CHAPTER IV

Fancy, Femme Fatales and Fanny Brawne
The period in which Keats wrote his odes and ballads is considered the period of his mature creations. But this period was also one of great upheaval in Keats's personal life. His brother Tom died. Keats nursed him during his last days. He saw death closely and describes it to the George Keatses in the letter of 16 December 1818—4 January 1819:

The last days of poor Tom were of the most distressing nature; but his last moments were not so painful, and his very last was without a pang— I will not enter into any parsonic comments on death — yet the common observations of the commonest people on death are as true as their proverbs.

Keats had been acquainted with Fanny Brawne for some time. Fanny fascinated Keats. She took interest in his work and appreciated it. His letters bear proof of his attachment to her. During this time Keats's poetic creation was affected due to Tom's death. He was not able to restart his work. Keats's friends, Severn and Reynolds, did not like Fanny. Brown's excessive attachment burdened Keats. Robert Gittings Records Brown's attitude toward Keats as well as towards Fanny:

Brown, though a welcome companion against depression, was also a complicating force. If he resented Keats's intimacies with other men, he was even more likely to resent the influence of women. He resorted to strange methods, while proclaiming the purest motives to "protect" Keats; he even, so he himself said, put indecent verses of his own making among Keats's manuscripts to prevent female prying. In Fanny Keats he seems to have recognized a lively and shrewd appraisal of masculine tactics that needed a different approach.
Keats wrote ‘The Eve of St. Agnes’ in January 1819 during his stay at Bedhampton and Chichester. His throat was getting painful and he could not go outdoors. He writes to Bailey about ‘The Eve of St. Agnes’ and ‘Isabella’ in his journal letter of 14 August 1819, ‘I have written two Tales, one from Boccacio call’d the Pot of Basil; and another call’d St. Agnes’ Eve on a popular superstition; and a third call’d Lamia [...].’

In late April, Keats started work on ‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’. After the gap of a few weeks, he started to write the most beautiful of his creations viz. ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’, ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ and ‘Ode on Melancholy’.

The first draft of ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ was written on April, 30 when Keats was working in the garden under a plum tree at Wentworth Place. ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ was composed in the mean time while revising ‘Ode to a Nightingale’. Keats moved to Wentworth Place at Brown’s invitation from Wellwalk. Fanny Brawne was living in the other half of the same house. He cherished the double benefit of the beauty of nature and his growing love for her. Robert Gittings considers that the inspiring force behind Keats’s Odes is Fanny Brawne:

Neither of the great odes could have been written by a man against whom all the world had turned. They are the work of a man overpowered in the midst of distress, by a joy of a greater beauty than even he can express.
He continued writing ‘Ode on Indolence’ in early June. ‘Ode to Psyche’ was completed next.

Keats moved to Shanklin Isle of Wight by July I from Wentworth Place to a cottage near the sea. The painful separation from his beloved was immensely troubling. His friend Rice was with Keats at that time. Keats was not able to write properly due to his illness. Soon he went away with Brown and began to write with intensity. During that time he was working upon ‘Lamia’ and *Hyperion*. With Brown he planned to compose *Otho the Great* with the intention of earning money.

Thus it was a period of high creativity in Keats’s life. However, it was also a period of hardship and turmoil. At this time Fanny Brawne distracted the poet’s mind and gave him some respite from troubles and unhappiness.

In the odes Keats’s projection of femininity is at its height. To a certain extent, Keats’s ambiguity toward the feminine persona, which dominates his earlier poetry, is resolved in this part. Their power and energy is acknowledged by Keats throughout the odes.

In the ‘Ode to Psyche’ Keats’s poetic persona undertakes a certain quest which ends in an erotic encounter:

* I wandered in a forest thoughtlessly,
* And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
* Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side*
In deepest grass, beneath the whispering roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet, scarce espied.

(Ll. 7-12)

The feminine figure, Psyche, is addressed as a ‘Goddess’ when the poem opens. Keats has given her the status of a goddess and writes this ode to glorify her as she has been neglected for a long time. The male persona is trapped in the passive act of gazing at the goddess. He is unable to bear the impact of her beauty. As a result he faints. He wakes to a vision of mating lovers in a green bower. The recurrent green bower symbolizes the womb.

Psyche represents imagination or soul while Cupid symbolizes love and passion. She is called the ‘latest born’ and ‘loveliest vision’. The poet compares her to Phoebe and Vesper but finds her fairer than them.

According to Mario L.D ’Avanzo:

This comparison suggests that his vision of the imagination is more beautiful, more gracious, and more radiant (that is, “fairer,”) than the other two goddesses of imagination in “Olympus’ faded hierarchy” into which Psyche now enters. For Phoebe’s light remains inconstant and dimmed, and Venus’ starlight cannot match the brilliance of Psyche. Here again, Keats identifies the imagination as the source of spontaneous, generative light inspiring the poet with vision.

Keats confessed in his letter of 14 February – 3 May 1819:

You must recollect that Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before the time of Apuleius the Platonist who lived after the Augustan age, and consequently the Goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to with any of the ancient fervour – and perhaps never thought of in the old religion - I am more
In the ode he is concerned about her marginalization. She was not worshipped and she had no temple and no patron. As a compromise the poet says that she is the ‘brightest’ and represents the ideal beauty that inspires the artist to create. He wants to restore her lost status and be her voice, her lute, her shrine, her grove and oracle. He declares that he will be her priest:

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind.

(Ll. 50-53)

Thus the poet assumes the status of a priest and gives Psyche, the status of a goddess in the tradition of the other Romantics.

The goddess is so important for him that he places her in his thoughts which remain a pure and ‘untrodden region’. In that ‘wide quietness’ the poet promises to create a ‘rosy sanctuary’. This will be nurtured by the gardener ‘Fancy’. Psyche will be provided ‘soft delight’ by the poet. Thus Keats suggests that Psyche, the imagination, functions along with Cupid, who represents poetic passion. Both passion and imagination play their parts in the creation of poetry. Keats places Psyche beyond the ‘fixed model’ defined by Irigaray. Patriarchy, according to
Irigaray reduces women to being simply ‘representations’. Keats’s psyche is a total subject unoppressed by societal or cultural boundaries. By placing her in the timeless sanctuary of the poet’s mind, he leaves her free to evolve.

In ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ the nightingale is addressed as a ‘light winged Dryad of the trees’. The poet is charmed by her song and driven into oblivion. He wishes to enter the world of the nightingale and ‘fade away’. Jonathan Culler claims that in a feminist reading ‘the appeal to experience is veiled but [...] as a reference to maternal rather than paternal relations.’ The poet by merging with the nightingale whom he endows with a female identity, operates within this mode.

The poet progresses to lose his identity completely and merge with her. Her world which can now be identified as the maternal world is preferable to the world of reality which is full of worries and troubles. He wants to flee on the power of this song to an eternal temple of delight where the ‘cloying’ and ‘fading’ the ‘fever and fret’ of the mortal or patriarchal world shall be left behind forever. In the patriarchal world young age gives way to the old which is full of decay and thinking is associated with sorrow. In this transitory male dominated world everything will decay. ‘Beauty’ associated with the beloved is a fleeting thing. Even the lovers will not remain to admire her ‘lustrous eyes’. The
nightingale evolves into a feminist messiah and leads the poet from the world of mortality to the world of permanance and ultimate happiness.

The poet chooses poetry as his medium to enter in the world of the nightingale. He says:

Away! away! For I will fly to thee,  
    Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
    Though the dull brain perplexes and retards.  
Already with thee! Tender is the night,  
    And haply the Queen — Moon is on her throne,  
    Clustered around by all her starry fays.

(Ll. 31-37)

He rejects the male world of 'Bacchus and his pards' and chooses 'viewless wings of poesy'. 'Poesy' in Keats's poetry is seen as a woman. Thus Keats is constantly charmed by the feminine persona. His letters also reveal his pursuit of poetry in real life. He accepts that his mind is already intoxicated by her voice. The night is presented as tender, symbolizing feminine characteristics. The moon known as 'Queen Moon' is royal and ruling on her throne majestically. She is authoritative and powerful surrounded by stars symbolizing fairies. She projects maternity by assimilating stars around her like a mother. The images that Keats associates with the nightingale are representative of femininity. The night shows the tenderness and softness while the moon shows royalty and her majesty. Thus he has shown all aspect of womanhood.
In spite of the moon and stars, the poet finds himself in darkness which is 'embalmed'. This image of darkness with boughs and flowers reminds us of the green bower. This re-entry is soothing and comforting to the poet. Dark caverns that signify the womb acknowledge the superiority of the feminine ability to give birth. This return to the primitive, natural origin marks a new beginning. The poet, in the later part of the poem, uses the image of opening windows. This image may be deconstructed to imply an acknowledgement of the power of the feminine, in this case symbolized by the nightingale. He desires death at this time. To the Romantics death gives relief from sorrow.

