

JOHN KEATS AND THE PERCEIVING SUBJECT IN *THE FALL OF HYPERION*:  
POETICS, SYMBOL, AND PLAY

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

For my thesis, I claim that John Keats's poem, *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, exemplifies the aesthetic theory of German philosopher/poet/playwright Friedrich Schiller as explicated in *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*. I am analyzing Keats's poem through Samuel Taylor Coleridge's theory of the symbol as asserted in *The Statesman's Manual* . . . in conjunction with Schiller's aesthetic letters, and my claim is that Keats's poem illustrates Schiller's theory of the play-drive.

What Schiller terms as the play-drive is what happens cognitively when we make and/or encounter the beautiful in art. He claims that we transcend our material selves when we make and/or encounter the beautiful, and in transcending toward our formal selves, we are able to look back onto ourselves and feel pleasure from the beautiful. Schiller claims that because we are embodied, we first experience the beautiful through our sensuous drive, and when that happens, we then rationalize the experience and transcend to a higher plane of formal consciousness. This philosophy, along with Coleridge's ideas on the symbol, suggests that during the process of the human imagination, our subjectivity becomes projected onto an objectified symbol. When this happens, our subjectivity fuses with this objective symbol, we become free to be who we will ourselves to be, and we know ourselves as human beings. In that moment, as we can see ourselves as part of a universal humanity, we self-actualize.

Schiller believed that beauty is what links the sense experience, what he terms to be the material impulse, or sensuous drive, with the rational, what he terms to be the formal impulse or formal drive; in other words, beauty synthesizes these two impulses, balancing the two drives. Schiller's play instinct integrates the two impulses and represents the movement between the faculties of sense and reason; this play-drive gives us freedom—as in, one faculty or the other cannot enslave us. On the literal, meta-level, Keats's acts of both imagination and composition function in the same way as Schiller's play-drive, and I see *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* following this aesthetic pattern structurally and figuratively.

Keywords: Keats, Aesthetics, Poetics, Coleridgean Symbol, Schiller, Play

## DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this work to my family. To my husband Keith and my three children, Landen, Keely, and Julian, thank you all for your selflessness in giving me enough quiet time to work toward completing this research, in always providing me with a seemingly interested audience when I want to talk about John Keats and/or Friedrich Schiller, and for encouraging me when I lack motivation. I appreciate your sacrifice in tolerating the writing and studying hours I always need, in maintaining order at home amidst the chaotic stacks of scholarly materials, and for always cheering me on in support of my academic endeavors. I love you, and I am thankful to share my life with you. To my parents Jeff and Debra Klingensmith and my parents-in-law Larry and Martha Busby, thank you for willfully taking care of my children on occasion so I could research and write for this project. I would not have been able to complete this thesis successfully without all of your encouragement, support, and love.

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## INTRODUCTION

*I can scarcely express what I but dimly perceive—and yet I think I perceive it—that you may judge the more clearly I will put it in the most homely form possible . . . .—John Keats*

By exploring John Keats's intertextual imagination as it breaks from the confines of his precursors in his composing of the fragment *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, we can unearth yet another argument on behalf of the arts and humanities. This argument stresses the value of the relationship that exists between art and life. My aim is to reconsider Keats's intertextual poetic imagination by reevaluating his claim of poetic dissolution in light of my theory that his independent poetic authority is transcendently present in his compositions, as his mind becomes fully present to itself in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. Keats's poetic identity is not dissolved in the content of this specific work, but rather the content is an ekphrastic reflection in composition of the workings of his independent poetic imagination. This project emphasizes the connection between form and meaning as it is exhibited in this poetic work using Friedrich Schiller's theory of aesthetics found in his *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*.

In this epic fragment, Keats shifts toward the formal by first engaging and then disuniting from the influence of intertextuality and begins to see his own imagination as a beautiful work of art. In his text, *The Anxiety of Influence*, Harold Bloom argues, "[p]oetic history . . . is held to be indistinguishable from poetic influence, since strong poets make that history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for

themselves” (5). Bloom goes on to say that “strong poets . . . wrestle with their strong precursors,” adding that while those with “weaker talents idealize,” those “figures of capable imagination appropriate for themselves” (5). In this poem, insecure Keats works through literature as a consumable commodity, trading in his “weaker” imitations of “precursor[s]” for a composition bestowed upon him by his “capable imagination” (5). This paper both acknowledges Bloom’s claim and illustrates the dichotomy of those “weaker” writers and those “capable” ones by following Keats as he composes himself into an authoritative, ideal poet. This self-construction through signification enables him not only to overcome his literary insecurities but also to embed himself into text, gain confidence in his poetic abilities, and visualize himself as immortal through figurative symbols.

In the epic fragment, *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, Keats presents a poet-narrator coming to terms with his mortality by aestheticizing food from previously consumed literature to produce his own high poetry from everyday experiences. Aestheticizing food, for sensual Keats, allows him to transcend the reality of his mortality and move toward the ideality of potential immortality. During this moment of imagination, Keats exposes anxieties about composition.

The aestheticizing of food exists not only in Keats’s high poetry but also in his letters. For instance, he writes to Richard Woodhouse on September 21, 1819, “[p]erhaps I eat to persuade myself that I am somebody” (*Letters* 386). His comment is made in the context of a comparison between “beef” and “bread” (386), as he imagines his worth measured up against that of “a goodlooking coachman” who is “favour’d” and has “had a Call” (386). The letter continues with Keats’s insecure annotations and witty banter

with statements such as, “I see I have completely lost my direction” (388), “[m]y Poetry will never be fit for any thing[;] it does n’t cover its ground well” (389), “[t]hese are unpleasant Phrases” (389), “I am all in a Mess here” (390), and “I think upon crutches” (391). This self-evaluative letter to Woodhouse contains excerpts from *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. Jeffrey Cox, in *Keats’s Poetry and Prose*, says, “the only portion of the poem that we have in Keats’s hand was copied in . . . [this] letter,” and he had probably finished the poem by the date the letter was written (497). I contend that the same Keats, whose voice in this letter admittedly declares, “[o] that I could write something agrestunal [sic], pleasant, fountain-voic’d” (390), uses *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* allegorically as the poetic means to document the introspective debate he addressed in writing this letter to Woodhouse, substituting both the coachman for Moneta and the beef and bread for the refuse feast in the poem. In this material, sensuous occasion, Keats transforms real, physical food into a literary, metaphysical moment—into a feast of reason. He can no longer “burst Joy’s grape”<sup>1</sup> on his physical tongue, so he has to eat from John Milton’s Edenic leftovers. In reality, he compares beef and bread to the beauty of a coachman who has a certain vocation, but this tangible food object, along with the concrete vocation of the coachman, turns into an intangible refuse feast of summer fruits, which is poetically ideal. He uses everyday experiences of being to feed his imagination and to produce literary results that will resonate infinitely through an aesthetic landscape.

Keats, by transmuting real foods to an imaginary feast, hints at his own appetitive limits. According to Carolyn Korsmeyer, in *Making Sense of Taste: Food and*

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<sup>1</sup> See line 28 of “Ode on Melancholy” in *Keats’s Poetry and Prose: Authoritative Texts and Criticism*. Ed. Jeffrey N. Cox. 1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009. 473-74.

*Philosophy*, “art reaches toward limits of tolerability that practice cannot approach”

(147). Since he does not share details of what he eats, only those of the coachman’s meal he witnesses, the reasons behind his chosen written foods become conjecture. Looking closer at the foods represented in this particular letter and in the poem in relation to Keats’s personal eating habits at the time he was composing illuminates potential anxieties that Keats was experiencing regarding his physical appetite. After all, he had been placed on “starvation rations” at one point during his illness (Hastings 6). In fact, this fascination with eating evokes the sense that he is preoccupied with food in some way, and, quite possibly, his fixation is due in part to “starvation” (Livesley 16). Even Keats’s doctor noticed he was having stomach problems, but he credited the problem as merely “a slightly unusual, even bizarre aspect of . . . [his] tuberculosis”:

‘[T]he chief part of his disease so far as I can see seems to be seated in his stomach. I have some suspicion of the disease of the heart and it may be of the lungs . . . if I can put his mind at rest I think he’ll do well.’ (Smith 993)

Keats’s stomach had to tolerate his disease more than any other part of his body, so it is logical that he would focus his attention on all things edible because those things were being withheld from him.

Keats writes of his dietary restrictions on several occasions in his letters, so clearly his nervous obsession with food at this time discloses anxiety about his body. These restrictions were in place for the sake of his health. Particularly, he takes notice of the coachman eating bread, and he repeatedly writes the word “beef” (*Letters* 386). In *Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society*, Bridget Henisch writes, “sick monk[s]” had

“to dine each day in the infirmary” in “the most austere monasteries” because it was there that “meat was served to strengthen invalids” (46). Keats, possibly aware of medieval meat treatments, either wanted to partake of it or wanted to avoid it depending on his taste, thus the parenthetical writing of “beef” twice in the letter. And certainly he was aware that eating fruit served a substantial function in the figurative fall of humanity, as his creative choice of summer fruits reveals an appropriation of Milton’s feast in *Paradise Lost*. However, the feast could also represent his desire for “visual appeal,” and the fruits were perhaps selected for the enjoyment of “their contrasting beauty” (Potter 1822). As for the bread, Korsmeyer claims, “[a]n edible object such as bread actually could serve as a symbol of all five senses, for bread is seen, smelled, tasted, and (when crunched) heard; and of course it is touched, not only by the hands but also by the lips, tongue, and throat” (155). Such a sensual symbol would have appealed to Keats. This awareness of bread and beef reveals that sensory experiences involved in eating food consumed Keats so much that he allowed such experiences to mediate his imagination.

In fact, his bodily sensations are necessary for rational mental ascension. While it has been argued that Keats’s “excessive sensuousness” was essentially an ““intuitive perception . . . of the mind and spirit,”” this discourse supports that the two are related (Ford 229). He takes this moment from reality—a moment where he observes a coachman and the food he consumes versus what the coachman consumes—and from such minute details in an everyday life experience, he creates high poetry. Keats works through the sensual in food and transforms it into a feast of reason, taking his reality and transmuting it into his ideality. As this transformation happens, his imagination discharges the full-blown creative process of composition. Leon Kass, in *The Hungry*

*Soul*, in a section on wine, states that “reason, fully grown and taking cognizance of itself, transcends the limits of . . . rationality,” and it begins to operate “reflexively,” becoming “aware of its own wondrous powers and of the mystery of life that makes such self-conscious openness to truth possible” (125). So, as this creative process erupts, Keats’s imagination moves from an earthly realm of temporal reality and experience to a Platonic realm of eternal ideality in cogitation. As Kass confirms, “reason through its cultural forms can bring us beyond reason, face to face with the mystery of being altogether” (126). Since Keats cares about the physical sensations of the body, and he desires to prolong them, in this poem, he creates a way that he can do so by consuming through the mind. He does so by using the food metaphorically and applying it to literature. He moves from the sensual to the intelligible when he consumes the refuse feast, which allows him to think of eating as he does reading. In essence, for Keats, eating and reading are similar because he seems to be dissolving into his writing at this moment of contemplative consumption. Watching the coachman eat has ignited his imagination, just as he knows his literary predecessors have nourished his imagination in the past. The leftover feast has been transmuted into text from this ordinary, everyday real experience.

To clarify, Keats uses this real experience with literal food, and he transforms it into a figurative feast of reason where his imagination allows him to move from the sensual realm to an intelligible one; this movement follows Plato’s divided line theory as detailed in *The Republic*. This progression is key for Keats’s sense of immortality in verse, as during this process, he becomes like the “philosophers . . . [who] are able to grasp the eternal and unchangeable” not through “any sensible object” but rather “from

ideas, through ideas, and in ideas” (Plato VI). Keats’s creative process in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* exemplifies Plato’s theory of knowledge, as he moves from what he thinks he knows of poetry to a moment of knowledge where he recognizes himself as a poet—and even as poetry. By allegorizing his life through verse, Keats embeds himself into this life while moving toward death and accepting it with what William Wordsworth called the “philosophic mind” in his “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood” (189). Through this mental feasting, Keats accepts his mortality with the hope of becoming immortalized through poetry.

Keats realizes that he, too, will die, so using his imagination, he moves into an ethereal realm that can immortalize him, as through his mind, he leaves his temporal bodily form and transcends into an eternal plane. Since the soul is outside of time, Keats moves mentally toward an eternity that immortalizes him in ideality. He does this by consuming food through the mind instead of food through the body. In doing so, he feeds the soul, which, for Plato, is immortal. The feast in the mind is important because, in death, the body is lost. Therefore, Keats realizes he will leave this body and this world upon death, but he understands that his essence will transcend by “reaching beyond the inconceivable” (Morton 168). By consuming fare “fit / [f]or gods, yet able to make gods of men” (Milton 5.69-70), Keats’s poet-narrator transcends reality, digests his mortal body’s insecurity, and tastes immortality through his poetic imagination, which is a redemptive sort of imagining in the mind’s eye.

In this moment of transcendental imagining, Keats remains conscious of the extensiveness of Milton’s contribution to literature and his direct influence on Keats’s own literary creations. In *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, before the poet-narrator

partakes of the meal, Keats introduces his claim that “[f]anatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave / [a] paradise for a sect” (1.1-2). I argue that this initial statement hearkens to Milton’s poetic authority, as Keats proves Milton to be one of his “strong precursors” on more than one occasion (Bloom 5). His poet-narrator, in an insecure voice, begins with a comparison between one with such magnitude as Milton and continues with “the savage, too, / [f]rom forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep / [g]uesses at Heaven” (1.2-4). The “savage” (1.2) is both Keats’s self-introduction and dissolution into the poem.

Keats dissolves himself into this poet-narrator, as he is the “camelion Poet,”<sup>2</sup> but it is clear that both Keats and the poet-narrator share similar anxieties about composition. According to Keats, or the poet-narrator (i.e., “camelion”), his poetic authority stands in the “shadows” in comparison to Milton’s “melodious utterance” (1.6). His evaluation in the first verse paragraph implicitly states that the “savage” (1.2) is “bare of laurel” (1.7). The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (*OED*) defines *laurel* as “an emblem of victory or of distinction in poetry” (“laurel,” def. 2). In composing this work, Keats knows that although he defines himself as a poet, he must earn distinction through his verse, and he

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<sup>2</sup> Of the “camelion Poet,” Keats writes, “As to the poetical Character itself, (I mean that sort of which, if I am any thing, I am a Member; that sort distinguished from the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone) it is not itself—it has no self—it is every thing and nothing—It has no character—it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated [sic]. . . . What shocks the virtuous philosopher, delights the *camelion Poet*. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things any more than from its taste for the bright one; because they both *end in speculation*. A Poet is the most unpoetical of any thing in existence; because he has no Identity—he is continually in for—and filling some other Body . . . [T]he poet . . . is certainly the most unpoetical of all God’s Creatures. If then he has no self, and if I am a Poet, where is the Wonder that I should say I would write no more? Might I not at that very instant have been cogitating on the Characters of Saturn and Ops? . . . not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature . . . I have no nature . . . When I am in a room with People if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself: but *the identity of every one in the room begins so to press upon me* that, I am in a very little time annihilated” (emphasis added). For more of this letter, see “Letter to Richard Woodhouse, October 27, 1818.” *Keats’s Poetry and Prose: Authoritative Texts and Criticism*. Ed. Jeffrey N. Cox. 1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009. 294-95.

accepts that he has yet to do so. At this moment, Keats realizes both his reliance on the classics and his tendency to imitate them.

After all, Keats imitates great poets like Milton, but he has anxiety because he knows he has not earned the right to rank among them at this point in his life. The “poet” (1.17) and the “fanatic” (1.17) here in the poem rank in close proximity of one another in status, and, for Keats, to rank with either would move him upward from his “savage” (1.2) position. By consuming the classics, Keats is learning his craft; he is being “nurtured in his mother tongue” (1.15) so that he will be able to use poetry to “save / [his] Imagination” (1.9-10) from its fixation with his consumptive illness. As his body will indeed fail him, his redemption must come through only his rational mind. The “refuse” feast (1.30) allegorically represents his preoccupation and anxiety with the foundations of poetic authority, and when Keats’s poet-narrator dissolves into these foundations, he transcends his own reality and realizes that his own place in literature ranks with those who have gone before him.

Ultimately, his poetic salvation begins and ends in his imagination—his imagination both in reading and in writing. By tasting and devouring works such as *Paradise Lost*, Keats’s heightened imagination soars and takes him to an altered level of poetic consciousness. His “appetite” (1.38) becomes other-worldly, and, after he “[eats] deliciously” (1.40) from the leftovers of his literary predecessors, he “thirst[s]” (1.41) and is tempted to think of himself more like the great poets, wanting to know what they know and imagining himself into realms where he can prove he is learning.

Keats was obviously dealing with stress in composing, as well as the stress and anxiety associated with his consumption, and I contend from my reading of this poem

and of his personal letters that he perceived stress deeper and stronger than many. His insecurity regarding his own poetic authority is questioned as he enters a heavenly dream-vision space where he meets Moneta. A product of his own imagination, Moneta tests his poetic authority by challenging him to dare to be the poet he claims to be:

From whose white fragrant curtains thus I heard  
Language pronounc'd: 'If thou canst not ascend  
These steps, die on that marble where thou art.  
Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,  
Will parch for lack of nutriment—thy bones  
Will wither in few years, and vanish so  
That not the quickest eye could find a grain  
Of what thou now art on that pavement cold.  
The sands of thy short life are spent this hour,  
And no hand in the universe can turn  
Thy hour glass, if these gummed leaves be burnt  
Ere thou canst mount up these immortal steps.' (1.106-17)

From this passage, we can deduce that Keats knows his illness will consume him, and he knows his time to prove himself is short. He is dealing with his illness, and his anxiety about his poor health mingles with his self-imposed pressures to achieve literary greatness. In his letters, Keats writes often on his anxieties around composing poetry, and these concerns weighed heavily on his nerves. Studies prove that “[h]igh amounts of stress and the perception that stress impacts health are each associated with poor health and mental health” (Cheng 677). After analyzing the letters compiled from the last year

of his life, I find it obvious that Keats felt an overwhelming stagnancy in sickness at times, and at other times, he felt like his health was improving, and he was getting better. These vicissitudes of intense mood shifts play on his creativity, and they contribute both positively and negatively to his literary results.

During moments of creative melancholy, Moneta is the device he uses to promote living life while there is still time, and she encourages him to realize his calling to be a poet. If he cannot prove that he is the poet he knows he is, no one will remember his name. He will not be immortalized through his work and will be forgotten. His ascension in the aforementioned passage is a metaphor for his own attainment of literary confidence; the “sands” of his “short life” are against him, but he can progress if he keeps climbing and does not fall into a mentality of death (1.114). He must not dissolve but rather fall into himself—into symbols of his genius and anxiety—and sacrifice his human insecurity to achieve his quest for poetic authority.

However, in the poem, Keats’s poet-narrator fights against a long-reigning anxiety not easily overcome. He evokes symbolic figures such as Moneta for the persuasion he cannot give himself in reality; only through his amplified poetic selves can he realize his worthy creative faculties. His bodily senses fuse with his reason in this moment to dislodge him from insecurity, ejecting his mentality from the confines of his burdened consciousness. The “palsied chill” (1.122) frightens him, but the fear comes from within himself, and he knows it; he writes, “I shriek’d; and the sharp anguish of my shriek / [s]tung my own ears—I strove hard to escape / [t]he numbness; strove to gain the lowest step” (1.126-28). We see in these lines that Keats struggles with such literary anxiety.

