful effects of dreams in check -- an idea which he explained to Rice a day after writing "To J.H. Reynolds":

What a happy thing it would be if we could settle our thoughts, make our minds up on any matter in five Minutes and remain content .... Alas! this never can be: for as the material Cottager knows there are such places as France and Italy and the Andes and the Burning Mountains -- so the spiritual Cottager has knowledge of the terra semi incognita and things unearthly; and cannot for his Life, keep in the check rein.

(Letters, I, 254-55)

Keats and Endymion, however, are not the only ones who cannot 'keep in the check rein' since, as Keats explains in "To J.H. Reynolds", "Few are there who escape these visitings"(l. 13) of "Things all disjointed ... from north and south/Two witch's eyes above a cherub's mouth"(ll. 5-6). Those who do escape "have patient wings"(l. 14), and their "dreaming all of sleep or wake"(l. 67) is of "young Aeolian harps personified" (l. 18). Unlike these patient dreamers, Keats sees instead of the harmony in nature a world "alive to love and hate"(l. 38).

There was a time when Keats "was at home"(l. 92) in his natural world but, unlike Endymion, Keats "saw too distinct into the core/Of an eternal fierce destruction"(ll. 96-97). After having seen this eternal destruction he can no longer unperplex pain and pleasure and see life in nature without concomitantly seeing death. Moreover, this newly acquired knowledge also affects his dreams. Echoing Coleridge's

"Dejection: An Ode", Keats illustrates that "Moods of one's mind" ("To J.H. Reynolds," l. 106) alter one's perception during the waking hours, and that, as Coleridge had acknowledged in "The Pains of Sleep", moods of one's mind can intrude into the world of dreams. Keats asks that dreams "take/From something of material sublime"(ll. 68-69), knowing as did previous dream theorists, that dreams are frequently a re-enactment of one's daytime concerns. As W. Jackson Bate explains, "often our dreams are simply the 'shadow' of our own hearts, of our daily preoccupations and anxieties in a world where we 'jostle'".<sup>16</sup> Keats concludes his discussion on dream psychology by planning to take refuge from his horrid moods in a new romance, but Isabella -- the romance which followed -- was hardly a refuge.

Rather than escape from his horrid moods, Keats by turning to Boccaccio's tale of Isabetta, indulges them as the story he borrows focuses on grief, obsession, madness, and, not surprisingly, a ghostly visitation. Lorenzo's ghost appears to Isabella in a dream, telling her of the murder and the exact location of the body, but rather than alleviate her grief, the dream initiates a rapid decline into madness which makes it quite a different type of dream from those found in Keats's earlier works. Keats has prepared us for such an outcome in his image of "a fierce potion"(l. 267) which, as Donald Goellnicht has explained, is an allusion to drugs administered to terminally ill patients promising a cure but

in effect only exacerbating the illness.<sup>17</sup> Goellnicht defines Isabella's disease as clinical melancholia originating from frustrated sexual desires and unrealized motherhood. Viewed in this light, then, Isabella's dream is analogous to the detrimental effects of a wrongly-prescribed drug and, rather than medicine "with a balmy power" (*Endymion*, II, 483), the dream poisons her. Although literally Isabella wakes from her dream, figuratively she does not as, like Endymion, she forsakes her own world for the memory of her dream world: She

forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,  
 And she forgot the blue above the trees,  
 And she forgot the dells where waters run,  
 .....  
 She had no knowledge when the day was done.  
(ll. 417-21)

Once again, Keats recognizes the danger of an escapist dream -- one which for Isabella had "power to wean/Her from her own fair youth and pleasures gay" (ll. 462-63).

Sleep in Isabella is no longer a balm which soothes the "troubled sea of the mind". Her own melancholy moods haunt her dreams, and she awakes bereft of "healthful mid-night sleep" (l. 323). Keats, the physician, was aware of the relationship between dreams and sickness and in a letter to Fanny Brawne explains:

I rest well and from last night do not remember any thing horrid in my dreams, which is a capital symptom, for any organic derangement always occasions a Phantasmagoria.

(Letters, II, 277)

Keats's words not only bring to mind Isabella's fate but also

recall the writings on dreams outlined in the previous chapters. Like Chaucer's "leches" who "seyne that of complexions/Proceden [dremes]"(Troilus and Criseyde,V,369-70), Keats is aware of the role of bodily humours in dreams. Moreover, echoing a later physician Hartley, Keats acknowledges that dreams may be interpreted as an indication of a person's health and temper. Isabella's dream, then, which she would have been better off forgetting, is itself a symptom of her "organic derangement".

The effect of one's moods on dreams surfaces again in The Eve of St. Agnes, a poem based "on a popular superstition" (Letters,II,139). According to the superstition,

Young virgins might have visions of delight  
 .....  
 If ceremonies due they did aright;  
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,  
 .....  
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require  
 Of heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.  
(VI,47-54)

These ceremonies, which acknowledge the role of diet and conscious preoccupations in dreams, recall similar acknowledgements in the dream theories of Chaucer, Burton, and Dryden. Moreover, by thinking only of what she desires, Madeline creates the proper conditions for inducing a wish-fulfilment dream, aware, as was Burton, that "sabini quod volunt somniant". Consequently, Madeline dreams of blisses "pure and deep"(XXXII, 302).