The nightingale is described by the poet as an ‘immortal bird’. She is immortal and cannot be destroyed by anyone. The song of the bird elevates the poet’s mood but the euphoric bubble bursts and he comes back to the real world. He realizes that his new perspective is not for any particular generation or time. It is beyond time and age. It influences everyone alike. It soothes the sad and lonely heart of Ruth when she was alone in a forlorn and unknown land. The poet feels immense sympathy for her. ‘But the moment of revelation is the moment of despair: the fairylands are “forlorn”, with no reality except in the dream of the poet.’ The realization of feminine power was too radical and too frightening for the poet. Keats’s superior poetic instincts led him to a realm that was
heavily obscured by the patriarchal culture. Stunned and stupified by his
discovery, he let go of it:

Adieu! The fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf,
Adieu! adieu! Thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music... Do I wake or sleep?

(Ll. 73-80)

But the effect was so strong that in spite of bidding her adieu he is
not completely out of the spell of the song of the nightingale. His last
question ‘Do I wake or sleep?’ shows his delirium and leaves him in a
state of uncertainty whether he is still dreaming or out of her spell.

In ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’, the urn is a feminine entity. She is
addressed directly by the poet as a female:

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Silvian histroian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme!

(Ll.1-4)

Being an ‘unravished bride’ she is virgin and chaste. Her purity and
chastity is highlighted by the poet. Patriarchy has always set high values
on female virginity. She is also silent, serene and calm. This is presented
as the idealized image of womanhood. Patriarchal definitions of the
perfect woman automatically privilege rationalism over emotionalism,
seriousness over frivolity and reflective over spontaneous. The urn is a
cold, voiceless, feminine creation by a man.

Its maternal aspect is evident by its images of wholeness,
embracing all nature and man in her own. Being silent, she performs the
role of ‘silvian historian’ who expresses a ‘flowery tale’. She is being
haunted by men as well as gods. The maidens are portrayed as shy and
traditional. There is a scene of mad pursuit, struggle and ‘wild ecstasy’.

The limitations of the feminine entity carved out of stone are
visible in the poet's comment. The youth on the urn is addressed ‘Fair
youth’ suggestive of beauty like a woman but on the other hand he is also
called ‘bold lover’. He is never going to achieve his love so it will remain
passive forever. Keats tells him not to grieve because ‘she cannot fade’
and always ‘be fair’. Her beauty is arrested in art. The lover’s love on the
urn is always warm, panting and young. While the human love results in
a ‘burning forehead’ and a ‘parching tongue’. The fear of losing love and
the desire to be loved is evident.

The Urn does not depict only sensuousness of young lovers, their
energy, enthusiasm and warm love but it also assimilates the other aspects
of life, the emptiness, desolation of the town as well as the sacrifice of the
heifer.
The urn is addressed as a ‘silent form’ highlighting the silence of a ‘perfect’ woman. Being silent she depicts a whole view of life. The poet eulogises her as the ‘Attic shape’ and says:

Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought  
As doth eternity. Cold pastoral!  
When old age shall this generation waste,  
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say’st,  
‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty’ - that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.  

(Ll. 44-50)

The urn reveals the mystery of life which ‘tease us out of thought’. Yet the poet is dissatisfied and calls her ‘Cold pastoral’ in the last stanza of the poem. But she is not cold and lifeless because the urn manifests a “magical view of life” that gives purpose and meaning to human life in the midst of suffering. The poet considers the urn a companion and ‘friend to man’. She removes the pain and woes of mankind. Thus ‘in this ode the urn becomes the means of fulfillment by objectifying the artist’s vision, giving it form and permanence, so that it becomes an enduring source of comfort not only to himself but to generations of men.’ It assimilates the qualities of serenity, maternal aspect of embracing everything into herself and even friend and companion to mankind.

‘Ode on Melancholy’ valorizes yet another feminine aspect. The andocentric vision seeks to simplify feminine existence. However in
Keats's poem, projected as the phantasm Melancholy, the feminine persona performs in the boundary-free region of the poet's imagination.

In the first stanza of the poem 'Ode on Melancholy', the poet refuses to go to Lethe, wolf's bane, nightshade, beetle or yew berries to arouse melancholy because it will not provide the true melancholy he is seeking. The poet has provided melancholy with regeneration and life giving functions:

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But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud.
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(Ll. 11-14)

The appearance of Melancholy is sudden like a fit. She has been compared with the 'weeping cloud' which gives freshness and new life to 'droop headed' flowers. Thus she is a symbol of fertility and life and revives even the dead objects of nature.

Melancholy has its presence everywhere. She is all pervasive from the morning rose, sand wave, globed peonies to the mistress's anger. The poet suggests that life must be enjoyed fully by absorbing the natural beauty of a morning rose. It fades as the time passes. In the same way the rainbow like appearance of the sand-wave is visible for a short time. So we must enjoy it rather than be sad over its transience. Keats shows the futility of his mistress's anger through these lines:
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Imprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

(Ll. 18-20)

The lover derives pleasure out of her anger by feeding on her eyes. She lives in the company of Beauty as well as Joy. They cannot be separated from her. In the same way she is associated with pleasure. She is not weak or humble. She is veiled, serene and powerful and even strong in her sadness:

Aye, in the very temple of Delight
Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

(Ll. 25-30)

'Veiled Melancholy' assumes the status of a matriarch ruling majestically in the temple of delight. She cannot be attained by everyone but by those who can bear her sadness and serenity. In the end of the poem the poet gives supremacy to the female psyche. The male persona will realize her power 'the sadness of her might' and is reduced to one of her 'cloudy trophies'.

'Ode on Indolence' creates an aura of what Keats described as 'effeminacy'. This stereotypical, patriarchal criticism of everything artistic being feminine or effeminate cannot be adhered to very long by the poet. Three figures, Poetry, Ambition and Love, appear serene and
calm with 'bowed necks, and joined hands, side faced,' dressed in white. The long white robes suggest the oppression of identities. The poet says:

[...]
Ripe was the drowsy hour;  
The blissful cloud of summer indolence  
Benumbed my eyes; my pulse grew less and less;  
Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreath no flower.

(L1. 15-18)

He is feeling dull and his eyes are 'benumbed'. His pulse is slow and cool. There is no excitement and he is insensitive to pain or pleasure. Thus Keats has linked poetic productivity to the capacity for passivity and submission. The state of indolence and lethargy is desirable to the poet because it is filled with creativity. Keats in his letter of 14 Feb–3 May 1819 equates indolence and nothingness to the state of effeminacy:

- This morning I am in a sort of temper indolent and supremely careless: [...] – In this state of effeminacy the fibres of the brain are relaxed in common with the rest of the body, and to such a happy degree that pleasure has no show of enticement and pain no unbearable frown.

Women, in patriarchal society, are excluded from the male camaraderie and conceived of as the 'other'. Kate Millet claims that 'Women have been placed in the position of minority status throughout history.' Keats too subscribes to this misconception by describing the act of creativity as effeminate. The poet treats the apparitions with hostility:

Oh, why did ye not melt, and leave my sense  
Unhaunted quite of all but – nothingness?

(L1.19-20)

But the poet is victim of the attraction repulsion archetype:
Then faded, and to follow them I burned  
And ached for wings because I knew the three.

(LL.23-24)

Consciously, Keats was following the patriarchal norms but his instinct led him deep into the feminine world. He identifies the three figures one by one. The first, described by him as ‘fair maid’, is love. Keats’s women are generally young and attractive. The second is Ambition, described as ‘pale of cheek’ and ‘ever watchful with fatigued eye’. But the third is the poet’s favorite:

The last, whom I love more, the more of blame  
Is heaped upon her, maiden most unmeek,  
I knew to be my demon Poesy.

(LL.28-30)

The poet is ravished by Poetry. He simultaneously loves and hates her. The poet’s sympathy is with her. She is also the ‘maiden most unmeek’ unlike the traditional women. He wants wings to go to them but at the next moment he shows his dislike for them. Ambition now turns into ‘poor Ambition’ and is treated as undesirable. He discards Poetry by saying:

For Poesy! No, she has not a joy-  
At least for me-so sweet as drowsy noons,  
And evenings steeped in honeyed indolence.

(LL.35-37)

The poet is confused in his thoughts. He declares his love for poetry ‘I love more’. But then he says, ‘No she has not a joy | At least for me’. The poet’s tussle needs to be deconstructed. But in his letter of the 14
February - 3 May 1819, Keats realizes that poetry is deserting him which is not good for him. He says that, '[...] I know not why Poetry and I have been so distant lately I must make some advances soon or she will cut me entirely.' Thus he wants poetry as his life long companion without any thought of separation.

To the poet indolence is desirable and sweet, because it is full of creativity. It is termed 'honeyed indolence' because 'An indolent day fill’d with speculations even of an unpleasant colour—is bearable and even pleasant alone[...]’ (Letter, 14 February – 3 May 1819).

He wants to be away from 'busy common sense’. Thus the poet wants a mood conducive for creativity where there is no dominance of reason. Reason, traditionally, is a masculine attribute. This state of indolence is equated with 'effeminacy' by the poet. Thus once again Keats’s inherent wish is for passivity and indolence which are feminine attributes. The poet is sleepy but this sleep is 'embroidered with dim dreams’. Thus sleep is full of imaginative creation. The poet’s soul is like a garden of poetic fertility with flowers, stirring shades, and baffled dreams. The morning is personified as feminine. Her ‘lids’ are filled with tears but these are the tears of May, symbolizing spring which is full of regeneration. He is unable to raise his head which is ‘cool-bedded in the flowery grass’. He wants to remain in this indolent state. So he asks these
figures to fade softly from his eyes and calls them ‘Phantoms’ and ‘Ghosts’. The poet’s exposure to the full range of activities of Love, Ambition and Poesy creates fatigue in him. According to Helen Cixous, ‘Women’s imaginary is inexhaustible, like music, painting, writing: their stream of phantasms is incredible.’