As Keats's poet-narrator climbs the steps at Moneta's urging, he swallows the insecurity that has held him chained to his mortal body and to his addiction to life's sensations. In this moment of poetic composition, his consciousness multiplies into figurative symbols, and though these figures are parts of the same self, they are seemingly opponents of the material Keats; therefore, as the passage below reveals, the poet-narrator has to digest the self-doubting Keats to move forward in the poem and allow Keats to deal with his insecurities. This digesting of material Keats happens as the poet-narrator climbs the stairs in the temple:

Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace: the cold  
Grew stifling, suffocating, at the heart;  
And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not,  
One minute before death, my iced foot touch'd  
The lowest stair; and as it touch'd, life seem'd  
To pour in at the toes: I mounted up,  
As once fair angels on a ladder flew  
From the green turf to heaven.—'Holy Power' . . . (1.129-36)

In this passage, Keats not only defeats his lack of confidence through the help of the symbolic poet-narrator, but he also subdues his fear of death and apprehends his forthcoming immortality.

Because of his new awareness of self through poetry, he can transcend life and consider the possibilities of the afterlife that the unimaginative person cannot fathom. After Keats's poet-narrator climbs, Moneta discerns for him that he "hast felt / [w]hat 'tis to die and live again before / . . . [his] fated hour" (1.141-43). Moneta assures him of his

“power” (1.143) to delay his death, at least in his own mind, by using his redemptive imagination. He reaches a level of consciousness that surpasses life, and he realizes that his ability to know “this height” (1.147) is a consequence of his “misery” in life (1.149). He has fought to let go of his anxiety over death, and he can now know philosophic truths about life, death, and immortality that he could not realize before through intense poetic visions. Moneta’s claim that he is “a dreaming thing” (1.168) is not an insult. She makes him consider himself with distinction, but she does not claim with certainty whether he is a “poet” or a “dreamer” (1.199). In this higher state of consciousness, he must judge for himself. Through this dialogue, Keats’s poet-narrator begins to see, in “a mode of imagining that renew[s]” his “capacity to live and move among history’s ruins” (Mulrooney 270), the value in what he has suffered for the sake of his poetic self, and he considers feeding the fire at the altar of Moneta as her reward for giving him such insight and reassurance bolstering his worth. Responding to his empathetic consideration, what Moneta calls his “sacrifice” (1.241), a grateful Moneta honors him by allowing him to see into her visions.

By observing her visions, he ascends in consciousness even still toward “imagination’s limits” (Mulrooney 252) and enters into higher layers of his own imagination to understand the immortality that awaits him in his bodily death. Through Moneta’s vision of a fallen Saturn and a falling Hyperion, Keats’s poet-narrator realizes that even immortals are familiar with the misery he knows; in fact, he learns, they know more of it. He begins to relate to these immortals, and as he sympathizes with them, he plummets deeper and deeper into his consciousness to enter theirs through a fusion of his intensified senses and rationality.

Because the poem is a fragment, one cannot know how long Keats remained in this dream-vision, or what other truths he discovered through such transcendence. What can be known from this introspective poem, as Keats also stated in his letter to Woodhouse, is that he uncovered both an appreciation of self that did not exist before this vision and a realization that he needed to use his remaining time in life to pen what he could that would guarantee his worth to the literary world. Without consuming the classics, he could not have transcended his reality and digested his anxiety about his own poetic authority through his imagination. If he had never experienced Milton, he could never have known the “refuse of a meal / [b]y angel tasted, or our mother Eve” (1.30-31), which served as the gateway for his ascension. Keats’s ascension is literary, and he surpasses his reality into ideality. He transcends the literal landscape of life, which was surrounded by death in the end, to immortalize himself in the Romantic literary landscape.

The Romantics, like Keats, were monumentalizing themselves. They were trying to eternalize their creativity to become a part of nature as an aesthetic, not necessarily the literal natural, but rather to become a part of a textual landscape of sorts where they could be eternalized in verse and thus be made immortal. Though the verse is eternal, the Romantic landscape is one that is temporal. It functions only when humanity exists in the body because it is then only that other bodies can consume the works. Becoming eternalized in the literary realm made the Romantics feel as though they were immortal, and Keats was aware of such a feeling.

To monumentalize himself figuratively in the literary landscape, Keats wanted to write an epic work of poetry of his own creation, but he realized his composition

reflected not his voice but Milton's. However, in order to change that reality, he realized he had to discover an autonomous poetic authority. Therefore, in the composing process, as he casts himself into multiple symbols to reflect himself back to himself, he learns to appreciate that his compositions are not the same as Milton's. When this realization happens, the tone in the poem changes, and readers participate in Keats's progression.

Just as intertextually bound as his predecessors were to their literary mentors, Keats cannot help but imitate them to some extent while creating something new. He "appropriat[es]" (Bloom 5) work from his poetic ancestors to make it independent. Therefore, in this particular poem, we see Keats instigate new thought through his interpretation and "appropriat[ion]" (Bloom 5) of previous works of literature, creating a new work with an identity of its own. As an original composition, Keats's *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* has brought and will continue to bring pleasure to generations of readers as they engage with the material original poem and, through aesthetic play, move toward formal contemplation and understanding.

Friedrich Schiller's aesthetic philosophy, particularly his theory of aesthetic play, provides further insight into understanding not only the material poem but also the formal process of composition. According to Schiller, this synthesis of the material impulse and the formal impulse for pleasure from the beautiful results in what he terms as the play instinct. This play instinct, defined by Schiller in *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, is "a bond of union between the form-drive and the material drive" (103). This bond is important because it moves us from our material, sensual nature toward transcendental, rational contemplation. Schiller asserts that the play instinct is activated by beauty. He claims, "the distance between matter and form . . . [and] feeling

and thought . . . is infinite”; therefore, even though “[b]eauty links the two opposite conditions of feeling and thinking,” in reality, “between the two[,] there is absolutely no middle term” (123). Schiller’s philosophy theorizes on how the material impulse, the formal impulse, and the play instinct function together. Of the material impulse, Schiller’s philosophy aligns humankind with the material world and the abilities of sense needed to function within this world: the ability to taste, to touch, to smell, to see, and to hear. In order for humankind to function in this material world, it must consider subjectively the things perceived to exist in this world (e.g., “beef” and “bread”). Furthermore, humankind is also endowed with cognitive faculties of rationality, which allow for objectivity regarding the material world (e.g., Keats’s self-actualization in transcendence). This ability to reason is what Schiller declares to be the formal impulse; he writes:

Where, then, the formal drive holds sway, and the pure object acts within us, we experience the greatest enlargement of being: all limitations disappear, and from the mere unit of quantity to which the poverty of his sense reduced him [i.e., the material impulse], man has raised himself to a unity of ideas embracing the whole realm of phenomena [i.e., the formal impulse]. During this operation we are no longer in time; time, with its whole never-ending succession, is in us. We are no longer individuals; we are species. The judgement [sic] of all minds is expressed through our own, [and] the choice of all hearts is represented by our action. (83)

Keats, a poet who was “reduced” by “the poverty of his senses” (83) works to “raise . . . himself to a unity of ideas” (83) in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, and in doing so, he

“experience[s] the greatest enlargement of being” that can be attained through rational contemplation. Schiller’s aesthetic philosophy supports that this balancing of sense and reason keeps subjectivity in check with objectivity as humanity moves between the material and the formal upon encountering the beautiful in art.

In considering Keats’s poem, *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, through Schiller’s aesthetic philosophy, the play instinct is obvious as Keats shifts into and out of both the material and the formal impulse and attempts to harmonize the subjective with the objective in a poetic composition. Therefore, analyzing Keats’s poetic imagination through a close reading of the poem in tandem with a critical examination of Schiller’s *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters* would indeed prove that the poetic composition of *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* exemplifies Schiller’s play instinct.

Since this poem is a reflection of Keats as he transcendently examines his own intertextual mind as an art object and constructs an ekphrastic poetic composition to document his beautiful imagination, in this composition, Keats alerts the reader toward the play instinct in the first section of *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. Immediately, there is a shift toward the formal impulse through the initiation of this intertextual awareness. For example, as Keats opens the poem, he writes, “[f]anatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave / [a] paradise for a sect” (1.1-2). These few lines ground the composition in Keats’s intertextual acuity. It seems as though he has dreamed many dreams—and imagined much of his own visions—through the dreams and the imaginations of others, but he is pointing the reader toward one “paradise” (1.2) in particular: Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. This intertextual imagining in this instance can be

seen as Keats's activation of his play instinct to convey such an abstract moment, as there are some abstractions of thought that are difficult to articulate in language. By beginning his poem in this way, Keats places the reader into a material location—a text, which also simultaneously moves him from his material location in composing toward a more formal one, which is his poetic imagination.

As readers, we are uncertain whether he originally begins this composition at this intertextual moment, but our own play instinct allows us to accept it, and we move from our material location of reading into the formal aspect of understanding and interpreting meaning from the poem.<sup>3</sup> With Keats as the guide, readers follow his lead, as he prepares for an ascent in imagination. As he writes, he ascends from his material moment of beginning composition to his imaginative, formal moment of contemplative consciousness, and as we read, we do the same to reach the moment of aesthetic pleasure. At this point in the poem, however, Keats has not established the objective magnificence of his own imagination. He has merely begun ascension into subjective imagination, and, thereby, he has pulled his reader's subjectivity along on his journey, sending the reader along a journey of his or her own.

The play instinct has been discharged for both parties to execute the aesthetic moment where the poet and the reader can begin to appreciate what is beautiful about the composition in all its literalness and in all its figurativeness. Schiller observes that “[t]he object of the play-drive” (101), which is, at this moment, the text(s) Keats recollects and reimagines, “represented in a general schema, may therefore be called living form: a concept serving to designate all the aesthetic qualities of phenomena, and, in a word, what in the widest sense of the term we call beauty” (101). Keats builds up to this beauty

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<sup>3</sup> For clarification, I use *formal* here in the sense of Schiller's philosophy and his “formal drive” (83).

without spelling it out for his reader. In producing a poem capable of rendering all of these important factors for the aesthetic movement from material sensibility to formal understanding through the play instinct, Keats uses the beautiful language of poetry to “affect the mind by raising in it ideas” (Burke 149), and he affects both his mind and the minds of his readers in doing so, leaving both in speculation.

These ideas are further developed in the thesis chapters that follow. My methodology for this thesis includes undertaking an analytical reading of Keats’s *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, understanding Coleridge’s theories on symbol in addition to his appropriation of German aesthetics, and elucidating the connection Keats’s poetic project has to Schiller’s aesthetic theories. In tandem with understanding Keats’s poetics, the Coleridgean symbol, and Schiller’s aesthetics, this thesis assesses the value of poetry and observes the significance of the vocation of the poet in society during this epoch (circa 1759-1821).

My first chapter consists of a critical close reading of Keats’s *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. By following the poem through the trajectory of Plato’s divided line theory, I critically establish Keats’s fascination with the Greek ideal, evaluate his use of figurative symbols in the *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, investigate Keats’s intertextual influence of Milton, and consider the impact his work had on Keats’s attempt at the epic tradition. I also look closely at how Keats uses a former work of his own as an allusion, as *Hyperion* is incorporated into the work as well; I do not claim that *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* is merely a revision of the first poem with a similar name, but rather that once Keats realizes the power of his own capable imagination, he begins to incorporate himself into this new work. The chapter ends by establishing the idea that

Keats uses art to reflect his subjectivity back onto himself through his use of the Coleridgean symbol, which I claim exemplifies Schiller's play instinct.

The second chapter connects Keats to Schiller through his extensive reading by conjecturing that Keats could have been familiar with Schiller through Coleridge's works. In this chapter, I provide a brief explanation of the Romantic period, explain how Coleridgean thought was shaped by German philosophy, clarify how Keats would have discovered this philosophy, and propose that Coleridge's ideas on symbol and unity in the imagination resemble Schiller's play instinct.

In my third chapter, I explicate Schiller's aesthetic theories, as they are put forth in his series of letters; in doing so, I draw from particular letters and provide a close analysis of those letters that I find to be most useful in furthering my argument. For this third chapter, I analyze Schiller's aesthetic theories to complement my analytical close reading of Keats's *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* to confirm that the poetic composition exemplifies Schiller's play instinct. This chapter explores Keats's composition process and evaluates some of Keats's own theories about composing poetry taking into consideration Schiller's theory of play.

My research uncovers that, to my knowledge, no one has previously examined Keats's poetry through the lens of Coleridge's ideas on symbol and Schiller's ideas on aesthetics, and it my hope that my research on Keatsian poetics, the Coleridgean symbol, and Schillerian play is useful in revealing a heightened authority in the poetic identity of Keats. My intent is to render Keats in this authoritative and confident manner, as, in my interpretation, *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* reveals in symbolic representation.

## CHAPTER 1

### PHILOSOPHIC JOHN KEATS AND THE POETICS OF TRANSCENDENCE: AESTHETICIZING SUBJECTIVITY IN *THE FALL OF HYPERION*

*O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts! . . . Imagination and its empyreal reflection is the same as human life and its spiritual repetition. . . . [S]ure this cannot be exactly the case with a complex Mind—one that is imaginative and at the same time careful of its fruits—who would exist partly on sensation partly on thought—to whom it is necessary that years should bring the philosophic Mind . . . .—John Keats<sup>4</sup>*

#### John Keats and German Romantic Aesthetics: The Greek Ideal in Art

A. W. Phinney writes in “Keats in the Museum: Between Aesthetics and History” that John Keats must have been moved by “the vogue for Greek art ushered in by [Johann Joachim] Winckelmann in the latter half of the eighteenth century” (211). Phinney asserts that Keats would have been familiar with the ideas of Winckelmann, a “great German art critic,” through a translation of his work that Benjamin Robert Haydon had access to because Haydon was Henry Fuseli’s pupil (211). After all, Fuseli translated the particular work by Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks* (211), and, indeed, Haydon “owned a copy” of it (211). Since Keats found “in Greek art a world of unchanging beauty,” Phinney supports that “Keats certainly seems to have been inspired by Winckelmann’s apotheosis of antiquity” (211). Phinney reports that Keats discussed his interest in such with many: “Joseph Severn, for instance, fondly recalled Keats’s discourses about ‘the Greek spirit,—the Religion of the Beautiful, the

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<sup>4</sup> See the letter “To Benjamin Bailey” dated November 22, 1817 in Hyder Edward Rollins’s edition of *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1958.

Religion of Joy, as he used to call it,” and, he includes the following quote from Severn: “Keats . . . made me in love with the real living Spirit of the past. He was the first to point out to me how essentially modern that Spirit is: ‘It’s an immortal youth,’ he would say” (211). Although “Keats knew antique art only through books” and “frequent visits to the British Museum” (212), and his “perception of antiquity” was determined within such an “institutional context” (212), he “adopt[ed] Winckelmann’s view of Greek art as ideal” (215). However, “that ideal is also posited as unattainable, crushing the poet with the recognition of his own inadequacy” (215). In his poetry, Keats works through this devastating reality, realizing the truth of the unreachable ideal by hypothesizing “the inaccessible ideality of ancient Greece” (Thomas 79). And this ideal was hypothetical for Winckelmann as well, considering he “never in fact visited Greece” (Thomas 79). However, what Keats realizes in understanding this reality is that “the ideal object of antiquity is not the external object, but an inner one” (Thomas 79). Therefore, in essence, Greek art, for Keats, “calls to mind the situation of his own art” (Phinney 216), —its internal nature—and he confronts past art (217) as a means of tackling “the destiny that he had willed for himself” (218) because his anxiety about this fate weighed upon his consciousness.

#### *From Hyperion to The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*

The unobtainable Greek ideal continued to inform Keats’s poetic compositions. M. H. Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism* informs that “[t]he highest mode of wholeness hitherto achieved by man . . . was the culture of classical Greece” (209). Therefore, in writing both *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, Keats was dealing with this

ideal and some of the most debated philosophic and aesthetic issues in the nineteenth century. What is the relationship between the mind and emotions? Can this relationship lead to truth? What is truth? Can we know it? What is beauty? What is the purpose of the beautiful? Can the beautiful in art bring us to knowledge? What purpose does art serve besides providing us with pleasure? Can we know from art? Keats's poetry from the beginning (think *Endymion* and "Ode on a Grecian Urn") worked to reconcile such philosophic and aesthetic notions of truth and beauty.

However, Keats was not always taken seriously as a poet, and in fact, his early poetry did not receive positive reviews. Thomas A. Reed informs in "Keats and the Gregarious Advance of Intellect in *Hyperion*" that one "*Blackwood's* review, besides reprobating Keats's education, moral character, and taste, derided him as a 'bantling'" (195). However, though the critics insulted him, Keats remained dedicated to composing poetry that created an aesthetic experience for both himself and his readers.

He strived to find truth in the beauty of both his life and his death, as such significance would represent his time on earth in a meaningful way—as a life not wasted and cut short but rather lived and lived to the fullest. Since he somewhat foreknew—or intuited—that he was being quickly ushered out of life by tuberculosis, he was creating as much quality poetry as he could in the short span of time that remained for him in life. Like his contemporaries—and the seemingly immortal Greeks—Keats wanted to leave a legacy of import.

Coping with the loss of his brother Tom, who died on December 1, 1818 (Roe 280), and acknowledging the possibility of his own imminent death (Roe 231), Keats mentally began to process his physical impermanence in tandem with his shortened

poetic vocation. Not only was he anxious about his abridged vocation as a poet, but he was also burdened with a concern for the longevity of his thought and language, particularly the permanence of his poetry. Indeed, he brought all of these anxieties and concerns together in composing and, through his poetry, considered his forthcoming nonexistence and the possibility of immortality.

These concerns culminate in *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* to reveal this anxious young Keats symbolically as a poet coming to terms with his mature philosophy. Thus, Keats's fretful subjectivity interrupts the narrative of the epic fragment *Hyperion*, instructs his muse to "leave" (III.3) the fallen Titans behind, and shifts into "[a] solitary sorrow" (III.5) that "best befits / . . . [his] lips" (III.5-6) to "anthem . . . a lonely grief" (III.6). In shifting his focus away from the many fallen Titans toward the one new Olympian god, Keats continues in *Hyperion* to describe the anxieties and questions of Apollo as he "[d]ie[s] into life" (III.130) immortal in the presence of Mnemosyne's prophetic face. These anxieties and questions that Apollo voices about his new power as he becomes a god mirror Keats's own ruminations regarding his vocation as an established poet and his impending death. This anthem of Apollo's grief in *Hyperion* is re-envisioned into one of Keats's own anguish in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. In this work, Keats embarks on a poetic journey to finalize his notions of truth and beauty, his ideas about his existence, his personal theology, his thoughts on life and death, his love for humanity, his values and morality, his intertextual dependence and independent knowledge, his imagination and theories of language and the mind, his sensuousness, his poetic imagination, his rational mind, his approaching death, and more.

*The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream: The Philosophical Substance*

In *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, Keats situates himself—as Apollo—into his own imaginary moment and uses this work of art to know the nature of his identity in ways that, before writing this poem, he could not see. Working toward defining himself as either a poet or a dreamer, Keats employs imagination and the facets of poetry and dreaming to compose a reflective, philosophic model of verse. What he composes is a poem that reflects himself back onto himself in symbols. He comes to know himself, in a sense, through dialectic with himself in symbol—with himself as a poet-narrator—as Apollo. The final product reveals a symbol of Keats through a poet-narrator interacting imaginatively with the many symbols he has created and launched to represent the complexity of his identity to come to understand and know himself. He casts himself into symbols to be able to objectify his own subjectivity and understand himself as a being all at once. In revealing the becoming of his subjectivity through objective symbols—both inanimate and animate, he writes himself into being and reconciles his identity to himself.