Keats, however, adds a further complication by off-setting the image of Madeline's dream-lover with her 'actual'

lover. Thus, by presenting the two lovers side-by-side, Keats builds a more explicit contrast between dreams and 'reality' than he had in his earlier work. Moreover, Keats not only presents two worlds -- the dream and the reality -- but also two different approaches to the 'real' one. Once we understand these two approaches, the meaning or role of Madeline's dream becomes much clearer.

One approach to life is symbolized by the characters Angela, the Beadsman, and Madeline, all believers in Christian superstition. We know from his letters and the poem "Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition" that Keats had a bitter distaste for superstitious beliefs. In a letter to the George Keatses written around the same time as The Eve of St. Agnes, Keats states:

These Reviews too are getting more and more powerful and especially the Quarterly -- They are like a superstition which the more it prostrates the Crowd and the longer it continues the more powerful it becomes just in proportion to their increasing weakness.  
(Letters, II, 65)

He had voiced similar complaints in "Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition", condemning Christianity for binding "the mind of man ...In some black spell"(ll. 5-6) as without such a belief man would not tear "Himself from fireside joys, and Lydian airs"(l. 7).

In The Eve of St. Agnes Keats's attitude towards superstition has not changed. Like those in "Vulgar Superstition", Angela -- "a churchyard thing"(l. 155) -- is "far

beyond/The sound of merriment and chorus bland"(XI,94-95). The Beadsman is also isolated from 'fireside joys': rather than join the revellers, "Another way he went and soon among/Rough ashes sat"(III,25-26). Moreover, the images of cold with which he is associated suggest his likeness to the "sculptur'd dead"(II,14). With his "numb"(I,5) fingers and "frosted breath(I, 6) he too seems "to freeze/Emprison'd"(II,14-15) by some black spell. Madeline, another believer in vulgar superstition, is "St. Agnes' charmed maid"(XXII,192) who,"Hoodwink'd with faery fancy"(VIII,71), "heeded not at all"(VII,59). All three characters,who believe in a religion that tears them away from "converse high"("Vulgar Superstition", 1. 8) represent an escapist approach to life.

Keats set in opposition to this religion of inactivity Porphyro's active one. Porphyro, who is repeatedly described in religious terms, represents a type of younger beadsman. He is a "famish'd pilgrim"(XXXVIII,339) who longs to "kneel" and "worship"(IX,81,80) before a "silver shrine"(XXXVIII,337). But whereas the older Beadsman's religion is one of lonely contemplation, Porphyro's is one of active participation in the world. He of all the characters in the castle is the most active. The lords and barons are imprisoned by their hatred; the "bloated wassailers"(XXXIX,346) drown in "the sleepy mead"(XXXIX,349); and Angela and the Beadsman, like their 'vulgar superstition', are gradually "dying like an outburnt lamp"("Vulgar Superstition", 1. 11). Madeline too

exists in a state of suspended animation entranced by a "midnight charm/Impossible to melt as iced stream"(XXXII,282-83).

By applying these two approaches to Madeline's dream -- one which stems from a belief in superstition -- we discover that it is yet another form of escapism. The words of an earlier dream theorist, Hobbes, who had already commented on the role of dreams in religious superstition, aptly describe Madeline's situation:

From this ignorance of how to distinguish Dreams and other strong Fancies from Vision and Sense, did arise the greatest part of the Religion of the Gentiles in time past.<sup>18</sup>

Fortunately for Madeline, however, Porphyro arrives to bring her back to her senses. Before he melts the trance, Madeline is havened away from "joy and pain"(XXVII,240) where her "soul fatigued away"(XXVII,238). Her dream offered an escape from the harsh winter storm and a world of "looks immortal"(XXXV, 313), but to remain in such a state places her among the other soulless characters in the castle. Upon waking, she chooses the "pallid, chill, and drear"(XXXV,311) Porphyro, professes her love(XXXVII,331), and becomes a believer in the religion of active participation in the world. The poem's stormy conclusion -- one which has often troubled readers<sup>19</sup>-- is no longer a problem. Porphyro does not symbolize an ideal world but a world of both "sunshine and ... rain"(XXVII,242) -- the necessary requirements for developing a soul.

Madeline's decision to accept 'reality' over her dream echoes a similar choice made by Endymion, but, unlike

Endymion, she is not immortalized. In the earlier poem, Keats was more divided in his belief in the value of dreams. Endymion may have renounced his dream, claiming that he had "lov'd nothing", but eventually his dream is realized, and with its realization followed an escape from the mortal world. In The Eve of St. Agnes, however, Madeline does not escape from her world. Indeed, she becomes more active in it, entering into the wintry storm. At this stage in his dream studies Keats has not only recognized the danger of escapist dreaming but also the necessity of accepting the world of sunshine and rain, and it is significant that in the poems which follow The Eve of St. Agnes he presents a new type of dream, one which, rather than offering escape, prohibits it.

