Chapter Four

Stylistic Analysis of the Odes

4.1 Keats as the Writer of Odes

In defining Ode, Peter Childs and Roger Fowler in The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms argue that the Ode in English is

a much-practised form of lyric poetry from the time of Ben Jonson to that of Tennyson, with sporadic modern revivals. The most elevated and complicated species of lyric, the ode was often written to celebrate notable public occasions or universal themes. It attracted an exalted diction and free metrical experimentation, highly formalized stanza-types rather removed from the main currents of English versification. The exponents of this genre were usually explicitly conscious of their classical models, hence, the strangeness of the verse forms: many poets attempted to render in English metrical patterns which were natural only in terms of the sound-structure of Greek (160).

They added that

The English ode begins with Ben Jonson and rises in esteem through the period of neo-classicism, culminating in some of the more exalted poems of the Romantics and then surviving in public Victorian verse…. [T]he odes of Keats published in 1820 (‘Nightingale’, ‘Psyche’, ‘Grecian Urn’, ‘Autumn’, ‘Melancholy’) are the best-remembered examples in this period, highly philosophical, intense, yet controlled (161).

The Odes of Keats belong to that group of works in which the English language finds an ultimate embodiment. If one were to point out the consummate embodiment of Keats' work in a perfect form, one would mention the Great Odes.

According to Paul D. Sheats,
Keats composed his first Ode early in 1815, while an apprentice surgeon-apothecary. It is addressed to Apollo. It imagines bards singing on the western sky. Shakespeare and Milton are among them. In the next five years, he wrote eleven more of which five the so-called “Great Odes” of 1819, stand among the most celebrated in English: "Ode to a Nightingale", "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Ode to Psyche", "Ode on Melancholy", and "To Autumn"( 86).

The principal formal variants – Pindaric, Stanzaic, Horatian and the irregular – had been mastered by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others. All remained working options for Keats and his generation. And yet the inherent paradoxes of the form were particularly obvious at this point in its history. Traditionally dedicated to the celebration of an external object, the ode and its characteristic figures, apostrophe and personification, were frequently read self-reflexively as displays of visionary imagination. It is taken as the loftiest of lyric kinds. In the fading neoclassic hierarchy of genres, it is the equivalent of the heroic epic. Greater or sublime ode predictably attracted satire. A lively genre of mock odes flourished throughout the period. In the slang of Keats' letters, the Ode was early "smoked".

In the five odes Keats wrote before 1819, his technical and thematic choices are suggestive. Instead Of abstractions of natural objects, he invokes mythological or literary figures – Apollo, Maia and Milton. He always avoids the extremes of the visionary sublime and the comic, self-parodic ode, and he employs the ode as a site of apprenticeship. He also employs it as a generic retreat from the burdens of his first endeavour after a long poem –"Endymion". His attitude towards formal discipline often seems similarly contrarian. With a prescribed form such as the iambic-pentameter couplet, Keats, rebels enthusiastically. "I Stood tip-toe upon a little hill", "Sleep and Poetry", and "Endymion" are the examples. With the cultivated rebellion
of the irregular ode, he seeks formal and thematic discipline – the "Ode to Maia" is patterned on the sonnet.

If Keats' early minor Odes provided respite from "Endymion", the Great Odes of 1819 were shadowed by another challenge, the epic "Hyperion" project, which by spring 1819 was going nowhere. In early January, Keats was already projecting a volume of "minor poems" intended for "those people...who cannot bear the burthen of a long poem" (SLK, 234). In a subsequent letter he wrote to Haydon, Keats joked about writing an "ode to darkness" (SLK, 243). He then began exploring the themes, and sometimes the terms, of Odes to come. "Nightingales, Poetry" were subjects of conversation during a walk on April 11 with Coleridge (SLK, 278). A decision to abandon "Hyperion" later that month precipitated a burst of lyric composition: a ballad "La Belle Dame", a choral "Song of Four Fairies", and "Ode to Psyche". When and in what order he composed the other odes is partly guesswork. The best guess is that he composed "Ode to a Nightingale" on early May 1819, a few days after "Ode to Psyche" and that "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Ode on Melancholy" and "Ode on Indolence" followed in May and early June. "To Autumn" was composed in September.

The craft that produced these poems is visible in editions and plates of manuscripts where one can trace Keats' cancellations and fresh starts. Byron's claim was his being not able to understand a bold metaphor from "Nightingale" – "a beaker full of the warm South". But Leigh Hunt spoke in defense of Keats by accusing Byron as a poet who was not accustomed to these poetical concentrations. In writing Odes, Keats concentrates and intensifies techniques he had mastered in other genres, especially a characteristic, slow-moving orchestration of sound, versification and sensuous imagery. Nowhere does one sense more keenly Keats' trust in the power of imagery to
arouse pain and pleasure, than in the Great Odes especially when it draws on the "Knowledge of Contrast" Keats thought necessary for a poem (SLK, 486). Yet the surface of these poems frequently bristles with other sorts of linguistic activity – puns, internal echoes, links to other literary texts and fine arts.

The Odes resist the Eighteenth Century practice of self-summary at a high level of abstraction. Their art frustrates paraphrase. All are concerned with poetry, its power over the passions and imagination, its moral bearings. At the age of twenty-three, he was aware that he was writing at random – "straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness" (SLK, 271). He did not welcome moral dogmatism in any form. His Odes are not "preresolved" with respect to their subject-matter. They do not flesh out abstract proposition with relevant imagery. When he wrote poetry, he said, "thoughts come about him in troops," from which "he culls...the best"; his poems could seem even "to come by chance or magic – to be... something given to him" (The Keats Circle, Volume I.128-29). The result is a poetry that does not so much pre-resolve thematic issues as represent them in ways that invite resolution, and completion, by the reader. This has been called the "poetics of cooperation". It is based on the reciprocal activity of an imagining, desiring reader. This cooperation envisages openness and generosity towards both reader and subject. There is no self-display because, as a poet, he always deplored it. Negative Capability is his principle. And then he also likes unobtrusiveness. Poetry to Keats "should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul and does not startle it or amaze it with itself but with its subject" (SLK, 87).

The happiest and yet the most deliberate of the Odes, about soul itself, is "Psyche" written leisurely and with moderate pains. This is the view of Keats himself. It actually presents a preview of the Odes to come. It is in the mould of earlier Odes: an
irregular form; an address to a classical deity. Unlike "Psyche", "Ode to a Nightingale" was written easily and quickly, most probably within two or three hours. Within a new and auspicious form, Keats arranges a host of themes, images, and practices from the work of the previous three years. He took the decision to abandon irregular in favour of the stanzaic form. The great technical challenge was the constantly changing principle of formal structure. With the stanzaic form, the poet could play the urgencies of passion and impulse. Drawing on recent experiments with the sonnet, he invented a new ten-line stanza; a Shakespearean Sonnet quatrain (abab) plus a Petrarchan Sestet (cdecde). Just longer than the Spenserian stanza of "The Eve of St. Agnes", and varied by a three-foot eighth line, e.g., "But here there is no light", this stanza also mitigated the obtrusive "pouncing rhymes" that for Keats marred both sonnet forms (SLK, 298). The result must have pleased him. With minor variations, he used it in all the remaining greater odes.

Like "Nightingale', "Ode on a Grecian Urn" traces a dramatic arc of imaginative approach and withdrawal. The poet's attention engages with one scene (stanzas 1-3), then another (4) and then rises to general reflections (5), the sequence joined by repetitions of words and syntax. The questions make enquiry that makes it embedded more in history than in the "immortal" nightingale. Keats regularizes the stanza, expanding "Nightingale's" trimeter eighth line to the pentameter norm he would use hereafter. The title signals a commentary on its subject. The opening apostrophe is direct and forthright in form. As it celebrates the urn, Keats' Ode demonstrates the power of poetry’s temporal art to confer what the spatial arts, painting or sculpture, cannot. Poetry can give life, warmth, and breath to sculpted figures on the urn. The first three stanzas display "pain and passion" in abundance: a "wild ecstasy" (10) and a lover’s grief (17-18), a love "for ever warm and still to be enjoyed" (26). In stanzas
four and five, imaginative engagement subsides, and the urn metamorphoses into the "ideal" but inhuman artifice.

One finds "Ode on Indolence" having been inspired by a cherished moment of emancipation, conferred by "honied indolence" (37) from the compulsions Keats felt driving his life: Love, Ambition, and Poesy. There is an attempt to reconcile Indolence and idleness, to present luxurious passivity as intrinsically creative. Yet, as a subject of an ode, the abstraction "Indolence" proves far less successful than an urn or nightingale, and for reasons that illuminate the conditions of their success. The poem blunts the energy of the odal form. When desire threatens to spread its wings, indolence rules against it: "so, ye three ghosts, adieu! ye cannot raise/ My head cool-bedded in the flowery grass" (51-52). Keats had not yet devised a successful stylistic equivalent to poetic austerity.

The abstraction that inspires "Ode on Melancholy" allows him to exploit an abundance of associated images, emblems from Milton's "L'Allegro". Instead of invoking the goddess Melancholy, the speaker addresses the reader, with an energy of specification one sees only here. With its striking allegorical personifications of Beauty, Joy and Pleasure, stanza three verges on the style of the Eighteenth Century sublime Ode. It suggests, with increasing intensity, the simultaneity of pleasure and pain, joy and sadness. He presses the poem to a moral verge where masochism and sadism meet. What he gains is an impressively strong, assertive lyric stance, able to welcome "the wakeful anguish of the soul" (10) without bitterness or complaint.

The poem "To Autumn" was composed on the nineteenth of September 1819 after a walk through the fields outside Winchester. It was a day of clear, chaste weather just after Keats decided to give up "Hyperion" and its artful Miltonic idiom. He turns, rather returns, more accurately from epic to an odal form he now knew well. In it, any
technical decision reflects on his songs of spring. The result is a sustained naturalism, a maturity and equanimity of tone and masterful craft. The poem looks not to myth, art, or abstraction for inspiration but to the present English countryside. It is the month of migration of birds, of the finished harvest, of nut-gathering and perry-making. Mimetic naturalism is apparent. What is more important is that "To Autumn" participates in a rich Georgic tradition of agriculture that links it to Chatterton, Thomson and Virgil. This is done in a diction that, like Chatterton's, is emphatically native. Keats banishes the Latinate vocabulary of Milton and Renaissance humanism in favour of words that are mostly agricultural and domestic. "To Autumn" brings his words nearer Chaucer. This winnowing of diction affects not only sound and imagery, but also the ode's moral stance, its apparently lucid substantiality.

"To Autumn" shows Keats' Shakespearean touch where "ripeness is all". Keats has achieved perfect maturity in the poise in which he contemplates mingled beauty and sadness. It closely resembles in tonal and philosophic antithesis "Ode on Melancholy". The patterns of frustrated desire in "Nightingale" and "Urn" have largely disappeared. The imagination seems content with what nature offers; the three stanzas represent the "progress" and "setting" of the season. Like the Spring Odes, "To Autumn" enlists the reader's imagination. But the ends seem to be more disinterested and impersonal.

The Odes' maturity, "To Autumn", is often credited to a philosophical acceptance of process. But philosophy is aided by many fine poetic and linguistic devices. The poem is marked by intense realism. Only Summer is named, yet it is clear that Winter is coming. That "warm days" are eternal is doomed. The bees too are doomed. However, this realism is neither eased nor sentimentalized by moral reflection. The
bees have their destiny not by vice or virtue. They live and work by the same power
that fills their cells. Change is deftly and precisely implied, but the text refuses to
represent or endorse it. The granary floor will soon be covered by the grain reaped in
the next picture; the half-reap'd furrow will get fully so; gleaners will follow the
reapers; the cyder-press will have its "last oozing". In the poem, Keats succeeds in
reconciling "poetry" and philosophy. The reconciliation is so close that the two
coalesce.

The Odes are of an impersonal kind. One cannot read them as fragments of
continuous spiritual biography, like the lyrics of Byron or Shelley. The poetic "I" is to
a large extent universalized. This is the chief measure of difference between the "Ode
to a Nightingale" and "Dejection: an ode" and between "To Autumn" and "Ode to the
West Wind". This impersonality on the part of the poet makes for the inclusion of the
synaesthetic imagery. Keats is not concentrating on himself and he had the sensibility
to perceive and portray the things which make a direct impact. The Romantic element
in Keats is not running into transcendental or pseudo-romantic or propagandist
excesses. He rather attempts to gain something of the quality of that "Negative
Capability" which he admired so much in Shakespeare's work. Keats was not a poet
who desired mere egotistical self-expression. This objectivity reached its peak in the
ode, "To Autumn". The Odes conform to the idea of "Negative Capability". At the
same time, Keats laboured hard to achieve perfect expression. An instance, sometimes
cited as pure and purely spontaneous poetry in which every word is compulsively
inevitable, is provided by the lines in the nightingale ode:-

Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery Lands forlorn. (69-70)
Keats was a consummate artist; his organisation of sensory perceptions into images was not the product of haphazard selection. Gillham in *Poems of 1820: And, The Fall of Hyperion* comments on this aspect of Keats:

Visual imagery is not over-emphasized, with a corresponding flatness of result, but rather you tend to touch, to smell, to taste, to feel, the living warmth of one object after another. And these sense-impressions are direct: they are rather our own critical abstractions from a more complex whole. Keats writes with a feeling for an object which makes us aware of its weight or smoothness or warmth without any too direct assertion on his part; there is always more than the one simple appeal. He is continually losing himself in one whole experience after another (217-8).