While not specifically recognized as a philosophical work, as indeed it is a poem, I find Keats's epic fragment to be grounded—almost saturated—in philosophy. Whether Keats was aware of how philosophical this work is, I cannot say, but I find it chock full of philosophic cogitation and aesthetic exploration. In terms of aesthetics, Keats wrestles with notions of German idealism, early Romantic notions of aesthetics, the purpose of art, and the authenticity of imagination. In this epic fragment, Keats—knowingly or otherwise—addresses Plato's theory of the divided line, Coleridge's aesthetics and ideas on the symbol, Immanuel Kant's transcendentalism, and Friedrich Schiller's aesthetics, as Keats's poem demonstrates Schiller's play instinct at work. Echoing Kant's

“*transcendental* foundations” (Simons 465; emphasis original) and Schiller’s ideas regarding the sensual, formal, and play drives, Coleridge’s theory of aesthetics involves “a complex dialectical movement” and “the combined powers of the symbol, the idea, the reason, and the imagination” (Simons 465-66), and I see Keats’s poem exemplifying such principles.

### *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream: The Philosophical Structure*

Though the content of the poem invokes the above-mentioned philosophers and their convictions, the structure hints at philosophical and aesthetical investigation as well and also calls to mind the theology and thought of John Milton. Keats wrote *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* in blank verse form. As such, the lines are organized in unrhymed iambic pentameter in the fashion of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* though, at times, Keats does stray from the syllabic constraints.

However, abandoning syllabic constraints is not the only choice Keats made in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* to vary his poem from Milton’s epic. In “Keats, Milton, and *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*,” Stuart M. Sperry, Jr. writes that in this work, Keats “abandoned the epic structure of the first *Hyperion* for a form . . . more personal and allegoric—that of a vision or dream” (77). Sperry goes on to add that this change represents “the poet’s dissatisfaction with the epic nature of the earlier version” (77). Indeed, the epic conventions have been distorted in this later version. Instead of invoking a muse, Keats indirectly invokes himself and his readers to judge “[w]hether the dream now purposed to rehearse / [b]e poet’s or fanatic’s” (1.16-7). Keats excludes martial heroism to triumph instead over a sort of psychomachia; instead of presenting conflict on

the battlefield, he presents a conflict between the body and soul explored through transcendental reflection on the internal landscape of his mind. Instead of presenting an epic poem about the fall of humanity, “Keats . . . presents . . . the deification of the poet, Apollo, through an imaginative and supremely intense realization of human destiny and its suffering,” which “is largely subjective and personal and represents Keats’s groping toward a new and more mature conception of tragic beauty” (Sperry 77). Therefore, the poem’s structure, though considered an epic fragment, is more akin to that of the lyrical meditative ode, and I believe Keats was incorporating the two genres.

In integrating his epic narrative with the Romantic ode, Keats would have chosen the irregular ode form. Insofar as *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* has no set “stanza pattern,” a varying “number of lines per strophe,” and no definite “rhyme pattern,” the irregular ode would have afforded him the “greatest freedom of expression and greatest license as well” (Harmon 381). According to the online adaptation of *A Guide to the Study of Literature: A Companion Text for Core Studies 6, Landmarks of Literature* published by Brooklyn College, there are “three elements” of the “Romantic meditative ode” (Melani). The first is “the description of a particularized outer natural scene”; the second is “an extended meditation, which the scene stimulates, and which may be focused on a private problem or a universal situation or both”; and the third is “the occurrence of an insight or vision, a resolution or decision, which signals a return to the scene originally described, but with a new perspective created by the intervening meditation” (Melani). Keats’s poem includes these three elements, but it alters the third element, as there is no return to a scene originally described at the end. In combining the

epic narrative with the lyrical meditative ode, Keats revolutionizes the structure of both genres.

Keats structures *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* into two cantos. The first canto has five verse paragraphs, and each one has a varying number of lines. To be exact, verse paragraph one has only 18 lines, while verse paragraph two has 62 lines, verse paragraph three has 246 lines, verse paragraph four has 45 lines, and verse paragraph five has 97 lines. Canto two has only one verse paragraph with 61 lines. While I can discern no distinct pattern in the way Keats structured the lines of this epic fragment, I do note that the poem in its entirety contains 529 lines of verse. This number is almost equivalent to the number of days between Keats's abandonment of the poem on September 21, 1819, as evident in his letter to John Hamilton Reynolds with that same date, and his death on February 23, 1821: 522 days. I find this quantifiable fact quite interesting, especially when considering the subject matter of the work and my own interpretation of meaning. In effect, my proclivity toward optimism (and superstition) encourages the supposition and reasoning that had Keats written more lines, then perhaps he would have lived more days. However, this hopeful conjecture gets us nowhere, and from what I can ascertain as of yet, the numerical coincidence has no certain evidential value.

What I have found is that examining the poem through Plato's divided line theory has been beneficial in understanding Keats's structure somewhat, as the trajectory of the verse paragraphs seems to follow Plato's divided line. Though we cannot be certain that Keats was specifically thinking of book 6 of *The Republic* when he structured *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, in "Adapting Philosophy to Literature: The Case of John Keats," E. Douka Kabitoglou elucidates the fact that Keats was in dialogue "with Plato through the

mediation of his friends” (117). Therefore, since we know that Plato was a topic up for discussion among Keats and his contemporaries, it is conceivable that Keats had access to a work like *The Republic* and that he would have read it closely. Moreover, knowing how much Keats read and studied, it is also plausible that he would have given thought to the structure of his poem on the basis of such an influential chapter of an important philosophical work. Even still, it must be acknowledged that Plato did not consider poetry to be art, and he would have laughed in the face of being presented with the idea that Keats used his divided line theory as the trajectory for his epic fragment. Nevertheless, an important piece of information to consider is that Plato did define “art as ‘knowledge’” (Kabitoglou 116), and I contend of course that poetry is art, so therefore logically poetry is knowledge.

Furthermore, to clarify where this thesis stands in light of Plato’s opinions on poetry not being art, I will strike Plato’s belief that poetry cannot be considered as art, and I will focus on the fact that poetry is indeed art and can move both the poet and the reader from the sensible realm of the imagination to the intelligible realm of knowledge. After all, “Plotinus . . . showed how a philosopher might retain the frame of Plato’s cosmos and yet avoid Plato’s derogation of the arts simply by allowing the artist to bypass the sensible world in order to imitate the Ideas,” and “[b]y this sleight, the work of art is conceived to reflect the ideal more accurately than does imperfect nature itself” (Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 42). In essence, “a work of art” is “as a mirror turned around to reflect aspects of the artist’s mind” (Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 45). William Reid Manierre, in “Versification and Imagery in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*,” explains that “*The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* is, of all Keats’s poetry, the most

pregnant with information regarding his intellectual biography” (264). Grant F. Scott, in *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekphrasis, and the Visual Arts*, supports that in “*The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, ekphrasis becomes more and more indistinguishable from Keats’s own most fundamental poetical inclinations,” and that he “assimilate[s] the workings of ekphrasis to such an extent that it . . . become[s] point of view” (xiv). In considering Keats’s poetics in this way, the poem functions as sort of an ekphrasis; in the work, Keats transcendently examines his mind as an art object and constructs an ekphrastic poetic composition to document his intellection. Therefore, while I support that Keats’s poem challenges Plato’s notion that poetry is not art, I maintain that this poem paradoxically illustrates Plato’s divided line theory because it reveals Keats’s intellectual development through the “*psychology* of ekphrastic encounter and the anxieties generated by the writer’s confrontation with the provocative immediacy of the image[s]” (Scott xii; emphasis original). The images in this poem, however, constantly evolve according to Keats’s symbolic appropriation, changing from one to the next to the next through dialectic until Keats reaches his highest form of contemplation—that of self-intuition.

David Weissman, in *Lost Souls: The Philosophic Origins of a Cultural Dilemma*, constructs a table to illustrate Plato’s divided line, which I have recreated below and observed in my close reading of Keats’s poem. Though I notice a pattern in the trajectory of the verse paragraphs in this way, I oppose Plato’s idea that the imagination should be valued lower than rational intuition. Instead, I argue, as I believe Keats’s poem does, for a synthesis of both sense and reason. This synthesis will be further explained in chapter three of this thesis when I discuss how I see Keats’s poem exemplifying Schiller’s “play-drive,” which is the “crucial mediating or oscillating force between the form-drive and

the material-drive, or sense-drive” (Thomas 149). For now, however, let the record show that David Pugh in *Dialectic of Love: Platonism in Schiller’s Aesthetics* asserts, too, that “Schiller’s philosophical thought, that is, his concepts, his theories, and his dilemmas, can best be understood as a revival of the Platonic tradition” (5); and, if Schiller’s thought connects to Plato’s in this way, no wonder I see the relationship between Keats and Schiller. Therefore, casting Plato’s evaluation aside, I do find that the following illustration from Weissman helps when considering the structure of Keats’s poem:

Subject Matters	States of Mind	Method	Value
Forms: i. The Good ii. Others	Knowledge: i. Intuitive ii. Discursive	i. Rational Intuition ii. Dialectic	Highest
Mathematicals	Mathematical Knowledge	Deduction	High
Physical Objects	True Opinion or Belief	Perception	Low
Images	Opinion or Belief	Imagination	Lowest

Table 1. Plato’s Divided Line.

As the following analysis will reveal, though the poem in its entirety is an exercise in the imagination, the epic narrative of the structured verse paragraphs moves the poet-narrator (i.e., Keats/Apollo) from a position of materiality to a journey of the imagination to perception and deduction that involves dialectic and leads to rational intuition.

In addition to following Plato’s divided line in structure, I also claim that the form and content of Keats’s *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* follow a philosophical configuration he set forth himself in a letter he wrote to John Hamilton Reynolds dated May 3, 1818 in which he describes his “simile of human life as far as . . . [he then] perceive[d] it; that is to the point to which” he had “arrived at” (*Letters* 1: 280-81). In the letter, Keats writes:

Well—I compare human life to a large Mansion of Many Apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me—The first we step into we call the infant or thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think—We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second Chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle—within us—we no sooner get into the second Chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight: However among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart <head> and nature of Man—of convincing ones nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression—whereby This Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages—We see not the ballance [sic] of good and evil. We are in a Mist . . . now in that state—We feel the 'burden of the Mystery,' To this point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive when he wrote 'Tintern Abbey' and it seems to me that his Genius is explorative of those dark Passages. Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them. (*Letters* 1: 280-81)

Keats explores the philosophical chambers he mentions here and the impact of these compartments on the mind and heart of humanity in both the structure and the content of *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. In the following close reading of Keats's epic fragment, I will examine these compartments and how Keats's progression through these chambers in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* parallels Plato's divided line in both structure and substance as he attempts to finalize his philosophy on life, which is an understanding of truth and beauty as developed through his poetic imagination.

*The Fall of Hyperion* Canto I, Verse Paragraph 1: Materiality of Keats

*The first we step into we call the infant or thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think—We remain there a long while . . . .*

The prelude of *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* introduces the materiality of the poet Keats, and we see him introduce himself in this first section. Upon reading these first 18 lines, we know that Keats has certain ideas about his poetic ability, but we do not see any definitive claims being made. Rather, he is merely positioning himself to think here in this moment. He opens this section of the poem with a reference to “[f]anatics” who “have their dreams, wherewith they weave / [a] paradise for a sect” (1.1-2). I see these lines as alluding to other poets, such as Milton and Coleridge. Keats had read Milton's *Paradise Lost* by the time of composing this poem, and he had already tired of modeling Milton's prosody and voice in the first *Hyperion*. His letters illumine that by this time he had read Coleridge's works as well. Undeniably, “Keats sees himself as writing for all time,” so he would evoke other poets to place his work in dialogue with other work from his time and from time before (Phinney 217). As he begins to compose this particular poem, those poets' works and others' works as well were fueling his

thinking and anxiety as in this moment, he considers his own place in the literary landscape of his time.

Keats's materiality shows itself in this anxious dialogic opening. Keats does this by situating his actual being—his “warm scribe my hand” (1.18)—into the poem so he can debate his place as a poet. He opens the debate by trying to talk himself into believing he, too, has the power to use language to create a “fine spell of words” (1.9) to “save / [i]magination from the sable charm / [a]nd dumb enchantment” (1.9-11). The Keats we see in this first verse paragraph is a representation of the material poet beginning composition—the anxious poet reaching for a way to prove himself to his audience. In a sense, Keats opens with himself as though doing so eases him in to the moment of composition. He slowly enters the contemplative moment of imagination by fretfully reflecting on himself.

His obvious insecurity about his vocation clearly reveals that the narrator in the opening few lines is definitely Keats: a Keats who knows the magnitude of his intertextual debt; a Keats who makes an argument for curiosity and the power of poetry; and a Keats who presents himself before his audience as one tottering back and forth between being a poet and being a dreamer. This particular section is the “thoughtless Chamber” (*Letters* 1: 280-81) because it shows Keats unable to accept his place as a poet. Instead, he aligns himself momentarily with “the savage” who “[f]rom forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep / [g]uesses at Heaven” (1.2-3). This vacillating narrator is Keats's pre-symbolic form: a material Keats presenting himself honestly on the page before he dives into the moment of imagination and contemplative thought. According to Ross A. Norris, “[i]ntellection . . . imagines reality” (57). Therefore, because Keats writes

himself—his reality—into his poetry here at this moment, he is launching this moment of intellection. In reflecting on himself as an object to present his philosophic view of poetry in verse paragraph one, he is dissolving into himself.

*The Fall of Hyperion* Canto I, Verse Paragraph 2: Imagination to Perception

*[N]otwithstanding the doors of the second Chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle—within us— . . . .*

As in the previous verse paragraph the “thinking principle” was launched, here, in the second verse paragraph, we have a mature moment of imagination during which Keats, having dissolved into himself, casts himself into the symbol of the poet-narrator. By opening the second verse paragraph with the word “Methought” (1.19), Keats signals to the act of himself dissolving into the symbol of the poet-narrator and into this act of the imagination. Though Keats has dissolved into himself, the poet-narrator is an objectified symbol of his subjectivity. As a symbol of Keats’s subjective thought, the poet-narrator’s activity in this second verse paragraph has been provoked by Keats’s imaginative thinking about other poets that have come and gone before him and his thinking about the works he has read by these poetic forefathers. The poet-narrator exposes this intertextual debt, which has ignited the imaginative moment for Keats.

As Keats begins to launch his own moment of intellection through his intertextual contemplation, here we see verse paragraph two illuminating the creative process, as it begins with images pouring in. The poet-narrator begins to perceive things in his imagination and build up images in a way that helps him ascend in consciousness. For example, in the first few lines of the second verse paragraph, Keats’s symbolic projection

of the poet-narrator reveals that trees surround him, and he lists them in addition to a catalog of other images around him at this moment. These trees hearken to the trees surrounding Adam and Eve's Edenic bower in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. These images, which hint at Keats's intertextual debt, evoke the sense that Keats is enclosed in this protective moment of thought here. He sees in his mind's eye all these images from these intertextual realms he has visited throughout his reading life. Therefore, in this intertextual realm, his symbolic poet-narrator is shown as perceiving himself in terms of the places Keats has imagined visiting while reading about them.

As these images are stirred up in his imagination and brought to mind before the reader, Keats uses them in a moment of synaesthesia to signify the working imagination. He describes a "neighborhood of fountains" (1.22) whose "noise / soft showering in . . . [his] ears" (1.22-23) stimulates his thinking along with "the touch / [o]f scent, not far from the roses" (1.23-24). Keats, through the poet-narrator, imagines sensuality in this moment, as he looks around to see the images of Milton's Paradise, hears the sounds of nearby fountains, and smells the roses close at hand. However, the senses of sight, hearing, and smell are not the only ones imagined at this moment in the poem.

In the next part of this verse paragraph, Keats engages with both touch and taste, as he feels his appetite increase and partakes of the refuse feast. This leftover feast seems to be the remnant of Adam and Eve's meal with "the sociable spirit" Raphael,<sup>5</sup> another allusion to *Paradise Lost* (Milton 5.221). From his positioned material moment in verse

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<sup>5</sup> I find it interesting that Keats evokes Milton's Raphael in this moment, especially because of his name's meaning and what he is associated with, as I see parallels between Raphael and Keats—Keats being quite sociable and his associating of poetry to medicine. Raphael is "Hebrew for 'Health of God'" and "is often associated with Christian medicine" according to the footnote to line 221 in book 5. Milton, John. *Paradise Lost. The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*. Eds. Stephen M. Fallon, William Kerrigan, and John Rumrich. New York: Modern Library, 2007.

paragraph one, Keats has projected himself into this moment of intertextual imagining.

As he tastes, Keats's poet-narrator still ascends in consciousness and further engages with Keats's intertextuality.

However, in order for him to engage with his independent mind apart from intertextual leanings, Keats has to dissolve. In effect, he has to make himself disappear in this moment. Because Keats is so present in verse paragraph one, in verse paragraph two, in order to keep on moving forward toward the ascension in consciousness that comes next, he has to die to himself. He succeeds in this self-death as he drinks the “domineering potion” (1.54). The “potion” (1.54) he drinks here causes him to fall into a “cloudy swoon” (1.55), in which he becomes “Like a Silenus on an antique vase” (1.56). In Greek myth, Silenus, according to *The Oxford Dictionary of Reference and Allusion*, was “[a]n old woodland spirit who was a teacher of Dionysus”<sup>6</sup> and is usually “represented as . . . intoxicated.” Therefore, he has been made drunk, even senseless, by his appetitive desires, and because of such, he becomes as immovable as the images from his own Grecian urn. Because his materiality played such a large part in the first verse paragraph, in the second verse paragraph he must remove this material self and aestheticize it, transforming it into a metaphysical presence. In essence, Keats must die to his material reality—the one he presented to his audience in the first verse paragraph—to be able to transcend himself and objectify his subjectivity in symbol using the poet-narrator—Apollo—as his aesthetic double—as a piece of art.

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<sup>6</sup> The source also describes Dionysus as “also called Bacchus . . . a god of wine who loosens inhibitions and inspires creativity in music and poetry.” Of interesting note, “Dionysus, representing creativity, sensuality, and lack of inhibition, is often contrasted with Apollo, representing order, reason, and self-discipline.” For more, see Delahunty, Andrew, and Sheila Dignen. “Dionysus” and “Silenus.” *The Oxford Dictionary of Reference and Allusion*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford UP, 2010. *Oxford Reference*. Web. 5 May 2014.

As his independent “thinking principle” awakens, his material—and intertextual—self rests. He describes this waking process at the end of the second verse paragraph:

When sense of life return'd, I started up  
As if with wings; but the fair trees were gone,  
The mossy mound and arbour were no more;  
I look'd around upon the carved sides  
Of an old sanctuary with roof august,  
Builded so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds  
Might spread beneath, as o'er the stars of heaven;  
So old the place was, I remembered none  
The like upon the earth; what I had seen  
Of grey cathedrals, buttress'd walls, rent towers,  
The superannuations of sunk realms,  
Or nature's rocks toil'd hard in waves and winds,  
Seem'd but the faulture of decrepit things  
To that eternal domed monument. (1.58-71)

In this new waking vision, Keats cannot associate what he sees with what he has seen before. In fact, the Miltonic allusions, such as “the fair trees” (1.59) and “[t]he mossy mound” (1.60) have disappeared. In this moment, Keats realizes that his vision is independent from his intertextual imagining of before, as he cannot reconcile what he now looks around and envisions with what he has seen in the past, whether his past visions have been actual experiences or intertextual ones.