In "La Belle Dame sans Merci", written around the same time as the Vale of Soul Making letter, Keats once again examines the fate of those who attempt to escape from the "World of Pains and troubles" (Letters, II, 102). But whereas in previous poems the metaphor of escape was a dream, here it is the belle dame -- an enchantress figure reminiscent of Dante's Siren, Coleridge's Geraldine and his own Circe in Endymion. The knight at arms, while under the belle dame's spell, rather than be nourished by life's proper pith, feeds on "honey wild, and manna dew" (l. 26). Further, in the tradition of other Keatsian escapists, he abandons his world and "nothing else [sees] all day long" (l. 22).

But, while living in the illusory world of the

"fairy's child"(l. 14), the knight experiences a dream in which he sees "gleams of a remoter world". This world of kings, princes and warriors (ll. 37-38) is, in fact, the 'real' world that he has forsaken. Moreover, his dream of 'reality', which reveals the 'truth' about the belle dame, releases him from her spell. In "La Belle Dame", then, Keats presents a dream that functions in reverse to his earlier dreams; rather than offer an escape from 'reality', the knight's dream brings him back to his 'real' world. Unlike the dreams of Novalis or Shelley or Spenser, which are intimations of a higher, true Reality, Keats's dream in this work is of the lower reality -- the mortal world of pains and troubles. But as we will see in The Fall of Hyperion, this type of dream is, for Keats, a much healthier one. Moreover, the knight's dream anticipates the speaker's dream in The Fall of Hyperion as both he and the speaker in the later poem learn through dreams the dangers of living in dream worlds. The knight, however, has not yet learned the full significance of his "waking sleep". We meet him aimlessly "loitering"(ll. 2, 46), and we leave him the same way.

Although the knight's experience leaves him an outcast, he does survive to "hand his story down"(Lamia, II, 7). In Lamia, however, Lycius, another escapist, dies from his attempt to live in an illusory world. Keats, in this work, presents three different states of existence -- immortal,



recalling other Keatsian enchantresses, sets out to enthrall Lycius. Her task is not too difficult since Lycius, like Glaucus and the knight, is also predisposed to enchantment. He too is isolated from "his companions"(I,231), "thoughtless" (I,234) and indifferent(I,238) to the world around him. Consequently, he is ripe to taste Lamia's love dream and very quickly becomes "entangled in her mesh"(I,295). Like the knight, he enters into a world of "unperplex'd delight and pleasure"(I,237) only to learn, like the knight before him, that such an illusory world cannot last. Sounds from the outside world enter into his mind, and for the first time since meeting Lamia, his spirit "pass'd beyond its golden bourn/Into the noisy world almost forsworn"(II,32-33).

The sound of the trumpets "fled/But left a thought a buzzing in his head"(II,28-29). After returning to the world of thought, Lycius initiates a plan which eventually leads to his destruction. Keats, however, is not suggesting that thoughtlessness is the preferable state. He may treat Apollonius unsympathetically, leading critics to interpret the poem as a condemnation of "cold philosophy"(II,230),<sup>21</sup> but Lamia is not exempt from criticism. She is portrayed as a serpent-woman who "seem'd, at once some penanced lady elf/Some demon's mistress or the demon's self"(I,55-56). Neither she nor Apollonius is totally to blame for Lycius's death; rather, Lycius himself is to blame for what he plans to do with his dream. Unlike Endymion who used his dream to teach

others, Lycius plans to "flout"(II,147) his "sweet dreams"  
(I,377), claiming:

What mortal hath a prize, that other men  
May be confounded and abash'd withal  
But lets it sometimes pace abroad majesticall.  
(II,57-59)

Rather than lave their spirits in the wonders he could tell,  
Lycius would vex his fellowmen.

He is of the 'dreamer tribe' and consequently does not experience "What 'tis to die and live again"(The Fall of Hyperion,I,142). Like Dante in the Purgatory, he sees in Lamia only a projection of what he wants to see. Her world is one of illusion where

A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone  
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan  
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.  
(II,122-24)

But after learning that she is a serpent-woman, an enchantress, Lycius cannot "Receive the truth, and let it be [his] balm" (Hyperion,II,243). Instead, he cries "Begone foul dream" (II,271) which is

not directed towards the false appearance of the fading Lamia (though, ironically, he is looking at her as he speaks) but towards reality itself. Still ruled by his vision of godlike happiness, he is compelled to reject a life that is now rejecting it. He is willing to repudiate the name of a dream in order to guarantee its substance, which is as much as to say that he is willing to extinguish human consciousness in order to invalidate human knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

For Lycius, "the pain of truth"(Hyperion,II,202) is too great to bear and, unable to "envisage circumstance all calm" (Hyperion,II,204), he dies with his dream.

Beginning with Endymion, Keats studied the dangers involved in escapism, and with each successive escape the dreamer encountered graver dangers until in Lamia escapism resulted in death. Moreover, Keats has discovered a new use of dreams. The turning point, as we have seen, occurred in The Eve of St. Agnes in which dreams and reality fuse, and in the poems that follow dreams no longer offer an escape. Yet the knight and Lycius failed to understand the value of this new dream. Keats, however, did, and in his last dream poem, The Fall of Hyperion, paradoxically he explains how a dream can teach us not to be dreamers.

## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 3

<sup>1</sup>Finney, I, 33. See also I, 25-33 for Keats's early influences.

<sup>2</sup>Finney, I, 26.

<sup>3</sup>G. Wilson Knight, The Starlit Dome (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1959), p. 266.

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Letters, I, 246, Letters I, 251, and Letters, II, 11. For a thorough examination of Keats and Associationism see James Caldwell, Keats' Fancy, pp. 68-89. See also Beth Lau, "Keats, Associationism, and 'Ode to a Nightingale'," Keats-Shelley Journal, 32 (1983), 46-62. Hereafter cited as Lau.

<sup>5</sup>Jack Stillinger, ed., John Keats: Complete Poems, p. 425.

<sup>6</sup>Irene Chayes, "Dreamer, Poet and Poem in The Fall of Hyperion," Philological Quarterly, 46 (1967), 504. Hereafter cited as Chayes.

<sup>7</sup>Finney, I, 300-01.

<sup>8</sup>Jack Stillinger, The Hoodwinking of Madeline (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 156. Hereafter cited as Hoodwinking of Madeline. See also Finney, I, 301.

<sup>9</sup>Glen O. Allen, "The Fall of Endymion," Keats-Shelley Journal, VI (1957), 37-57. See also Hoodwinking of Madeline, pp. 25-26.

<sup>10</sup>Lau, 46.

<sup>11</sup>See, for example, Endymion, II, 705-855, and II, 932-33.

<sup>12</sup>Finney, I, 301.

<sup>13</sup>Finney, I, 318-19. He explains that although Endymion resolved to give up his quest, he had "attained his quest of immortality unwittingly" (318-19).

E.C. Pettet, On the Poetry of Keats (Cambridge, 1957) sees Endymion's repudiation of the dream as a recognition that dreams cannot last: "while in the inevitable order of things he must and will surrender himself to the Indian Maid." p. 197.

Walter H. Evert, Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of Keats (Princeton, New Jersey, 1965) asserts that Endymion's renunciation of his dream is "out of keeping with the aesthetic

vision that Endymion exists to propagate, and the narrative voice assures us that Endymion ... is rationalizing" p. 162.

Newell Ford, The Prefigurative Imagination of Keats (Connecticut, 1966) states that Endymion's speech on dreaming is "only ... a brief chiding of himself for having believed he could cross the fragile bar into eternity." pp. 83-84.

Jack Stillinger in Hoodwinking of Madeline claims that "although Endymion's love-dream does turn out to be a truth ... Endymion seemingly has serious misgivings towards the end of the poem." p. 25.

<sup>14</sup>For a similar interpretation see Evert, p. 137.

<sup>15</sup>Lau, 55.

<sup>16</sup>W. Jackson Bate, John Keats (Cambridge, 1982), p. 308.

<sup>17</sup>Donald C. Goellnicht, The Poet-Physician (Pittsburgh, 1984), p. 193. Hereafter cited as Goellnicht.

<sup>18</sup>Hobbes's Leviathan, p. 17.

<sup>19</sup>Earl R. Wasserman, The Finer Tone (Baltimore, 1953) claims that Madeline and Porphyro escape into the mysterious elfin storm and transcend the mortal world. pp. 122-25.

Pettet sees the poem as a "daydream of happy fulfilled love." p. 297.

Bernice Slote, Keats and the Dramatic Principle (Nebraska, 1958) sees the storm as "another reminder of the bitter-sweet of life, where ugliness jostles beauty, death and storm destroy, and time itself forgets both beadsman and lovers". p. 36.

Stillinger in Hoodwinking of Madeline sees the storm as a symbol of "the ordinary cruelties of life in the world." p. 83.

<sup>20</sup>Finney, II, 700. See also Werner Beyer, Keats and the Daemon King (New York, 1969), p. 238.

<sup>21</sup>Mario D'Avanzo, Keats's Metaphors for the Poetic Imagination (Durham, N.C., 1967), p. 62. Hereafter cited as D'Avanzo.

<sup>22</sup>Robert D. Wagner, "Keats' "Ode to Psyche" and the Second Hyperion," Keats-Shelley Journal, 13 (Winter, 1964), 38.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FALL OF HYPERION

In a letter to J.H. Reynolds written while he was "finishing the first part" of Lamia (Letters,II,128), Keats, in a moment of self-awareness, asserted:

I have of late been moulting: not for fresh feathers  
and wings: they are gone, and in their stead I hope  
to have a pair of patient sublunary legs.  
(Letters,II,128)

Thus, with his feet firmly on the ground he not only completed Lamia by illustrating the fatal consequences of excessive dreaming, but went on to write "To Autumn", a poem in which night and day dreams were conspicuously absent. But apparently Keats could not resist taking one last flight as in The Fall of Hyperion he once again soars into the world of dreams.