The poem, when read in the feminist perspective, provides an example of Keats’s futuristic vision of women triumphing over patriarchy not only by favouring sexual strength but through creativity and truth. The poet’s inability to raise his head indicates a masculine dilemma of self-definition.

‘To Autumn’, the last of the major odes was written a few months after the May Odes. Autumn is personified as a female figure. Autumn is the ageing companion of the ‘maturing sun’. Keats now delinks gender from sexuality. Autumn, the feminine persona, continues to hold her power till the end of the poem. She can achieve this by following the natural scheme of things. Paul de man says:

The deconstruction of a system of relationships always reveals a more fragmented stage that can be called natural with regard to the system that is being undone. Because it also functions as the negative truth of the deconstructive process, the ‘natural’ pattern authoritatively substitute its relational system for the one it helped to dissolve.

The first stanza describes the traditional functions of autumn. With the sun she conspires to give life and nourishment to the fruits. She plans
to ‘load and bless’ the vines with fruits. Her role is benevolent and maternal. She provides juice to the fruits. She even provides the opportunity for ‘budding more’. In the company of sun, autumn gives new life to plants. The buds bloom and grow into flowers which serve as food for bees. Autumn’s beneficence follows a natural circular pattern. In the second stanza, autumn is actually seen by the poet:

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, [...] 
(Ll. 13-17)

She is a familiar figure, calm and serene, amid her store of food. She sits with abandon, replete with contentment. Autumn is presented in multiple roles. Sometimes she is seen as a reaper who unusually enough takes a break. She is laborious and hard working. The smell of poppies makes her drowsy. She is a ‘gleaner’ also who gathers grain left by reapers after the harvest and keeps her loaded head across a brook. ‘Finally she appears as a vintager, still wonderfully relaxed in her vigilance ;[...].’¹² She has a ‘patient look’ and watches the oozing patiently.

In the last stanza, the poet encourages autumn not to think of the spring. The songs of spring are no more in autumn but the poet is not bothered. He says that autumn has her own music. The ‘barred clouds’
revive the ‘soft dying day,’ and give new life to ‘stubble plains’. The clouds have a regenerative effect. Autumn provides new life to dead lands. Autumn is gracious and regenerative. Keats’s vision of ‘sad, grey’ humanity of ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ has now changed to a calm and logical vision of old age.

The personified figure of autumn is replaced by concrete image of life, and of life unafflicted by any thought of horror. Moreover it is life that can exist in much the same way at other times than autumn.

Each one of Keats’s ballads projects a central female character. Each ballad narrates a love theme. The woman’s role in love relationship has been analyzed from different perspectives by the poet.

_Isabella_ is about ‘fair Isabel’ who turns into poor ‘simple Isabella’. Lorenzo is a young pilgrim in search of love. He fails to complete his pilgrimage. The rather sinister note in the introduction implies that something unpleasant is going to happen to the lovers.

Glimpses of happy days give way to problems. The lovers live in the same mansion. The ‘Continual voice’ of Lorenzo appears to Isabella ‘pleasanter’ than the ‘noise’ of the trees. Noise traditionally is not pleasant. It is harsh and not soothing. Isabella reduces her lover into a mere noise. But the discordant sound is pleasant to her.
Lorenzo has been compared to the ‘falcon spies’. He watches Isabella when she opens the door. He continually spies on her and tries to catch glimpses of her at the chamber-window. He spends all night longing to hear her morning footsteps.

But Lorenzo is unable to express his love. Through Keats’s narrative it is evident that Lorenzo is nervous of declaring his love. He wants to take initiative but like Endymion he is ‘waked and anguished’, his forehead ‘pale and dead’. He says:

And to his heart he inwardly did pray  
For power to speak; but still the ruddy tide  
Stifled his voice and pulsed resolve away—  
Fevered his high conceit of such a bride,  
Yet brought him to the meekness of a child.  
Alas! when passion is both meek and wild!  
(Stanza VI. ii.43-48)

Unlike the traditional woman waiting endlessly for her lover’s initiative, Isabella has to take the initiative of speaking to him because he is languishing in love and is unable to find the courage to express it. When Isabella sees his pale and deadly look she calls his name ‘Lorenzo’. Through her voice he gets the courage and energy to speak and declare his love for her. The reason of his delay may to be that he is afraid of her response. But Isabella’s can see Lorenzo’s condition. Lorenzo for the first time addresses Isabella directly in stanza VIII and declares his love for her in words. He assures that he will not do anything against her will:
The role of Isabella as described by Lorenzo is that she leads him from wintry cold to the 'summer clime'. She is the healer and comforter. Cold symbolizes death. Thus she leads him from death into life and regeneration. She regenerates his head into a plant. He also accepts that he gets the power of expression through her. His 'erewhile timed lips grew bold'.

For the first time we get information about Isabella's brothers. The two brothers represent patriarchy. In this poem the woman is not given any choice. They are cruel and hard hearted. Everyone is afraid of them. They appear totally evil not only to Isabella and Lorenzo but also to pearl divers, to miners and factory workers. 'In the name of glory' they are proud. They are rich, greedy, dangerous and violent. In short they are torturers who 'set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel'. They are also called 'blood-hounds' and 'money bags', Isabella and Lorenzo meet each other secretly. However, Lorenzo's eyes betray a 'straying from his toil'. The brothers are not satisfied only after killing Lorenzo who is below their status.
In contrast to her brothers, Isabella is pure and chaste. She is religions and performs her ‘matin song’. She is beautiful with ‘features bright’ and soft footsteps. Her happiness is short lived. After Lorenzo’s departure she is seen weeping alone in distress. She makes a ‘gentle moan’. Her health as well as beauty decline rapidly. She enquires about Lorenzo time after time, ‘with an eye pale’. She loses her glow. But the brothers create a false tale to appease her.

Lorenzo’s voice appears strange when she sees him in a vision. When he was alive he was unable to speak. As a ghost, he speaks with great effort. To Isabella, this strange sound seems like music. His voice is hoarse and tremulous. His eyes are very significant. They reveal the hidden secrets to Isabella about her brothers. But once the ghost of Lorenzo speaks, it speaks eloquently. He asks her:

Go, shed on tear upon my heather – bloom,
And it shall comfort me within the tomb.
(Stanza XXX VIII. ll. 303-304)

Through Isabella Keats represents the motherly aspect of a woman. She is a comforter and soother to Lorenzo. The comfort giving role of Isabella within the tomb reminds us of a mother who carries her child within her womb. As Argha Banerjee writes, ‘Women figures in Keats, are often seen as mother figures-fostering maternal care, affection, and
protection.' She is going to sing a lullaby for Lorenzo as if he were her child.

Keats highlights the glory of love, patience and tolerance of a woman through Isabella. His attitude toward Isabella is sympathetic but her representation is not of a meek and helpless woman. She has enough courage to go and search for her dead lover with full patience and hard work. She says:

Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord.
If Love impersonate was ever dead,
Pale Isabella kissed it, and low moaned.
'Twas Love - cold, dead indeed, but not dethroned.
(Stanza L.11. 397-400)

She goes to the place where Lorenzo was slain, cuts his head with a knife and takes it to her bosom like a mother does to her crying child. The old nurse, a confidante to Isabella is astonished to see that sight first but she pities her ‘dismal labouring’. The image of labor is also associated with childbirth. Isabella forgets everything except his dead body.

The garden pot is like a tomb to the dead Lorenzo. She buries his head inside that pot and nurtures it with her tears. It has a life-giving and reviving impact. Her dedication and sacrifice for her love without caring for her health and beauty shows her motherly attitude. Keats’s nostalgia for his mother is evident.
She never raises her voice against her brothers even after coming to know that they have killed Lorenzo. They do not want her to live happily. In the patriarchal tradition the ruthless brothers believe that she must be hounded because she dared to make a choice. Isabella does not leave the pot even for a moment. She does not leave the basil pot alone because it contains her love. The rather macabre attachment has Gothic elements. The vicious brothers feel their authority is being challenged by the flourishing basil so they steal it and damage it. Isabella is now doomed to a lifetime of tears. Helena Nelson says, 'Keats was, I think, imaginatively drawn to a type of love which has no future. Isabel and Lorenzo’s union is simply not a possibility: they are doomed from the start by social circumstances.'

‘La Belle Dame sans Merci’ is biased right from the beginning:

‘La Belle Dame Sans Merci’ or the beautiful woman without mercy passes a judgement in the title itself. Everything that goes wrong in the relationship of the knight and the Belle. Dame is blamed on the Belle Dame. This is one of the identified attitudes of the patriarchy. The patriarchy stereotypes women as ornamental, supremely virtuous or terrible evil. Elaine Showalter defined a feminist critique that focuses on ‘... images and stereotypes of women in literature, the omissions and misconception about women in criticism, and woman-assign [sic] in semiotic systems.’