As Keats's poet-narrator has detached from Keats's intertextual imagining, now, Keats, in symbol, moves into uncharted territory of his own creation. This realm is not one he owes to reading works by other great poets. Instead, it is something that comes from himself. There is nothing else from his previous understanding keeping him enclosed within his intertextual self. He is moving on toward imagining and thinking for himself, and what he finds here in this moment is an "old sanctuary" (1.62): one he had never seen before. Anne K. Mellor in "Keats's Face of Moneta: Source and Meaning" carefully argues that Keats was possibly thinking of "the Panathenaic Procession" (67) here, as "depicted on the Parthenon frieze" (68), which glorified "the Athena Parthenos" (67) and exhibited "an increasing deification of man" (69). However, while her case is persuasive and enlightening, I contend that what Keats clarifies in these few lines here is that this thought is new. This new, imagined realm belongs solely to him because it sprung up from his mind. Though he did use his intertextuality as a springboard to jump into this realm, it is not something he has known before. He has never read about it as far as I can tell from my research, and this section elucidates Keats's imaginative awakening, revealing that his creative mind becomes more independent at this point in the poem. Keats has allowed the poet-narrator to establish his own authority over Keats's subjectivity.

However, while Keats's poet-narrator realizes the newness in the images he now sees, he also tries to make sense of them in terms of the old images Keats knows from his extensive reading. One example of this comes at the end of the second verse paragraph, as the poet-narrator takes notice of what I interpret as "linen" (1.76) tapestries. As he describes these tapestries with their "imageries from a sombre loom" (1.77), I see this as

Keats's way of trying to remind his objectified subjectivity of his intertextuality again, as he inserts this image that can be interpreted by the reader as an image from Vergil's text *The Aeneid* when Aeneas visits the shrine of Juno and sees the mural with "Troy's battles painted in their sequence" (Vergil 1.455-56). In effect, Keats tries to reconcile that new image seen by the poet-narrator with an image from his intertextual arsenal, but as the mediums are different, he cannot.

*The Fall of Hyperion* Canto I, Verse Paragraph 3: Deduction to Dialectic

*[W]e no sooner get into the second Chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight: However among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart <head> and nature of Man—of convincing ones nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression— . . . .*

Verse paragraph three leads to the moment when Keats's poet-narrator begins the dialectic with Moneta—another objectified symbol of Keats's subjectivity, as he is now suspended in the "Chamber of Maiden-Thought" and has to convince himself in a moment of poetic deduction that he is indeed a poet. Karla Alwes in "Moneta and Ceres: The Final Relationship Between Keats and the Imagination" defines Moneta as "the embodiment of Keats's ideal imagination" (206), and this passage reveals this imagination escalating in authority and doubling in representation. The first lines of this verse paragraph assert that Keats through his poet-narrator is still ascending in consciousness, as he reports "once more I rais'd / [m]y eyes to fathom the space in every way" (1.81-82). Only now, this consciousness is split—as Keats presents himself as having a double consciousness at this moment because he is now objectified by two

symbols of his subjectivity. This double symbol makes sense for the purposes of this dialectical moment since Keats's poet-narrator requires someone else to participate in this dialogue with him. Nevertheless, interestingly, all of these parts are, in fact, the whole of Keats.

Keats's poet-narrator is wedged between two states of being, so to speak—one of Keats's material state progressing toward an ideal state—as the poet-narrator functions in the liminal moment between Keats's position of materiality and Moneta's position of elevated consciousness. This passage makes a claim about both the body and the mind: the body is going to lose something, but the mind through imagination will reclaim what is lost and fill in that sensual loss with contemplative thought. Because Keats can still imagine sense, the poet-narrator almost becomes immovable here and unable to move on. This section shows him in that liminal moment between sense and reason, standing on the precipice of the body but transcending it and instantaneously engaging through his illimitable mind. Because his body was breaking down—and maybe not *his* body per se as of yet, as he could have been thinking of the way Tom's body broke down in front of him—I think he feels like he has this gift of escaping death through the mind and not letting the reality of death affect him because he can transcend it with his imagination.

One image he evokes to illustrate a rising in consciousness here is the “flame” (1.96). The flickering of flame gives the sense that the poet is thinking, and, as long as it burns, he is continually in thought. Keats takes a few lines to introduce this flame and its power:

When in mid-May the sickening east wind  
Shifts sudden to the south, the small warm rain

Melts out the frozen incense from all flowers,  
And fills the air with so much pleasant health  
That even the dying man forgets his shroud;  
Even so that lofty sacrificial fire,  
Sending forth Maian incense, spread around  
Forgetfulness of every thing but bliss,  
And clouded all the altar with soft smoke,  
From whose white fragrant curtains thus I heard  
Language pronounc'd. . . . (1.97-107)

This passage suggests that Keats assigns extraordinary power to this flame. As the above lines imply, this flame has the power to remind him of sensuous spring, induce him to “forget . . . his shroud” (1.101), and elevate his thoughts to “[l]anguage pronounc'd” (1.107). In essence, flame in this passage signifies thought, and it is used to activate transcendence.

Still transcending in thought, Keats's poet-narrator now imagines sensation. The flame, while signifying thought, also allows him to imagine using senses. Keats has thus imagined sense to imagine sense again through the figure of the poet-narrator, as in this moment, his poet-narrator sees visions, smells incense and other fragrant scents, and hears the voice of Moneta. However, this sensuousness is monitored by the urging of a rational voice instructing him to continue to imagine. In this section, Keats envisions his own sublime moment on these steps by imagining Moneta's urging of his poet-narrator to ascend further in consciousness. The voice of Moneta challenges him:

. . . . 'If thou canst not ascend

These steps, die on that marble where thou art.  
Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,  
Will parch for lack of nutriment—thy bones  
Will wither in few years, and vanish so  
That not the quickest eye could find a grain  
Of what thou now art on that pavement cold.  
The sands of thy short life are spent this hour,  
And no hand in the universe can turn  
Thy hour glass, if these gummed leaves be burnt  
Ere thou canst mount up these immortal steps.’ (1.107-17)

Though confronted here to ascend in consciousness, Keats’s poet-narrator is torn because—like the material Keats—he also wants to continue to feel.

At this point, he is still experiencing synaesthesia, as he is both hearing and looking around (1.119-121), but he fears the more he ascends, the less he will feel. However, he realizes that he can imagine sensation in the ideal world of poetry to substitute for the loss of actual material sensation. As he hesitates but then progresses to ascend the steps here in this passage, he continues to imagine sensation, he envisions feeling his “iced foot” (1.132) as it “touch’d / [t]he lowest stair” (1.132-33) and feeling that “as it touch’d, life seem’d / [t]o pour in at the toes” (1.133-34). He realizes that what he thought he might have been giving up sensually is reconciled here, and when he ascends in consciousness, he realizes there is still a sensual moment—though imagined. Keats synthesizes materiality and ideality right here at this moment.

Because Moneta issues such a challenge with such an urgency for him to climb the steps and to remain in feeling, I support that this section of the poem is the result of Keats's mental state being somewhat disordered. In fact, it seems as though his mind is tempting him to let go of sensual reality altogether. Because Keats was such a sensual person who was so connected to life and what he could sense (taste, touch, feel, hear, or see), and because he was so connected to such a sensual level of living and engagement with feelings, asking him to ascend so far in consciousness would have been similar to asking him to give up his sensual reality. Therefore, in considering this challenge along these lines, it would seem as though Keats's mind was almost trying to shut down his sensuality. In a 1907 medical journal article "Tuberculosis and the Creative Mind," Dr. Arthur C. Jacobson discusses the effect of "spes phthisica" (225), which is a euphoric state of mind very common with those who had tuberculosis that resulted in "a means of quickening genius" (225), and I think that Keats's mind here is experiencing this side effect. Jacobson says that tuberculosis can be an "intellectual asset" (229), and I think Keats proves this statement with this section of the work. Keats is dealing with this effect in symbol as he projects his own mind onto Moneta who is pushing him toward a higher state of consciousness.

In the main, the steps can also be seen as an accumulation of the imaginary forms that Keats has built up in his mind from allusions to works by other great poets, and he climbs them to move beyond his material consumption of texts toward a realm of formal understanding. Thus, as he climbs these steps, he mounts above his intertextual dependence and rises beyond his doubly represented subjectivity. He goes further than his dually symbolic objectified subjectivity, and in transcending his mind in this way,

Keats surpasses what he believes is the leading order of hierarchical poets. In this rising of consciousness, Keats realizes his own poetic ability is as fine as other poets' abilities—perhaps even better. Writing about his anxieties in this way allows his mind to react to and reconcile with all the forms he has met intertextually.

These figurative steps can also be representative of the monumental uncertainties Keats had not only about his vocation as a poet but also his life and death. After all, he presents Moneta with questions that speak to such insecurities:

. . . 'Holy Power,'  
Cried I, approaching near the horned shrine,  
'What am I that should be so sav'd from death?  
What am I that another death come not  
To choak [sic] my utterance sacrilegious here?' (1.136-40)

Through an aestheticized dialectic between Keats's poet-narrator and Moneta, Keats manages a transcendental moment of self-reflection. According to Ellen Brinks in "The Male Romantic Poet as Gothic Subject: Keats's *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*," Keats's as the "poet-spectator-scriptor of the *Hyperion* fragments finds barely concealed versions of himself mirrored in the various characters" (433). Therefore, he asks himself questions by asking them both through and to the figurative symbols, and he answers them as he engages in deep contemplation about them through his objectified subjectivity. Thus, to answer these questions, Keats presents Moneta as communicating with the poet-narrator to reiterate his self-worth:

. . . 'Thou hast felt  
What 'tis to die and live again before

Thy fated hour. That thou hadst power to do so  
Is thy own safety; thou hast dated on  
Thy doom.' . . . (1.141-45)

Moneta explains to the poet-narrator that he could only “usurp this height” (1.146) because he has known and can understand human misery. In “Keats, Milton, and *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*,” Stuart M. Sperry, Jr. writes, “[s]chooled, in part, by the unhappy events of his own life, he grew increasingly to realize that the visionary imagination must find its material in the common ground of human experience and its suffering and misery” (79). This passage reflects this understanding, and Moneta’s purpose here is to remind Keats of the experience that fuels his imagination. She functions as a tool for “sharpening . . . [his] vision into the heart <head> and nature of Man—of convincing . . . [his] nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression” (*Letters* 1: 280-81). In performing this task, she reveals to the poet-narrator what he is and how worthy he is by describing those who lack the sympathetic imagination that he possesses. She allows him to reflect himself back onto himself. Through this transcendent moment of objective subjection using symbolic reflections of himself, which Schiller termed as “aesthetic simulacra, a community of individuals joined by their ‘virtual’ (symbolic) productivity and expertise” (Pfau 32), Keats recovers from wallowing in his own self-pity, as he was prior to this moment potentially “venom[ing] all his days, / [b]earing more woe than all his sins deserve” (1.175-76). Therefore, by imagining these stairs and climbing them, the poet-narrator’s vision of Moneta’s challenge allows Keats to become fully present to himself. In effect,

Keats creates the sublime and trumps it all at once in this dialectical moment, as he tropes the imagination, climbs the steps, which are sublime, and overcomes such insecurities.

Using Moneta and the poet-narrator to reflect himself and his insecurities back onto himself in this symbolic way allows Keats to organize the flickering of thought he experiences in composing this poem. To illustrate the flickering of his thought as it connects him with these symbols of his subjectivity, Keats develops the image of Moneta's "hand / Pendent" (1.197-98; 1.219-20). In both places where he refers to this image of a "golden censer" (1.197), his tactical enjambment splits the words. This deliberate, divisional enjambment evokes the sense that while he is connected to these symbols because he authored the poem, he still remains separate from them in some way. This simultaneous connection and disengagement allows Keats to project himself into several symbols at once, remaining both a part of the symbols and separate from them throughout composing. The image of the "hand / [p]endent" (1.197-98; 1.219-20) connects the material Keats's "warm scribe my hand" (1.18) with the other images associated with thought. Using this image, Keats symbolically activates his "hand" (1.18)—his real hand—even more by writing about the "hand / [p]endent" (1.197-98; 1.219-20). Like the flame image previously mentioned, the phrase stirs up images of thoughts and the acts of thinking and composing. For example, Keats mentions the "incense curls" produced by the censer (1.212), which spread through the air and dissipate into the atmosphere as thoughts spread through the mind and dissolve if they are not supervised into language. The enjambed phrase is tied to so many images, linking Keats's physical act of writing to the thoughts behind the composition, which fuel the act. The word "[p]endent" is a word used also by Milton in *Paradise Lost*, though he spelled

it differently: “And fast by hanging in a golden chain / [t]his pendant world” (2.1051-52). Alison Chapman asserts that Milton’s use of this word is a pun on the abbreviated word “pendent,” claiming that Milton’s use of the word signified the word “dependent,” as Milton’s God wanted a dependent creation. I can see this semantic shift also working for Keats’s use of “[p]endent” (1.198; 1.220), as his poetic creation depends on him. The *OED* defines the word as “suspended from . . . the point of attachment” (“pendent,” def. 1a). According to the *OED*, the etymology of the word affirms that the word comes from the classical Latin and is spelled now as Milton spelled it: “pendant.” What is most interesting about the etymology listed in the *OED* is that the word also originates from the French meaning “suspended” or “floating.” From this etymology, the classical Latin etymology, and the definition, one can see Keats’s intention in using the word in relation to his selected symbols. He wanted these symbols to illustrate his thoughts as he ordered them in the poem. They function as a part of him; they are dependent on him, hanging from his mind in verse like the “hand / [p]endent” (1.197-98; 1.219-20) to the censer. As he imagines, he transcends his body and activates his writing hand, which produces these infused symbols that appear on the page. The infused symbols of the poet-narrator and Moneta together reflect Keats back to himself, and by imagining them into existence, Keats presents to himself an objective view of his subjectivity through dialectic.

This imagined dialectic with symbols culminates near the end of verse paragraph three as Keats’s moment of poetic deduction exasperates him, clarifies his vocation, and helps him self-actualize. In the last section of this verse paragraph, Keats’s moment of poetic deduction peaks with the poet-narrator revealing his insecurity to Moneta when

she presents before him the options. To urge Keats toward confident self-definition, Moneta asks the poet-narrator to proclaim his intentions:

. . . ‘Art thou not of the dreamer tribe?  
The poet and the dreamer are distinct,  
Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.  
The one pours out a balm before the world,  
The other vexes it.’ (1.198-202)

Exasperated by her assertion, Keats’s poet-narrator screams “with a Pythia’s spleen” (1.203) and then invokes Apollo to come to his defense (1.204). Keats appeals strategically here to Greek myth. He summons both Apollo and Pythia. *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature* informs that Pythia was a “prophet of Apollo” who “gave oracular responses to those who came to consult her” at Delphi.<sup>7</sup> By calling upon Apollo in this way and bringing to mind Pythia’s name, Keats suggests that he cannot answer Moneta’s question without their help. In effect, he evokes them to get to the truth of himself. After all, according to *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, “[o]n the front of the temple” of Delphi (the third construction) were the “engraved . . . maxims ascribed to the Seven Sages, ‘know yourself’ (*gnōthi sauton*), i.e. know your human weakness in contrast with the power of the gods, and ‘nothing in excess’ (*mēden agan*).” While we cannot know if Keats was imagining Apollo’s sanctuary, we do know he was hearkening to this idea of self-knowledge from knowing himself at his strongest as well as at his weakest. Keats comes face to face with his weakest moment here when he has the poet-narrator affirm a most selfish proclamation:

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<sup>7</sup> For more, see Howatson, M. C., ed. “Delphi.” *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford UP, 2011. *Oxford Reference*. Web. 7 May 2014.

‘Apollo! faded, far flown Apollo!  
Where is thy misty pestilence to creep  
Into the dwellings, through the door crannies,  
Of all mock lyrists, large self-worshippers,  
And careless hectorers in proud bad verse.  
Though I breathe death with them it will be life  
To see them sprawl before me into graves.’ (1.204-10)

This admission of the poet-narrator’s jealousy of other successful poets of his time (possibly Lord Byron and Wordsworth) reveals Keats’s feelings of envy because he is approaching death while they are not. Perhaps Keats was a little disgruntled that others were more successful in their poetic vocation than he was currently. He had only a short time to accomplish what they could take more time to achieve, as they could live longer lives perfecting their verse. Here, the poet-narrator wishes for these other poets to experience the burdening of consciousness that he feels at this moment, and he wants Apollo and Pythia to get to the truth of their consciousnesses the way they are invading Keats’s consciousness now. He ascends here in consciousness and learns from Moneta shortly after this moment, but only after rising from admitting the lowest facet of his corporeal self.

In order to continue the dialectic, the poet-narrator must recover from this dark, selfish side of consciousness, which is the result of Keats’s appetitive desire to remain in a transient, bodily state. Keats’s double consciousness again exposes itself. Almost immediately, after Keats briefly interrupts his transcendence with his true feelings of envy, material Keats exits the poem again. When this happens, the poet-narrator realizes

that in order for him to be a poet, he must not be one who “vexes” (1.202) the world but one who “pours out a balm upon” (1.201) it. After revealing the dark side of himself, he immediately shifts his focus from his appetitive desire to that of the “Majestic shadow” of Moneta (1.211), asking her to explain to him where he is (1.211), “[w]hose altar” he has approached (1.212), “[w]hat image” he sees (1.213), and who she is (1.215). This new interest in his surroundings removes corporeal, selfish Keats from trying to come back into the poem, and it allows the poet-narrator to reveal the humanistic, sympathetic side of Keats—the poetic side.

Before his empathetic side makes its appearance in the poem, Keats illustrates his temporary return into the poem and his momentary collapse of transcendent thought through the image of the “lang’rous flame” (1.238). The flame, which I have previously discussed as an image of flickering thought, grows faint just following Keats’s intrusion. In drawing attention to the weakening flame, which parallels Keats’s own weakening thought, Keats presents a sort of extra mental debate for himself by having the poet-narrator closely examine the surrounding of the temple. For instance, the poet-narrator looks at the “[f]aggots of cinnamon, and many heaps / [o]f other crisped spice-wood” (1.235-36), as if considering feeding “the altar’s blaze / . . . fainting for sweet food” (1.232-33). Though the poet-narrator’s consideration is apparent here, the poem omits whether the poet-narrator actually places more wood on the fire. However, for Moneta, his meditation on the fainting flame’s need of attention is enough. Because he notices that there is no one to place the wood into the fire except for Moneta, the poet-narrator has displayed an act of empathy.