In The Fall, Keats examines the relationship between sleep and poetry and thus, coming full circle, ends his career on the same theme with which it began. But unlike Sleep and Poetry, in which he optimistically asserted that dreams can inspire "worthy"(l. 349) rhymes, in The Fall he is no longer convinced of the value of dreams and asks his reader to judge "whether the dream now purposed to rehearse/Be poet's or fanatic's"(I,16-17). Similarly, The Fall's structure differs from that of the earlier work. In 1817, under the influence

of both Spenser and Hunt and the current theory of Associationism, Keats created poems which consisted of richly sensuous images linked together by the principles of association. In The Fall, however, Keats follows the older tradition of the medieval dream vision, aware as was Coleridge in "Kubla Khan" that the dream-vision was a suitable form for describing the creative process. Both Dante and Chaucer are mentioned in Keats's letters of 1819, and in The Fall echoes can be heard of both The Divine Comedy and Chaucer's dream-vision poems.

Employing a technique similar to the one Chaucer had used in the House of Fame, Keats begins his poem with a discussion on dreams and thus, like Chaucer, both introduces his dream and provides his reader with the necessary criteria for assessing it. Similarly, just as Chaucer had acknowledged that dreams are "noght to every man lyche evene" (House of Fame, I, 10), Keats identifies three types of dreams: the fanatic's, the savage's, and the poet's. Although, unlike Chaucer, Keats does not discuss in great detail the causes of dreams, he does agree with Chaucer that some dreams stem from "devocion ... and contemplacion" (House of Fame, I, 33-34). He claims that

Fanatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave  
A paradise for a sect; the savage too  
From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep  
Guesses at heaven.

(I, 1-4)

Moreover, after describing the three types of dreams, Keats, echoing Chaucer's words in the proem to the House of Fame,

feigns ignorance and, pretending to have "noon opinion" (House of Fame, I, 55), does not attempt to assess his own dream.

In the narration of the dream itself, Keats incorporates dream-vision elements which he would have found in his "black letter Chaucer" (Letters, I, 276). Like Chaucer's Parliament of Fowls, Keats's poem includes a catalogue of trees (I, 20-21)<sup>1</sup> and a goddess, Moneta, who, like Chaucer's "noble Goddess of Nature" (Parliament of Fowls, l. 368), instructs the dreamer. Further, as Irene Chayes has noted:

When the dream is 'rehearsed', it includes the most conventional elements of the courtly dream vision: the archetypal images (or alternately topoi) of a garden and an architectural edifice ... the narrator's lapse into sleep and a reawakening in a dream, the strange scenes and events before which he is privileged to stand as an observer and eavesdropper, with an omniscient guide; the appearance of characters from myth and legend as live persons who can be seen and heard talking about themselves.<sup>2</sup>

The presence of the goddess Moneta strongly suggests that Keats has experienced an oraculum comparable to the dreams in the House of Fame and the Parliament of Fowls in which Chaucer was guided by an eagle and Affrycan respectively. But Keats's treatment of Moneta differs from Chaucer's: he treats her with respect and reverence, whereas Chaucer's guides, in particular his eagle, are treated light-heartedly.

In his depiction of Moneta, Keats aligns himself with Dante whose Virgil in the Divine Comedy is a solemn figure who both advises and admonishes the dreamer. Moreover, as critics such as Robert Gittings, Stuart Sperry, and John Saly have commented, when Moneta parts her veil and reveals her

identity to the dreamer she is reminiscent of Beatrice in Canto XXI of the Purgatory.<sup>3</sup> Also reminiscent of the Purgatory is the dreamer's ascent up the stairs as Dante too made "repeated ascents by means of steps".<sup>4</sup> Further, Keats's dream, like Dante's vision, includes scenes which defy articulation. Dante confessed: "How weak are my words, and how unfit to frame/My concept"(Paradise, XXXIII,121-22); recognizing the same weakness in language, Keats asserts that in "our feeble tongue"(I,351) words are "frail"(I,352).

Dante and Chaucer were both respected and admired poets and thus, by incorporating into his poem conventions which they had established, Keats brings to his work what Chaucer had so often called "auctoritee". Moreover, Dante and Chaucer had illustrated that the dream-vision structure could be utilized to present a personal allegory. Dante, in the Divine Comedy, recounted a spiritual growth and Chaucer, in the House of Fame, recalled a dream which not only included "discussions of the nature of poetry and the function of poets"<sup>5</sup> but also forced him to evaluate his own poetry and decide whether or not it would bring him "fame". Keats, then, by alluding to the allegorical works of Dante and Chaucer, alerts his reader to the possibility of interpreting his dream allegorically.

Indeed, the parallels in the poem between Keats and the speaker suggest that, like the House of Fame and the Divine Comedy, The Fall is also a personal allegory. Keats's dream

which is both an oraculum and a somnium -- one that veils its true meaning -- functions on two levels. On the surface, it is a re-enactment of the evolution of the gods, and on a deeper level, it is an allegory of the various stages of Keats's own philosophical thought and the poetry which emerged from each stage. That Keats encourages such a reading of The Fall is suggested by the autobiographical references in the dream, which has become personal rather than formulaic.