We find the knight ‘alone and palely loitering’. He is haggard and woe-be gone. He does not look like a traditional knight who is supposed to be heroic and bold. He is filled with ‘anguish moist and fever dew’. The
knight's pathetic and degenerate appearance is the result of his encounter with the Belle Dame whom he meets in the meads. She robs him of his manhood. The knight describes his encounter with the lady:

I met a lady in the meads
Full beautiful, a fairy's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.
(Stanza IV. l. 13-16)

The Belle Dame exudes magical charm. Her wild eyes captivate him with their sensuousness. The knight, representative of patriarchy, treats her only as an object of beauty. He prepares a garland for her head, bracelets for her wrist and a girdle for her waist. In return for these presents he says, 'she looked at me as she did love'.

He 'set' her on his 'pacing steed' and subjects himself to the pleasure and entertainment she offers him. She sings a fairy song and feeds him some heavenly food like honey and manna dew.

The Belle Dame takes him to her 'elfin grot' and 'sighed full sore' which made the knight consider her a weak being. He feels powerful because he consoles her with 'kisses four'. She lulls him to sleep and deserts him forever.

In his dream the knight encounters pale kings, princes, pale warriors, all representatives of the patriarchal forces of society. As Susan J. Wolfson points out:
It is significant that the chorus who identifies the lady as 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'- kings, princes, warriors, knight- are representative figures of a patriarchal order defined by quest, battle, conquest, and government, and secured by rejection of the indulgences the Knight associates with her, namely a zone of erotic luxury, sensuality, and near infantile pleasure.  

Keats's poem elicits such a meaning when analysed in a deconstructionist-feminist perspective. Thus she is the target of all attack and offence. But she is not solely responsible for what happens to the knight, rather 'The poet-knight takes an active part in the process that is enthralling him.' The lady is blamed by the patriarchal forces because she acts according to her own will without caring for what they will say about her. Thus through Belle Dame Keats represents that women are not dependent or weak. They prove themselves more powerful than men.

The role of the deserter, in traditional literature, has been the man's role. Women suffer, pine and languish. Keats has reversed the roles. Keats's knight has a feminine behaviour pattern, according to the patriarchal perspective. In the feminist perspective, however, we would treat this as a mark of evolution of the poet's craft. Gayatri Spivak says:

Deconstruction demonstrates that a certain view of the world, of consciousness, and of language has been accepted as the correct one and if the minute particulars of the view are examined, a rather different picture (that is also a no-picture [...] ) emerges!

'Lamia' deals with love strategies. Hermes strikes a bargain with a lamia, who desires a human shape. In return for the favour, she promises
to release a nymph from her power. The nymph has been made invisible by Lamia:

And by my power is her beauty veiled
To keep it unaffronted, unassailed
By the love-glances of unlovely eyes
Of Satyrs, Fauns, and bleared Silenus' sighs.

(Lamia I. ll. 100-3)

Lamia expresses her desire again and again to achieve a woman's shape in order to win her love. She says:

'I was a woman, let me have once more
A woman's shape, and charming as before.
I love a youth of Corinth-Oh, the bliss!
Give me my woman's form, and place me where he is.

(Lamia I. ll. 117-20)

The nymph is the representation of the traditional woman. She is shy with 'fearful sobs'. When she feels the touch of Hermes, her 'chilled hand' turns warm and she blooms like a morning rose.

Lamia's metamorphosis is painful from the snake into a woman, 'a lady bright, | A full born beauty new and exquisite'? She is chaste, pure and virginal. Virginity is a highly valued patriarchal virtue. Lamia has been given a brain also. Thus Keats presents an ideal and complete woman who possesses beauty as well as intellect.

Lycius is first seen by Lamia on a chariot looking thoughtful. His reason fades in the calmed twilight of 'Platonic shades'. He is unlike the traditional male in 'indifference', lost in mysteries, his mind 'wrapped
like his mantle'. Lamia falls in love with him. The fear of desertion is one of her first emotions:

[...] 'Ah, Lycius bright,  
And will you leave me on the hills alone?  
Lycius, look back, and be some pity shown!'  
(Lamia I. ll. 244-46)

Lycius is charmed by her ‘delicious’ words. He relishes her beauty and reciprocates:

'Leave thee alone! Look back! Ah, Goddess, see  
Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee!  
For pity do not this sad heart belie-  
Even as thou vanishest so shall I die.  
(Lamia I. ll. 257-60)

He reiterates his point revealing that he too is afraid of separation:

So sweetly to these ravished ears of mine  
Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou shouldst fade  
Thy memory will waste me to a shade-  
For pity do not melt!'[...]  
(Lamia I. ll. 268-71)

Lamia creates a beautiful palace in the middle of the wilderness lost in her charms; Lycius spends all his time in the magical dwelling. Thus Lycius is not the traditional hero fulfilling the needs and desires of the beloved. Instead he swoons, became pale and remains dependent on her for love. Lamia is called the ‘cruel lady’ who does not express sorrow or sympathy for his ‘tender favorites’ woe’. Thus Lycius is tender not strong. Lamia provides the regenerative power by her kiss to the pale Lycius. He experiences one trance after another. She raises his ‘drooping head’, ‘clear his soul of doubt’ by her song. Thus it is asserted that a
woman is compassionate and understanding. Also, a woman’s love can provide nourishment for the soul. Lycius forgets all his learning in her company.

Keats’s poetry is dominated by women. They are an inseparable part of his writing. At the time when Keats wrote poetry, patriarchy was dominant. He talks of the male poets of his time whose poetry is devoid of women:

Let the mad poets say whate’er they please
Of the sweet Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
There is not such a treat among them all,
Haunters of cavern, lake and waterfall,
As a real woman, lineal indeed
From Pyrrha’s pebbles or old Adam’s seed.
(Lamia I. ll. 328-33)

Apollonius comes to the wedding feast at the end of the Part I. He is the representative of patriarchy. He appears in philosophic gown with-grey beard, sharp eyes, smooth bald crown, walking with slow steps. Seeing him Lamia gets nervous and trembles. Lycius too does not want to face him. She enquires about him and Lycius says:

‘’Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide
And good instructor; but to - night he seems
The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams.’
(Lamia I. ll. 375-77)

Apollonius’s rational thinking terrifies Lamia. She fears she will be ‘houseless’ but Lycius reassures her and tells her not to feel sad because he plans:
How to entangle, trammel up and snare
Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there.
(Lamia II. II. 52-53)

Lycius's plan is to take Lamia's bridal car through the crowded street to be seen by everyone. This desire represents the male ego. She grows 'pale and meek' and tries to persuade him to change his plan. She even kneels before him and weeps because 'very little that is good in Keats happens in public before an audience of men.'

Lamia is aware of Lycius's pompous nature and his desire to show her off like a trophy. He invites guests in spite of her unwillingness. Thus 'it is not the pursuit of pleasure but of respectability and masculine approval that kills Lycius.' Lamia calls the guests 'revels rude', 'dreadful ghosts', 'gossip rout' who spoil her solitude. Lycius's act is not considered sensible. He is called 'senseless Lycius! Madman', who has invited the 'herd'. Keats's attitude toward Lamia is sympathetic. Her loneliness is highlighted again and again.

Apollonius, the representative of traditional masculinity, tries to solve the 'knotty problem'. His looks were severe making her nervous and cold. He 'gazed into her eyes'. He said to Lamia 'Begone, Foul dream!' As a result Lamia was 'no longer fair'. Lycius condemns Apollonius and says:

Corinthians! Look upon that grey-beard wretch!
Mark how, possessed, his lashless eyelids stretch
Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!
Thus Lycius realizes Appollonius true nature and calls him ‘demon eyes’. He still considers himself wise and Lycius a fool but ‘He is ignorant of the limitations of his own knowledge, he overrates how much he knows.’ He considers Lycius will work under his guidance and follow his instructions. He keeps gazing on her and discovers that she is a serpent. Then ‘with a frightful scream she vanished’. Thus Apollonius wants to destroy Lamia and protect Lycius but in the act of destroying her he destroys Lycius too. The tussle between reason and emotion culminates in the disintegration of both. Apollonius’s cold logic does not permit either to flourish. Patriarchy, through slow decay, had already begun to die away.

‘The Eve of St. Anges’ opens with the old beadsman. He is a ‘patient, holy man’, meagre, barefoot, wan. The poet’s attitude is sympathetic. The beadsman loves humanity, and prays for its betterment. The warm and glowing atmosphere inside the castle contrasts with the cold outside. The old beadsman represents the positive and beneficent aspect of patriarchy.

Madeline is an innocent, young virgin who believes in love. She is guided by the ‘old dames’ to perform certain ritual to get the ‘visions’ of
delight' and 'soft adoring' from her future husband on the eve of St. Agnes.

Her chastity is reflected in her 'eyes divine'. Many an amorous cavalier tried to pursue her but she did not pay attention. She is 'hoodwinked with fairy fancy'. Thus she is the idealized projection of femininity.

Porphyro undertakes a dangerous task. He comes across the moor 'with heart on fire'. But the manner in which he enters the palace is not heroic. He hides behind a broad hall pillar and waits for her. Angela the old nurse advises Porphyro to go away. She calls Madeline's family 'the blood-thirsty race'. Everyone is cruel and unkind 'in that mansion foul' excepting her who is physically old and weak. She is the maternal figure full of compassion and love. In contrast to her, Keats has portrayed in the form of Madeline's brothers the patriarchal society of his time. For Porphyro, Madeline's family and her brothers are 'Hyena foeman, and hot-blooded lords'. They have an open enmity with Porphyro's 'lineage'.