This is particularly true of the Odes, where Keats is predominantly of the earth, where the world is full of luxuriant vegetation, lush grass, fruits and flowers. There are certain characteristic images and sensations in the Odes which are a result of the synaesthetic quality of the poet’s descriptive power and which, in turn, enhance the overall synaesthetic effect of the poems.

Keats' world is soft, quiet and cool; against this rich background, the images which are most synaesthetic are to transmit sensations peculiarly apt to the situations. They link the main sensations and this is especially noticeable in the nightingale ode where various states and processes are gradually evolved. This is done by establishing at the beginning of the stanzas, a rich and synaesthetic image which sets the tone of the rest of the stanza. For example, through the mixing of tactile, kinaesthetic and gustatory images in stanza one of the nightingale ode, the prominent stage emerging is one "Letheness" and in stanza five the opening is rich with "soft incense" – sensations of touch, smell, taste and vision mingling to herald the fullness of the lines which follow.
Keats' poetry is more concrete, sensuous and less ethereal than that of the other Romantics. This sense of concreteness comes out most clearly in the Odes: yet it has been dismissed in many cases as merely a facet of Romanticism, as simply another expression of the ethereal and mystical element in Romantic poetry. However, Keats' Odes are not of this fashion. They are exceedingly sensuous. Their images are concrete, full of that quality of synaesthesia, which makes his Odes have many layers of images, each reflecting the other, until the internal organic quality of one of the Odes is like that of a room of mirrors.

The danger has been, therefore to see Keats too much as one of the Romantic school, to assume that his poetry works from the same basis as that of the other Romantic poets and will yield similar results through the use of common poetic method. Even Leavis, in his book *Revaluation*, has said that if the full character of the period is to be recaptured, "the full separate treatment of the individuals is necessary" (203). This appears to be of special importance in dealing with Keats, with whom the label "Romantic" seems to indicate that one is using a crude piece of shorthand to connote highly complicated sets of attitudes and beliefs.

Keats' poetry unfolds the richness of experience in a different way from that of the other Romantics. His poetry probes beyond the mere verbal level of language, to a level where the connotations of the words become highly significant, resulting in the synaesthetic quality of the imagery in the Odes. Very few poems of the rest of the Romantics have the power of synaesthesia which the Odes possess. This is the one point where Keats is more modern than the rest of the Romantics. His poetry fulfills the modern requirements of the critics in that the Odes are dense, complex, and although not ironic in such a way as modern poetry is ironic, they generally stand up pretty well to the criteria of "good poetry" today. Any notion of transcendental
essence was probably far from Keats' mind. His thought adhered steadily to the sensuous, not to the super sensuous and to the particular, but to the universal.

4.2 Stylistic Analysis of the Five Great Odes

To J. H. Reynolds, once Keats wrote that he himself could not distinguish, in "Hyperion" "between the false beauty proceeding from art" and "the true voice of feeling" (SLK, 345). The true voice of feeling can come out only when there is an organic relationship between subject and style. The style, the poetic diction and vocal accent should be the poet's own – free and individual, moving isometrically round the contour of his thought, revealing the sensational structure of his poetic experience.

This organic structure he could achieve in the Odes with a sure felicity. Like his own nightingale, he sings with his "full-throated ease" and his song finds its best expression in the long, slow-moving verses which expand into an intricate maze of vibrating melody with the onward march of his deeply felt sentiment and thought. The Ode with its complex structure was a form destined for the expression of Keats' richest and ripest observations and experiences. Cazamian, in his History, says –

The favourite themes in Keats's Romanticism are set in the Odes in short and elaborate forms, constructed with harmonious skill … Everything here cooperates to enchant a sensual and dreamy contemplation, the outlines, the colour, the emotion and the melody; the tone has a smooth suavity, and is free from any excess of softness or ease; indeed it is constantly relieved by rotes of vigour (1063).

As a matter of fact, the Five Great Odes of Keats are a standing monument to the extraordinary capacity of the poet to blend together the essence of Romanticism and the discipline of Classicism which constitutes the hallmark of the highest art. The
passion is romantic in its intensity and wild fervour. Yet this centrifugal romantic passion is chastened and subdued by an intellectual discipline which shows itself in the long-drawn, slow-moving lines, in the deft manipulation of the vowel and consonantal sounds and, above all, in the choice of on effective and felicitous word and the extreme density of the texture of the whole poem. The richness and opulence are by no means totally absent but every detail is precise and exact.

The speciality of Keats is the growing use of "participial" phrases as "epithets" to indicate the momentary arrest and suspension of energy and movement at a single point – "beaded bubbles winking at the brim", "purple stained mouth" etc.

Apart from these, the single epithets and compound words are equally rich and condensed - "drowsy numbness"; "sunburn mirth"; "unravished bride" etc.

The condensation in imagery and his use of syneasthetic imagery in his Odes is the result of an increasing concentration on the tactile effects as if he were eager to touch and grasp everything abstract or concrete.

The Five Great Odes will be analyzed in the light of stylistics since stylistics is a useful tool for a close reading of these Odes. Stylistics according to Barry, in his book *Beginning theory: an introduction to literary and cultural theory*, "is essentially a bridge discipline between linguistics and literature. Stylistics aims to show how the linguistic features … contribute to its overall meaning and effects" (203). Simpson in *Stylistics: A resource book for students* argues that stylistics "is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language" (2) [original emphasis].

Like Simpson, Widdowson views stylistics as an area of mediation between language and literature. In his book *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature*, he argues that
… stylistics is neither a discipline nor a subject in its own right, but a means of relating disciplines and subjects. … Stylistics can serve as a means whereby literature and language as subjects can by a process of gradual approximation move towards both linguistics and literary criticism, and also a means whereby these disciplines can be pedagogically treated to yield different subjects (4).

He suggests that literature should be treated as a discourse not as a text (6).

In this study, a stylistic analysis is made in order to pay careful attention to the language of these Odes and how it works and achieves its effects through employing poetic techniques and conventions. Stylistics shows one how the actual language of these Odes, in its myriad forms and techniques, generates effects and meanings.

Feeling, as Peter Childs and Roger Fowler in The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms argue

accounts of how a work of literature is created, or of how it affects the reader, touch on two areas of non-literary investigation.... Art is the area of creative activity in which organic sensation plays the strongest controlling part....Wagner argued that music is the representation and formulation of feeling itself. But literature has moral, social and rational dimensions that interfere with clear exemplification of any feeling-based aesthetic (85).

Thus through the stylistic analysis of the Five Great Odes, according to Widdowson in Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature, an attempt will be made to show specifically how elements of the linguistic text of these combine to create the poets' own feeling and to "arrive at an interpretation of [each ode] as a complete unit of discourse" (13) [in other words, as an organic form]. Stylistics will help "to go beyond the text of [Keats' Odes] and to consider the nature of the poem as discourse and to go beyond linguistic description towards literary judgement" (23).
The "curious amalgam of opposites is a common feature" (Widdowson, 1975, 31) in Keats' Five Great Odes and this "reconciliation of contraries" (Widdowson, 1975, 31) will be possible to be seen in a very clear way through a stylistic analysis of each ode. These contraries and opposites are integrated to create unity in one way or another and give an organic unity for each ode. The different stylistic features like metaphors, images, synaesthetic imagery, alliteration, and so forth are used by Keats in his Five Great Odes and the result is, as many critics say, and Cazamian says, in his History, that everything in these Odes "co-operates to enchant a sensual and dreamy contemplation" (1063). And he says that "the outlines, the colour, the emotion and the melody; the tone has a smooth suavity, and is free from any excess of softness or ease; indeed it is constantly relieved by rotes of vigour" (1063).

As a matter of fact, Keats' universality is a natural result of his form, expression, thought, and the central idea that he used in his Five Great Odes that were written in 1819.

### 4.2.1 Ode to Psyche

This is the quietest poem of Keats. It is also a prelude to the other Odes to follow and provides a picture of the luxuriant growth in future. It is also the first of the Five Great Odes. It has been written about the same time as "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" around March /April 1819. Although Keats had attempted to write Odes earlier, "Psyche" was the first to actually celebrate the right combination of the content and form. It is the first to have pagan-religious associations. Keats himself has taken the poem very seriously as a prelude to the other Odes – "This I have done leisurely; I think it reads the more richly for it and will I hope encourage me to write things in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit" (SLK, 294). Keats thus accepts its value as a
poem; it is rich and then it explains the sanguine hope of Keats of writing better Odes. For this scheme of things to be realized, "Psyche" is very important. It reflects upon Keats confidence; it can be taken as a revelation of his confidence. But unfortunately, at the hands of critics and readers, it has suffered neglect as compared to the other Odes. His letters make it clear that it is carefully organized behind a facade of apparent casualness. Varying stanza lengths, conversational rhymes and unobtrusive scheme words – are all there. The important thing is that the poet is forming this experience by moving between sleep and wakefulness. It compares with the opening in certain other poems – the opening lines of "Ode to a Nightingale". Further, the setting in the Ode is that of wandering 'in a forest', a setting which haunts Keats' later poetry – the landscape of leafy forests far removed from the disturbing hands of man.

This Ode is the first one Keats wrote in which one has a description of the foliage of life – it is not simply about Psyche. It is true that the statement that he makes could not "really" happen. But the statements about reality he is making can have a bearing on everyday living. The image of the forest, of luxurious, mossy foliage, is important in the poems following the Ode, more so than in the poems preceding it, because it takes on a meaning which imbues it with deep significance and personal immediacy for the poet.

The first two stanzas celebrate the goddess. Keats finds the two lovers at the highest moment of intensity. Like the lovers on the Grecian urn, they are neither apart nor together. They are in an embrace which is neither apart nor together. They have no beginning and no end. Psyche is revealed to him with astonishment. Revelation is through apprehension. The language is serene and leisurely. The words have a tension as the lovers have a tension in their embrace. In stanza one, the sensuousness of the words clashes with the dreamy quality of the verse. This shows the synaesthesia in the
Ode. Visual imagery is seen in "couched" as also in "saw two fair creatures" (9) seated in the grass. Besides, 'couched' also has the overtone of tactile imagery. Grass is important, for it is the couch of grass. The phrase "side by side" (9) adds another beauty with tactile sensation. The lovers are close together – "Their arms embraced and their pinions too" (16). The adjective "deepest" (10) adds to the sense of touch. The atmosphere which is given by the use of the word "deepest" (10) also adds to the beauty and the sense of the stanza. It helps to place the lovers not only in space but is also suggestive of a state of mind. They are deeply in love. "Whisp'ring" (10) animates the leaves just as "trembled" (11) adds to the animation of the leaves. Nature is alive and the lovers are one with their surroundings. Lines become increasingly synaesthetic as lines are loaded with images – one image after another. Roots add to the visual tactile sense. The lovers are enjoying in the multitude of "hush'd" (13), "fragrant-eyed" (13) flowers which are in the proximity of the brooklet. On the whole, the visual and tactile image, with a few auditory overtones, combines to give the sensation of the "soft handed slumber" (18) in which the lovers lie together.

There, in the poem, is a certain ironic nostalgia wherein the poet regrets the neglect of psyche. There is less emphasis on imagery in the second and third stanzas but the language is important. Changes occur in the words when one comes to stanzas two and three. The imagery becomes less mechanical; "chain-swinged" (33) is replaced by "swinged" (47). The word "teeming" (47) is suggestive of a full, lively existence. Another word "thy" (48) transforms the passage. Both the changes bring out a change in the image of the poem. The effect is meditative and composed, and just with wistfulness. But there is strength in the last few lines of stanza three which leads into the affirmative movement of the last stanza:

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: (50-53)

This landscape is indistinct because Keats is here describing the terrain of the mind, not of a physical one. Bloom (1961) says –

The implication is that the process is one of soul-making in an undiscovered Country: to build Psyche's temple is to widen consciousness. But an increase in consciousness carries with it the dual capacity for pleasure or for pain. The thoughts that will grow like branches in that hitherto untrodden region will be brown "with pleasant pain": the oxymoron, Keats' most characteristic rhetorical device, is peculiarly appropriate to any rendition of an earthly or poet's paradise (393).

A sensation of lightness and quietness suffuses the Ode which brings the necessary atmosphere to the work, enriching the qualities of tenderness, delicacy and refinement in the human situation when embodied in art. These qualities are nourished by the Ode. These qualities suffuse the imagery which suggests these attributes. Though only elementary among the imagery of the greater Odes, the images of this work give a glimpse of what is to come – a surer use of the synaesthetic quality that imbues the later work with a richness and concentration found only in parts of this Ode.