Therefore, his compassion for those forgotten in this temple elicits the goodwill of Moneta, who wants the poet-narrator, i.e., Keats, to appreciate that which is incorporeal. Because of his affinity for antiquity, she decides to share with the poet-narrator “the scenes / [s]till swooning vivid through . . . [her] globed brain” (1.244-45), so that he will seek an ethereal identity for himself—a soul—instead of trying to sustain an impermanent bodily vehicle. At this point, symbolic Moneta’s function to “sharpen . . . [Keats’s] vision into the heart <head> and nature of Man—. . . [and to] convinc[e] . . . [his] nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression” (*Letters* 1: 280-81) takes on a higher calling. This higher calling reaches beyond the finitude of Keats’s materiality, which is his corporeal understanding, to move him toward an acknowledgement of immateriality, which he can only experience corporeally through intellection. When Keats’s composition allows for the symbolic poet-narrator to share the visions of symbolic Moneta, we begin to see the dialectic progress toward his self-actualization as a poet. In this progress, we understand that for Keats, this moment of high intellection indicates his potential for poetic apotheosis.

In order for Keats to experience this intangible realm through intellection, he must allow the symbolic poet-narrator to rise in consciousness—through Moneta’s “hollow brain” (1.276)—even more—without material interruption whatsoever—and attempt to both identify and empathize with something solely from the realm of ideas. To reach this higher state of thinking through “the dark secret chambers of . . . [Moneta’s] skull” (1.278), Keats presents the idea of a fallen Saturn with which to relate. Keats projects himself—already symbolically represented by both the poet-narrator and Moneta—into the symbol of this fallen Saturn and his “high tragedy” (1.277), already a figurative

remnant from Keats's *Hyperion*. Reconstructed in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* to be another symbolic reflection of Keats, Saturn represents Keats's affinity with antiquity, his anxiety over his permanence, and his ultimate figurative presence.<sup>8</sup> Keats, though figurative through the symbols of the poet-narrator and Moneta, here becomes more figurative by projecting himself into a figure from a previous poem of his own. As he becomes more figurative, his corporeal presence becomes less important, and his focus shifts toward a more advanced moment of intellection.

By alluding to Saturn of *Hyperion*, his own work of poetry, through the symbols in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, Keats experiences an ultimate moment of self-actualization through dialectic. This visionary moment begins the moment he quotes from his own work:

*Deep in the shady sadness of a vale,  
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,  
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star.  
Onward I look'd beneath the gloomy boughs,  
And saw, what first I thought an image huge,  
Like to the image pedestal'd so high  
In Saturn's temple. Then Moneta's voice  
Came brief upon mine ear,—'So Saturn sat  
When he had lost his realms.'—Whereon there grew  
A power within me of enormous ken,  
To see as a God sees, and take the depth*

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<sup>8</sup> Perhaps Saturn represents figurative Keats, which is the antithesis of Byron, whom Keats states "is not figurative" in a letter dated February 19, 1819 "To George and Georgiana Keats" in the second volume of Hyder Edward Rollins's edition of *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1958.

Of things as nimbly as the outward eye  
Can size and shape pervade. The lofty theme  
At those few words hung vast before my mind,  
With half unravel'd web. I set myself  
Upon an eagle's watch, that I might see,  
And seeing ne'er forget. . . . (1.294-310; emphasis added)

Only the first line of this passage is quoted directly from *Hyperion*.<sup>9</sup> However, the importance of its appearance in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* is that by Keats's consciousness being able to ascend to this height, he can see himself imagining. He can view himself in this moment. The passage reveals this moment of supreme transcendence when Keats—reflected to himself by the symbols of his objectified subjectivity—begins to know himself. He begins to understand the importance of his ideality with less concern for his materiality. In a moment of metacritical examination, he realizes that his figurative existence in poetry is the only way for him to exist postmortem. He becomes aware of the need to abandon his materiality, as he references here the trees at the beginning of the poem and proclaims, “[o]nward I looked beneath the gloomy boughs” (1.297). He decides he cannot be consumed by his corporeal desires anymore because he now understands that his imagination is more important—his visionary “power . . . of enormous ken, / [t]o see as a God sees” (1.303-04). Therefore, because he now sees using his mind, he has no need for the sense of sight; in effect, he no longer has to “strain . . . out . . . [his] eyes / [t]o search” (1.273-74) for truth of an immortal existence because he knows that he has idealized himself and has one in his poetry. He no longer has to worry consciously about his “warm scribe . . . [his] hand”

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<sup>9</sup> To clarify, there are other lines from *Hyperion* throughout the poem, but not in the passage included here.

(1.18) because he views himself through symbols, such as that of Saturn, whose “old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead, [u]nsceptred” (1.322-23). Keats realizes then the infinite sense of immobility that actual immortality would cause. Therefore, through this dialectic in verse, Keats realizes that he possesses within himself an ability to transcend materiality through his mind, and he appreciates this uplifting and infinite mobility he has through his imagination. In this realization, he experiences the ultimate moment of self-actualization as a poet. Keats’s poetic self-knowledge is discovered by his connection with Saturn through Moneta’s visions near the end of verse paragraph three.

*The Fall of Hyperion* Canto I, Verse Paragraph 4: Dialectic

*This Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes gradually darken’d and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages—We see not the ballance [sic] of good and evil.*

However, Keats continues with his ascension in consciousness in verse paragraph four to reveal an even higher level of intellectual contemplation: he shows us inside the imagined minds of his symbols. In essence, his “aesthetic simulacra” (Pfau 32) functions to “suspend . . . the directive drives of the conscious mind in order to give the results of less conscious creative processes a chance to ‘present themselves’” (Schiller 250n). This presentation is akin to “dramatic characters” (Schiller 264n), as the symbolic figures Keats both occupies and presents call to mind what Schiller would have called theatrical “roles” (Schiller 264n). Keats not only imagines dialectic with these symbols of his objectified subjectivity, namely the poet-narrator, he also imagines these symbols in dialectic with each other.

Keats imagines this symbolic dialectic by imagining that his poet-narrator observes Thea communicating with Saturn through Moneta's visions. Saturn, like the poet-narrator at the beginning of the poem, is immobile: "It seem'd no force could wake him from his place" (1.327). However, Keats's poet-narrator attempts to connect with Saturn through Thea to get him to "look up" (1.354). The poet-narrator's "I" in 1.332 and 1.336 engenders the "I" of Thea in 1.355, 1.356, and 1.368, as the symbols begin, in a sense, to merge. As Keats attempts to fuse these symbols together, he provides the reader with a glimpse of Saturn's figurative existence that closely resembles the poet-narrator's existence before meeting Moneta. Only Moneta, this time, is re-represented as Thea. Therefore, the poet-narrator has fused with Moneta to envision in their fusion the fusing of the poet-narrator with the other symbols, namely Thea and Saturn. In his rendering of Thea, Keats notes:

There was a listening fear in her regard,  
 .....  
 One hand she press'd upon the aching spot  
 Where beats the human heart; as if just there,  
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain . . . (1.339-46)

Clearly, here, Keats tries to envision Thea as sympathetic, but the poet-narrator has difficulty in communicating this characteristic. Keats's poet-narrator can only imagine the "mourning words" (1.351) humanity's "feeble tongue" (1.351) could utter in "this-like accenting" (1.352) that only moderately encapsulate Thea's communication with Saturn. Showing the difficulty in narrating the "large utterance of the early Gods" (1.353) reveals Keats's discharging of his poet-narrator into unknown territories—into

the territories of ideality. In attempting to narrate Thea's thought and language at this moment in the poem, Keats emphasizes that his goal was not only to seek the unattainable ideal in art but also to seek it with the understanding that if he ever reached it, then he could expect for this ideal to identify with him as well as the rest of humanity.

That moment of empathy shared between both the material and the ideal would be a tragic moment of truth and beauty. In recognizing the need for the synthesis of the material and the ideal, Keats acknowledged what Schiller considered the "circular" account "of each individual life" (Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* 209). He intuited from this understanding the "initial state of man as one of simple self-unity, which has fallen into multiplicity, fragmentation, and opposition, but in its divided state contains an inherent dialectic which presses on toward a higher unity which will incorporate the intervening multiplicity and resolve all conflicts" (Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* 209). Keats expected the ideal—if it ever materialized poetically—to meet with the material and receive from it all of humanity's longing while synthesizing with it its own ethereal longing. In essence, the exoteric would merge with the esoteric in a unifying moment of beauty.

In this expectation, Keats situates a tragic notion of beauty—what he notes as "dark passages" in the letter to Reynolds (*Letters* 1: 280-81)—to understand his intangible soul through language. I contend that these metaphysical passages are "dark" because in reality, they cannot be known because they never actualize; they exist only through a sense of poetic potentiality. They can never be concretized because they exist only in signification. For instance, in Keats's case, the potentiality is illustrated through figurative symbols, which he uses to communicate the abstract act of rational intuition as

he journeys into these passages of tragic beauty, but these are places we cannot touch, as they belong to Keats's intellection. In *Speaking of Beauty*, Denis Donoghue writes that this sense of beauty is Kantian—a “theory of beauty . . . concentrated on . . . free beauty,” which “is subject only to a judgment of taste, a faculty which features the harmony of understanding and imagination: it is disinterested, irresponsible, as free as play” (Donoghue 68). Donoghue adds:

In Plato, as in Greek thought generally, it was not found necessary to distinguish with any insistence the beautiful, the true, and the good. . . . According to Plato, the beautiful, the true, and the good were available, as an Idea or an ideal Form, to the soul rather than to the senses . . . . (63-4)

As the passage above indicates, in the Platonic sense, what is beautiful can only be known to the soul. Therefore, by ascending in consciousness in an attempt to know his soul, Keats attempts to intuit this tragic understanding of beauty with his rational mind through *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. However, in order to reach a full understanding of himself—a self he recognizes as embodied and therefore sensual—Keats seeks this ideal Form of beauty through his senses first. Keats's reaching in this contemplative moment is after his own soul—the Form of himself. He wants to connect his material being to his ideal Form. This kind of connection can only be reached through a moment of “disinterestedness” (Donoghue 68). What this means is that Keats must be “content to appreciate the beauty of the object [his objectified subjectivity] and to retain that intuition” for himself (68)—and he is, and he does.

*The Fall of Hyperion* Canto I, Verse Paragraph 5: Dialectic to Rational Intuition

*We are in a Mist . . . now in that state—We feel the ‘burden of the Mystery,’ To this point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive when he wrote ‘Tintern Abbey’ and it seems to me that his Genius is explorative of those dark Passages.*

As existential Keats casts himself further into symbolic figures to appreciate the beauty of his intellect, verse paragraph five reveals an epistemological realization insofar as he acknowledges that there are some realms he cannot know. In this understanding, we see what Donoghue termed as “disinterestedness” (68)—we see Keats’s retention of intuition. This “disinterestedness” (Donoghue 68) is apparent when material Keats does not return from this speculative moment of thought in the poem:

. . . A long awful time  
I look’d upon them; still they were the same;  
The frozen God still bending to the earth,  
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet;  
Moneta silent. Without stay or prop  
But my own weak mortality, I bore  
The load of this eternal quietude,  
The unchanging gloom, and the three fixed shapes  
Ponderous upon my senses a whole moon. (1.384-92)

In this moment, even Keats’s poet-narrator moves deeper into consciousness—into a figurative space reserved for even higher contemplation.

As the poet-narrator searches for something to be revealed to him from the ideal, what he discovers in addition to his awareness of mortality is that Saturn, like him, searches as well: “Methought I heard some old man of the earth / [b]ewailing earthly

loss” (1.440-41). In this line, the poet-narrator reveals that he has connected himself to Saturn because Saturn is merely another symbolic projection of Keats’s objectified subjectivity. The poet-narrator sympathizes with Saturn in this moment to illustrate the material poet’s connection to the divine part of himself. Therefore, in this material moment of poetic composition, Keats, through language, attempts to access the mysterious realm of the soul through a transcendental moment of thought.

The poem’s synthesis of thought and language to transcend the material moment of composition is analogous to the synthesis of the fragmented self and the symbols to transcend the authorial body. In these dual syntheses, I locate beauty in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, for in these syntheses, Keats endeavors to encapsulate his material poetic identity into a figuration and vice versa. He shapes himself into a poet by shaping his thought into symbol. It removes his subjective feeling of insecurity because he transcends subjectivity through these objective symbols to become confidently a poet. This act frees him from corporeality and makes him—his subjective materiality—into art—into text—into objective beauty.

Comprehending an objectified subjectivity presents problems to our understanding because the words are antithetical, but we can recognize how both objectivity and subjectivity are interdependent. Mary L. Coolidge, in “Purposiveness without Purpose in a New Context,” draws attention to the difficulty in proclaiming something objectively beautiful because of the subjective factor involved in making such a claim (86). However, because, in effect, in this work Keats becomes both poet *and* poetry in idea, there must be a symbiosis between “psychological terms” and “conceptual terms” (Coolidge 86). After all, he is the material poet becoming the ideal poet. He is

the author of the poetry that reflects the idea. And the idea comes before the material poet; the material poet is merely the vehicle for the idea to present itself in transcendental reflection. Because the subjective poet is reaching after the ideal form, we have to understand that what he was seeking was outside of him, existed before he did, and had to be sought after transcendently. In *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant “appl[ies] the term transcendental to all knowledge which is not so much occupied with objects as with the mode of our cognition of these objects, so far as this mode of cognition is possible a priori” (46). In *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, Keats had to come away from his subjective interiority to reflect independently and “conceptual[ly]” on that “psychological” subjectivity (Coolidge 86) as an object, and because we are embodied, he had to begin the process with imagination. And since, according to Kant, “all our intuition is sensuous, imagination, by reason of the subjective condition under which alone it can give a corresponding intuition to the conceptions of the understanding, belongs to sensibility” (123). David A. White supports this understanding in “Kant on Plato and the Metaphysics of Purpose” when he notes, “Kant says that the ideas are unchanging” (69), and these “ideas as such are ‘completely determined in the highest understanding, each as an individual and each as unchangeable, and are the original causes of things’” (68). Therefore, Keats had to rely on his subjectivity as the means from which to ascend and reach the objective understanding of the idea, which is a priori. White goes on to say that “Kant insists, ‘no single creature in the conditions of its individual existence coincides with the idea of what is most perfect in its kind,’” and “since Kant holds that the idea as archetype is unchangeable and since the individual thing is changeable, it follows that the individual thing will always differ from its idea,

the original cause of that thing” (68). From this understanding, we can deduce that Keats’s intuitive subjectivity was the gateway to his objective understanding of the perfect idea of poet and poetry. Though antithetical, his subjectivity and objectivity mutually function in Keats’s poetic composition.

Keats must imagine through his senses to become free to explore the ideal. Donoghue attributes such “liberating” beauty to Kant, as he quotes him, “[b]eauty is the form of the *purposiveness* of an object, so far as this is perceived in it *without any representation of a purpose*” (68; emphasis original). Coolidge, while admitting the “paradoxical character” of Kant’s phrase, maintains that “the most important point which he makes in the whole discussion that centers about the phrase is the point that we have in [a]esthetic experience, in which thought and feeling are both inextricably involved, a unique way of knowing something that could in no other way be known” (89). Keats, in this moment of his life, wanted to explore the ideal because he was aware of his impending loss of sense in death, and he wanted to attempt to know the unknowable through poetry.

*The Fall of Hyperion* Canto II, Verse Paragraph 1: Rational Intuition

*Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them.*

In the final verse paragraph of this poem, Keats attempts to comprehend the mysterious realm of death, as he reaches the height of his figurative representation through an independent envisioning of Hyperion. We can see this ultimate moment through his total abandonment of materiality, as he moves on from Moneta’s visions and reappropriates Mnemosyne. Through the entire poem up until this point, Keats has been

moving further away from his materiality, but the final abandonment happens after the poet-narrator imagines Hyperion without the help of Moneta. Keats writes, “[n]ow in clear light I st[and], / [r]eliev’d from the dusk vale” (2.49-50). In this moment of clarity, Keats’s poet-narrator catches a glimpse of “Mnemosyne / . . . sitting on a square edg’d polished stone” (2.50-1), which “reflected pure” (2.52) her “garments” (2.53). Positioning her in this way, Keats figuratively recalls his figurations from Moneta.

Keats inserts Mnemosyne back into the narrative at this moment of rational intuition because he wants to claim poetic authority. In effect, filtering his symbol of Mnemosyne—a symbol from the first *Hyperion* poem—through Moneta’s use of her back to his poet-narrator’s vision returns Keats back to himself in a sense. He writes, “[m]y quick eyes ran on” (2.53), as though he wants the reader to be certain that he had indeed made the choice to be a poet not a dreamer, and the vision he sees of Hyperion, though initiated by Moneta’s visions, is indeed his own. Though his poet-narrator heard Mnemosyne’s voice earlier in the narrative simultaneously as he was granted Moneta’s visions, Keats’s poet-narrator envisions her here in this moment as he moves beyond Moneta’s visions. In “Memory in Mankind: Keats’s Historical Imagination,” J. Philip Eggers writes that Mnemosyne in *Hyperion* is “the goddess of memory (996). She functions in this way in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* as well, as she “confronts the persona of the poet with a reflection of himself in the glass of history; the wild commotions that shake him are the shock of recognition” (996). Eggers goes on to add the following:

[A] willing participation in the world of historical action brings an end to the death-obsession which cannot be escaped in the oblivion of

forgetfulness. The commonplace that man studies history to comprehend himself yields place to the deeper thought that history is the way for man to become himself. Mnemosyne . . . provides mankind with an identity and the only possibility of immortality. Only when man finds his role in history and does not strive for godhood directly do the gods share his fate. (996)

Clearly, Eggers would agree that Mnemosyne's role in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* functions in much the same way as it does in *Hyperion*. In bringing her back here at the end of the poem, Keats illustrates his certain identity as a poet. He also alerts the reader to his rationality, as he realizes that the only way for him to access immortality is through figurative symbols of his objectified subjectivity. Abandoning Moneta's vision of Hyperion for his own, Keats can abandon the symbolic fallen Saturn to move toward a figure who has not yet fallen but will.

At the end of his final verse paragraph, Keats's poet-narrator imagines Hyperion meeting death head-on, and because he closes the poem with such a visualization, we know that Keats's poet-narrator does not recover from thinking about Hyperion. The material Keats does not make another appearance in this work because he has allowed himself to dissolve and his objectified subjectivity to take over. Keats becomes fully figurative in this moment. Though the time will come for Hyperion, as it will come for material Keats, he is not ready to accept the "poisonous brass and metals sick" (2.33) that will meet his "palate" (2.32) until he envisions Hyperion meeting his fall. This visualization ultimately changes his mind because, in essence, through Hyperion, Keats imagines the act of accepting his fate of death empowering:

. . . My quick eyes ran on  
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,  
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,  
And diamond paved lustrous long arcades.  
Anon rush'd by the bright Hyperion;  
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,  
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,  
That scar'd away the meek ethereal hours  
And made their dove-wings tremble: on he flared (2.53-61)

From this passage, we see Keats foreseeing death with a sense of regality. As he becomes dissolved completely into this final moment of intellection—into the idea of Hyperion—he can be at ease with death because he has met it head-on through the symbol of Hyperion.

Hyperion's majestic embracing of death is a call to action for Keats. Because Keats has imagined Hyperion's glorious joining of the other fallen gods in this moment, he forecasts for himself something magnificent on the other side of life. Thus, this work is his attempt at rationalizing death to "go on thinking" to "explore" figuratively those "dark passages" (*Letters* 1: 280-81) that exist after life ends.