When Angela tells Porphyro his lady's plan, he immediately makes a strategy and 'his eyes grew brilliant'. At this Angela reacts:

'A cruel man and impious thou art--
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee.[...]

(Stanza. XVI. ll. 140-43)
But he assures her that ‘I will not harm her’ and ‘displace her soft ringlets’ or ‘look with a ruffian passion’. Thus Angela allows him to do ‘whatever he shall wish betides her weal or woe’. But she is concerned for Madeline and says to him, ‘Ah! thou must needs the lady wed | Or I may I never leave my grave among the dead.’

Madeline is compared to a ‘missioned’ spirit, carrying a ‘silver taper’. She has a glory ‘like a saint’:

She seemed a splendid angel, newly dressed,
Save wings, for Heaven. Porphyro grew faint;
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.
(Stanza XXV. ll. 223-25)

Before her purity and chastity ‘Porphyro grew faint’. He could not resist her charm like Endymion before the moon-goddess and faints. She is an object of beauty as well as desire for her lover. Keats invites Porphyro:

[...] Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed--
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray’d and fled.
(Stanza XXII ll. 196-98)

Pale and frightened, Porphyro rouses Madeline from her enchanted sleep. She wakes to encounter a pathetic version of her heroic dream lover. Prophyro’s actions are not heroic. He walks silently, peeps and talks in whispers:

‘And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite.
(Stanza XXXI. ll. 276-77)
Madeline admired Porphyro’s ‘spiritual and clear’ eyes and sweet voice in her dream. But now the real Porphyro appears changed. She says:

How changed thou art! How pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh, leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my love, I know not where to go.’

(Stanza XXXV. ll. 313-15)

Thus the mortal Porphyro is urged to act. Madeline’s voice represents the strength of womanhood. Her words appear to him ‘voluptuous accents’. He feels ‘eternal, flushed’ and ‘into her dream he melted’. Thus, recharged by her encouragement, Porphyro regains his confidence and the lovers flee from their warring, insensitive families.

Madeline is the ‘silver shrine’ and Porphyro a ‘famished pilgrim’. His search for the love of Madeline is like a pilgrimage which is achieved by him after many hours of toil and quest. He wants to be her ‘vassal’ her ‘beauties shield’. However, at the end of the narrative we find that it is Madeline who provides strength to the unhappy, fearful and disintegrating Porphyro. This deconstructionist reading inverts the conservative narrative where the male was always the source of strength and the weak female recharged through his power. This disempowerment of Porphyro implies a complete overhaul of power relations.
Keats's letters of the year 1819 are very important as they include his love letters to his beloved Fanny Brawne. These letters trace the growing intimacy between them and Keats realizes her growing power over him. He is very attached to her.

He was in touch with George Keatses and Fanny Keats as well. To George Keats he wrote lengthy letters talking about family matters, the death of their brother Tom, about Fanny Keats as well as about his feeling about women. Keats gives an account of Fanny Brawne to George in his letter of 16 December 1818 - 4 January 1819:

Mrs. Brawne who took Brown's house for the Summer, still resides in Hampstead - she is her a very nice woman and her daughter senior is I think beautiful and elegant, graceful, silly, fashionable and strange we have a little tiff now and then - and she behaves a little better, or I must have sheered off.

He praises her mother as a nice woman. He says that Fanny is a combination of good as well as strange qualities. But she also appears silly to him. He is, however, impressed by her beauty. This is the reason Keats keeps contact with her otherwise he probably would not have paid attention to her.

One aspect that impresses Keats is her height. Keats has a complex about it:

- Shall I give you Miss Brawn[e]? She is about my height – with a fine style of countenance of the lengthen'd sort – she wants sentiment in every feature – she manages to make her hair look well – her nostrills are fine – though a little painful – he[r] mouth is bad and good he[r] Profil is better than her full-face
Keats's perception of life changes to widen with the passage of time. He says that more knowledge makes people more inquisitive. He discusses this point with George in his letter of 16 December 1818 – 4 January 1819, ‘Mrs. Tighe and Beattie once delighted me—now I see through them and can find nothing in them—[...] This same inadequacy is discovered [...] in Women with few exceptions—'

He does not seem a satisfied person. He wants to discover new things in the world. Poets like Mary Tighe and James Beattie were once a source of pleasure to Keats. He enjoyed reading their works. But their close observation and knowledge made him dissatisfied with them. He finds nothing in them now but weaknesses. But this is not so with every woman.

Keats treats Georgiana like a friend. He tells her about his dinner at Brawnes with Mr. and Mrs. Dilke. He says that it did not give him any amusement because nothing unusual happened there. Keats likes beauty in everything so also in women. He likes young and attractive women as he frankly says, ‘I never intend hereafter to spend my time with Ladies
unless they are handsome- you lose time to no purpose [...]’ (Letter, 16 December 1818 – 4 January 1819).

In his letter to George Keatses, Keats talks about his empathy with Georgiana. He says his poetic creativity is influenced by his association with her in the same letter, ‘I never forget you except after seeing now and then some beautiful woman but that is a fever.’ Thus thoughts of women keep recurring in his mind. They are part and parcel of his very existence.

In another letter to George Keatses of 14 February – 3 May 1819, he imagines his poetic pursuit as a sexual drama where he perceives poetry, his coy muse, as a woman wooed by him. He says, ‘I know not why poetry and I have been so distant lately I must make advances soon or she will cut me entirely.’

He makes advances toward her as a suiter in order to maintain his love otherwise she will desert her. Thus the images he uses are often feminine and his poetic pursuit is similar to the sexual pursuit. In the same letter of 14 February-3 May 1819 he says ‘[...] In this state of effeminacy the fibres of the brain are relaxed in common with the rest of the body, and to such a happy degree that pleasure has no show of enticement and pain no unbearable frown.’ But this state is a state of calmness. The mind as well as the body is cool and relaxed. It is a
condition of complete bliss. The poet is able to relish the pleasure as well as the pain. It is a state of creativity.

The letter to George reflects a phenomenology which is quite similar to the view expressed by the Merleau Ponty that 'perceived space is orientated and rooted in the experience of the body.' Keats presents his view that ‘[...] Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced – Even a Proverb is no proverb to you till your Life has illustrated it – [...]’ Further in the same letter the heart has been compared to teat, a life giving source from where the mind sucks its identity.

Keats maintains his contact with his sister Fanny Keats during these years. He is always concerned for her and realizes his responsibility. He says to her, ‘[...] I feel myself the only Protector you have. In all your little troubles think of me with the thought that there is at least one person in England who if he could would help you out of them [...]’ (Letter, 11 February 1819). Keats is always aware of his separation from her. But she has always been in his thoughts. He tries to communicate his brotherly affection.

The letters addressed to Fanny Brawne show Keats’s deep feelings for her. Though apparently he accuses her of being cruel sometimes, she fascinated him very much. In his letter of 1 July 1819, addressed to Fanny Brawne, Keats expresses his unhappy state. He says that he has not
enjoyed ‘unalloyed happiness’ for many days. He has been disturbed by death and sickness constantly. He writes to her, ‘Ask yourself my love whether you are not very cruel to have so entrammelled me, so destroyed my freedom’ (Letter, 1 July 1819). She has power to attract him and influence him.

His love and devotion for Fanny grows gradually in further letters. He feels her power and influence upon him. These letters show Keats as a lover who is overwhelmed with the passion of love. He misses her in her absence. Keats always expresses his attraction for women. Sometimes they appear good but at times a ‘set of Devils’. He keeps mentioning them in his letter when he encounters them. But they never stay in his heart for a long time. ‘I never knew before, what such a love as you have made me feel, was; I did not believe in it; my Fanny was afraid of it, lest it should burn me up’ (Letter, 8 July 1819).

In the same letter he takes the role of a ‘Mentor’ for her and is ready to protect her from any harm. He likes to discuss her beauty in the letter of 8 July 1819, ‘Why may I not speak of your beauty, since without that I could never have lov’d you - I cannot conceive any beginning of such love as I have for you but Beauty.’ Keats describes his feelings to Fanny Brawne in his letter of 25th July 1819, ‘[...]the very first week I knew you I wrote myself your vassal;[...]’
Thus Keats does not assert authority over her rather he takes the humble and submissive role. In Keats’s mind, there is always the fear that women may dislike him especially because of his physical appearance. In the same letter he says:

[...] I cannot be admired, I am not a thing to be admired. You are, I love you; all I can bring you is a swooning admiration of your Beauty. I hold that place among Men which snub-nos’d brunettes with meeting eyebrows do among woman - [...].

(Letter 25 July 1819)

Keats himself accepts that his attitude toward women has changed to a certain extent. Earlier his eyes were of a wandering suitor. He observes them carefully. But now he has found his goal. ‘I am indeed astonish’d to find myself so careless of all cha[r]ms but yours – remembering as I do the time when even a bit of ribband was a matter of interest with me’ (Letter, 25July 1819).