The poem shows an inclusive movement of thought; the poet has internalized what was an external vision and turned it into a spiritual possession in his quest for permanence, which, however, can be seen to acquire a poignant note of irony in the biographical context of the impending death of his hopes and his own tragic end. In the poem, there is a highly personal note about the poet's invocation of Psyche. There is also a personal remembrance in the poem.
O Goddess! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
Even into thine own soft-conched ear; (1-4)

These are the opening lines of the poem. They involve a little more than usual measure of personal involvement. As an intimate personal expression of a "remembrance dear" (2), the Ode illustrates the poet's own definition of Poetry. Keats says "Poetry... should strike the reader as a wording of his highest thoughts and appear almost a Remembrance" (SLK, 97).

After such a study of the theoretical and general aspects of the poem "Ode to Psyche", one is now concerned with its practical aspects – its technique, language, use of language, and the other linguistic and stylistic devices. Keats himself has been aware of these aspects in the poem –

The following poem – the last I have written – is the first and the only one with which I have taken even moderate pains. I have for the most part dash'd off my lines in a hurry. This I have done leisurely; I think it reads the more richly for it and will I hope encourage me to write other things in even a more peaceable and healthy spirit (SLK, 294).

The earlier poems, such as "The Eve of St. Agnes", are very distinct and even contrasted with this Ode and with what he is going to write. And this contrast is very important for him. He felt as though he was turning over a new technical leaf; it is not so much between careful and careless composition or between slow and fast composition. This contrast in his methods made him feel as though he was turning a new leaf in his composition. The poem has just such richness which Keats attributed to "leisurely" composition. This proves that the Ode is a significant milestone in his
poetic progress. And Keats has reason to trust his account of his own process. In writing it, he had passed beyond the stage in which the writer is dominated by the imperative and sometimes almost feverish instinct. There are alterations and modifications but they are all within limits which may be found cramping. He can modify his composition as he goes along and secure a measure of consonance between design and material. He knows that it will never be what it should have been.

Another remarkable trait of Keats has been the distillation of words in the sentences. Keats has managed to concentrate in one line or phrase the full rich essence of images. This may be called a verbal carpentry on the part of Keats. He achieves it in just two lines in the poem –

Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,

Blue, freckle pink, and budded Tyrian, (13-14)

No wonder that the poem has got richness and is quite different from lusciousness which is to be found in his earlier work. It seems that he has now learned to make a new approach to the writing of the poem.

The language in the poems of Keats has been excitingly brilliant. Perhaps none of his poems has been worded more gorgeously. None has used vowels, consonants and syntax with such care and affection. It appears as if the poet enjoys these techniques of English poetry. When the lines are read, it seems, the readers find them in abundance. What they do is to read them from inside out. From the underground they send a rippling music; the words at the surface live the usual flat life. The ears are ready to hear them. They are so rapt with them. Garrett Stewart (2001) has said –

So rapt by the syllables of English verse was Keats that even (or especially) at his most aching, gripped by mortality and stung by frustrated ambition, his words often become his theme. Ideally wielded, they heal. In the process they
become his diagnosed means as well. Trained as a physician, self-schooled as poet, Keats was an intuitive anatomist of language, its closely articulated skeletal structure, its ligaments and fibers, its muscular tensions and release, its rhythmic corridors of breath – while also a genetic specialist in its origins and mutations. With pen rather than stethoscope, he took the phonetic pulse of his every word through the listening ear of script (135).

Keats has nurtured verbal gifts. Sometimes the strain of his lines seem less an indulgence than a monitored experiment. One can notice this in the last seven lines of the first stanza of this Ode. Some of his most striking images are less finished products than the organised power of words –

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

His verse struggles with what it would take to be great. He may be a healer, philosopher but is more a poet who is trying to invent words which are craving with their own sense of inevitability and invention –

But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?

His Psyche true:(22-23)

"happy, happy" – the repetition of these two words carry the quality of being inevitable and invented. The words are very common. But in the line Keats invests them with inevitability and invention. They cannot be replaced from their position. They cannot be replaced by any other word. Their inevitability at the place is understood by the readers so that they accept them with the quality of invention. This
shows the organizing power of words. They are indelible. They are craving their own sense of inevitability.

The argument so long is about the language used by Keats in the poem. The first impression that one has about the lexicon of the poem is one of simplicity. The opening lines of the poem makes one remember the Eighteenth Century poems with their similar openings. The style may be the same but the words used by Keats definitely are superior in that they, being common, have a glamour of their own. On the surface, they are simple but underneath they are musical and the readers are attracted towards this music. This music is sufficient to enchant the readers towards them. Keats apparently appears to be moving, on the surface, with sufficient ease. But that is not so appealing and attractive to the readers who are eager to dive beneath and enjoy the music of the lines. The poet has selected them for their appropriateness of both their sound and sense, which makes them quite distinct from the common, conversational language.

In a poem, words have normally two identities. The first is their separate, individual identity; each one is a separate unit. The second is their collective identity; each one existing and being meaningful with the other. Each one as a separate unit carries with itself agreed-upon meaning or dictionary definition. One can call it the identifying function of the word; it is its denotation. They take on the "feel"; the words get a feeling of their own which comes to them by being together. One may even call it their suggestiveness, adding an extra meaning to them which is not in their denotation. This is called their connotation. The poet's choice falls on the connotation of the words. In his poems he is not so much insistent upon denotative meaning of words as upon the connotative. He wants to convey the "feel" of the words – their extended meaning that can actually convey the poet's own "feeling". The lines 50-53
are examples of that. Words separately, carry their denotation, their dictionary meaning, with themselves. But in conjunction, they carry a connotation that gives them a feel of their own. Each word in the sentence, separately, denotes the exact thing and sense. The pronoun "I" identifies the speaker. It is "I" and not anybody else. Only "I" – the one particular man – is ready to be "thy priest" and nobody else. This fixing of the listener-speaker helps in objectifying the undercurrent of feeling, some thrill that he feels in himself. "I" gets a specific personality, a particularity, by shedding its vagueness. It is "I" and nobody else. More confirmation of his strong desire comes in "Yes, I will be thy priest". "Yes" vehemently confirms the desire. If the poet had any doubts about being the priest, that phase has passed away. Any hesitation is gone. So the "I" gives a dual picture and "I" presents the old desire to be the priest. The desire works at two levels – the past and the present. In the past, he was not sure about himself; hesitantly he speaks to the Goddess. Because he is hesitant, and one also can call him shy, he feels that he is not capable enough to be the priest. And that is why the feeling of hesitation lingers through the main section of the poem. There is a conflict in his mind. And that is why he proceeds in the poem by remembering so many things of nature. That is the psychology of a personality that is weak. He moves round and round and traverses through natural things in order to make his mind firm. When it becomes clear, definite about himself, "I" takes on the form of confirmation of values. Then he is not doubtful about himself. His confirmation comes – "Yes, I will be thy priest" (50). As if he is taking an oath of total allegiance. And then he becomes more confident. Others may waver but the poem and the poet cross the line and make a promise with Psyche. The promise comes so strongly that the whole poem breathes with this strength. The poet now breaks with the past and is very much looking to the future "Yes, I will be thy priest". "Yes" is
there so loud to make his true assertion that there remains no mystery and doubt about
Psyche and the poet also comes out of these things and the poet, confident about
himself, makes a loud statement – "Yes, I will be thy priest". He is attached more to
his future. Their relationship – the poet speaks about their "warm love" (67) – is now
very much clear and affirmative. "Yes" is a strong confirmative word which comes
out from the poet. It does not leave any doubt now about the poet's weakness and
confirmation. There is no doubt and mystery now. The statement makes it very much
clear that the poet is very much sincere about his act. So the simple word "Yes" talks
about the past of the poet that is gone and gives a hint about the future to come. "Yes"
is one point of interest which extends itself to the poet's positive and confident feeling
– "I will be thy priest". The use of "will" in the sentence simply reinforces the desire of
the poet. After "Yes", the poet wants to be double sure of the fact of his being the
priest. In one small and simple sentence, the poet talks big about his desire. His
decision and determination are now so confirmed that the poet makes it clear that now
there is no hesitation, mystery and doubt about these things, either in his own personal
life or in the world around him. Once the poet has all this, he can be sure about his
creation. He is sure not simply about himself but also about the world around him.
With this confidence at both the levels, there is no doubt of creation –

And in the midst of this wide quietness

A rosy sanctuary will I dress... (58-59)

"Quietness" is "wide" – from the poet's "I" it travels to the universe and brings the "I"
of the poet under the cover of the poetic creation. Here he will create a "rosy
sanctuary" about his Goddess.

Fixing all these feelings in the poem, the poet can now imagine "soft delight" (64)
for Psyche. With Psyche, there will be a "bright torch" (66) and a "casement ope at
night" (66). Finally, there will be "the warm love" (67) in the casement. The end has been achieved by the poet. Love is there, finally. These words frame a small sentence. But when one considers them, the words themselves speak so much. Their analysis brings out the meaning. This is the beauty of the poem's lexicon. The words help in objectifying the undercurrent of feeling, some thrill of determination and hope. It appears that something concrete is there. It is not simply ethereal. The ethereal concretizes itself and so these words give a concrete feel to something that is ethereal. Something afar comes near and gives its feel and sensation to the ears of the listeners.

In other words, the words drop their denotation for connotations in order to carry and convey the feeling of the poet. They give the feeling of being natural and are arranged in the lines in a natural way. One feels that the poet has selected his words with more acute attention to various forces within the word. Every word releases its own aura of feeling. It is done through the extended meaning of the connected words, through the aura of feeling that is extended by bringing together only four words. Nothing can be more common than these words. But the idea that they convey is uncommon. This is what Keats wanted to do with words.

Phonologically, there is an exuberance of consonantal sounds in the fourth stanza –

Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incence sweet

From swunged censer teeming:

Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat

Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming (46-49)

With this sound, the lines move leisurely. It appears that there is no hurry either on the part of the listener-speaker or the lines themselves. They are working with the same rhythm and harmony. One is impressed by the composed state of the situation as opposed to the sick hurry and din and bustle of man’s life outside nature. Thus,
through its phonological structure, through the clever manipulation of the sounds of words, the poet sets the tone of the poem – positive and negative.

A study of the phonological features of the poem involves a study of the repetition of sounds there. Alliteration is prominent in "Ode to Psyche". It is prominent in lines 50-53 of the fourth stanza. Repetition of the same or similar consonantal sounds at the beginning of words occurring in the same line, or in two or three lines together is called alliteration in the words. The consonant "p" has been repeated several times in the words like "priest" (50), "pleasant pain" (52), and "pines" (53). Also the consonant "t" makes a very beautiful and wonderful music in these lines. It is repeated in different lines in the words like "priest" (50), "untrodden" (51), "thoughts" (52), "pleasant" (52), and "Instead" (53). This repetition is not just a sheer chance; it is also not something deliberate on the part of the poem or the poet. Everything takes place by the choice of the poet. A poem has a pace of its own as music has. The poet, like the musician, sometimes accelerates and sometimes slows down the pace according to the requirement of expression of his emotion and feeling. In this effort, alliteration works as a support to him. The repetition of the consonant sound follows the pattern of emotion and thought in the poem. It is the emotion or feeling of pleasure at being the priest of the goddess. Alliteration helps the sounds to make the emotion and related meaning clear.

The language is serene and leisurely, and the movement is in keeping with it. It is an image poised and still, but with a power stemming from the tension captured in the words, as there is tension in the embrace of the lovers.

From the words and language one now comes to the images. In stanza one, the first sensuous image clashes with the dreamy quality of the verse:

I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms,… (7-11)

Here is the first hint or the quality of synaesthesia in the Ode. "Couched" (9) can be taken as a visual image, as indeed the poet "Saw" the "two fair creatures" (9) seated in the grass. But "couched" (9) has overtones of tactile imagery; the two lovers are held by the grass; their position in the grass makes a couch of the grass. This sense is further enhanced by the phrase "side by side". This strengthens the tactile sensation: the two lovers are close together, and, although there is no kiss, they are so close together that "Their arms embraced, and their pinions too". The adjective in the superlative, "deepest", referring to the grass, again enhances the sense of touch. It is also what one may call atmospheric which helps in picturing the situation and to place the lovers not only in space but is also suggestive of a state of mind; they are deeply in love. "Whisp'ring" animates the leaves as does the "trembled" to the blossoms. Nature is made to come alive and the lovers are one with their surroundings.

The stanza becomes increasingly synaesthetic as the lines add image to image. The cool freshness of the damp roots of flowers is added to the visual and tactile sense of roots, in the hyphenated "cool-rooted" in line 13. The lovers are lying among a multitude of quiet ("hushed"), gloriously scented ("fragrant-eyed") flowers, which are cool-rooted because of the proximity of the waters of this stream. There are some weak moments in the first stanza when banal sloppiness intrudes in phrases such as "fainting with surprise" (8) and "soft-couched ear" (4). But on the whole, the visual and tactile images, with a few auditory overtones, combine to give the sensation of the "soft handed slumber" (18) in which the lovers lie together.
The next two stanzas are parallel in structure. They are also deliberately contrary to each other in emphasis and meaning. In the second stanza, Keats' gentle treatment is sustained where with a certain ironic nostalgia, he regrets the neglect of Psyche and catalogues all those proper dues to which she was entitled but which were never paid. There is less emphasis on imagery in the second and third stanzas, but their language is important. In stanza two, the machinery of worship is catalogued – temple, altar, choir, voice, lute, pipe etc. In the third stanza, the same apparatus is humanized and eulogized. In stanza two, the Olympian hierarchy is "faded" and Psyche is the loveliest of the gods still evident:

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

These are liquid and delicate, the richness and resonance of "sapphire-region'd" (26) and the elegiac first line being nicely qualified by "faded" (25) and extravagantly comic "amorous glow-worm" (27).