Because he identifies with Hyperion in this moment approaching nonexistence, Keats reaches the highest possible moment of rational contemplation, as he imagines the consciousness of an immortal deity meeting the fate of mortals—his fate. In this self-referential moment of intuition—though he refers to himself through symbols—Keats succeeds in "imagin[ing] . . . [his] own nonexistence" (Nichols 215). Shaun Nichols in

“Imagination and Immortality: Thinking of Me” quotes Goethe and Thomas Nagel to address the difficulty associated with “imagin[ing] . . . nonexistence” (215). First, he attributes the following quote on the matter to Goethe: “It is quite impossible for a thinking being to imagine nonbeing, a cessation of thought and life” (215). Next, he notes that “[t]he difficulty, as . . . Nagel puts it, is in grasping one’s own nonexistence from the first person point of view,” claiming “[t]he subjective view does not allow for its own annihilation” (219). Keats’s poem not only speaks to this claim but also challenges it using first person with each new symbol in dialectic—in essence, he challenges this claim using figurative first persons. Keats, using symbols of his objectified subjectivity, obliterates himself through his imagination and an intense ascension in consciousness during a moment of poetic composition. The emphasis we saw in the first part of the poem placed on his material, poetic identity evaporates into an objectified representation of figurative identity, which displaces Keats’s materiality altogether and allows him to demonstrate more intense poetic authority. After all, caveats against intentional fallacy would recommend reading the poem without referencing Keats altogether. Therefore, it is important to note that Keats, while clearly injecting the poem with his own figurative subjectivity realizes the importance here in the end of keeping authorial distance as well.

#### Play in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*

To balance his authorial distance and still maintain authentic aesthetic representations of his subjectivity, Keats employs a transcendental technique grounded in aesthetic play to self-actualize while also self-annihilating. In composing to imagine

himself into the ideal poet, a poet immortal only because his thoughts have been immortalized in verse, Keats must also imagine his material dissolution. After all, he cannot perceive himself as an immortal (even through verse only) if he maintains his corporeality. Therefore, Keats must self-actualize as one—the immortal poet—while obliterating the mortal Keats. In this aesthetic moment of self-awareness by self-negation and figuration, we take what “Sartre call[ed] . . . ‘possession’” of ourselves (Norris 55). This self-custody allows for the means “to own one’s self” (Norris 55). When this happens for Keats in the poem, he “acquire[s] a new viewpoint the consequence of which . . . allows [him to realize] . . . ‘I *am* these objects which I possess, but outside, so-to-speak, facing myself; I create them as independent of me; what I possess is mine outside of me, outside of all subjectivity as an in-itself which escapes me at each instant and whose creation at each instant I perpetuate” (Norris 55; emphasis original). Therefore, because “art is believed to represent the eternal verities” (Norris 58), Keats aesthetically represents himself truthfully by rendering himself in symbol. This act of symbolic representation is the “aesthetic interplay of [the] sensible and intelligible” known as Schiller’s play instinct (Pugh 336). My research indicates that Keats’s understanding of Schiller’s play instinct arose out of his extensive reading of Coleridge, which I explore in detail in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE COLERIDGEAN SYMBOL AND SECONDHAND GERMAN PHILOSOPHY: CONNECTING KEATS TO SCHILLER THROUGH COLERIDGE

*All real knowledge supposes a prior sensation. For sensation itself is but vision nascent, not the cause of intelligence, but intelligence itself revealed as an earlier power in the process of self-construction.*—Samuel Taylor Coleridge<sup>10</sup>

#### Connecting Coleridge, Schiller, and Keats

Romantic literature scholars identify both Keats and Coleridge as salient figures in the literary movement of English Romanticism. Cockney poet, Keats, born October 31, 1795, was 23 years younger than his precursor—and contemporary—Lake poet, Coleridge. Although Keats lived a short life of 25 years, and Coleridge lived into his early sixties, we evenly remember both of them today for not only their canonical literary contributions to the Romantic period but also for their philosophical ideas on the poetic imagination at this time in history. The points of Coleridgean thought that are of interest to me are those outlined in chapters 12 and 13 of *Biographia Literaria* that I read as synthesized from Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*; these chapters, along with Coleridge's distinction between symbol and allegory in *The Statesman's Manual . . .*, prove to be an innovative, yet relevant, theoretical framework for analyzing Keats's fragment, *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, providing a literary, a philosophical, and a theological grounding through which this work can be closely examined.

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<sup>10</sup> See *Biographia Literaria*. London: Everyman, 1997.

## From Enlightenment Rationalism to Empiricism to Romanticism

The Romantic period was a time for turning inward to imagine new ways of thinking about one's place in the world after the failure of the French Revolution and its rational democratic ideal. That democratic ideal—a result of enlightenment thought—devalued humanity in its attempt to perfect society. For enlightenment thinkers, science was the method through which God's rationality and truth could be revealed. Instead of believing in a human ability to uncover truth and the perfections of God and nature through subjective idealism, science was the mode of gaining knowledge; a reliance solely on faith in God was unnecessary. However, epistemologically, Romanticism was a movement away from this enlightenment rationalism toward empiricism. Whereas enlightenment rationalism privileged reason in a coalescence of science and God, empiricism, based on the philosophy of John Locke, privileged experience and raw sense data. Empiricism allowed for both science and religion, but one did not depend on the other; science had to dissociate from faith. In fact, as Locke believed, if all knowledge came from the senses, there could be no knowledge of God because God was not available to the senses. However, in Romantic empiricism, even though knowledge did come from sense experience, and the individual's subjective understanding of that experience was knowledge, sense experiences could be infused with feelings and imagination in order to make them more personally significant and intellectually limitless. In this way, despite Locke's logic, a supernatural God could have been felt subjectively, and one could have an experience that began as a material sense experience, propagated into an imaginative moment, led to rational consciousness, and produced both

pleasure and knowledge. This knowledge and pleasure was the result of what began, for the Romantic poets, with emotion and feelings.

### A Revolution in Poetry

At the end of the eighteenth century, Wordsworth and Coleridge attempted a revolution in poetry through a rustic return to nature and to feelings. These feelings were documented and shared through writing poetry. Poetry, according to Wordsworth in the “Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*,” was considered as “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” originating in “emotion recollected in tranquility” (Wu 508). Coleridge insisted that Wordsworth’s poetic philosophy as outlined in the “Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*” was “half a child of . . . [his] own brain” (Wu 506n). Working together to write and publish *Lyrical Ballads* would help the two fund “a trip to Germany, where they would study the exciting new developments in literature and philosophy” (McKusick 7-8). Uniting to reform poetry, Coleridge’s philosophy was proposed to underscore Wordsworth’s poetic project. During their years of collaboration, Wordsworth was planning all along to write his magnum opus, *The Recluse*, using Coleridgean philosophy as the framework, but by the time that Coleridge had written the philosophy for their project, which was his *Biographia Literaria*, they were not on good terms with one another. Despite their long friendship and literary partnership, Wordsworth had wounded Coleridge by including a “derogatory note” and other “overt gestures of rejection” in the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, and afterward, their relationship was never the same (McKusick 10). Even though Wordsworth never completed *The Recluse*, Coleridge moved forward with *Biographia Literaria*, which was first published in 1817, using the work as a means to

“emancipate himself from his uncritical devotion to Wordsworth’s poetic career” (McKusick 10). Though Coleridge, too, failed to complete his magnum opus in philosophy, the prose works he did complete have proven sufficient to keep readers busy enough hermeneutically for quite some time.<sup>11</sup>

### Coleridge and Germany

Though the relationship between the two poets eventually lost its luster, the collaboration with Wordsworth was not at all a loss for Coleridge, and the moderate success of *Lyrical Ballads* enabled the duo, along with Dorothy Wordsworth, to make their trip to Germany. In fact, Coleridge traveled to Germany with the Wordsworths, but he separated from them once arriving there, settling in “Ratzeburg, a small village where he began intensive study of the German language, living in a German household and compiling long lists of German vocabulary in his notebooks” (McKusick 8). These months of studying prepared him to advance his understanding of the language by “proceed[ing] to the University of Göttingen, which was recognized throughout Europe as a leading center of Germanic philology and biblical exegesis” (McKusick 8). While he was at the academy, he was exposed to several scholars who influenced his thinking, instilling in him “a keen appreciation for the German language and literature, a basic familiarity with the exciting new discoveries in historical linguistics, and a sense of the boundless enthusiasm that accompanied the development of Germanic philology” (8). Julie A. Carlson suggests, in her monograph *In the Theatre of Romanticism: Coleridge, Nationalism, Women*, that “we should take more seriously Coleridge’s point of entry into

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<sup>11</sup> Some material from this section was explained by Dr. Stefan Forrester and Dr. Samantha Webb in a course entitled “Romantic Poetry and Philosophy.” University of Montevallo. Comer Hall, Montevallo, AL. 2013. Lecture.

Germany” (231), as it was there and “through Schiller” where “Coleridge first thinks about Kant” (68).<sup>12</sup> During this important time in Coleridge’s intellectual development, he first became acquainted with German poetry and theatre, including “the plays of . . . Schiller,” “the literary criticism of August Wilhelm von Schlegel,” “the philosophy of Kant and his disciple Friedrich von Schelling, who gave Kant’s epistemology an aesthetic turn by elevating the faculty of imagination to a primary generative role within consciousness; [t]hese concepts of imagination and organic form would later prove essential” for Coleridge in his literary and philosophical works (8). In fact, Coleridge would eventually synthesize the thinking of these German philosophers and writers in the *Biographia Literaria* so much so that he has been charged by critics with “unacknowledged borrowings from [these and several other] German authors” (McKusick 18), but the question of plagiarism is not one I seek to explicate in this essay, as he is not on trial here.

### Coleridge and Keats Meet

Keats documents in detail in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats the day in April 1819 when he met Coleridge. He notes that he strolled with Coleridge “for near two miles” (*Letters* 2: 88), adding that during “those two Miles he [Coleridge] broached a thousand things” (88). Keats records a “list” of the topics under discussion during their walk:

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<sup>12</sup> Carlson explores the use of theatre for political ends in the Romantic period, and she explains how Schiller’s ability to use the stage in a revolutionary way appealed to Coleridge’s own revolutionary tendencies and his desire to participate as an active voice in politics. She writes that for Coleridge, the “stage is crucially shaped by German idealism but an idealism more invested in reality and theatre than is generally acknowledged (even by Coleridge),” adding that “the varied theatrical projects” of Coleridge’s “middle stage” helped him maintain “his ‘shaping spirit of imagination’” and “prove his legitimacy to speak as England’s representative mind” (25; emphasis original). For more on this topic, please see *In the Theatre of Romanticism: Coleridge, Nationalism, Women*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.

Nightingales, Poetry—on 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 the second consciousness—Monsters—the Kraken—Mermaids—southey believes in them—southeys belief too much diluted—A Ghost story—Good morning—I heard his voice as he came towards me—I heard it as he moved away—I had heard it all the interval—if it may be called so. He was civil enough to ask me to call on him at Highgate Good Night! (88-89)

Keats's letter implicitly records that he was walking beside and deliberating on this multitude of topics directly along with Coleridge. However, Jack Stillinger, in his essay "Keats and Coleridge," presents Coleridge's memory of their meeting from a much different perspective. In fact, Coleridge describes their brief conference as though he had no idea at all that Keats was close by him and his companion Mr. Green. Stillinger presents the following "account, as young [John] Frere wrote it down in the form of a dialogue" that he recalled from a "conversation" he had "eleven years later" with Coleridge about his meeting Keats:

Poor Keats, I saw him once. Mr. Green . . . and I were walking out in these parts, and we were overtaken by a young man of a very striking countenance whom Mr. Green recognised and shook hands with, mentioning my name; I wish Mr. Green had introduced me, for I did not

know who it was. He passed on, but in a few moments sprung back and said, 'Mr. Coleridge, allow me the honour of shaking your hand.'

I was struck by the energy of his manner, and gave him my hand.

He passed on and we stood still looking after him . . . . (8-9)

Coleridge describes their meeting as a moment of fleeting introduction and civil ritual and goes on to recall that when he shook Keats's hand at this meeting, he could sense from the "heat and dampness in the hand" that "there was death" in Keats's touch (9). Clearly, Coleridge imaginatively tinged his recollection of the account with a dramatic element regarding Keats's handshake as he creatively remembers it for his conversation with Frere.

When they met, Coleridge obviously had plenty to say to Keats. Older, Coleridge was naturally more experienced in his philosophical and theological understanding than Keats was. Judging from the list of topics up for discourse during their brief interval together, he was much more of a talker than Keats was as well. I speculate that in addition to the subjects Keats mentions, Coleridge discussed his theories of creativity, cognition, the imagination, his faith in God, his ideas on epistemology, ontology, and teleology, and how in his opinion, the subjective and the objective fuse together in the poetical imagination. Of course, this previous list is purely conjectural, but he did seem to speak about everything else, considering what Keats had to say about their encounter. Therefore, limiting their topics of discourse solely to how each remembers the event probably falls short of how much information actually was transmitted in the moment.

Perhaps, Coleridge even discussed his own philosophy of death and dying, talking to Keats about what it means to die. Surely, ideas of temporality, eternity, mortality,

and immortality were on Coleridge's mind during their meeting, as he discussed remembering the feeling of death in Keats's handshake. Coleridge took this moment as his call to share what he thought about everything—especially belief in an afterlife and deity—with someone he knew quite possibly needed to believe in something else coming after life.

Keats had already probably begun to think about his death—and not just because he was sick or knew he was dying, but rather because he was that speculative person who would become absorbed in thought about something, especially when it involved finding beauty and discovering truth on the subject of what it means to live and to die. Unquestionably, sensual Keats wanted to find a philosophy and/or some theology that would allow him still to feel after death. He wanted to feel as though he were living in his dying and death.

Perhaps because Keats was in the throes of death during writing *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, and because he understood his life was ending, he began to approach theology and a philosophy regarding death as a means of comfort about the afterlife. After all, we cannot say for sure that Keats was, in fact, a Christian throughout his living life. Amy Lowell, in her biography *John Keats*, claims that he left the matter “unsolved” (1: 310). She goes on to add that Keats “seem[ed] still to believe in Deity, but . . . [he had] reached the point of questioning Christianity” (1: 310), no matter how much Haydon “hint[ed] an encouragement [of such] to [him]” (1: 284-85). With that said, perhaps Keats, throughout his dying life, began to consider the afterlife differently. Because he was acquainted with Christian friends and had read Milton's *Paradise Lost*, he was probably contemplative of Christ, of heaven, and of hell, if only in the figurative

sense. In this vein, Keats could have leaned toward religion on his own through reading and contemplation. In this way, for Keats, *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* becomes a symbolic representation of this complex move from believing in nothing—or in pantheism or atheism—to believing in something bigger, in some higher truth, or in some real faith that he had arrived at on his own—something like Coleridge’s faith of Christianity, perhaps—that he could take comfort in during these last moments of life. After all, Lowell does suggest that he had “a strongly religious nature” (1: 497). However, to complicate that suggestion, she adds that “the religion he harboured was a highly individualized form of satisfaction to ignorance” (1: 497-98), which, to me, seems only to be a paraphrase of Keats’s idea of Negative Capability. Lowell continues in explaining the religiosity she ascribes to Keats, as she understands it:

He believed in the ‘principle of beauty’ and the wisdom of virtue, but beyond these shadowy outlines of truth he was content not to go. He was the type of man who holds to a visionary clue flung out from himself and projected into the unknown. To such a man, the ideal is a magnified essence of his own finest qualities; the difference between him and the devotees of creeds is that, where he is satisfied to leave everything vague and fluid, they must needs crystallize and announce an actuality. (1: 498)

For him, writing poetry was religion, in a sense. Poetry allowed Keats a way to “project . . . [himself] into the unknown” (1: 498). In writing *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, he steps outside of himself and moves into his higher consciousness to determine for himself what the afterlife could bring.

Keats was trying to imagine beyond life—beyond the myth of afterlife—to move into a higher consciousness of reason that would have shown him something different about the end of life and where he was heading next. He was a questioner. Lowell refers to his “continual questioning,” and she includes a letter from her own collection that Keats wrote to Bailey regarding “his melancholy and his eternal endeavour to find some stable spiritual ground where he may rest in peace” (1: 601). In the letter, Keats writes:

You know my ideas about Religion. I do not think myself more in the right than other people, and that nothing in this world is proveable [sic]. I wish I could enter into all your feelings on the subject, merely for one short 10 minutes, and give you a page or two to your liking. I am sometimes so very sceptical [sic] as to think Poetry itself a mere Jack o’ Lantern to amuse whoever may chance to be struck with its brilliance. As tradesmen say everything is worth what it will fetch, so probably every mental pursuit takes its reality and worth from the ardour [sic] of the pursuer—being in itself a Nothing. Ethereal things may at least be thus real, divided under three heads—Things real—things semi-real—and Nothings. Things real, such as the existances [sic] of Sun, moon, & Stars and passages of Shakespeare.—Things semi-real, such as love, the Clouds &c., which require a greeting of the Spirit to make them wholly exist—and Nothings, which are made great and dignified by an ardent pursuit . . . . (1: 601)

Much like *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, this letter, itself full of philosophical and theological musings, does not arrive at any solid conclusion. Whether Keats believed his

destination after life was heaven, I cannot claim to know. All I conjecture is that *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* is about the sun setting on Keats's life. Just as Milton was birthing himself in "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," Keats was breaking down his religious beliefs, his life as a poet, and his vocation in this poem. Keats makes no final claim. Whatever he discovered in this moment of poetic questioning was personal and not for us to know. Besides, he could not have quite reached what was waiting for him on the other side of life. He had to imagine it: he could not have known what was next until arriving at death. Therefore, he remained in the mystery of not knowing. He left the poem unfinished—purposefully fragmentary—abandoning his readers, who remain suspended, as he was, in speculative Negative Capability.

To remain in the mystery of speculation is something Coleridge could not do, according to Keats, as he explained in a letter to George and Tom Keats in December 1817: "Coleridge, for instance, would not let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium [sic] of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half knowledge" (*Letters* 1: 193-94). Though Keats had not yet met him, he definitely already had Coleridge pegged when the two convened two years later in 1819.

The first encounter is not Keats's only known reference to Coleridge. Stillinger asserts, "Keats mentions Coleridge half a dozen times in his extant letters" (11). Stillinger goes on to convey that there are "connections" (13) found within the literary works of Keats and Coleridge. He reports in his essay on "a comprehensive study of Keats's literary relationships with his contemporaries" being conducted by "Beth Lau," who has "collected some 150 echoes, borrowings, and other evidences of Coleridgean influence that scholars over the years have detected in Keats's writings" (Stillinger 12-

13). Therefore, obviously, Keats had read and had been under the influence of some of Coleridge's works. In his letters, Keats directly mentions "Coleridge's Lays" (*Letters* 1: 175), "asks his friends the Dilkes to send him a copy of *Sibylline Leaves*" (Stillinger 11), and "uses Coleridge, in contrast to Shakespeare, to epitomize the lack of Negative Capability" (Stillinger 11). In reading Keats's letters alongside some of Coleridge's works, I have found strong traces of familiarity between the two poets. Lowell supports that "Keats had been reading Coleridge," that "[h]e was under the spell of Coleridge," and that he had quite possibly "jotted . . . down [lines of poetry] while the mood induced by Coleridge was strong upon him" (1: 439). I would go as far as to add that he wrote some lines of *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* while under this so-called Coleridgean "spell." In fact, I associate the "fanatic" (I.1) and the "vellum" (I.5) in the opening of *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* with Coleridge—with both his *Biographia Literaria* (see the first page of chapter 12) and his "'clasped vellum' notebook" (Barth 5n), and I see this poem as Keats's way of working through some of Coleridge's German philosophical musings and his theological leanings.