With the maturity and attainment of his love, his feelings toward women also change and his thoughts are centered on one woman. He says, ‘My love has made me selfish. I cannot exist without you – I am forgetful of every thing but seeing you again – my Life seems to stop there – I see no further. You have absorb’d me. I have a sensation of the present moment as though I am dissolving - [...]’ (Letter, 13 October 1819).
In the same letter he says that 'I feel myself at your mercy'. This shows that Keats's love has overpowered him. He is enchanted by her love. Thus through these letters Keats's deep feelings for Fanny Brawne are evident. He is unable to come out of her spell.

The treatment of women is an important concern in Keats's poetry. The period when Keats was writing his poems was male dominated. He was working under the predominant social pressure to accept prevalent standard codes of masculinity. Keats was a poet of instinct. In his work there is a flexibility regarding gender for which Keats has often been criticized. He has often been termed effeminate and juvenile. The reason is obvious to a certain extent through these words:

That Keats did not fit conventional figures made him a convenient focus for ideological debate; indeed, a manifold of literary style and sensibility, personal appearance, class origin, and the legend of his death made him a magnetic focus. Keats's peculiar position on the boundaries of discrimination, as we shall see, makes highly legible the systems of power, both social and psychological, that inform the language of gender and influence its uses.\(^{23}\)

There is a constant tussle in Keats's work between the masculine and feminine perspectives which is responsible for Keats's ambivalent attitude. Susan J. Wolfson says that 'In his effort to create a poetic identity and win acceptance as a poet, he profoundly internalises and struggles with social and psychological attitudes about gender.'\(^{24}\) which made his varying attitude possible.
Anne Mellor is concerned about Keats's feminine attitudes. She proves herself effective by citing Adrienne Rich and Barbara Gelpi who rely on Keatsian 'negative capability' for his ideological crossover into a feminine poetic identity. Margaret Homan holds Keats's 'humble origins and poverty' responsible for exempting him from classification with poets of the dominant masculine tradition. The presentation of women in Keats's odes and ballads shows this ambivalent attitude.

In the sonnets and odes addressed to Fanny Brawne, Keats realizes the true power of womanhood. There is a gradual change in his attitude toward Brawne. He recognizes the status of the feminine entity that cajoles and controls through her multi faceted personality. This is the time when he surrenders completely before Fanny. In this way Keats delinks from the norms of patriarchy where women are given an inferior place and 'were incorporated as second class participants; as such could be controlled and dominated.'

Keats gives an account of Fanny Brawne to George Keatses for the first time in his letter of 31 December 1818 – 4 January 1819 where he described her as a combination of good as well as bad qualities. But later on he idealizes her as a complete woman. As Julia Kristeva says, 'Love, for example, is impossible without the capacity for idealization and
identification. Keats achieves the recommended level. His voice is intense and fully absorbed in his beloved.

The sonnet ‘The day is gone and all its sweets are gone’, was written when Keats met Fanny Brawne after a separation of many months. The meeting overwhelmed the poet. He was overcome by her beauty and charm that seemed enhanced. He says:

The day is gone, and all its sweets are gone!
Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,
Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,
Bright eyes, accomplished shape, and languorous waist!

(L.1-4)

He is dazzled by her beauty and tenderness. Her presence permeates his being. But at the end of the day when she is not with the poet, every joy and happiness evaporates. Thus she becomes the agent of hope and happiness for the poet. Those flowers and buds which were ‘a sight of beauty’ fade from his eyes because the ‘shape of beauty’ was no more in his arms. The poet is fascinated by Fanny’s voice, energy and enthusiasm. The poet’s conception of her is unlike the traditional conception where women are seen ‘as being ‘naturally’ material and spiritual, formless and confined as well as exhibiting passivity, instability, irrationality, piety and compliancy.’ She is his paradise. All symbols of her beauty fade with the end of the day.
The poet mourns her departures. It seems premature because with the end of the day their love should have come to fruition. However, in a mood-shift, the poet feels satisfied that he has attained full knowledge of love by reading the holy book of love. This knowledge is enough to keep him calm and satiated. For the Romantics, 'beauty' meant internal or spiritual beauty. In these lyrics, Keats encounters and explores the inner beauty of Fanny.

The poem 'To [Fanny]' was written one hour after Keats's visit to Fanny Brawne. She made her impact upon the poet who 'wrestles with love and tries to get back to serenity and poetry.'

In the opening lines of the poem, the poet desires to remove her memory from his eyes. After seeing her, he is occupied with her memories and gives into the temptation of dreaming about her. His eyes recollect the beauty of his 'brilliant' Queen. Her memories are fresh for him. Even her touch has a memory. He is imprisoned by her thoughts and completely helpless before her unlike the traditional male who has power and authority. Keats expresses his desire to enjoy full freedom as he used to do before. He wants to be liberated from her obsessive thoughts. He feels nostalgic for those days when he was not controlled by love. He shows his helplessness when he says:
What can I do to kill it and be free
In my old liberty?
When every fair one that I saw was fair,
Enough to catch me in but half a snare,
Not keep me there.

(Ll. 5-9)

At that time every woman seems beautiful to him. Every one attracted him for a short while but no one fascinated him for such a long time. In his letters he declared the same thing, ‘I am indeed astonish’d to find myself so careless of all cha[r]ms but yours – remembering as I do the time when even a bit of ribband was a matter of interest with me’ (Letter, 25 July 1819).

Keats feels that his poetic creativity has been affected due to his love for Fanny Brawne. He has become excessively attached to her and finds it a hindrance. She has absorbed his mind and thoughts. He accepts that she is his muse and the inspiring source of poetry. Earlier he thought that his imaginative faculty was at its height. He managed it in his own way. Now he wants to attain that power again. He desires poetic inspiration and wants to go beyond the ‘reach of fluttering love’ and for a while surmounts love to attain higher poetic creativity.

Her memories fill his mind and he is unable to think of other things. In order to create poetry he wants to go beyond thoughts of love. Keats’s friends considered Fanny an obstacle to his poetry because ‘she was offered, by the poet, a privileged and idealized status.’ Like in the
‘Ode to a Nightingale’, where the poet resorted to wine, in this poem too he exhorts wine to make him forgetful of his beloved so that he can create poetry. But at the very moment he realizes that wine is not allowed in the premises of love. He wants to banish the thoughts of unpleasant things associated with America which he refers to as hell. He longs for a ‘sunny spell’ and realizes that she is no one else but his lady bright who approaches him like the dawning light which is fresh and life generating. Thus she tantalizes the poet by her spell. Finally, he takes shelter and finds comfort upon that dazzling breast. Thus the poet contradicts his earlier statement desiring to banish her thoughts from his mind.

According to Derrida:

The process of ‘deconstruction’ which investigates the fundamentals of Western thought, does not do so in the hope that it will be able to remove these contradictions, nor does it claim to be able to escape the exigencies of this tradition and set up a system of its own account. Rather, it recognizes that it is forced to use the very concepts it sees as being unsustainable in terms of the claims made for them. In short, it, too must (at least provisionally) unsustain these claims.30

The poet desires physical contact. The ideal woman in Keats’s poetry represents all factors of womanhood viz. mother, sister, daughter and beloved. Fanny is presented as the epitome of womanhood. This image shows his maternal longings. Keats desires to place his ‘aching arms’ around her waist. He wants to possess her. She has intoxicated him. She represents the ‘sweetness of the pain’.
In the sonnet, ‘I cry your mercy, pity, love,’ Keats surrenders before his love. He is humble and appeals for mercy. He asks for help, requests her to pity him. She has absorbed him and her love has made him an object of pity. The poet claims that ‘Merciful love’ is true love and gives complete satisfaction. He wants her to be ‘One-thoughted’ and ‘unmasked’, pure and chaste ‘without a blot’. Irigaray says, ‘Female sexuality has always been conceptualized on the basis of masculine parameters.’ Fear of desertion keeps recurring in his mind. So he desires her to be single minded, stable and constant. If she does his bidding, he will be consoled. Keats is very possessive about her:

Oh, let me have thee whole — all, all, be mine!
That shape, that fairness, that sweet minor zest
Of love, your kiss-those hands, those eyes divine,
That warm, white, lucent, million-pleasured breast;
Yourself-your soul - in pity give me all,
Withhold no atom’s atom or I die.

(Lll. 5-10)

The poet’s imploring reduces him to an object of pity before his love and passion. He pledges to give full possession. He says that if she retains even a small portion of her love, even ‘atoms’ atom’ he will die for the lack of it. Even if she remains alive, his life will become purposeless. There will be no joy and enthusiasm left in his mind. Her love has life-giving properties for him.

In the sonnet entitled ‘Bright star! Would I were steadfast as thou art’, the poet desires to be like a star. Her wants to integrate its
steadfastness and 'unchangeable' nature into the love of his beloved Fanny Brawne. He says:

No - yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
   Pillowed upon my fair love’s ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
   Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender taken breath,
And so live ever-or else swoon to death.

(Ll. 9-14)

He wants to remain constant and still, and rest upon the 'ripening breast' of his beloved, feeling its rise and fall and relishing the pleasure. The use of the word 'ripening' suggests that the poet is looking forward to growing old along with his beloved. The poignancy is borne out by the fact that Keats knew that he was going to die. In his imagination, the poet creates an ideal life. What destiny denied in life, he achieved in poetry.