When one comes across the second and third stanzas, it becomes clear that the imagery has not become mechanical – the censer is no longer "chain-swung" (33); it is now "swinged" (47). The censer is itself alive. It is "teeming" (33), a word suggestive of a full, lively existence. But it is the use of "thy" that transforms the passage from its similar counterpart in stanza two. This changes the overall image of the poem, in that the "oracle" (34) or prophet" (35) will be Keats. The urgency of feeling which gathers behind the repeated "too late" (36), "holy" (39) and "I see" (43) is softened into a rather more gentle quietness by the unobtrusiveness of tone and language – "haunted" (38), "fluttering" (42), "faint" (42) and even "antique" (36). As
it is mentioned before, the effect is meditative and composed, and just with
wistfulness, and the strength in the last few lines of stanza three leads into the
affirmative movement of the last stanza:

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In same untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind: (50-53)
The imagery of the stanza becomes more synaesthetic and forceful as the lines grow
to their climax. Having created a more ideal nature, the poet proceeds to empower
within it a sanctuary for Psyche:

And in the midst of this wide quietness
A rosy sanctuary will I dress
Within the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same: (58- 63)
The perfect phrase "this wide quietness" captures the atmosphere of the poem. The
quietness can stretch afar, yet it has depth because Keats is in "the midst" of it.

The sensation of lightness and quietness that suffuses the Ode brings the necessary
atmosphere to the work. It enriches the qualities of tenderness, delicacy and
refinement in the human situation when embodied in art. The Ode nourishes these
qualities. The reader has to be fully aware of the quality of the imagery which
suggests these attributes. Though only elementary among the imagery of the greater
Odes, the images in this work are a glimpse of what is to come – a surer use of the
synaesthetic quality that imbues the later work with a richness and concentration found only in parts of this Ode.

4.2.2 Ode to a Nightingale

"Ode to a Nightingale" is the poem in which the poet talks about the misery in human life and also about the release from pain. This is the dominant impulse in most of his poems, especially the Odes. Another impulse is dominant in this poem. It is his desire of easy soaring flight in the remote world of "poesy" and fantasy (33). It forms a large part of Keats' poetry. It has an exceptional degree of distillation, of concentrated recollection of images and terms of expression, sensation, emotions, ideas and moods that are common and diffused throughout the rest of Keats' major works. As such, it is extremely strong in synaesthetic and kinaesthetic imagery. This is not simply because it is the longest of the Odes, but because the treatment of the subject involves a totality of experience on the part of the poet which he seeks to express with the maximum impact.

There is a dramatic development in the poem. There, the poet tries the gradual transformation of the living nightingale into a symbol of visionary art. By means of this symbol, the Ode explores the consequences of a commitment to vision, and as it does so, it implies the destruction of the protagonist.

The beauty of the poem lies in its inter-textuality. There are references throughout the work which are connected with other poems of Keats. The main theme, of associating creative activity with death, implying notions of withdrawal and self-immolation, can be seen in "Sleep and Poetry". Here there is the representative remark that in "the o'erwhelming sweets" (62) of poetry, Keats might "die a death / Of
luxury" (58-9). In a message from "Endymion" which clearly anticipates the Ode, the shepherds were –

Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,
When the great deity, for earth too ripe,
Let his divinity o'er-flowing die
In music,… (Book I, 141-144)

Here Apollo reveals his divinity by letting his divinity die in music. This can be seen as similar to the nightingale "pouring forth" (57) its "soul abroad" (57), where the bird is both declaring its identity or 'soul' and dying.

The Ode opens with a description, admirably suggestive in its sound effect, of a certain sensation. The vowel sounds and the blunt consonants - in "numbness" (1), "dull" (3), "drunk" (2) and "sunk" (4) – pull our voice and feeling down towards the black Lethe, river of forgetfulness. This state of drugged languor receives more direct, narrative expression, though less synaesthetic, in "Lamia" and "The Fall of Hyperion". The equivalent to his drowsy numbness would be the 'cloudy soon' which overcomes both Lycius and the poet himself in "The Fall of Hyperion".

The key words are: "aches" (1), "drowsy numbness" (1), "pain" (1), "dull opiate" (3), "Lethe-wards had sunk" (4). These words have a peculiar quality, created in part by their sound quality, and by the images they help to construct and the movement of the verse. In the first line, the image is almost one of complete internal kinaesthetic sensation; it is the poet's heart which "aches" (1) - a word with all the connotations of a lasting, throbbing, rather feverish pain. The numbness which "pains" (1) his "sense" (2) is a "drowsy" (1) one – one that has an anaesthetic effect upon the poet, and due to the movement of the verse and the dreamy sensation which the image presents, also, in part, on the reader. The poet feels as though he had drunk of a poison "hemlock"
(2), reminding one of the opening stanza in the "Ode on Melancholy". Even the "opiate" (3) is "dull" (3). Again, there is the feeling of fading from the mortal world into a world which is paradoxically richer in sensation, and in which the poet's receptiveness is the keener. The "drowsy numbness pains" (1) the poet's sense because numbness is related to the pain of existence.

As it was in the "Ode on Melancholy", to fall too far into happiness is to feel the touch of pain. Keats longs to be one with the nightingale, but because he is mortal, this cannot be and his sense of being held back in the mortal world "pains" (1) him. The happiness of the nightingale is reiterated as is happiness in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to Psyche" – "happy happy boughs" (21) and "happy, happy dove" (22). The sensations of lightness of colour, and of song are there, the latter being elaborated upon, in the last line. The brightness of "beechen green" (9) carries the colour of the beech trees into a realm of freshness, as is found in the "green hill" (14) in the "Ode on Melancholy" and the "green altar" (32) of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn". Even the image of the "shadows numberless" (9) loses its sombre connotations because they are cast by the luxuriant foliage of the beech trees. "Summer" (10) carries with it all the visual sensations of light and colour, and the tactile sensations of warmth and dryness. And Keats finishes by pulling out all the stops, with the richness and ripeness of the bird singing "in full-throated ease" (10) – an image which the reader himself feels by the drawing out of vowels. This music of sensation and feeling is in curious apposition to the dullness of feeling at the beginning of the stanza.

This brightness continues in the opening lines of stanza two:

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd for a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the warm South,

Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,

With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,

And purple-stained mouth;... (11- 18)

This description of the "draught of vintage" (11) magnificently condenses a metaphor recurrent through Keats' career. The use of wine as an image by Keats has always been of some importance. Wine is frequently associated with the ascent towards "heaven" (39), poetry, imagination and happiness – what the nightingale represents. Like the bird, the wine comes from a "long age" (12). The invocation to the wine image in stanza two shows that the nightingale and its song have given way to other thoughts, perhaps stimulated by the mention of "summer" in line ten. The atmosphere of summer warmth dominates the whole stanza. The imagery through the stanza is synaesthetic, mainly so through quick shifts of sensation – tactile, visual, and gustatory – and through half-hidden but powerful personifications.

In line 1, "the draught of vintage" suggests not only a visual impression of wine but all the gustatory senses of the cool, refreshing and sparkling juice of the grape. In line 2, there is a touch of delicious contrast to the all-embracing atmosphere of summer. "Cool'd" – an image of temperature – is reinforced by the "deep-delved earth" suggesting the cool darkness of a richly damp cellar. The earth image in Keats is always one of fertility and pleasant richness. Indeed, Keats wrote in a letter to Fanny Keats, "and, please heaven, a little claret wine cool out of a cellar a mile deep" (SLK, 252): and again in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, "now I like Claret. Whenever I can have Claret I must drink it. 'Tis the only palate affair that I am at all sensual in" (SLK, 258). Even the alliteration "deep-delved" (12) hints at the strokes of
the spade digging into the earth. The next lines are full of the sense of summer; there are images of movement, of temperature, colour and taste in these two lines.

The personification begins with the beaker, again a visual image overlaid by one of temperature and a sense of fullness, for it is "a beaker full of the warm South" (15). The "Hippocrene" (16), an image of a fountain gushing forth, is personified in "blushful" (16) – the marvelous red tint of the wine admirably suggested. And then comes one of the most synaesthetic passages in Keats' poetry –

With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,

And purple-stained mouth; (17-18)

Here one is brought back to the central image of tasting. The drinker is glutted; the reiteration of the word "full" (15) and the ripe fullness of the beaker suggest a desire for an intense experience.

But the rich, thrilling taste of the cold wine curves back towards the initial awareness of the suffering and the longing to escape as well. The impulse to leave the world leads inevitably to a recollection of the actual human life. The poet's desire was:

That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,

And with thee fade away into the forest dim: (19-20)

And this links in with the 'weariness, the fever and the fret' of stanza three. The happy and pleasant thoughts connected with the wine were simply a kind of "waking dream" (79); but his longing for wine has been a longing for oblivion – a yearning to "fade away into the forest dim" (20). In stanza three, one is back into the mood of stanza one – the aching heart and the sinking Lethe-wards.

In the third stanza, Keats sets out all the things he wishes to forget, all the unhappiness that is pressing hard upon him: in a word, mortality. Stanza three
presents a world of images which bear a distorted and ghastly resemblance to his own state of mind. It is a stanza of images of heat and sound; of the fever of human existence and the groaning of men. In this world of sorrow and leaden-eyed despairs,

Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,

Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow… (29-30)

there can be no actual prolonging either of what is beautiful in itself or of an intense response to it.

The first four lines of the fourth stanza present an image of movement – "fly" (31), "charioted" (32), "wings" (33) – and the exclamation at the beginning of the stanza is repeated. But the very language of this stanza has often been noted as the worst poetically in the poem; certainly the imagery is of a standard, stereotyped fashion until the last line. There is something decidedly affected in these lines: they do not have the concentration of the other lines of the poem. The images, though exceedingly charming, are self-consciously poetical in the bad sense. The moon is referred to as a "Queen" (36) and there is something ludicrous in the presentation of the stars as fairies. Keats then comes down to earth. This is reflected in his use of imagery. One no longer gets the weak offerings of the previous few lines, but a picture of "verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways" (40), the very opposite of the rather transparent heaven of the preceding lines. The light which reaches the poet down here on earth is not that of the imagined radiance of the "Queen-moon" (36). The tangle of the Verdure and the winding of the mossy ways are brought home by the effect of the words. The image is of darkness – "glooms" (40) – and tortuous paths, with a tactile sense of dampness and softness in the "winding mossy ways" (40). Keats' imagery reaches its highest point when it involves the tactile sense: when the poetic approach
is to the ethereal, the imagery loses its power; the synaesthetic quality is lacking in the ethereal sections, as in stanza four.

In stanza five, the flower image is given full reign. The poet is depicting delighted response to the sensuous beauty of this world in the forest. He is not describing what he actually sees, for he tells us explicitly that there is not enough light to see or distinguish the flowers on the ground and the blossoms in the trees and hedges. This is distinguished from the last one by the fact that here the poet is expressing the workings of his imagination rooted solidly in his notion of what the invisible blooms are like. This stanza has been taken as more than an encaptured piece of descriptive writing. The language of stanza five has its peculiarities. It is to be found in a contrast between such homely words as the "seasonable month" (44), and "soft incense" (42), "embalmed darkness" (43) and "dewy wine" (49). The last three phrases are notable for their quasi-religious nature, hinting at something deeper than merely the scents of flowers and nectar of the musk-rose.

In this stanza, there is a typical example of Keats' use of synaesthesia. In the darkness, he cannot see the flowers. But the song-haunted darkness stimulates the imagination; and here is that power of Keats, the power of the imagination to see and feel more than the senses of the physical eye and ear. The imagination converts the incense into something that is virtually solid so that it presents what is very close to a visual image. The "incense" (42) is "soft" (42) and does not hang about the boughs, but "upon the boughs" (42) of the trees. "Seasonable" (44) is a delicate adjective, full of mild restraint, and the mingling intensifies the massed, drenched richness of mid-May.

In the final stanza, Keats is tolled back by that word "forlorn" (71). Indeed, this line has a funeral association which connects with the later line where the song of the
bird is said to be "buried deep / In the next valley-glades" (77-8). It is to be noticed that out of eighteen words in two lines, only two have more than one syllable. This produces an effect of flat, prosaic reality.

If one looks closely at the imagery of the poem, one finds that the sections where it is most powerful, where the quality of the Synaesthesia is most apparent, are those which base not only their thoughts and sensations upon the actual, the external object – the felt concrete – but on the imagery as well. Such is the power of Keats' imagination that external objects are made to feel more concrete in the imagination. The imagery conveys sharper sense impressions of the objects than could be felt in actuality. This is one of the most densely packed poems of Keats, and in it the quality of experience receives great expression from the density and synesthesia of the imagery.