One of the more explicit personal allusions in the poem is the dreamer's assertion, "sure a poet is a sage;/ A humanist, physician to all men"(I,189-90), as it readily recalls Keats's own situation. At the time of writing The Fall, Keats was questioning his decision to leave medicine for poetry. On 9 June 1819, in a letter to Sarah Jeffrey, he wrote that he had decided against becoming a ship's doctor (Letters,II,116), but only a week later he "was preparing to enquire for a situation with an Apothecary"(Letters,II,121). The reference to physicians and poets in The Fall suggests that apparently this conflict was not yet resolved. Moreover, the dreamer's dying into life(I,142) and his acquisition of Moneta-Mnemosyne's knowledge of the Titans' fall -- two actions which identify him with the Apollo of the first Hyperion poem -- strongly suggest that Keats's own conscious concerns have intruded into his dream. Like Apollo, he too was both a poet and a physician.<sup>6</sup>

By focusing on the personal nature of the dream we

discover that in each successive scene Keats includes autobiographical allusions. In the first scene, the dreamer exists in a world of sensuous delight in which he lives a "life of Sensations rather than of Thought" (Letters, I, 185). His bower of "spice blossoms", "trellis vines, and bells, and larger blooms" (I, 21, 26) is reminiscent of the bowers in Sleep and Poetry, "I stood tip-toe" and Endymion -- poems which Keats wrote when he believed that sensations rather than "consequitive reasoning" (Letters, I, 185) led to 'truth'. As critics such as Clarence Thorpe and Mario D'Avanzo have recognized, at this point in the dream Keats, like the dreamer, has only just entered the Chamber of Maiden-Thought.<sup>7</sup> Here "we become intoxicated with the light and atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders" (Letters, I, 280). However, one of the effects of drinking in this light or "draught" (I, 46) is, as the dreamer soon discovers,

one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of Man -- of convincing ones nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression -- ... We see not the ballance of good and evil.

(Letters, I, 281)

After awakening from his swoon, the dreamer is no longer satisfied to acquire knowledge solely through sensory perception.<sup>8</sup> He begins to ask Moneta questions, demanding to know why he was "sav'd from death" (I, 138). Moreover, he urges her to "purge off ... [his] mind's film" (I, 145-46), aware as was Keats himself that "an extensive knowledge is needful to thinking people -- it takes away the heat and the

fever; and helps, by widening speculation, to ease the Burden of the Mystery"(Letters,I,277). The knowledge that the dreamer gains is that he is a "dreaming thing" and a "fever" of himself(I,168,169) -- two terms which also apply to Keats. While writing Endymion, his "spirit [was] fevered in a contrary direction"(Letters,I,142). Later, during Tom's illness, living "in a continual fever"(Letters,I,369), Keats felt "obliged to write, and plunge into abstract images" to divert his thoughts from Tom's "voice and feebleness". Moreover, months prior to writing The Fall, Keats described his two choices in life:

the one is voyaging to and from India for a few years;  
the other is leading a fevrous life alone with Poetry  
-- This latter will suit me best.

(Letters,II,113)

It is only in The Fall that Keats describes a healthy creativity which stems from a more healthy dream -- one which paradoxically illustrates the dangers of dreaming. In a discussion with Moneta reminiscent of the Peona-Endymion debate on dreams, Keats, engaging in an interior dialogue with himself, finally faces the question of whether dreaming can be a healthy form of creativity. The answer is slow in coming, but by going over in his mind the dangerous consequences of escapist dreaming, Keats finally learns the 'true' function of dreams in society. Moreover, as we will see, this 'truth' also involves a better understanding of the role of the poet in society.

The dreamer first learns that only "those to whom the miseries of the world/Are misery, and will not let them rest" (I,148-49) can mount the steps. But after hearing this he is puzzled and asks:

'Are there not thousands in the world  
 .....  
 Who love their fellows even to the death;  
 Who feel the giant agony of the world;  
 And more, like slaves to poor humanity,  
 Labour for mortal good? I sure should see  
 Other men here; but I am here alone.'  
 (I,154-60)

Moneta explains:

'They whom thou spak'st of are no vision'ries,  
 ... They are no dreamers weak,  
 They seek no wonder but the human face,  
 No music but a happy-noted voice --  
 They come not here, they have no thought to come.'  
 (I,161-65)

Her reference to 'vision'ries' readily recalls the 'fanatics' in the induction -- the Endymion-like dreamers -- who "weave/A paradise for a sect". Similarly, the "dreamers weak" brings to mind escapist dreamers like Lycius and the knight at arms who cannot accept the "truth" of their mortal existence. Dreamers and visionaries only come to the temple as a consequence of escaping from their natural world: they are not content with the wonders of their fellowman, the "happy-noted voices", the "fireside joys, and Lydian airs/And converse high" ("Vulgar Superstition", ll. 7-8). Those who do not come are the true humanitarians -- the Porphyros of the world who are believers in a religion of active participation in society. Moreover, they have no need to come to the temple because, by



explains:

'What benefit canst thou do, or all thy tribe,  
To the great world? Thou art a dreaming thing:  
A fever of thyself -- think of the earth.  
What bliss even in hope is there for thee?  
What haven? Every creature hath its home;  
Every sole man hath days of joy and pain  
Whether his labours be sublime or low.'