In the poem 'Ode to Fanny', the love of Fanny is celebrated. All his joys, sorrows, hope, fears are associated with her. Her beauty is enhanced by her smile and happiness. She appears to him 'brilliant' and 'bright'.

Keats is possessive about his love. He calls Fanny his 'feast' but does not want others to share. He says:

   Let, let, the amorous burn,
   But, prithee, do not turn
   The current of your heart from me so soon.
   Oh, save, in charity,
   The quickest pulse for me!

(Ll.20-24)
His earnest request in not to be deserted in love and he wants certainty in love. Keats requests Fanny his 'sweet love’ to save her quickest pulse for him. The poet requests her to be true and loyal to him. This shows Keats’s deep attachment to her. He does not want Fanny to go out to dance. According to patriarchal society women are supposed to live in the domestic sphere:

An ideal state of affairs was supposed to be one n which men and women operated in ‘Separate Spheres’ (the term comes from the 1860) women worked in the domestic sphere, protected from painful reality outside, but also acting as moral guides to their men folk, in that they provided for them also a pleasant refuge as respite from their external tasks. In this way, women’s’ role was to act as the enabler of culture, who made culture possible but she was not finally a participant in culture.32

Keats makes suggestions to Fanny in these words:

Be like an April day,
Smiling and cold and gay,
A temperate lily, temperate as fair;
Then, Heaven, there will be
A warmer June for me.

(Ll. 28-32)

He asks her to be like a soft and moderate lily. The lily, conventionally has served as a symbol of purity. Also, it can bloom anywhere without much nurturing.

Keats wants certainty in his love. He reiterates this in his letters. According to him a woman should not be like a ‘feather on the sea’ which moves with the blowing wind. Fanny’s thoughts occupy his mind all the
time. It is not only her presence which fascinates him but when she is away he misses her and feels uncomfortable. Keats accepts that he is jealous of her admirers. The jealousy often seems unbearable. Love itself is enough to give pain but jealousy adds further troubles. The poet assumes a humble aspect before her. Thus she is not the ‘negative object or “Other,” to man as the dominating “Subject” who is assumed to represent humanity in general.’ He earnestly requests her:

Let none profane my Holy Sea of love,
Or with a rude hand break
The sacramental cake;
Let none else touch the just new-budded flower.

(Ll. 51-54)

He does not want her purity and chastity to be destroyed by anyone. She is pure like a religious object, fresh and delicate like the new budded flower.

The Fanny poems represent Keats’s own experiences of love. His attitudes oscillate between those of Keats the man and Keats the poet. The human lover experiences human weaknesses like jealousy and possessiveness. The poet gleans out eternal passions.

The most important aspect of Keats’s attitude toward woman is found in his relationship with Fanny Brawne. She plays an important role in his life. She has been treated unfavorably and harshly in Keats’s life time and even in the century after his death. R.H. Stoddard on the
publication of Keats’s love letters to Fanny Brawne, April 1878 writes, ‘The influence of Miss Brawne was the most unfortunate one to which Keats was ever subjected. She made him ridiculous in the eyes of his friends and he hated his friend’s accordingly.’ The Victorians considered Keats a ‘dying poet consumed with unsatisfied love for a heartless flirt.’

Edward E. Bostetter writes that ‘Keats’s love for Fanny Brawne had turned out to be far different from the love he had so blithely envisioned in Endymion. Fanny’s beauty gradually takes on sinister connotations, it enslaves him and threatens to destroy him.’ Keats’s disproportionate degree of care and attention toward Fanny Brawne bothered even Severn. He considered her not only a hindrance to Keats’s craft, ‘but she was offered by the poet, a privileged and idealized status of which, the painter believed, she was not worthy.’

Fanny was the object of a raging passion. He was emotional and passionate about his love. ‘Fanny became the other great passion of his life and another cause to mourn when illness struck.’ Keats shows excessive emotionalism in his letters to Fanny Brawne which, made his male admirers uncomfortable regarding his manliness. His excessive emotionalism is the result of his ill health and unfulfilled poetic ambition.
The image of Fanny Brawne was redeemed gradually. The accusation that Fanny Brawne was a ‘heartless flirt’ began to fade. The redemption came for Fanny Brawne in 1937, when thirty-one letters were published by Oxford University Press. These letters were written by Fanny Brawne to Keats’s sister, ‘Though the letters did not really reveal very much, they at least showed Fanny Brawne in a pleasant light.’ The letters projected her love for Keats. These letters proved a means to protect Fanny. Thus she was ‘either transformed into a pillar of strength or else sentimentalized in a way she would have been the first to scorn: as a clinging, gently naive girl, ready to surrender herself with passive simplicity.’

Keats’s feelings were profound regarding Fanny Brawne. She was considered a distraction for his poetry by his friends. She became the great passion of his life. The more his sickness aggravated, the more he worried about his love. His insecurity regarding his love intensified his doubts, fears and uncertainties.

Thus Fanny Brawne is of central importance in Keats’s personal life. She is not a negative force damaging Keats’s artistic creation. From the feminist perspective she appears as a source of strength for Keats and brings some respite to his problems. He is very sensitive and possessive about her and this makes him jealous and uncertain at times. Edward E.
Bostetter says, 'It was inevitable that with his intense idealism Keats would fall violently in love and demand what no one could return. It was inevitable that he would discover there by the darker side of love, no matter who the woman was.'

Keats's letters of 1820 are mostly addressed to his beloved Fanny Brawne. These letters express his deep love and concern for her but they also reveal his disbelief and uncertainty about woman which is the result of his own childhood experience. He was not able to concentrate on his work as she distracted him. His health deteriorated badly at this time plunging him into severe emotional distress.

Keats was advised to stay indoors for sometime. He was satisfied with his confinement because he was living next door to Fanny Brawne. He was also conscious that she loved him. Even the house which was a virtual prison appeared habitable because Fanny was a frequent visitor.

In the letter of 4 February (?) 1820, Keats responded to her complaints. He with indulgence says that she may complain of his being plain and unromantic because love and her response are a continuous source of pleasure as well as inspiration for him. He writes:

[...]You had a just right to be a little silent to one who speaks so plainly to you. You must believe you shall, you will that I can do nothing say nothing think nothing of you but what has its spring in the love Which has so long been my pleasure and torment.

(Letter, 10 February 1820)
But his views regarding Fanny Brawne keep fluctuating. In the letter to Fanny Brawne, February (?) 1820, Keats exhibits a mixed response of his fear as well as certainty about love:

My greatest torment since I have know you has been the fear of you being a little inclined to the Cressid; but that suspicion I dismiss utterly and remain happy in the surety of your Love, which I assure you is as much a wonder to me as a delight.

(Letter, February (?) 1820)

This fear of uncertainty and insecurity is the result of his childhood experiences with his mother. In the letter of February (?) 1820, Keats talks about his separation and subsequent grief:

According to all appearances I am to be separated from you as much as possible. How I shall be able to bear it, or whether it will not be worse than your presence now and then, I cannot tell. I must be patient, and in the meantime you must think of it as little as possible. [...] No more of this -I am not strong enough to be weaned[...].

(Letter, 14 February 1820)

The separation tormented him. During this time Keats suffered a severe hemorrhage while returning from his visit to his friends in London. He was advised by his friends as well as doctor to remain indoors. He had to avoid excessive emotion and anxiety. The separation from Fanny troubles him and he jealously desires that she should abstain from company too. He fears that she will forget him. He assures her that he cannot stop loving her because his love is sincere and mature.
In yet another letter to Fanny Brawne, February (?) 1820, he assures her of his love. His failing health makes him feel helpless. He loves her so deeply that death seems preferable to a separation. These letters show Keats's deep commitment to his beloved Fanny Brawne. He expresses this in most of the letters of this period. He says:

My sweet creature when I look back upon the pains and torments I have suffer'd for you from the day I left you to go to the Isle of Wight; the ecstasies in which I have pass'd some days and the miseries in their turn, I wonder the more at the Beauty which has kept up the spell so fervently.

(Letter, February(?) 1820)

Keats suffered a lot in separation during his visit to the Isle of Wight. He recalls those days which he passed in extreme happiness in her company. It turned to misery after her separation. Keats wonders at the ever growing charm of the beloved who is able to maintain her spell over him. When separated Keats pines for her. The intensity of Keats's passion is reflected when he writes to her:

The power of your benediction is of not so weak a nature as to pass from the ring in four-and twenty hours—it is like a sacred Chalice once consecrated and ever consecrate. I shall kiss your name and mine where your Lips have been—Lips! why should a poor prisoner as I am talk about such things. Thank God, though I hold them the dearest pleasures in the universe, I have a consolation independent of them in the certainty of your affection.

(Letter, 1 March 1820)

The chalice, if once used in religions ceremony, must always be used. Their names are engraved on a ring that Fanny gave to him. He
laments that a prisoner like him can only talk about things like a kiss. But he consoles him-self with the belief that he is confident about her love. His confidence, however, fluctuates. He sometimes has doubts but at other time he feels confident. Sometimes he consoles her. He writes:

You fear, sometimes, I do not love you so much as you wish? My dear Girl I love you and ever and ever without reserve. The more I have known you the more have I lov’d. In every way — even my jealousies have been agonies of Love, in the hottest fit I ever had I would have died for you. I have vex’d you too much. But for Love! [...]. Have I nothing else then to love in you but that? Do not I see a heart naturally furnish’d with wings imprison itself with me?