Inter-textuality plays an important part in the explication of the poem. While articulating his longing for wine, Keats achieves the remarkable feat of encompassing and appropriating a wide – ranging vista of history and myth to give enrichment and efficaciousness to the drink intended to revive the failing senses. What is urgently sought is a resuscitation. The wine capable of effecting the desired resuscitation is thus aptly related to the rejuvenating power of earth, of nature, to the vitalising potency of human culture. The absorption of the cultural west both in terms of mythological Flora and Hippocrene and in terms of the historical Provence and "warm South" (15) indicates a conscious evocation of tradition and adds a wholly new and rich dimension to the otherwise unedifying desire for an intoxicant. With Keats, this evocation is entirely in character. The allusion to Hippocrene is particularly significant, first because this well is a symbol of life-giving force, and secondly, because of its association with Pegasus, the mythical winged horse. Threatened with a
forfeiture of consciousness, the poet is in need of something life-giving, of some elixir. The wings of Pegasus who created the well (or Spring) for the Muses by the stamping of his moon-shaped hoof look forward to "the viewless wings of Poesy" (33) of the fourth stanza.

While Keats invokes the cultural west in terms of myth and history to give enrichment to the "draught of vintage" (11), he does not, or rather fails to, invoke the nightingale in terms of the classical myth as might have been expected. This is especially significant since almost all his characters having discernible classical antecedents are referred to their origin, either directly or otherwise, and can be properly understood in their immediate poetic context only by relating them to the original myths. Whether it is Hyperion and Apollo, Endymion and Cynthia, Psyche and Cupid, or Lamia and Lycius, or Isabella and Lorenzo, each character is seen to gain in meaning and suggestivity in Keats' verse only by being connected with its classical or mythical past. It is the past that gives sustenance to their imaginative reincarnation in the present. Perhaps one could claim that much of the illumination of Keats' poetry derives from a creative and individual assimilation of the past cultural heritage. The nightingale is denied the sustaining framework which could only have come from tradition.

The language of this Ode is as brilliant as its theme. In 1882, Algernon Charles Swinburne wrote in the Encyclopaedia Britannica that this Ode is "one of the final masterpieces of human work in all time and for all ages". Vowels are for Keats a passion, consonants an ecstasy and syntax a life force. It seems that Keats is so rapt with his words and syllables that readers are over whelmed by them. The readers, immersed in the Ode, feel a proximity to the poet and the poem. The words often become his theme. He seems to be an intuitive anatomist of language. With pen in his
hands, he takes the phonetic pulse of every word. He writes with the ear close to the music of the words. With the experience of a physician, he manages them, taking care of each and every word. The words seem to have the organizing power in themselves. Sometimes this organizing power seems to have grown weak. But the poet is always ready to rectify this weakness. The poet is ready with his pen as a physician is ready with his instruments. Like the physician, he is ready for muscular tensions of the syllables. It is so because of his preoccupations with the music of the syllables. The Odes are taken as the best examples of total control over the words and sentences. He took the phonetic pulse of his every word through the listening ear of the script. He appears to be more preoccupied with the nurturing of verbal gifts. In this he was resolute. Words are provided with a sense of inevitability. This inevitability is achieved by their own freedom; nothing is imposed by the poet. The words' wearied spirit sometimes becomes the proof of their poetic stamina. It is so because the poet is not leisurely in his management of words. The poet is much aware of the quality of words and naturally, he is very serious in their selection. Their selection in the poem from their source is not random and casual. Their use in the poem shows that the poet has selected them for their appropriateness of sound and sense which makes them quite distinct from the common, conversational language –

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains,

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk: (1-4)

In this Ode as well as the other great Odes, words have normally two identities. Connotative words which, joined together, are capable, with their extended meaning, to carry the load of the poet's feelings. The use of connotative words introduces a new
quality to them. It is the dramatic sense that extends the meaning to the readers. It is this sense that induces Keats to make certain changes in his lines of the poem. In the third stanza of the poem, the poet makes changes. In the first draft of the poem, the sixth line is – "Where youth grows pale and thin and old and dies". In the stanza, the sixth line seems to be monotonous and not too vivid in imagery. So it is strengthened to – "Where youth grows pale and specter-thin, and dies". This suggests the poet's liking for the words and their proper place. The change is always for the better. The words in the poem are all words in a lyric poem but the poet introduces each word in the line with such a dramatic force that each word impinges on the eyes and ears of the reader. Words are impregnated with sound, image and meaning and are so deep and heightened that words attain a natural dignity which immediately affects the senses and the mind of the reader. The poet achieves his meaning, as distinct from the common meaning of the common man, through this impregnation of words. The abstract idea is unobtrusively personified through the sound and image of the words. The poet does not seem to be making any extra effort to achieve his purpose. He does not take recourse to the usual rhetorical method of personification –

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth! (11-14)

With the trick of no device he achieves his purpose in a natural way. That way he so easily and naturally absolves himself from the use of poetic diction. Passion itself suggests the words. With the selection of choicest natural words and without any aid of supposed ornaments, the poet not only communicates his passion and thought but also gives an organic unity to them and to the poem. With so little he achieves so
much. And that is the beauty of the simplicity of words. It seems, as if, words are not being used by the poet; rather, they are created by the passion of the poet. They come out with the same spontaneity from within as the passion of the poet. The poem gives the impression that the poet has grown maturer in the selection and use of natural words. This way the poet achieves a grand coalition of thought and structure in the poem; it turns the poem into an organic structure.

4.2.3 Ode on a Grecian Urn

The poem explores the eternity of art. It is intrinsic to art. It helps the poet to confront the facts of death and change. This is done by showing the continuity of human behavior and its value. The urn also suggests that the main business of art is the union of time and place. This is the value that the urn suggests. Further, here Keats also makes clear the notion that art is not a mirror held up to life, but something higher in itself, a high insubstantial ideal. This is the concept of art which Keats is always eager to prove. He feels that it is a higher, finer thing than life. But it is not life itself nor is it an alternative to life.

Stanza one is a good poetic exemplification of the opinion of Keats which he had expressed in his letter to J. H. Reynolds on the 3rd of February 1818 in which he wrote about poetry and how it "should be great and unobtrusive" (SLK, 87). The poem opens with the measured and deep-breathing rhythm of Keats. The effect is strengthened by the repetition of the long 'i' sounds and the two immediately following speaking stresses at the second line:-

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme: (1-4)

These calm opening lines combine with the tension created by the paradox of the imagery to announce one of the themes of the Ode – the relation of the urn to silence. The image often the bride of quietness contains two apposite and suitable senses: the phrase is arresting for its highly sexual nature and for its paradox. Sensuously, this marriage between the urn and "quietness" is linked to a human marriage which has never been consummated. The bride retains her virgin purity, and the phrase transmits an atmosphere of perfection, a state of spiritual tranquility through its own quietness and smoothness of sound pattern.

But not only is the bride a partner in no physical union, but also it is implied through the imagery personifying the urn that, she is also the child of an equally non-sensual relationship. The urn is not the issue of "silence and slow time" (2), but is simply their "foster-child" (2). These images have the effect of stressing the non-human purity and detachment of the urn. They prepare the reader for subsequent statements and suggestions as to the urn's remoteness from what Keats regards as impure, unrewarding and distressing in the human lot. The articulation of the words, especially in line two, imposes a slow movement, appropriate to the atmosphere surrounding the precious object. The effect of the word "still" (1) is linked in here: for it has two meanings, the first of which qualifies the simultaneous existence of the bride as both sensual and virgin. The second meaning qualifies the view of the urn as stationary and silent. The personification of the urn continues in line three where it is called "Sylvan historian" (3), a phrase which alerts the mind to the urn’s expressive functions, the urn as an organ of communication, something that is consequent on but different from its self or being, the theme of the opening couplet.
The urn is both a bride and a foster-child, and it is precisely because of this that it retains its pristine purity unviolated, for what time, as a spouse, could have done to its bride in the form of consummating the marriage and thus violating it, it refrains from attempting in its other role of a foster-parent. Thus it is that it escapes "the rude wasting of old Time". The image of carnality has been subordinated to that of protection and preservation. Time is more a foster-parent than spouse. The bride foster-child image is followed by the image of a historian who by virtue of enshrining a legend seems to be telling the story of pastoral life with singular charm and vividness. The epithets "Sylvan" (3) and "leaf-fring'd" (5) connect with "Temple" (7) and "Arcady" (7) noted in antiquity for their matchless pastoral beauty.

The urn, therefore, is a "bride of quietness" (1) a "fosterchild" (2) of "silence and slow time" (2), a "Sylvan historian" (3) and its tale is "flowery" (4), its "legend" (5) is "leaf-fring'd" (5). So once again Keats returns to a woodland setting to capture the magic of art, the ethereal character of its essence in a concrete and luxuriant fashion. This series of images contributes a great deal to the atmosphere of the Ode. The "leaf-fringed" is visual but also contributes to a sense of light brushing of the urn's freize by the leaves (5). This effect is further heightened by the lightness of the sound of "legend", which has overtones of mystery and myth (5).

In contrast to the above, the last three lines express extreme agitation. The figures on the urn may be "men or gods" (8), but they are swept up in a wild sexual orgy which appears antithetical to the picture the urn has presented to the reader up to now. The hot haste of the lines is reflected in the stormy rhythms, the repeated questioning and the language – "mad" (9), "struggle" (9) and "wild ecstasy" (10). This turbulence of the surface of the urn is conveyed mainly by the dense imagery in the last two lines. "Struggle" suggests both a visual picture of contortion and conflict and a tactile
sense of straining against the closed time scale of the urn to "escape" (9). "Pursuit" (9) transmits a sense of movement once again. "Mad" (9) increases the frenzy. "Pipes and timbrels" (10) contribute to the raucous auditory quality of the scene. "Timbrels" by itself expresses the sound of frenzied escapade. At this point, the stanza has swung full circle: from peace to violence and from innocence to passion.

The opening lines of stanza two continue the musical reference contained in the last line of stanza one and thus, by implication also continue the theme of silence. But now the poet moves on to a closer consideration of the freeze, its scenes and their implications. In stanza one, the verse is packed, and there is a quality in it which one does not find in the rest of the poem. Boris Ford refers to this density of structure, the architectural quality, when he says –

There is another quality in his magnificent stanza … and that is the marvelously plastic use of language of such a sort that the system of apprehensions assumed by the reader in response to the poet's words is a kind of model or metaphor of the physical structure of the Vase, from its still centre to its turbulent surface. The language traces in the responsive mind the shape of the vessel (135).

In contrast, the second stanza begins quietly on the subject of "heard" (11) and "unheard" (11) melodies preferring the latter:

Heard melodies are sweet but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone: (11-14)

This musical image follows from the "pipes and timbrels" (10). Yet, in essence, it remains no more than an idea, for these melodies do not impinge upon the sensual ear.
Instead, appealing to the spirit rather than to the physical ear, this music is thought of as superior to that which can be heard in the ordinary way. This idea provokes Ford to comment that "when Keats contrasts the 'sensual ear' with 'spirit', he contrasts sensory perception not with the soul or intellect, but with imagination" (136). Hence, the urn simply suggests situations, such as the hearing of music.

The three sets of images set out in stanza one – the trees or woodland, the music, and images of sexuality – are to be found more prominently in stanza two –

In the second stanza the originally subliminal images have become the central theme. The entire stanza works towards fixing the three images in heaven's bourne, where sound is so intense as to be inaudible, the maturation of nature so intense as to be without growth or decay, and the consummating of love so intense as to be without consummation. The images are now on the surface of the poetic texture, the least attention being given to the trees, more to the song, and most to the lovers (Wasserman, E. 18).

The trees are an instance of Keats habitual symbolism of the seasons. But here the cycle of the seasons has been suspended – the trees will never be "bare" (16). The "fair youth" (15) can never leave his "song" (16). But it is the lover which represents Keats' usual way of suggesting the intensity one wishes to possess forever. The object of his love cannot "fade" (19) in the sense of losing her beauty and also in the sense of fading from his eye in the way the nightingale fades. The situation of the lover is forever poised and arrested. He is "winning near the goal" (8) but he cannot kiss. If there is no fading or death, there is no fulfillment. There is a delicate balance in the stanza, almost ironic, between the charms of the Arcadian life and their unreality.

The second and third stanzas are a brooding elaboration of the first. The second stanza begins by seizing on the contraries of "heard" and "unheard" (11) melodies and
of the "sensual ear" (13) and the "spirit" (14), and expressing of preference for unheard melodies to which the spirit as opposed to the "sensual ear", is peculiarly attuned. The expressed wish looks back at the "pipes and timbrels" (10) of the first stanza which are the source of the unheard melodies or "ditties of no tone" (14).

In stanza three, the world of process, which had previously been implicitly contrasted with life on the urn, is explicitly contrasted with the more detailed situation on the urn. The trees are once more asserted to be able to hold their leaves forever; the melodist "for ever" pipes songs "for ever new;" (24) and love is even more and "more happy" (25):

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion for above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

In this stanza, Keats' powers of empathy are ably demonstrated; not only are the melodist's songs "for ever new" (24), and "love" (15) is "for ever young" (26), one never "cloy'd" (29), but the love is "for ever panting" (27) and "for ever warm" (26). Keats' imaginative vision has passed far beyond the lifelessness "of marble" (42). The lovers are alive; they love. Keats is imagining a perpetually tireless creation in an ideal poetic state, where the poet is "unwearied" (23), where leaves are perpetually
upon "happy boughs" (21), and lovers are perpetually "young" (27) and above that "breathing human passion" (28) which is, in effect, the reality.