#### Keats, German Romantic Philosophy, and Schiller

Furthermore, I add that Keats understood German philosophy—though in a second-hand sort of way—through his association with Coleridge and by reading his writing, which was full of embedded German philosophical thought. However, several critics assert that Keats was unfamiliar with German Romantic philosophy. For instance, René Wellek, in her essay "German and English Romanticism: A Confrontation," claims that "Keats knew nothing of German romantic writing" (39). Douglas B. Wilson also

writes in “Reading the Urn: Death in Keats’s Arcadia” that “a German philosophical tradition” was “unknown to Keats” (823). However, this essay attempts to prove otherwise.

As previously stated, Keats notes in his letters that he had read Coleridge’s works, mentioning both his *Lay Sermons* and *Sibylline Leaves*. The latter, which Coleridge published in 1817 as “a companion volume of his collected poems” to the *Biographia Literaria* (McKusick 17),<sup>13</sup> includes a translation of Friedrich Schiller’s poem “The Visit of the Gods,” lines of which hearken to Keats’s “cool vessel of transparent juice, / Sipp’d by the wander’d bee, the which I took” (*Fall* I.42-43) whose “full draught is parent of my theme” (I.46) in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. The translated lines (from 17 to the end) by Coleridge of Schiller’s poem echoed in Keats’s work speak to the conceit of one drinking something in order to have divine visions and live forever; here are lines 17-24:

O give me the nectar!

O fill me the bowl!

Give him the nectar!

Pour out for the poet,

Hebe! pour free!

Quicken his eyes with celestial dew,

.....

And like one of us Gods may conceit him to be! (*Sibylline Leaves* 274-75)

In examining this poem closely in tandem with other Coleridgean works, I propose that it was this translation (what Coleridge termed to be an imitation) of Schiller’s poem that

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<sup>13</sup> According to Frederick Burwick, *Biographia Literaria* was “[w]hat Samuel Taylor Coleridge originally conceived as a preface to his *Sibylline Leaves*.” For more on *Biographia Literaria*, see Burwick, Frederick, ed. *Coleridge’s Biographia Literaria: Text and Meaning*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1989.

planted the idea for Keats's *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. In effect, *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* is an imitation that Keats composed under the influence of Coleridge's philosophic works and his poetic imitation of Schiller.

Coleridge's imitation of Schiller, "The Visit of the Gods," is not the first mention of Schiller in *Sibylline Leaves*. To preface his section titled "Meditative Poems in Blank Verse," Coleridge includes the following epigraph from Schiller:

Yea, he deserves to find himself deceived,  
Who seeks a Heart in the unthinking Man.  
Like shadows on a stream, the forms of life  
Impress their characters on the smooth forehead:  
Nought sinks into the Bosom's silent depth.  
Quick sensibility of Pain and Pleasure  
Moves the light fluids lightly; but no Soul  
Warmeth the inner frame. (*Sibylline Leaves* 164)

By reading these few select words from Schiller, Keats would have shared in the sensibilities evoked in these lines, which imply that if one is to be a thinking being, one must have feelings—in other words, one must have a "Heart" to have a "Soul."

In examining Keats's collection of books, as well as his family's collection, both those held in *The Harvard Keats Collection* at the Houghton Library and those documented elsewhere, I have found no evidence, as of yet, to place any work by Schiller into his hands. Charles Brown's list in *The Keats Circle* lacks any mention of Schiller's works as being part of Keats's library (1: 253-60). However, since there was no mention of Milton's *Paradise Lost* in these library lists, which we know from his letters Keats

indeed read, it stands to reason that he certainly could have read Schiller's works. In my research, I also reviewed a copy of *The Keats Library* by Frank Owings, who, according to information found online at *The Harvard Keats Collection*, "estimates that Keats accumulated less than a hundred volumes, consisting largely of contemporary poetry (e.g. Shelley, Hunt, Wordsworth) and the classics (e.g. Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare)."

Owings's book bears no mention of Keats having read anything by Schiller. However, despite having gained nothing thus far in the preliminary searches, I nonetheless contend that Keats was familiar with Schiller's works, both poetic and philosophical. Nicholas Roe, in *John Keats: A New Life*, writes that books changed hands among social circles and friends with regularity; he notes that "[s]uch spontaneous generosity with another's property was completely in character" (108). Keats's letters detail this kind of liberality with books, poems, etc. among his group of literati, his family, and his close companions. Specifically, Keats notes giving several of his books to Fanny Brawne, to whom he writes in an 1820 letter, "Do not send any more of my Books home. I have a great pleasure in the thought of you looking on them" (*Letters 2*: 265). He mentions giving books away on several occasions in his letters, especially during the period at the end of his life as he was ordering his final affairs. However, though there is no mention of him having owned any copies of Schiller's works, the lack of evidence placing the works into Keats's hands does not preclude that he was familiar with them.

Furthermore, according to another letter, Keats's letter to Richard Woodhouse dated September 21, 1819, Keats was familiar with Schiller through reading a translation of his work by William Render titled *The Armenian; Or, The Ghost Seer* (*Letters 2*: 173n). David Bonnell Green, in his article "Keats and Schiller," discusses this

familiarity, and he states that this work was one by Schiller with which Keats was acquainted:

Keats was influenced only once, though importantly, by Schiller's unfinished novel. The poem that reveals the influence is *Lamia*. The scene is that of the banquet. . . . [This is] the scene from which Keats took the framework for the concluding episode of *Lamia* . . . . He chose the striking and dramatic features of Schiller's episode and skillfully adapted them to his own requirements in his tale of ancient Corinth. We are thus once more enabled to cite an example of how Keats made use of the raw material for poetry that he found in his widespread reading. (538-40)

Through this article, we can see two things: first, Keats was influenced by a work originally written by Schiller, and second, Keats was able to integrate others' works and thinking into his own. Therefore, though again the exposure is second-hand, we cannot say the Keats knew not the work of the German Romantic and philosophic writers during this time; we can claim only that he knew them through translation—in the works of writers such as Coleridge and Render—the way he knew (George Chapman's) Homer.<sup>14</sup>

#### Keats Reading Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*

In this vein, it is evident that Keats integrated Coleridge's thinking into his works, and by so doing, he also incorporated the German philosophy embedded within Coleridge's prose into his poetry. Stillinger, in his essay "Keats and Coleridge,"

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<sup>14</sup> Nicholas Roe explores Keats's first experience with Chapman in *John Keats: A New Life*. According to Roe, Leigh Hunt praised George Chapman's Homer "in *The Examiner* in a manner calculated to appeal to Keats," exalting the work by writing, "CHAPMAN, whose *Homer's* a fine rough old wine," because "Hunt recognised that Keats could learn from what Chapman had done" (108). For more on Keats and Chapman's Homer, see *John Keats: A New Life*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2012.

references several critics who align Keats's thinking with Coleridge's prose and poetry. After all, Coleridge's "most significant writings . . . were first made widely available in the midst of the activities of the later generation of Romantics" (11), of which Keats was a part. Since Keats alludes to *Sibylline Leaves*, which had been published in the same year as *Biographia Literaria*, it is acceptable to speculate that he was familiar with both works. Keats's interest in the imagination would have made chapters 12 and 13 of the *Biographia Literaria* an appealing read, and his letter "To Benjamin Bailey" dated in December 1817—written only a few months after Coleridge had published both the *Biographia Literaria* and *Sibylline Leaves*—closely speaks to the possibility that he, in fact, did read Coleridge's philosophical and theological musings and was indeed in focused contemplation on his ideas about the imagination.

Coleridge's ideas on the imagination as put forth in the *Biographia Literaria* challenges what Keats considered the dissolution of the poet, or what he termed as the "camelion Poet."<sup>15</sup> Robert Essick, in "Coleridge and the Language of Adam," clarifies how Coleridge explains the imagination at work. He writes that "Coleridge's definition

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<sup>15</sup> Of the "camelion Poet," Keats writes, "As to the poetical Character itself, (I mean that sort of which, if I am any thing, I am a Member; that sort distinguished from the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone) it is not itself—it has no self—it is every thing and nothing—It has no character—it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or eleveated [sic]. . . . What shocks the virtuous philosopher, delights the camelion Poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things any more than from its taste for the bright one; because they both end in speculation. A Poet is the most unpoetical of any thing in existence; because he has no Identity—he is continually in for—and filling some other Body . . . [T]he poet . . . is certainly the most unpoetical of all God's Creatures. If then he has no self, and if I am a Poet, where is the Wonder that I should say I would write no more? Might I not at that very instant have been cogitating on the Characters of Saturn and Ops? . . . not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature . . . I have no nature . . . When I am in a room with People if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself: but the identity of every one in the room begins so to press upon me that, I am in a very little time annihilated." For more of this letter, see "Letter to Richard Woodhouse, October 27, 1818." *Keats's Poetry and Prose: Authoritative Texts and Criticism*. Ed. Jeffrey N. Cox. 1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009. 294-95.

. . . as a general epistemological statement . . . assumes a transcendental truth and describes how [the] mind produces art” (70-71). Essick goes on to explain that “the imagination is . . . characterized as an active and ‘inner’ symbol” (72); at work, the imagination as symbol is “a projection of something within the subject, not the discovery of truth about objects of perception” (71). To further elucidate this idea, Essick quotes from Coleridge’s *Notebook* from an entry dated April 14, 1805:

‘In looking at objects of Nature while I am thinking, as at yonder moon dim-glimmering thro’ the dewy window-pane, I seem rather to be seeking, as it were *asking*, a symbolical language for something within me that already and forever exists, than observing any thing new. Even when the latter is the case, yet still I have always an obscure feeling as if that new phænomenon were the dim Awakening of a forgotten or hidden Truth of my inner Nature.’ (71)

Therefore, in a sense, the imagination functions as a symbolic representation of the poet’s identity. Coleridge touches on this idea of “self-intuition” even further in chapter 12 of the *Biographia Literaria*, which he calls “the philosophic imagination” (146). Only those who “can acquire” this ability can “within themselves . . . interpret and understand the symbol” (146). Therefore, the only way one can know or understand his or her own identity is by expressing that identity—or what is unknown about it—in symbolic language. Joel Harter explains the Coleridgean symbol in his *Coleridge’s Philosophy of Faith: Symbol, Allegory, and Hermeneutics*:

As with traditional allegory, Coleridge’s symbol involves a dynamics of *participation* and *deferral*. Through active and creative interpretation, or

the symbolic imagination, symbols enable us to participate in mystery and meaning that we can never fully comprehend. This is the poetic power of symbol, and poetic expression—whether in poetry or in other forms of literature and culture—has a similar *apophatic* power to rupture and enlarge existing categories of language and knowledge. Symbols always retain this critical edge, or they cease to function as symbols. The symbolic imagination is both deconstructive and constructive, humbling and empowering, enabling the self-transcendence that is necessary for the advancement of our knowledge and our moral and political progress. (6; emphasis original).

Those gifted with this ability to express themselves through the symbolic imagination can access what Coleridge calls “spontaneous consciousness” or “PURE philosophy,” which is “*transcendental*” (*Biographia* 144; emphasis original); the way they come to know this intuitive faculty is by an awareness of it through a synthesis of sense (i.e., feeling) and of spirit (i.e., thought) (146). They trust their proclivity to question, to seek, and to know because they work to make sense of how feelings fuel thoughts, how minds react to nature, how bodies respond to feelings, etc. Knowledge comes from this unity of “the objective and subjective,” and the two “are so instantly united” (152). According to Coleridge, “[a]ll knowledge rests on the coincidence of an object with a subject”; in other words, he claims, “[f]or we can *know* that only which is true: and the truth is universally placed in the coincidence of the thought with the thing, of the representation with the object represented” (152; emphasis original). Coleridge writes of this unity, or

“coalesce[nce]” or “supervention” (153), in several occasions under the headings of different theses in chapter 12.

### Coleridgean Unity in the Imagination as Schiller’s Play Instinct

In this thesis, I explore Coleridge’s concept of transcendental unity, or “intimate coalition,” as he calls it in the *Biographia Literaria* (152), of the subjective with the objective as it relates to Coleridge’s theory of the imagination as symbol and Schiller’s play instinct, as both concepts are identical and are exemplified in Keats’s *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*.

As we experience beauty—whether in viewing a piece of art, in reading a poem, in listening to a musical composition, in witnessing the glories of nature, etc., our minds attempt to harmonize the subjective with the objective to make meaning from the experience. Schiller refers to this synthesis as the play instinct. According to Schiller, aesthetic play is the “middle state” we are transported to by “beauty” (123). Play is the “state midway between matter and form” (123). The beautiful pulls something from our subjective understanding out from within, that something becomes objectized, and we create meaning from experiencing it. The meaning is not objective, but rather subjective. In the same way that we experience beauty, we create that which is beautiful.

### A Symbolic Rendering of Keats in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*

In composing *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, Keats, by projecting his subjective self into the symbolic object of the poet figure—and other figures—uses his imagination as represented by Coleridgean symbols to discover knowledge about himself. After

analyzing Keats's poetic imagination through a close reading of this fragmented composition in tandem with a critical examination of Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, I indeed insist that the poetic composition of *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* exemplifies Schiller's play instinct.

### CHAPTER 3

#### KEATS AND MEDIATING BEAUTY: SCHILLER'S PLAY INSTINCT IN *THE FALL OF HYPERION*

*By means of beauty sensuous man is led to form and thought; by means of beauty spiritual man is brought back to matter and restored to the world of sense.—Friedrich Schiller<sup>16</sup>*

Keats, Beauty, and Play: Interiority Objectified in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*

In order to understand how Keats expresses beauty in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, one must first comprehend an abstract sense of beauty in art, and the art of which I speak does not render itself tangible because it is the art of interiority. We cannot touch it with our hands, but we can feel it with our hearts, and we can contemplate it with our minds. Therefore, the only way I can communicate my point about how I see Keats's poem exemplifying Schiller's play instinct is to explain this very abstract sense of beauty I believe Keats was apprehending, communicating, and expressing in composing *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*.

For Keats, the beautiful apprehended, expressed, and communicated in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* comes in the form of an interior dialectic—the dialectic of interiority that Keats has with the symbols of his objectified subjectivity. He expresses this interior dialectic through figurative dialectic, yes, but this interior dialectic conveys the beautiful, especially the beautiful insecurities and the beautiful truths that solely

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<sup>16</sup> See *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*. Eds. and Trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1967.

belong to Keats: his worries about impending death, his anxieties about vocation, etc. Yi-Fu Tuan, in “Surface Phenomena and Aesthetic Experience,” argues for what he calls “[t]he [b]eauty of the [u]nseen,” stating, “Plato . . . argued for the idea of successive layers of beauty, each more abstract and splendid than the other, that stand behind (as it were) the sensible particulars” (235). These “particulars” (235), while specific to Keats and his life, however, are also the essence of all humanity. Therefore, in the poem, Keats compassionately articulates his personal insecurities and anxieties in addition to his empathy for others dealing with the substance of humanity through his use of symbolic figures. Through aesthetic reflection and poetic composition, he conveys universal, empathetic consideration to such particulars, and in doing so, his poetic art represents the beauty of human existence, which is the unseen art of humanity.

Keats weaves such particulars of human existence through figurative symbols in poetic dialectic, which meets with Keats’s interior dialectic, and in this signification and contemplation, I see Schiller’s play instinct at work. Keats’s mind corresponds with all of that apprehended feeling and thinking and expresses it through his poetry to communicate it as intangible art through signification, and the very act of such emotional and intellectual exchange is Schiller’s play instinct. The play instinct is what mediates between Keats’s feelings and his thoughts, and it represents an abstract sense of beauty in both his life and the poem. I see this play instinct in mediation as Keats composes, which I traced in my introduction by mentioning the details of Keats’s letter to Woodhouse and his fascination with the coachman’s beef and bread, and in the composition itself, which I conveyed by examining Keats’s imagined sensation and his projection of self through symbolic figures in the poem. The beautiful is not only located in the interiority of the

material aspiring poet—Keats, but it is also signified through the symbolic figures the material poet casts into being in verse to represent the ideal poet. This ideal poet is reflected in both the material poet and the signified poet—the poet-narrator in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. And Keats does not stop there. He continues to signify, continually projecting his materiality into ideality to try to grasp the beautiful, which is, itself, an ideal.

The fact that he tries to connect with this ideal through the manipulation of signs and symbols means he is incorporating Schiller’s play instinct, which mediates between the material and the ideal. Through composing this work, Keats activates his “aesthetic impulse” (Tuan 239), which is “the human effort to create a *pleasing* world” (Tuan 239; emphasis original). In *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, Keats constructs a textual world and textual selves out of the material world that has fostered his sensibility. In this textual world, he attempts to connect materiality—his sensation and his “sensible particulars” (Tuan 235)—with the ideality—the universals. In endeavoring to make such a connection between materiality and ideality, Keats’s mind is at play, and during this process of play, all of the particulars become absolutes as he reaches a higher level of consciousness, which is pure and transcendental. Keats merely reaches these absolutes through the gateway of sensation; he knows we can only experience through the senses because we are embodied. However, when we intellectually experience absolutes on a universal level, we have reached the full ascension of consciousness that is the ideal, which reflects the material. Therefore, when Keats symbolically objectifies his material subjectivity, he also expresses the ideal, which reflects his ideal, poetic self back to his

material self in text. As this text illustrates Keats's material and ideal empathy with humanity as a whole, he expresses beauty.

In *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, Keats's interiority—his material subjectivity—objectifies in Coleridgean symbols. These imagined symbols allow material and intellectual Keats to communicate with the substantial realm of phenomena and change in the nature of humanity, and they allow him to express the ideal in the realm of absolutes. The mediation back and forth between the two realms is Schiller's play instinct in action.

Schiller's Thesis in *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*

Schiller's thesis in *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters* supports the need for aesthetics, as humanity, in order to be moral, must ascend beyond the sensual to the rational. Reginald Snell explains this theme in clearer terms in the introduction to his translation of the letters:

The whole burden of the argument in these Letters is, in a single sentence, that Man must pass through the aesthetic condition, from the merely physical, in order to reach the rational or moral. The aesthetic condition itself has no significance—all it does is to *restore* Man to himself, so that he can make of himself what he wills. He is a cipher; but he is capable of becoming anything . . . . Sensuous Man, then, must become aesthetic Man before he can be moral Man. (12; emphasis original)

Schiller believed, as the passage above indicates, that aesthetics was necessary not only for the moral development of humanity but also for the freedom of humanity—allowing

members of the human species to become what they willed themselves to be. Walter Grossmann, in “Schiller’s Aesthetic Education,” quotes Herbert Marcuse who said that “Schiller’s letters . . . aim at a remaking of civilization by virtue of the liberating force of the aesthetic function: it is envisaged as containing the possibility of a new reality principle” (32). Grossmann writes that this “educational concept of art” puts art at the heart of “the evolution” of humanity (32). Art liberates humanity from “[t]he state of necessity,” which “is in Schiller’s eyes bare of any moral authority” (Grossmann 33). Disappointed with the French Revolution, Schiller believed, as quoted by Grossmann, that “[t]he moral possibility was wanting, and the favorable moment found an apathetic generation” (Grossmann 32); in essence, the French Revolution was an abuse of reason and a time during which humanity lacked sympathy.