(Letter, March (?) 1820)

This letter proves that Fanny had expectations from Keats. He, in turn, assures her that he loves her and will never desert her. Intimate association with her makes the love of the poet deeper. He feels terribly jealous of those who show an inclination towards her.

Her beauty has always attracted and tantalized Keats. It always seems ever new and more attractive to him. So when she passes his window, he admires her as if he has seen her for the first time. Even though Fanny complains that Keats loves only her beauty, he was aware that she had a beautiful heart too. Thus a very contrary view is found regarding Fanny’s beauty in the letter of 1819. This difference shows Keats’s gradual maturity regarding Fanny. At one time Keats pledges his entire love and devotion to her. He writes in the same letter:
Even if you did not love me I could not help an entire devotion to you: how much more deeply then must I feel for you knowing you love me. My Mind has been the most discontented and restless one that ever was put into a body too small for it. I never felt my mind repose upon anything with complete and undistracted enjoyment-upon no person but you.

(Letter, March (?) 1820)

To Keats there is no way out. He says that he will devote himself totally to her. His love for her would be much deeper if she declares her feelings for him. He is restless and dissatisfied. He begs for an answer. There is a strong undertone of passionate surrender. In the same letter Keats says that her company makes him forgetful of everything except her:

When you are in the room my thoughts never fly out of window: You always concentrate my whole senses. The anxiety shown about our Loves in your last note is an immense pleasure to me: however you must not suffer such speculations to molest you any more: nor will I anymore believe you can have the least pique against me.

(Letter, March (?) 1820)

She overwhelms his senses. Her anxiety, which is an expression of love, pleases the poet. But he is also concerned about her well-being. So he instructs her not to take pains to think about such things. Thus he exhibits care and concern for her. He writes in a letter of March (?) 1820 to her, ‘Perhaps on your account I have imagined my illness more serious than it is: how horrid was the chance of slipping into the ground instead of into your arms - the difference is amazing Love-[...].’ He declares that due to her he is more worried about his illness. Love seems to him amazing. He now wants to make her realize the mature intensity of his love. Here
Keats emerges as a passionate and possessive lover. He writes in the letter of May (?) 1820:

I shall be selfish enough to send it though I know it may give you a little pain, because I wish you to see how unhappy I am for love of you, and endeavor as much as I can to entice you to give up your whole heart to me whose whole existence hangs upon you.

He wants to make her realize the intensity of his love. He decides to entice her more and more to receive her whole love. Even if she is not ready he will try again and again because his whole life depends upon her. He seems adamant to get her response. If she does not favor him he will do his best to elicit an answer. He is now committed to her. He is extremely possessive of her and wants his monopoly over her. He claims in the letter of May (?) 1820:

[...] I am greedy of you – Do not think of anything but me. Do not live as if I was not existing – Do not forget me – But have I any right to say you forget me? Perhaps you think of me all day. Have I any right to wish you to be unhappy for me? [...], you must think of no one but me, much less write that sentence.

Keats is obsessed by her beauty. He instructs her to love him and think only about him. He wants to possess her. He constantly fears that she may prefer someone else. He is possessive of her and reacts when he finds her in the company of other men. In the same letter of May (?) 1820 he writes:
upon my Soul I can be contended with nothing else. If you could really what is call’d enjoy yourself at a Party — if you can smile in peoples faces, and wish them to admire you now, you never have nor ever will love me — I see life in nothing but the certainty of your Love — convince me of it my sweetest. If I am not somehow convinc’d I shall die of agony.

The same idea is expressed by Keats in his Fanny poems also. In his letters to Fanny, Keats again and again asks for a commitment of love. Her interaction with others made him feel insecure. He is excessively sensitive regarding her.

Keats feels jealous of his close friends when they turn their attention toward Fanny Brawne. He tries to convince her that his love is deeper and his feelings finer than his friends. In most of his letters, Keats cajoles Fanny constantly. This may be the result of his own experience with women, particularly with his mother. He earnestly pleads in the letter of May (?) 1820:

I do not pretend to say I have more feelings than my fellows— but I wish you seriously to look over my letters kind and unkind and consider whether the Person who wrote them can be able to endure much longer the agonies and uncertainties which you are so peculiarly made to create— My recovery of bodily hea[1]th will be of no benefit to me if you are not all mine when I am well. For god’s sake save me — or tell me my passion is of too awful a nature for you.

Keats is afraid that her attention may wander. That she is meeting other people makes him insecure. His letters reveal his true and earnest love for her and so he wants her to read those letters. He is unable to bear
the agonies and uncertainties of the situation. The expression of Keats's excessive and intense emotions toward Fanny Brawne made him seem effeminate or unmanly to eyes of some of his friends. He was heavily criticized for this. Swinburne, in a highly patriarchal manner, says that 'a manful kind of man or even a manly sort of boy, in his love making or in his suffering, will not howl and snivel after such a lamentable fashion.'

Keats, however, was simply a young man in love. The maturity of the poet created high expectations from the man. In the letter to Fanny Brawne, May (?) 1820, Keats emerges as only a lover pining for his beloved. Fanny is a highly desired woman. Her presence is life-giving and health generating. The intensity of love increases and reaches a dizzying height:

You are to me an object intensely desirable— the air I breathe in a room empty of you is unhealthy. I am not the same to you — no — you can wait — you have a thousand activities— you can be happy without me. [...] You do not feel as I do — you do not know what it is to love — one day you may — your time is not come. Ask yourself how many unhappy hours Keats has caused you in Loneliness.

Keats loves Fanny intensely and wants to dream about her all the time. He fears that she does not want to do the same. Fears beguile him incessantly. Primarily, the fear of death haunts the unfortunate young man. What was to come naturally to other people was denied to him. He could not approach her for a permanent relationship. He uses the agency of poetry and letters to express his feelings. Letters represent a highly
personal communication. Particularly letters written to a beloved are not intended for public viewing. The duality of certainty and uncertainty should be viewed simply as the experience of new found love doomed from the start.

In his letter to Fanny Brawny June (?) 1820 Keats declares his whole hearted love to her. He constantly brooded over her thoughts:

Upon my soul I have loved you to the extreme. I wish you could know the Tenderness with which I continually brood over your different aspects of countenance, action and dress. I see you come down in the morning: I see you meet at the Window— I see every thing over again eternally that I ever have seen.

He wants to make her realize that he loves her passionately. In the same letter he clarifies her complaint of ill treatment through words and deeds. He claims that this too is an expression of love. Keats's letters present the image of a lonely young man whose illness hampers him from enjoying the company of his beloved.

Keats wants to maintain high privacy in love. His friends sometimes joked about Fanny. This embarrassed the shy, young man. He values the reputation of the girl he was not able to marry. Some letters contain lovers' quarrels. In the letter of June (?) 1820 he attempts to appease her with compliments and persuasions:

If I have been cruel and unjust I swear my love has ever been greater than my cruelty which last[s] but a minute whereas my
Love come what will shall last for ever If concessions to me has hurt your Pride, god knows I have had little pride in my heart when thinking of you.

The letter takes on a serious note when he thinks of his impending death. The build up of pressure on Fanny must have been immense. Keats’s desperation to win back her good humor is visible in the following lines:

My dearest love, I am afraid to see you, I am strong but not strong enough to see you. Will my arm be ever round you again. And if so shall I be obliged to leave you again. My sweet Love! I am happy whilst I believe your first Letter. Let me be but certain that you are mine heart and soul, and I could die more happily than I could otherwise live. If you think me cruel— If you think I have slighted you— do muse it over again and see into my heart - [...].

(Letter, June (?) 1820)

In a letter to Charles Brown, 30 September 1820, Keats talks about his plan to leave England for Italy. He was aware of his fate, so he nominated Brown as a caretaker for Fanny Brawne after his death. Keats at one stage prohibited Fanny from meeting him in the company of Brown. He says in the letter of 29 (?) February, 1820, ‘I think you had better not make any long stay with me when Mr. Brown is at home.’ But after his death Keats appointed Brown to look after her. Keats tells him to ignore Fanny’s faults for his sake. Keats’s feelings regarding women have changed greatly. His thoughts are not rigid anymore. In the letter of 30 September 1820 he says:
I am in a state at present in which woman merely as woman can have no more power over me than stocks and stones, and yet the difference of my sensations with respect to Miss Brawne and my Sister is amazing. The one seems to absorb the other to a degree incredible. I seldom think of my Brother and Sister in America. The thought of leaving Miss Brawne is beyond everything horrible [...].

During his last days the thoughts of Fanny Brawne kept recurring in his mind. He visualized her all the time. He also used to remember her all the time when he was at Hampstead. At that time he was hopeful to see her again but in his last days, he felt helpless. At times, he wished to be buried near her house. He became so sensitive that he could not read her letters. Her handwriting became a source of torture.

The Keats Fanny love affair emerges as a tragic saga of unfulfilled and prematurely terminated love. The deep, intense passion of the young poet, doused with the consciousness of his impending death, provided his poetry with sensitivity much beyond his years.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


34. John Keats and Fanny Brawne


   http://englishhistory.net/keats/fanny brawn, html