In the last three lines, one is given an extremely intense image of physical discomfort and sickness. The state presented is not one that is beyond time, as is that of lovers, suggested by the images' ideality and felicity. But this feverish state is the opposite to that of the lovers. The lovers in their arrested moment are in a fresh throbbing state of an expectancy. The picture of the last three lines is that of unhappiness, of exhaustion, disillusionment and fever. "Passion" (28) introduces the sense of heat uncontrolled and consuming. "Cloy'd" (29) suggests the density, the clutching weight of this state which prevents one reaching above the "breathing human passion" (28). "Burning forehead and parching tongue" (30) portray the arid existence of "the weariness, the fever and the fret" (23) of the "Ode to a Nightingale".

It is not only in the aspect of love, in his instinctive response to nature and song and dance that man appears in timeless beauty on the body of the urn. As if to complete the picture of man in his diverse manifestations, the poet calls up a religious procession moving towards an altar where sacrifice is to be offered. Man, driven by the whole complex of his urges, not only seeks union with the female of his species but also sees a kinship with nature, and expresses himself in song and dance and other forms of art. He is also powerfully moved to contemplate and negotiate with the felt divine, the source and sustenance of his being, the anchor of his deepest thoughts. Given that native response to the Greek mode of worship and prayer, it is not surprising that Keats should be seeing and letting us see in timeless outlines a site of pagan religious fervour intimated by a host of people making their way devoutly to the altar along with a priest who is leading a heifer, as the custom bids, for the
purpose of sacrifice. Images of sacrifice, of the priest, the altar and the heifer are a familiar and recurring expression of the Keatsean imagination.

In stanza four, one moves away from the high temperatures and equally high thoughts of the previous stanza into a calmer, more contemplative mood. The rhythm and metre are more controlled, but the imagery is rich with symbolic meaning.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

The dominant word is "mysterious" (32). It refers not merely to the priest or the rite, but also to the poet's feelings about everything he mentions in this stanza. Keats can adopt no sure attitude to the symbol of the empty town because of its silence. One is told nothing of the priest. The whole of this fourth stanza asks questions like the first. There is the question of identity and the question of location – "Who are these coming to the sacrifice?" (31) And then, "To what green altar" (32) is the procession going and from what town has it come? The altar is green and vital. It is a visual image which has Keatsian overtones that relate the freshness of green to the vitality of life. The heifer lows to the skies, a sound image which nevertheless carries the overtones of mystery in that the lowing is directed to the skies. The flanks of the heifer are
"silken" (34). It is an image of both texture and of sight. It also reflects the ambiguity of the poem. "Silken" may picture the sheen of the living animal or it may describe the pallor of the marble figure. And it is this type of mysterious quality, this ambiguity, which allows the reader to speculate about the town. The heifer presents a colourful picture, with its flanks dressed with "garlands" (34), but the tone of the scene is grey – it is the opposite of the "Wild ecstasy" (10) of the previous stanzas.

Man, driven by the whole complex of his urges, not only seeks union with the female of his species, not only sees a kinship with nature, not only expresses himself in song and dance and other forms of art, but is also as powerfully moved to contemplate and negotiate with the felt divine, the source and sustenance of his being, the anchor of his deepest thoughts. Native response to the Greek mode of worship and prayer finds expression so often in Keats' work. It is not surprising that Keats should be seeing and letting one see in timeless outlines a stir of pagan religious fervour intimated by a host of people making their way devoutly to the altar along with a priest who is leading a heifer, as the custom bids, for the purpose of sacrifice. It is worth noting how the sacrificial scene is one where man, animal "heifer" (33) and nature "green altar" (32) are entwined in an image of integration and so are man and the divine through the symbols of "sacrifice" (31) and the "mysterious priest" (32), the latter intoning the sacred mystery of the communion between the natural and the supernatural.

In the final stanza, Keats gradually makes one feel the cold of the marble from which the urn is fashioned. Keats refers to the urn as a "shape" (41) – visually a form, but without any dynamics or power of movement or hint of life. It is art not life. No longer warm with vitality, it is "cold" (45). Even the scenes which were described so fully – the maidens and men, and the lovers – are now said to be marble. The
positioning of "overwrought" (42) at the end of line two has a reaction into the next line, so that it is hinted that the marble men and maidens are overwrought, smothered by the forest branches and trodden weed of the legend. The qualification "trodden" (43) increases this sense of lifelessness.

Yet the urn still has the power to "tease us out of thought" (44) as "doth eternity" (45). By likening the urn to eternity, Keats reinforces its value as a symbol of permanence. There is a final surge of happiness in the lines where the urn is again personified. However, it is now not a "bride" (1) or "historian" (3) but a "friend to man" (48), who uttered the famous line: 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'. The power of the urn is hypnotic and it is this power to "tease us out of thought" (44), to involve us in beauty and timeless truth of art, that Keats celebrates in this last stanza. The word "tease" implies that the urn tantalizes the beholder by suggesting an ideal state of things in which one might combine the permanence of art with what is purely pleasant in human life.

In the poem, one comes across the colloquial words – words as commonly used by the common people in their common conversation. But, here their commonality has been raised a bit to a heightened level by their poetic use. By the poetic use, one means the use of the words in a way which helps in expressing ideas in a very sensitive way and with great beauty, imagination and precision. They are common words which have been impregnated with passion so that, in spite of their usual colour, they can convey the passion to the reader. One considers the words in the first line of the first stanza of the poem "Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness". They are all words in a lyric poem but the poet introduces each word in the line with such a dramatic force that each word impinges on the eyes and ears of the reader. The one word "bride" preceded by "unravish'd" and followed by "quietness" produces, with
their rhythmic beat, the effect of a real picture of a beautiful and silent bride. The bride, really beautiful and quiet, draws a picture that overwhelms the reader with a thrill that is almost unearthly. The rhythm reverberates from here and rhythmically overwhelms the whole sentence and the whole stanza. At the pictorial level too, the three words join together to present such an unearthly picture that intertwines them together. Then there is one more word that one cannot forget easily. There is the word "still" that also adds to their music and meaning. The beauty and quietness of the bride is given an extension in time. It is continuing since time immemorial and will continue up to a time whose limit is unknown.

The beauty of each and every line in the poem depends on the choice of words, their arrangement in the sentences and their rhythmic flow. All the words are highly active and hyper-sensitive in themselves because they intertwine both sound and image. Even the complex idea or image simultaneously is conveyed smoothly and naturally without any elevation of style or supposed ornamentation. Keats does it with words as they are found naturally. His words ought to be weighed in the balance of feeling and not measured by the space which they occupy upon paper. He expresses his feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions.

Thus, with the selection of the choicest natural words and without any aid of supposed ornaments, the poet not only communicates his passion and thought but also gives an organic unity to them and to the poem. With so little he achieves so much. And that is the beauty of the simplicity of words. It seems, as if words are not being used by the poet; rather, they are created by the passion of the poet. They come out with the same spontaneity from within as the passion of the poet.
4.2.4 Ode on Melancholy

"Ode on Melancholy" describes Keats' perception of Melancholy through a lyric discourse. According to John Gleason, in his article "A Greek Eco in Ode in Grecian Urn", "Ode on Melancholy" contains references to classical themes, characters, and places such as Psyche, Lethe, and Prosperine in its description of Melancholy, as allusion to Grecian art and literature were common among the Five Great Odes.

In Keats, Narrative and Audience, Andrew Bennett has argued that the narrator of "Ode on Melancholy" speaks directly to the reader rather than to an object or an emotion. This is unlike the narrator in "Ode to Psyche", "Ode to a Nightingale", and "Ode on a Grecian Urn". Bennett also has pointed out that "Ode on Melancholy" is the shortest of the Five Great Odes of 1819. It is published in three stanzas of 10 lines. Keats removed the original first stanza before the publication of the poem in 1820 (Bennett 133). The removal of this preliminary stanza strengthens the beginning, and, by reaching back to "Ode to a Nightingale", has the effect of tying the poem brilliantly to the sequence of the Odes. Bloom (1961) has stated that the poem originally contained four stanzas, but the original first stanza was removed before publication in 1820 for stylistic reasons (413). He added that the poem describes the narrator's opinions on melancholy and is addressed specifically to the reader, unlike the narrative of many of the other odes (413). The lyric nature of the poem allows the poet to describe the onset of melancholy and then provides the reader with different methods of dealing with the emotions involved. Using personification, the poem creates characters out of Joy, Pleasure, Delight, and Beauty, and allows them to interact with two other characters which take the shape of a male and his female mistress mentioned in line 17. According to Harold Bloom (1961), one can presume that "the poem's harmony was threatened if fully half of it was concerned with the
useless quest after "The Melancholy"(413). Helen Vendler has argued that despite the adjusted length of "Ode on Melancholy", Keats thought the poem to be of a higher quality than "Ode on Indolence", which was not published until 1848, after Keats' death (20, 60).

Robert Gittings in his book *John Keats* has stated that "Ode on Melancholy" consists of three stanzas with ten lines each. Because the poem has fewer stanzas than "Ode on Indolence" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn", the rhyme scheme appears less elaborate, with the first and second stanzas sharing a rhyme scheme of: ababcdecde, while the third takes on one of its own: ababceddee. As with "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Ode on Indolence", and "To Autumn", each stanza begins with an abab rhyme scheme and then finishes with a Miltonic sestet (Gittings 300). The general meter of the poem is iambic pentameter. In *Reading Voices*, Garrett Stewart reaffirmed Bennetts assertion that Keats himself fails to appear as a character in the poem, as there is no mention of the poet himself suffering from melancholy (172). In the final stanza, the poet describes the mistress as dwelling in Beauty, but modifies the beauty by saying that it "must die" (21). Harold Bloom (1961) suggests that this provides the poem with a hint of Keats' philosophy of Negative Capability, as only the beauty that will die meets the poem's standard of true beauty (413). The image of the bursting of "Joy's grape" in line 28, gives the poem a theme of sexuality. In *The Masks of Keats*, Thomas MacFarland suggests that Keats' beautiful words and images attempt to combine the non-beautiful subject of melancholy with the beauty inherent in the form of the Ode (94). He too writes that the images of the bursting grape and the "globed peonies" (17) show an intention by the poet to bring the subject of sexuality into discussion on melancholy (96).
Much of the effectiveness of this poem derives from the concrete imagery. Throughout the poem, Keats joins elements which are ordinarily regarded as incompatible or as opposites. This technique is appropriate for the theme of this Ode and in fact, this technique does illustrate the theme.

It is noticed that the poet's passionate outcry not to reject melancholy is presented negatively--"no", "not", "neither" (1), "nor" (3). Moreover, three of the first four words of the poem are negative. The poet is using grammar to parallel his meaning and thereby reinforce it. The first two words, "No, no," (1) are both accented, emphasizing them; their forcefulness expresses convincingly the speaker's passionate state. The degree of pain that melancholy may cause is implied by the remedies or ways to avoid it, oblivion and death (i.e., Lethe and poisons).

Keats in the first stanza uses dark imagery such as poison and hell to show that dwelling on sorrow will only allow it to become part of one and slowly drive one to despair. Keats' second stanza suggests to the readers that if sorrow is to fall upon them, they should find things in life that make them feel happy to help drive off bad feelings. The last stanza concludes his view on melancholy by suggesting that none of the good things in the world, such as beauty, joy, pleasure, or delight last forever but instead fade away leaving the less desirable of the feelings.

This poem has pure and simple imagery and connotations. In the first stanza, Keats incorporates wolf's-bane, nightshade, and yew-berries, three types of poisonous plants, representing the way sorrow can get into one's blood like a poison. He also warns against letting the beetle, the death-moth, or the owl (three more sinister animals) become one's psyche, or let their dark symbolism become part of one's soul or being. There are also two references to Hades: the river Lethe, and Proserpine, the goddess of the underworld (equivalent to Persephone). In the second stanza, Keats
once again uses symbolism to elaborate on the idea of sorrow, having it fall "from heaven like a weeping cloud that fosters the droop-headed flowers" covering everything in a shroud. If the words are looked at individually, they add much more character to the passage. From the clouds weeping, to the flowers that droop as if they are sad, to the shroud, the entire first half of the stanza nearly oozes sorrow. The second half of the stanza suddenly switches to positive images such as a rose which has the traditional meaning of love, a rainbow as a symbol of hope as in the story of Noah and the ark, a wealth of peonies as the traditional meaning of prosperity and the woman who represents beauty.

The last stanza uses an extended metaphor in the form of a personification. Beauty dies; Joy bids adieu; Pleasure aches. All of these nouns are capitalized and are referred to as "he" or "she".

One of the interesting patterns in the poem occurs in the first stanza. It suggests a three-piece progression through which one deals with depression. First one tries to forget it, as the dead forget the trials of their lives in the river Lethe. However, that usually doesn’t work and it slowly leeches its way into one's veins like a poison until it fills one's whole body. Lastly, one is so far gone that the only thing one can turn to is the perpetual call of death to just drown away everything permanently.