(I,167-73)

Thus, as a member of the dreaming tribe, the speaker not only fails to "benefit" others, but is, in fact, harming himself. He exists in a state of fever unable to experience what joys may be possible for him because he is constantly dreaming of better worlds. Dreams that promise "blisses pure and deep" are in actuality harmful because they destroy by force of contrast the dreamer's waking reality. Consequently, members of the dreamer tribe, like the knight in "La Belle Dame sans Merci", exist in a "sort of purgatory blind" ("To J.H. Reynolds, l. 80), unable to live satisfactorily in either the dream or the waking reality. Although Moneta acknowledges that there is joy as well as pain on earth, for the dreamer -- one who "venoms all his days/Bearing more woe than his sins deserve" (I,175-76) -- there is only pain.

Yet there is hope for the speaker. He did manage to mount the steps and thus was aware of the "miseries of the world", and because he "suffer'd"(I,180) in the temple "for that cause"(I,180), he is favored. Until this point in the dream, poetry has not been mentioned, but in the speaker's reply to Moneta, Keats, very conscious of his decision to become a poet, illustrates that, like Chaucer's House of

Fame, The Fall is a poem about writing poetry. In an attempt to justify his decision to become a poet and to lend credence to the poems he had already written, through the speaker, Keats responds:

'If it please  
Majestic shadow, tell me: sure not all  
Those melodies sung into the world's ear  
Are useless: sure a poet is a sage;  
A humanist, physician to all men.'  
(I,186-90)

Although he is willing to admit that he may be a lesser poet than others, Keats does claim that he is in some way related to the humanist poets: "That I am none I feel as vultures feel/They are no birds when eagles are abroad"(I,191-92). Then, after having presented his perhaps limited credentials, he asks Moneta again:

'What am I then? Thou spakest of my tribe:  
What tribe?'  
(I,193-94)

Her reply which was "so ... earnest"(I,195) is in fact Keats's own earnest acknowledgement of the type of poetry demanded of a poet-physician:

'The poet and the dreamer are distinct  
Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes,  
The one pours out a balm upon the world,  
The other vexes it.'  
(I,199-202)

A dreamer vexes the world by promising a false paradise, an escape from "the wakeful anguish of the soul"("Ode on Melancholy", l. 10). A poet, by recognizing the beauty in sorrow, can render suffering bearable and thus pour a balm upon the world.<sup>9</sup>

Evidently, the speaker has not understood Moneta's words since, in "spite" (I, 203) of being one himself, he calls to Apollo to destroy all dreamers, willing to die himself to see false poets destroyed. His call to Apollo, however, has further significance. In the poems written prior to The Fall, Keats presented an Apollo who was a positive figure, a god of healthy light and inspiration. Here, the speaker, beginning to see the "ballance of good and evil", calls to Apollo's dark side,<sup>10</sup> his "misty pestilence" (I, 205). Consequently, he has revealed to Moneta that he is ready to explore the "dark passages" and witness "the high tragedy/In the dark secret chambers of her skull" (I, 277-78).

The tragedy of the Titans' fall, however, is one which the speaker must witness alone "without stay or prop/But [his] own weak mortality" (I, 388-89). Moreover, to understand fully the tragedy, he must take on the identity of the characters and sympathetically experience their suffering. This he does, as initially "there grew/A power within [him] of enormous ken/To see as a God sees" (I, 302-04); then, like the "frozen" Saturn "postured motionless" (I, 386, 382), he endured "the unchanging gloom" (I, 391). Unable to escape from this vale of soul-making, the speaker learns the origin of "death" (I, 424), the "pain of feebleness" (I, 429), and the "darkness" of hopelessness (I, 463). By identifying with the Titans, the speaker has experienced "enthrallments far/More self-destroying" (Endymion, I, 798-99) than the sensuous enticements

in his paradisaal bower. Consequently, he loses the self-centered nature characteristic of escapist dreamers, becomes a physician-poet and, like Apollo, sees the "ballance of good and evil" -- the "pestilence" and the health. Moreover, the speaker has discovered that to become a true humanist-poet he must accept the world of pain and sorrow rather than dream of escaping from it. Only then can he explore the 'dark passages and ease the burden of the mystery'.

This is the lesson that Keats learns from his dream, but for a poet simply recalling an experience does not necessarily result in poetry -- that "would be merely as bad as telling a dream" (Letters, I, 322). Further, "since every man whose soul is not a clod/Hath visions" (I, 13-14), dreaming alone does not make a poet. What becomes important is the act of telling:

For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,  
With the fine spell of words alone can save  
Imagination from the subtle charm  
And dumb enchantment.

(I, 8-11)

After introducing the theme of articulation in the induction, Keats, self-conscious of his own craft, outlines, along with his own intellectual development, a corresponding development of language.