Schiller set out to change that by proposing a restoration in humanity through art. According to Schiller, aesthetic education could reinforce such sympathy. “Aesthetic education,” Schiller believed, “prepare[d] man to be a human being, embracing life in its fullness” (Grossmann 39) and feeling empathy for the human species. Unfortunately, this kind of education had not been acquired during the time of the French Revolution (39). Therefore, Schiller’s philosophy, published just after the Terror, insisted on such an education for the sake of restoring humanity. According to Grossmann, “Schiller assigns to reason the task of finding and establishing the laws for an ideal community” (34), but such a task must involve art because “reason, according to Schiller, cannot act immediately upon feelings” (35); it must have a mediator. Therefore, in order to move from the sensual to the rational, art is necessary because “[a]rt,” Grossmann asserts, “has the power to act upon man’s feelings immediately” (35). Aesthetic education was

necessary to understand the political implications of art. Without such knowledge of aesthetic education, humanity could not reach its ultimate moral state of freedom.

### Schiller: Art and Morality

Schiller directs readers to his thesis of aesthetic education for morality in his first letter. He writes, “I shall be treating of a subject which has a direct connexion [sic] with all that is best in human happiness, and no very distant connexion [sic] with what is noblest in our moral nature” (3). In order to address the issues of necessity that obstructed humanity’s moral state of freedom, Schiller figured out a way to bring humanity into harmony through “Beauty” (3). He knew that humanity could be enslaved by either sense or reason. Therefore, he postulated that through the beautiful in art, humanity could be freed, as he states in the first letter, because through the “technical form [i.e., the beautiful in art] . . . truth is made manifest to the intellect” (3). Schiller tells us in his ninth letter, after all, that “[t]ruth lives on in the illusion of art” (57). To get to this truth, Schiller writes in his first letter that the “intellect must first destroy the object of Inner Sense” (3). In annihilating sense, humanity can ascend in consciousness to a level of intellection that moves beyond materiality—a selfish position of savage, appetitive desires—to rationality—a formal position of intellection and empathy for the human condition.

### Schiller’s Material Impulse

For Schiller, the materiality of humanity is limiting, and the restrictions of sensuality can constrict and keep humanity from finding this higher level of intellection.

In the twelfth letter, he terms this materiality “the sensuous drive,” which “proceeds from the physical existence of man” (79). Schiller writes that this sensuous drive “set[s] . . . [humanity] within the limits of time” (79). Such boundaries keep humanity in a state of “sensation, and it is through this alone that physical existence makes itself known” (79). Schiller asserts that “when man is sensible of the present, the whole infinitude of his possible determinations is confined to this single mode of his being” (79). Furthermore, he adds that if “this drive functions exclusively, we inevitably find the highest degree of limitation” (79). Schiller writes that, as a slave to sensation, “[m]an in this state is nothing but a unit of quantity, . . . for his Personality is suspended as long as he is ruled by sensation, and swept along by the flux of time” (79). In the passage below, Schiller not only clearly writes against humanity’s exclusive dependence on such a drive, he also goes on to explicate the importance of this drive and how “[t]he domain of this drive embraces the whole extent of man’s finite being” (81):

[S]ince form is never made manifest except in some material, nor the Absolute except through the medium of limitation, it is indeed to this sensuous drive that the whole of man’s phenomenal existence is ultimately tied. But although it is this drive alone . . . [that] awakens and develops the potentialities of man, it is also this drive alone . . . [that] makes their complete fulfillment impossible. With indestructible chains[,] it binds the ever-soaring spirit to the world of sense, and summons abstraction from its most unfettered excursions into the Infinite back to the limitations of the Present. Thought may indeed escape it for the moment, . . . but

suppressed nature soon resumes her rights, and presses for reality of  
existence . . . . (81)

So what Schiller warns against here is that unless we, as physical beings, learn to transcend our materiality through intellection, we can forever be bound to this sensuous nature. Unless we travel away from the sensual on the wings of thought, we will be chained to our bodies; that is, of course, until our bodies are no more.

### Schiller's Formal Impulse

Schiller's resolution for such corporeal limitation is the formal impulse. He terms this impulse "the formal drive," which "proceeds from the absolute existence of man, or from his rational nature, and is intent on giving him the freedom to bring harmony into the diversity of his manifestations, and to affirm his Person among all his changes of Condition" (81). This formal drive "embraces the whole sequence of time" and "insists on truth and on the right" (81). It differs from the sensuous drive because "[f]eeling can only say . . . [that] this is true for this individual and at this moment, and another moment, another individual, can come along and revoke assertions made thus under the impact of momentary sensation" (83). However, "once thought pronounces . . . , . . . the validity of its verdict is guaranteed by the Personality itself," and "the moral feeling says . . . this shall be," then "you confess truth because it is truth," and "you have . . . treated one moment of your life as if it were eternity" (83). For Schiller, this formal impulse is when we reach our infinite point of intellection. During this impulse, we can imagine beyond ourselves because we see ourselves as objects transcendently. Schiller explains how the formal impulse works:

Where, then, the formal drive holds sway, and the pure object acts within us, we experience the greatest enlargement of our being: all limitations disappear, and from the mere unit of quantity to which the poverty of the senses reduced him, man has raised himself to a unity of ideas embracing the whole realm of phenomena. During this operation, we are no longer in time; time, with its whole never-ending succession, is in us. We are no longer individuals; we are species. The judgement [sic] of all minds is expressed through our own, [and] the choice of all hearts is represented by our action. (83)

This formal impulse is the point toward which we ascend in consciousness when we move away from and leave behind the sensual realm. We imagine the form of humanity to reach this height of perception. In order for us to be able to connect with the formal impulse, Schiller claims that we have to have a mediator, a way to restore us back to sense once we have pushed through the gateway of sensation and disregarded it to explore rational intellection.

### Schiller's Play Instinct

Schiller assigns the function of mediation between the sensuous impulse and the formal impulse to the play instinct. He terms this particular mediating impulse "the play-drive" (97). With its simultaneous two-fold function, this play-drive "deprives feelings and passions of their dynamic power . . . [to] bring them into harmony with the ideas of reason" and "deprives the laws of reason of their moral compulsion . . . [to] reconcile them with the interests of the senses" (99). Since Schiller declares "[t]he object of the

sense-drive . . . life, . . . designating all material being and all that is immediately present to the senses” as such, and he declares “[t]he object of the form-drive . . . form,” which “includes all the formal qualities of things and all the relations of these to our thinking faculties,” he terms the “play-drive . . . living form” (101). To this “living form” (101), Schiller “designate[s] all the aesthetic qualities of phenomena and . . . what . . . we call beauty” (101). Therefore, whatever can become “living form” can be termed beauty (101). Beauty activates the play-drive, which “cancels the authority of both [the sensual and the formal impulses] and liberates man physically and morally” (Hein 67). Hilde Hein, in “Play as an Aesthetic Concept,” writes that Schiller’s “play theory as so formulated is an unsatisfactory aesthetic doctrine” because it is not “clearly illuminated”; Hein writes that “Schiller does not clearly articulate the relationship between art and play” (67) and goes on to state that by this “[a]esthetic activity” of play, “Schiller refers [only] to the contemplative rather than the creative experience” (67). However, I contend that this play-drive functions in both experiences, and I find no problem in Schiller’s articulation.<sup>17</sup>

One interesting claim that Hein makes about the play-drive is that it performs a serious function in the development of humanity. She writes that “[p]lay is regarded as an assimilative activity by means of which circumstantial impediments are overcome and the agent gains active mastery of a situation . . . [that] he has passively undergone” (69).

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<sup>17</sup> Reginald Snell also discusses disjunctions in Schiller’s aesthetic philosophy in his introduction to *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, but where he found inconsistencies, I found congruities, and debating them at this time falls outside the scope of my research for this thesis. As I am no philosopher, Schiller’s philosophy, whether faulty or not, stands on its own. For more, see Schiller, Friedrich. *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*. Trans. Reginald Snell. New Haven: Yale UP, 1954. 14-16.

The way she explains it, “play is a form of conquest, and this is the basis of the pleasure derived from it” (69). In this way, I see Keats’s poem exemplifying play.

As Keats plays through poetic imagination, he reaches the height of his existence. By participating in imaginative play in composing poetry and casting himself in symbols of his objectified subjectivity, he overcomes his anxieties about vocation and his impending death. He realizes his poetic authority and connects with the form of himself through play. He no longer fears the loss of his physical life because as Schiller writes in the fifteenth letter, in play, “life becomes of less consequence,” and “our psyche accepts the reality of things, or material truth, with greater freedom and serenity once this latter encounters formal truth . . . and no longer feels constrained by abstraction” (105). Keats’s psyche, “by entering into association of ideas” (105) lets go of “reality” (105) through his moment of imaginative contemplation and composition. By playing with the beauty of humanity in signification, Keats accesses “the ideal of Beauty that is set up by Reason, an ideal of the play-drive, too” (107). When this contact with the beautiful happens, he transcends his corporeal body, reflects on his life objectively, knows himself as the ideal poet, realizes his poetic authority, and shuns his death warrant.

### Schiller’s Beauty

For Schiller, beauty is what leads humanity from nature to reason and then back again from reason to nature, and although it is ideal, it can be tainted by humanity. It is, after all, what activates the play-drive in sensuous humanity and what prompts the mediation from our most appetitive, savage places to our best places. In the eighteenth letter, Schiller writes that “[b]y means of beauty sensuous man is led to form and thought;

by means of beauty spiritual man is brought back to matter and restored to the world of sense” (123). This beauty, according to Schiller’s seventeenth letter can “restore . . . harmony to him who is over-tensed, . . . [give] energy to him who is relaxed, and thus, in accordance with its nature, . . . make . . . man a whole perfect in itself” (118-19). Two types of beauty are noted in the seventeenth letter: “[m]elting beauty . . . for natures . . . [that] are tense” and “energizing beauty for those . . . relaxed” (119). Schiller considers “a man tense when he is under the compulsion of thought, no less than when he is under the compulsion of feeling” (119). The following illustrates how the two types of beauty work to reconcile the nature of the human being:

Exclusive domination by either of his two basic drives is for him a state of constraint and violence, and freedom lies only in the co-operation of both his natures. The man one-sidedly dominated by feeling, or the sensuously tensed man, will be released and set free by means of form; the man one-sidedly dominated by law, or the spiritually tensed man, will be released and set free by means of matter. (119)

This passage indicates how beauty works to balance the whole of the human psyche. For Schiller, both natures are important as long as neither controls the psyche more than the other.

For Schiller, beauty could be life: it could lead to revelations about identity. As such, he writes in the tenth letter that it “would have to be shown to be a necessary condition of Human Being” (70-71) discovered through a “transcendental way [that would] . . . lead us out of the familiar circle of phenomenal existence, away from the living presence of things, and cause us to tarry for a while upon the barren and naked land

of abstractions” (71). In order for the human being to realize identity in this way through beauty, “two contrary challenges” must be confronted (77). Schiller explains these challenges in the eleventh letter to be “the two fundamental laws of his sensuo-rational nature” (77):

The first insists upon absolute reality: he is to turn everything which is mere form into world, and make all of his potentialities fully manifest.

The second insists upon absolute formality: he is to destroy everything in himself which is mere world, and bring harmony into all his changes. In other words, he is to externalize all that is within him, and give form to all that is outside him. (77).

This passage explains the transcendental process of realizing identity through beauty. Beauty enabled Keats to construct his poetic identity through speculation and the imagination. Leon Waldoff in *Keats and the Silent Work of Imagination*, in his chapter titled “*The Fall of Hyperion: Identity, Imagination, and Reality*,” discusses how knowledge is linked to identity through the imagination (184). In essence, human beings must learn themselves and will themselves through such a transcendental process, and beauty is the catalyst that instigates the play-drive for this self-actualization process to begin. Encountering the beautiful leads us to our highest sense of humanity and fulfillment.

### Keats and Beauty

In *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, the beauty Keats encounters and expresses is Schiller’s notion of melting beauty. Tense Keats “is under the compulsion of thought”

and “under the compulsion of feeling” (119), and he wrestles with these tensions in his psyche by casting himself into fragmented symbols to try to reconnect himself to the whole of his being. In so doing, Keats chooses to imagine himself in Grecian surroundings perhaps because, as Schiller reminds in his sixth letter, “[t]he Greeks . . . are . . . our rivals . . . [and] our models” (31). Schiller goes on about the Greeks:

[T]hey were wedded to all the delights of art and all the dignity of wisdom, without however, like us, falling a prey to their seduction. . . . In fullness of form no less than of content, at once philosophic and creative, sensitive and energetic, the Greeks combined the first youth of imagination with the manhood of reason in a glorious manifestation of humanity. (31)

For Schiller, as well as for Keats, the Greeks represented the potentiality of humanity. “With the Greeks,” Schiller writes in the sixth letter, “humanity undoubtedly reached a maximum of excellence, which could neither be maintained at that level nor rise any higher” (39). Therefore, since the Greek “intellect was . . . compelled by the store of knowledge it already possessed to dissociate itself from feeling and intuition in an attempt to arrive at exact discursive understanding” (39-41), they could “not rise any higher” (41). They were unable to return to feeling once they had reached such a higher rational consciousness.

Keats, in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, manipulates sensation through the play-drive by imagining it while moving toward the formal drive; therefore, for him, reaching his ascension in rational consciousness involves at least a continual reliance on imagining his sensual nature. Keats realizes the value of experience, and he continues to

imagine it while ascending in consciousness. In the same vein, Schiller, too, realizes that beauty reveals itself through experience, and only through the experience of the beautiful can the human being move toward formal understanding. In fact, Walter Grossmann, in “Schiller’s Aesthetic Education,” quotes Schiller from a letter he composed to Goethe to make this point clear: “Philosophy always seems ridiculous whenever it wants to enlarge knowledge by itself and to give laws to the world without acknowledging its dependency on experience” (34). Aware of the need for the beautiful to move humanity toward the formal understanding, Schiller accepts that experiencing the beautiful, no matter how tragic it seems as we experience it at the surface level of our senses, can lead us to find the whole of ourselves.

In Keats’s poem, the tragic sense of beauty he connects to through trying to connect with the form of himself is the suffering shared by humanity. R. D. Miller in *Schiller and the Ideal of Freedom* elucidates that “Schiller, examining the grounds for the pleasure which we take in tragic objects, comes to the conclusion that this pleasure arises from the sense of moral freedom . . . tragedy imparts” (22). Therefore, Keats, coming to realize the tragedies of humanity shared throughout the ages through his interiority, takes pleasure in this imaginative moment of intellection because he can “contemplate the natural world from a safe distance, so that the rational side of [his] . . . nature has an advantage over the sensuous side” (Miller 22). In effect, he appreciates the beautiful art of the humanity he is a part of and places value on beauty because he knows it will sustain his subjectivity long after his death. His form withstands his nature because it remains connected with the species of humanity long after his body is gone. Arnd Bohm, in “Just Beauty: Ovid and the Argument of Keats’s ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn,’” asserts that

Keats believed “that the beautiful, not the sublime, c[ould] be a healing influence” (3), and in this poem, he needed to experience this sense of healing. He needed to heal his anxieties about death, about immortality, about his poetic insecurities. Along these lines, art and the beauty of humanity as he encountered and expressed it in this poem served a religious purpose for Keats. He was self-medicating and trying to self-assuage by composing poetry and expressing fleeting life through eternal art. By projecting symbols of his objectified subjectivity into a poetic composition, Keats uses the aesthetic to capture the beauty of his interiority—his beautiful, rational mind and his beautiful, natural life—in text—to render himself in poetry—in essence, as both poet and poem.

Symbols as Play: Objectified Subjectivity in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*

In *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, Keats employs Coleridgean symbols to mediate back and forth between the subject and the object, as these symbols represent Keats’s objectified subjectivity. Such mediation—aesthetic play—allows him to move between the sensual and the rational. Lesley Sharpe in *Schiller’s Aesthetic Essays: Two Centuries of Criticism* writes that “[t]hough . . . Coleridge never alludes specifically to Schiller in his critical writings, there are striking coincidences of approach to certain questions” (35). Perhaps Coleridge’s thinking on symbol, which has the ability to reflect aesthetically the subjective back as objective, correlates in some way to Schiller’s aesthetics. Both seem to enforce a transcendental method toward understanding and knowledge. Terry Eagleton writes in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* that “if the aesthetic denotes the reference of an object to subject, then it must . . . be present as a moment of all our knowledge” (102). What I take this to mean is that Keats must find knowledge for

himself, and we, as readers, must find it for ourselves in the aesthetic. Truth in art must, in essence, be both relative and absolute in harmony. I realize that it seems implausible to say that truth can be both relative and absolute at the same time. What I mean is that the good in art is absolute, and we encounter the good in our own ways; therefore, the good is also simultaneously relative. Keats's use of Coleridgean symbols allows his poetry to present such a "reference of an object to subject" (Eagleton 102) through an "aestheticization of cognition" (102) in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*. He simultaneously knows and aestheticizes knowing using symbols of his objectified subjectivity in poetic composition. Richard Woodhouse even mentioned Keats's use of such symbols in a letter he wrote to John Taylor dated October 27, 1818:

The highest order of Poet . . . will have as high an imag[ination] that he will be able to throw his own soul into . . . any object he sees or imagines, so as to see feel & be sensible of, & express, all that the object itself wo[uld] see feel & be sensible of or express—and he will speak out of that object—so that his own self will with the Exception of the Mechanical part be 'annihilated.'—and it is the excess of this power that I suppose Keats . . . speaks [to], when he says he has no identity—As a poet . . . this is true—And it is a fact that he does . . . by the power of his Imag[ination] create ideal personages substances & Powers—that he lives for a time in their souls or Essences or ideas—and that occasionally so intensely as to . . . lose consciousness of what is round him. (*Letters* 1: 389)

From Woodhouse's passage on Keats's imagination, we can discern that Keats was known for his aesthetic play through his use of symbols in his poetic compositions. His

ability to encapsulate the human condition in symbolic play reveals Keats's sensitive perception of aesthetic beauty at both the sensual and the rational level. Eagleton asserts that "Schiller . . . define[s] the aesthetic as exactly the hinge or transitional stage between the brutally sensual and the sublimely rational," and that this mediation happens "[i]n the form of the so-called 'play drive,'" during which "the aesthetic condition reconciles the sense drive—the changing, shapeless, appetitive stuff of sensation and desire—with the formal drive, the active, shaping, immutable force of Kantian reason" (103). These Coleridgean symbols of Keats's objectified subjectivity allow him to manipulate the aesthetic and reconcile the sensual with the rational through play.

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#### From Sensual to Intellectual Beauty

Keats's letters and his poetry reveal his keen sense of and appreciation for the beautiful—in experience and in poetry—and his concern for the human condition that must endure suffering in life. His poetics evolved rather quickly as he began to process his brother's sickness and death while entertaining thoughts of his own. During such an evolution, he became more aware of the "gradual ripening of . . . [his own] intellectual powers" (*Letters* 1: 214). He said himself that "[n]othing ever becomes real till it is experienced" (*Letters* 2: 81). In fact, he admittedly writes in one letter that he composes poetry "with no thirst of any thing but knowledge when pushed to the point though the first steps to it were throug[h] . . . [his] human passions," adding, "—they went away, and I wrote with my Mind—and perhaps I must confess a little bit of my heart" (*Letters* 2: 81). That quote, in itself, represents Schiller's aesthetic philosophy insofar as the beautiful does move one from "human passions" toward the "Mind" through play.

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<sup>18</sup> Stillinger's edition of Keats's poem is the one cited in this thesis.

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<sup>19</sup> Though other editions were cross-referenced and consulted for understanding, the Wilkinson and Willoughby edition and translation is the version of Schiller's letters cited in this thesis.

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