There are also three very similar things in this section that can be regrouped in another way. The wolf’s-bane is referred to in the form of wine, a drink customary of religious services for being the blood of Christ. The second religious symbol is the warning against using yew-berries, another poison, as rosary beads. The last reference is the psyche, which is essentially one's soul. Keats possibly uses these objects to show the sacredness of finding a balance between emotions in life, because if that balance is lost, one's life slips into complete disorder.
Keats also uses a sort of a framing device in the poem through his imagery. The first stanza is full of symbolism for poison, and is so again in the last stanza, when pleasure turns into poison. There is also the reference of nightshade as the "ruby grape of Proserpine" (4), a poison, while Joy is also referred to as a grape in the last stanza. The concept of the soul also carries over. In the first stanza, the mournful psyche is represented by an owl, or other sinister animal. In the last, the soul tastes the sadness of melancholy as the after taste of joy. This framing device unites the juxtaposition of desirable feelings and undesirable feelings. It shows that these feelings are connected, and one cannot truly exist without the other to create a foil. One cannot be truly appreciated without the other.

It is believed that the images that Keats has chosen do advance his meaning, but not in direct ways. However, it did not make one feel any more persuaded to heed his suggestions. One believes that for the most part, his imagery was purely decorative. He made it very simple to imagine what he was saying. For example:

"But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud"

..........................................................

"Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes."

Because Keats uses these symbols that have been accepted across generations (ie yew-berrys, beetles, moths, owls as representatives of death), these images that he paints are very prevalent. In these lines,

"Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine"
one can relate to it, because the phrase, "kiss of death," is how one translates it in modern terms. The images are very connected. "Wolf's-bane" (2) is "poisonous" (2), and so is nightshade, and they are weapons of the Queen of Hades. Then the speaker refers to Psyche, goddess of the soul, and escaping as moths. In the next stanza, Keats compares melancholy to nature, as a "weeping cloud" (12). He describes how it makes flowers' heads droop, and covers the hills in a fog or mist, and then suggests taking out our sorrow and enjoying the beauty of nature. From this, he speaks of Melancholy as a goddess, and she lives with Beauty, "Beauty that must die" (21). He goes on to speak of the finer feelings in life, like "Joy" (22) and "Pleasure" (23), and write about how "Joy" is always ready to leave, while "Pleasure" aches with pain. As it has been mentioned before, he also says that "Melancholy" (26) reigns in the "temple of Delight" (25). Finally, once "Joy" has been burst, "Melancholy" is at her strongest, and overcomes those who no longer have happiness.

While one cannot be sure about the date of the "Ode on Melancholy", it is probable that it was written after "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and was written before Keats' departure from Brown's house in Hampstead for the months of July and August 1819.

It is noticed that "Ode on Melancholy" is different from the preceding odes in that its protagonist is not necessarily a poet: the poem deals with experience of tout court rather than specifically poetic experience. It is also a poem that is not without its internal contradictions, and is perhaps just a shade below the high seriousness of "Ode to a Nightingale" or "Ode on a Grecian Urn".

The poem begins, like "Ode to a Nightingale", in the middle. But it is linked with "Ode to a Nightingale" in a different way too: it is as though the poem has begun in response to the opening of the earlier poem –
My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk: (1-4)

"No, no, go not to Lethe," (1) the "Ode on Melancholy" admonishes, its speaker replying to this earlier voice...

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf’s-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss’d
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow’s mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul. (1-10)

The sharp, dramatic beginning (and all these poems are in some measure dramatic monologues), answers a latent suggestion in the opening lines of "Ode to a Nightingale", made explicit as the poem progresses, that one option available to the poet is suicide – not hemlock this time but the equally lethal (the word is chosen deliberately) aconite, or wolf’s-bane. Nightshade belongs here too, conflated with the wine, "the true, the blushful Hippocrene," (16) that was actually a means of escape from such melancholy reflections in "Ode to a Nightingale". Nightshade is a kind of anti-wine, the wine of Proserpine, goddess of the underworld. Beetles, death’s head moths, owls and the like, all creatures of the darkness, should have no place here, nor
serve as partners "in your sorrow’s mysteries" (8). Such conjunction of shady creatures with one's own shady thoughts will produce a drowsiness that will "drown the wakeful anguish of the soul"(10). The implication, then, is that one should preserve the "wakeful anguish," felt, one assumes, through the experiences of this world, Keats' "vale of soul-making."

Such negatives laid out, and the "wakeful anguish" (10) preserved are the available options to the reader. The first admonitory stanza, is delivered in the imperative, and it gives way to a second stanza of advice (again in the second person), structured somewhat like the first stanza:

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;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes. (11-20)

The first stanza was structured around a series of negative alternatives: No, no ... not ... neither ... nor ... not ... nor ... nor ... nor. This stanza provides a set of positives: when ... then ... or ... or ... or. It describes a series of scenes devoid of the mythological ornament of the first stanza, essentially naturalistic. The imagery itself is highly complex, negatives undercutting positives, positives banishing negatives. As Empson puts it in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, the poem "pounds together the
sensations of joy and sorrow till they combine into sexuality" (214). The first four lines of the second stanza describe the physical circumstances literally and the emotional circumstances figuratively. The "weeping cloud" (12) that falls from heaven "shrouds" (14) the green hill, but "in an April shroud," (14) so that the association of "shroud" with death is neatly undercut by the emphasis on April showers that "foster the droop-headed flowers all" (13). The melancholy fit thus stimulates, rather than withering, just as the "sorrow" (15) can be turned to admire the beauty of a mourning-yet-morning rose, its bloom opening in the morning and maturing as the day progresses. Or it can be turned to admire the shimmering quality of sands wetted by the ocean (salt tears turned to wonder, as it were). Or it can be redirected to the beauty of peonies. The clouds are "weeping," an appropriate action for melancholy (12). But it is surprising, even startling perhaps, to find that these weeping clouds, a negative image, "foster" or nurture the flower (13). The reference to flowers calls up positive images. However, the flowers are "droop-headed," a phrase having a double application (13). The first is on the literal level, the rain has caused them to droop. The second is on the figurative level, "droop-headed" connotes sadness, grief. The flowers are more specifically described in lines five and seven. The rain temporarily hides the view or hill which are the nature images that describe melancholy; however the hill is green, connoting fertility, lushness, beauty, aliveness, and it retains these qualities whether one can see them at a particular moment or not. The rain which cuts visibility is called a "shroud," an obvious death reference, but the month is April, a time when nature renews itself, comes alive after winter's barrenness and harshness (14). The rest of the stanza advises what to do in these circumstances: enjoy as fully as possible the beauties of this world and thereby welcome melancholy. To "glut" sorrow is to gorge or to experience to the fullest (15). The rose is beautiful,
but as a "morning" rose, it lasts a short time, i.e., the experience is transitory (15). Similarly, the rainbow produced by the wave is beautiful but short lived. The final section of the stanza appears at first sight to parallel the other phrases, but in fact, it presents a different kind of melancholy described by Robert Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* – the love melancholy that accompanies rejection by a mistress (523). Besides, the last four lines turn from nature to people. The imagery of wealth, her anger is "rich" (18), and eating intently "feed deep" (20) tie the natural and the human worlds and the two divisions of the stanza together. The words "glut", (15) "feed deep", (20) and "Emprison" (14) imply passionate involvement in experience; also the eating imagery suggests that melancholy is incorporated into, becomes part of and nourishes the individual. The food imagery is continued in stanza three. The lover, while the object of her angry raving, also enjoys her beauty and her "peerless eyes" (20).

The whole middle stanza is sharply different from the previous stanza, with its mythological references and its keenly observed originality. The language and the sentiments of this second stanza seem to revert to the language and the sentiments of "Ode on Indolence": they are self centered, indulging in a kind of Romantic passionate intensity that one associates with the Keats of "Endymion" rather than the Keats of the Odes. If this is the answer to the effects of melancholy, it doesn’t seem to advance Keats' agenda very much.

At this point, the tone and direction of the poem change again. One moves into the third person, a third person whose identity is quite unclear. The only "she" one has met is the mistress in the immediately preceding lines.

She dwells with Beauty – Beauty that must die;

And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil’d 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. (21-30)

Empson remarks that the "She" of stanza three is first a mistress representing a form
of joy, if a transitory joy. Then, however, she becomes "Veil’d Melancholy" itself. In
the last two lines, it is obvious to Empson that "She" is now "Joy", "Melancholy",
and the beautiful though sometimes angry "mistress" (216). It is told in this stanza
that Melancholy dwells with a Beauty that cannot last. She dwells also with Joy—a
figure caught here in frozen anticipation of his departure. It is noticed that, as one
moves into this third-person exposition, the actors in this third stanza are not natural
phenomena but personified abstractions, rather like the abstractions Beauty and Love
that pull one out of contemplation of "the weariness, the fever and the fret" of the
third stanza of "Ode to a Nightingale". There, they are seen as abstractions more
palatable and more distant than the examples of human decay that were presented in
the lines before. Here, they preside over a kind of hidden human activity that derives
from the first and second stanzas, almost as though a veil of abstraction has been
thrown over such specificities. If beauty will die, it follows that they must be seized
and held – and the tension, already presented in the second stanza, between the act of
holding and enjoying, imprisoning the soft hand, and the act of recoil, the mistress’s
ravings, defines the role of melancholy. If joy is ever bidding adieu, as it bids adieu in
"Ode to a Nightingale", for example, it too must be seized and enjoyed, and so must Pleasure, whose poison takes the reader back to the first stanza and whose sipping bee links the reader with the second.

Theresa Kelley in Reinventing Allegory writes that allegory represents "things or ideas as though they were present" (109): the "Melancholy" (26) of the discarded stanza, "Wolf's-bane" (2) and "Psyche" (7), the "melancholy fit" (11) falling and the personified emotions of the last stanza. Furthermore, "Bidding adieu" (23) makes joy "present". However, when personification uses "sensible or concrete things to convey abstract ideas, the outcome is merely rhetorically vivid language" (Kelley 109). Thus there exists in allegory a kind of conceptual discrepancy that is necessary for it to remain allegory; in "Ode on Melancholy," the "sensible or concrete" character "Joy" (22) conveys the abstract emotion joy, but this on its own is not allegory. It is more than "vivid language" because it transcends the poem and becomes about something else.

Keats is giving himself several alternatives: committing suicide would be too easy: "For shade to shade will come too drowsily" (9). He could dwell on life's pleasures, including his love for Fanny Brawne; but then he realizes that "She dwells with Beauty" (21). The "She" here does not refer to Fanny or the "peerless" (20) mistress; rather, the poetry that he truly loves belongs with a "Beauty that must die" (21) – in the end, he chooses to be a great poet, one who sees what is "seen of none save him" (27) – his soul "shall taste the sadness of her might, / And be [immortal] among her cloudy trophies hung" (29-30). It can be argued that all three stanzas of the poem are allegorical. The structure of the poem in its entirety is about how to find "Melancholy;" the first two stanzas say what not to do to find her: "go to Lethe" (1) or
commit suicide, while the final stanzas are about how to find her – "glut[ting]" (15) on the phenomenal world or going to the "temple of Delight" (25).

Helen Vendler argues that the first stanza is mythological, the second is not "and the third neither mythology nor nature but allegory" (159). She calls the first stanza mythological because of the references to Greek mythology in "Lethe" (1), "Proserpine" (4) and "Psyche" (7). The second stanza is pastoral and the third is allegorical. "Beauty" (21), "Joy" (22), "Pleasure" (23) and "Delight" (25) are what one encounters along the way.

At the end of this poem, the reward of the "wakeful anguish of the soul" (10) of stanza one is noticed. The possessor of the wakeful soul shall taste melancholy's sadness. Here the synaesthetic imagery of tasting a feeling is noticed. The change of tense, from present pleasure to future melancholy, expresses their relationship – one is part of and inevitably follows the other. Keats concludes that the wakeful soul will be the trophy or prize gained or won from melancholy. Trophy is described as "cloudy"(30), which has negative overtones. This negative touch suggests ambivalence on the poet's part or it is the absolute statement of the inextricably mixed nature of pleasure and melancholy. In another way, Keats is affirming, without any qualifications, doubt, or hesitation, the inseparable nature of opposites in life.

The scene with which the poem ends, the shrine of Melancholy, perhaps reminds one of the final stanza of "Ode to Psyche", with its very different, and altogether more optimistic, shrine of buds and bells and stars without a name. Like Moneta, in "The Fall of Hyperion", Melancholy is veiled. She has her all-powerful shrine "in the very temple of Delight" (25), and only he "whose strenuous tongue / Can burst Joy’s grape against his palate fine" (27-8) can reach her – can see beyond the veil. The obvious sexuality of the imagery here, the link also with the initial images, for example of
Proserpine and her wine, takes one in directions that are as unsettling as they are reassuring. The sexual fulfillment, of a sort, with which the poem ends, at least moves the sequence of odes a further step forward. "Ode on Melancholy", for all its thematic closeness to the tensions in, for example, "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode on Indolence", is the only one of the sequence thus far that has not focused on poets and poetry.