In the first canto, the tentativeness of "methought" (I, 19) and "seem'd" (I, 30, 267) parallels the dreamer's uncertainty. Eventually, no longer capable of articulating his experience, the speaker confesses "I could not know" (I, 34):

I had no words to answer; for my tongue  
 Useless could find about its roofed home  
 No syllable of a fit majesty  
 To make rejoinder to Moneta's mourn.  
 (I,228-31)

But after learning in The Fall that "Knowledge is sorrow, and Sorrow is Wisdom"(Letters,I,279), a new understanding of language develops. The dreamer is still aware of the limitations of "our feeble tongue"(I,351), but by finding comparisons, by using "this-like accenting"(I,352), he can convey Thea's "mourning words"(I,351). Like Moneta, he humanizes his sayings by "making comparisons of earthly things" (II,3) and describes "sorrow like to this, and such-like woe" (II,8). Hyperion's uneasiness is compared to earth where "dire prodigies/Fright and perplex"(II,18-19). His palace "glares a blood-red"; his "minions ... stand/Amaz'd, and full of fear, like anxious men"; and his "flaming robes ... gave a roar as if of earthly fire"(II,27,41-42). Unlike Endymion, who could not find an earthly "symbol"(I,609) to describe his goddess, the dreamer, by accepting his mortal world, finds within it appropriate analogies for articulating his dream. With these, then, he succeeds as a poet and thus saves his dreaming imagination from "dumb enchantment".

Keats, who was always a perceptive critic of his own work, would not have failed to see in his poetry a tendency to present dreamers as those who attempt to escape from the actual world. After condemning these dreamers, however, he went on to write a poem which rehearsed one of his own dreams

and consequently added yet another dream poem to his collection. But in The Fall of Hyperion Keats presents a new type of dream -- one which rather than offer an escape from the vale of soul-making carries the dreamer into the very core of it. Keats saw 'gleams of a remoter world' in his dream, but unlike the dream worlds of *Endymion* and *Madeline*, this world was not one of unperplexed delight. In this final dream, Keats learned the origin of the world's suffering and, as his dream carried him back in time, it also enabled him to look back at his own beginnings. Like the Titans, he too had once envisioned a "mazy world/Of silvery enchantment" (*Endymion*, I, 460-61), but as they fell into a world of experience, so did he. Learning to accept this world -- one in which "women have Cancers" (*Letters*, I, 292) -- was a gradual process, but whereas *Hyperion* refused to accept the 'truth' of experience, Keats, like *Apollo*, learned to see the balance of good and evil. Moreover, with his knowledge of both the joy and the pain in the world, there followed a fuller understanding of language itself. Thus his dream, which began with a conventional formula, did indeed reveal a deeply personal 'truth'. He had hoped to write "independently and with judgment hereafter", and in The Fall of Hyperion, by accepting the truth of experience, he realized his dream.

## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER 4

<sup>1</sup>Judy Little, Keats as Narrative Poet (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1975), p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>Chayes, 503-04.

<sup>3</sup>Gittings, The Mask of Keats (Toronto, 1956), pp. 38-44.  
John Saly, "Keats's Answer to Dante: 'The Fall of Hyperion'," Keats-Shelley Journal, 14 (Winter, 1965), 65-78.  
Stuart Sperry, "Keats, Milton, and the Fall of Hyperion", PMLA 77 (1962), 77-84.

<sup>4</sup>Sperry, p. 77.

<sup>5</sup>John H. Fisher, Introduction to House of Fame, p. 583.

<sup>6</sup>Goellnicht, pp. 163-66. Chaucer also acknowledges Apollo's dual role. See the House of Fame, III,1091-02: "O God of science and of lyght/Appollo".

<sup>7</sup>Clarence Thorpe, The Mind of Keats (New York, 1964), pp. 41-46.

D'Avanzo, pp. 154-55.

<sup>8</sup>Little, p. 148.

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, Keats's description of Thea in Hyperion:

But oh! how unlike marble was that face:  
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made  
Sorrow more beautiful than beauty's self  
(I, 34-36)

<sup>10</sup>Tilottama Rajan, Dark Interpreter : The Discourse of Romanticism (Ithaca, New York, 1980), p. 61. Rajan acknowledges Spence's Polymetis as a possible source of an Apollo who is both a healer and an inflictor of plagues.

## CONCLUSION

Keats once asserted that "axioms in philosophy are not axioms until they are proved upon our pulses: We read fine things but never feel them to the full until we have gone the same steps as the Author" (Letters, I, 279). Evidently, in his study of dream philosophy he followed his own advice.

Keats began his career following the paths of Spenser and Milton in whose works he encountered prefigurative dreams. But not content to accept passively their theory on the power of dreams to reveal "truth", he set out to prove this axiom on his own pulses. In Endymion he discovered another aspect of dreams: their ability to create a dissatisfaction with one's waking reality.

After testing the harmful effects of escapist dreaming in Isabella and The Eve of St. Agnes, Keats's focus changed. In "La Belle Dame sans Merci" and Lamia he examined a different type of dream. Here, rather than offer an escape from "reality", dreams function to remind the dreamer of the world that he has forsaken. Thus, having discovered this new function of dreams, Keats applies it to one of his own -- his dream of the Titans' fall.

At the time of writing The Fall of Hyperion, Keats was haunted by both his decision to become a poet and the type of poetry that he felt true humanist poets should write.

His dream, which recalled his 'waking' thoughts, not only revealed that he had made the right decision but also that dreams which teach acceptance of the mortal world can inspire the type of poetry that he hoped to write.

Keats once claimed that "the Morning said I was right" (Letters, I, 233); in The Fall, not the morning but the night said he was right. The result is a poet's dream which avoids the escapism of the fanatic's dream and teaches both poet and reader to accept the world.

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