To conclude, it is noticed that there is an organic unity in the "Ode on Melancholy". Empson sees that the ode "pounds together the sensations of joy and sorrow until they combine into sexuality" (215) and proceeds to elucidate this thesis, beginning with a paraphrase of the "contraries" of the first stanza. According to him, this Ode combines the opposite notions of death and the sexual act, of pain and pleasure, of woman as both mistress and mother, of desire for everlasting fame and desire for oblivion, of ideal beauty as sensual beauty and of eternal beauty as impermanent. The opposites all unite in the melancholy-joy antithesis. Empson remarks that the union provides the perfection of form, the immediacy of statement, of the ode (215).

Empson, in his skillful textual explication of "Ode on Melancholy", discovers a wide range of connotative meanings in the verbal complexity of the ode and pursues the implications of the language throughout the ode to formulate a plausible total meaning of the poem. Empson's alert reading is valuable, not because it represents an original interpretation of the meaning of the ode, but because it illuminates the nature of structural complexity. His explication demonstrates conclusively that the ode's form is inseparable from its meaning.

Carlos Baker, and Bennett Weaver, CLEANTH BROOKS indicates that the Ode is an example of acute poetic thought, conveyed through imagery and exceeding the logic. The explication centers, consequently, on the thought conveyed through one of Keats' images as similar in its functional qualities to Donne's use of the same image in "The Funeral" (Brooks 248).

Brooks's explication is similar in method to Empson's longer treatment of the Ode. Brooks, like Empson, identifies the richness of poetic speech in the Ode. He traces the structural harmony of various images uniting with the "April shroud" and suggesting the joining together of joy and melancholy. As a further demonstration of the organic unity in "Ode on Melancholy", the explication supplements Empson's discoveries of functional imagery in the Ode.

4.2.5 To Autumn

The last of the Great Odes, "To Autumn" is the poem in which Keats has realized the "Negative Capability" which he believed was the hall-mark of the greatest poetry. The poem is objective, oblique and impersonal. The season is the subject. The poem does not talk of human misery which is the subject of other Odes and other long poems. Its subject is the earth – man's abode – rather a significant aspect of it where nature takes the primacy of place but where man is a participant, in fact, a native partner. The quest for unearthly vision which had marked some earlier poems now yields convincingly to a wholly absorbing encounter with a vision that an autumnal scene begets. The poet himself is completely absent. There is no 'I' in the work, for the poem is entirely concrete and self-sufficient in its concreteness. Fred Inglis makes the observation -
This poem is, for me, the only one Keats wrote about which one is tempted to make no reservations at all. It is as nearly perfect as such writing can be; it is at any rate as great and as perfect as the best of Shakespeare's sonnets or of George Herbert's 'The Temple' or any other of the Seventeenth Century masters. The subject is important in itself, and implies a great deal more about human experience than at first appears; the writing is elegant, rich, serene, and grave in all its detail, it is profound and civilized. Such a poem is an enduring nourishment of one's humanity; it alters one's vision of the world and it grafts itself imperceptibly into the spirit and the memory (141).

In the poem, Keats has distilled all that he felt about the fullness of life. Nothing has been written about the transitoriness of the human experience. Here is a poem, unlike any that Keats ever wrote, without any echo of human suffering, without, in short, any shadow of what autumn is not about. The immediate impression yielded by the poem is of an extended landscape where nature alone is the actor and where she is sprawled out in her rich, living concreteness provoking our senses of sight, smell, touch and hearing. Behind it all, the poet has withdrawn himself. One does not feel his presence except in the briefest possible introduction to each stanza. It is difficult to think of a greater objectivity or impersonality in the rendering of a situation. Such is the art of the poet that one can only think of him as in a state of repose, detachment or composure, surveying the scene and letting one do the same.

The three stanzas succeed each other, or it is better to say that they are spread out with three different kinds of activities bringing out the soul of the season. The fullness of existence that the heart desires is expressed in the first stanza. The fullness is prolonged in the second. And in the final stanza, the poet expresses a sense of something interwoven into the course of things, into the cycle of the seasons that is
the continuity of life itself. The first stanza presents a picture of autumn in all its ripeness – the season that comes between summer and winter. Autumn is seen as the prolonging and intensifying of summer. It suggests the lengthening out of fulfillment as its crest or climax which Keats had desired to find in the concrete world. So Keats, turning to the concrete, can contemplate it with serenity. In the opening stanza, nature which has already brought forth her fruitage is absorbedly at work bringing about the maturation and sweetening of her products. One can feel, almost hear, the subtle, unhurried, but steady throb of this purposive activity that takes within its sweep the entire range of flora the eye can extend to.

Stanza one presents the reader with the mellow quality of the season –

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch eves run;… (1-4)

Autumn is the season of 'mists' which suggests two things. First, it suggests a haze experienced on a mellow day of sunshine. Another suggestion is that of chill. It is thus a season of space between two opposing conditions. One gets a hint of winter. "Mists" (1) suggests a world of abundant growth of vegetation. In the following line, one gets the first of the personifications of autumn, where the season is presented as a "close bosom-friend" (2) of the "maturing sun" (2). The word 'maturing' is ambiguous because it represents what the sun is actually doing – ripening the land for the harvest. But it also suggests that the sun is itself 'maturing', in the sense that it is growing old, preparing to fade into winter. The personification continues for the rest of the stanza: autumn is presented as a person in terms of the warmest friendship with the very
source of warmth itself. The overall impression of the first stanza is one of steady, radiant warmth:

To bend with apples the moss'd Cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,

For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells (5-11)

The images bulge softly in the language like the fruit itself. Here is the visual image of the apples bending the trees under their weight. There is also the tactile sense of the moist, moss-covered trees bending under the strain of the richness of the apples. Autumn fills "all fruit with ripeness to the core" (6). These images of full, inward ripeness and of strain suggest that the maturing can go on further and also that fulfillment has reached its climax. It swells the "gourd" (7) and plumps the "hazel shells" (7) with a "sweet kernel" (8). Images of growth, of lushness are combined with an image of taste. The very quality of the sound of the word suggests the sense of, rounded fullness which is suggested by "plump" (7). The season is to be prolonged, so that "later flowers" (9) will provide nectar for the bees so that their "clammy cells" (11) will be "o'r-brimm'd" (11). The imagery of the stanza suggests an intensity of fulfillment prolonged and almost seeming to be immortal. Keats presents fruitfulness in various ways – as ripe, luscious, and pulpy. Sometimes the images are used for the suggestion of taste as in 'sweet kernel'. Sometimes the images have sensitive tactile awareness, as in the awareness of touch one has when the "fruit the vines...round the thatch-eves run" (4). Sometimes, the most sensuous images add complication from
Keats' use of language to enact meaning. The vine, a creeping plant, characteristically entwines itself around the projection of the eves, and the movements of the mouth in articulating the words do actually suggest by analogy the twisting and twining growth of the plant. This kinaesthetic aspect of Keats' imagery combines with the senses of taste and touch. A further sense here is that of rounded fullness. This sense is continued in the next lines: "to set budding more... flowers for the bees" (8-9). This image is particularly apt with reference to the buds. Linked to the extreme sensuousness of the stanza is the sense of light and warmth: the words "sun" (2), "warm" (10), and "Summer" (11) suggest this. Besides the plants, the bees also share in the fullness of the season. Synaesthetic quality plays an invaluable part in the conveying of the sense.

Such is the realising power of language that one feels one is participating in the subtle, yet profoundly altruistic movement of leading and blessing of the vines whose sinuous movements one acts out. One feels the weight of the vines as they carry the blessed load of fruitage. One bends low as the cottage-trees bend low with the apples. One feels at one with the fruit as they fill out with ripeness to the core. One feels the gourd as it swells and the hazel shells as they plump. Indeed, such is the creative use of the verbs that one not only has an intense visual sensation of a dynamic sight of growth but also an intense tactile sensation of growing and bending from the inside of things.

Even apart from the participatory urge called forth by the language of action, the idea of participation or collaborative oneness goes deep into the making of some basic images of the poem. In the opening stanza, Autumn, the "close bosom-friend" (2) of the sun, embraces the latter in the creative act of participation. Autumn draws the vital energy of creation from the sun's "bosom" (2). The sun is the high genitor. It is a
generative union of the feminine (Autumn) and masculine (the sun) forces where both are being seen "conspiring" (3) in order to make the earth fecund and bring her a wealth of fruitage.

Stanza one presents the reader with a process continuing within a context of stillness and attained fulfillment. Stanza two can be seen as something of a reverse or mirror image of stanza one. The reader finds stillness where he expects process. For Autumn is conceived as a reaper or harvester. It is a harvester who is not harvesting. This theme is reflected in the imagery. It is the imagery of arrested motion. Autumn is personified as a waiting reaper. Autumn appears "sitting careless on a granary floor" (14) in a climate of soft stillness where the "winnowing wind" (15) caresses the figures' hair. The assonance of this line leads into the image of autumn "drows'd" (17) or "asleep" (16) "on a half-reaped furrow" (16) – again an image of the harvest arrested:

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours. (12-22)
All the first seven lines are heavy with sleepiness; they are full of long vowels avoiding heavy stresses. The reaper is "drows'd" (17) by the "fume of poppies" (17) – an image that combines the sense of smell (and indirectly of taste) of "poppies" and of the bright red of the flowers. There are recollections of the first Stanza when the reader sees the phrase "twined flowers" (18) and he finds that it represents both tactile and visual imagery.

In the second stanza, participation extends to a point where nature and man lose their conventional identity and become interchangeable, even indistinguishable. "Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?" (12) Nature has become human. Autumn has turned into a human female being busy in furthering the nature's work towards the sustenance of human beings.

There are only two images concerning activity in the stanza. The first is that of the "gleaner" crossing the brook with his load (19). But even here, there is a sense of stillness imbued by the word "keep" (19). This also refers only to the gleaner keeping his burden steadily balanced upon his head. The other image suggesting activity is that of the personified autumn watching the "oozings" (22) of the "cyder-press" (21). The last line of this stanza hints at a finality – these are the last oozings of the press, suggesting that the harvest is drawing to a close. One is presented not simply with a visual image of the last oozing, but an audible one also.

There are in the Ode indirect images of ageing. The sun is "maturing" (2), it is growing older; and so is autumn itself, the "close bosom-friend" (2) of the sun, though by implication only. There is an ambivalent note in the phrase "set budding… later flowers" (8-9). In stanza two, the ideas of pause and opposition continue.

The last verse moves to a conclusion that arises more organically from the verse. The transition is gentle and enforced to the question "Where are the songs of spring?"
The personified figure of autumn is replaced by concrete images of life. The images are different from those used in the first stanza. Here, instead of verdural imagery, one finds animal imagery linked to sound imagery. The music of autumn is played under a sky of "barred clouds" (25) which "bloom the soft-dying day" (25). There is a paradox here – the clouds, a symbol of moist, life inducing energy, though inevitably carrying somber over-tones, give life to the "soft dying day" (25).

The last stanza is suffused with tenderness. The objectivity of the last four lines suggests an acceptance which includes even the fact of death, which is something woven into the poem, into the course of things, as the condition and price of all fulfillment. The richest fulfillment comes just before death. In the last stanza, there is a similarity to the final stanza of the "Ode to a Nightingale" because the song here too begins to fade. The sounds gradually fade in the last stanza, consonants are kept soft, and the number of monosyllabic words is greatly reduced.

Even in the last two lines of the Ode, one has the juxtaposition of autumn and winter: the redbreast is a winter bird, while the swallows are summer birds. This is the transition zone between summer and winter where the sheep are "full-grown lambs" (29) – those which were lambs in the spring and are now full grown and on the point of superseding the begetters of that generation. It is almost winter, for the swallows are "gathering" (33) to leave for warmer climes.

It seems that Keats enacts an affirmation of faith in the process of life and change. The rhythm of the seasons is inevitably the rhythm of a man's life. Keats in enjoying this autumn accepts the brute fact of winter, and affirms faith in the ultimate return of spring. Edgar in King Lear was summing up the theme of "To Autumn" when he said: "Man must endure / Their going hence even, as their coming hither, / Ripeness is all" (Act V Sc. 2 11-13).
Chapter Five
Conclusion

5.1 The Relevance of this Study in Yemen

Yemen is a Middle Eastern country. It is in the southwest part of the Arabian Peninsula. Yemen is to the south of Saudi Arabia and to the west of Oman. The Red Sea is to the west of Yemen and the Arab Sea and Aden Gulf are to the south of it.

English Language is a foreign language in Yemen. It is not spoken in the society. Arabic Language is the mother tongue. So when one considers the teaching of English Poetry in Yemen, one should consider that English is a foreign language.

English Poetry is taught in the Departments of English in the Yemeni Universities under both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education. In these two Departments, the students have to study for four years to get their undergraduate degrees. Poetry is taught to the students of the third year and the fourth year.

In the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Metaphysical and Augustan Poetry are taught in the first semester of the third year. This course is concerned with the Seventeenth Century English Poetry. In the second semester, Romantic Poetry is taught. It aims at acquainting the students with the salient features of Romanticism in English Literature. Selected poems of William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, Alfred Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold are intensively studied. In this semester, another course is taught. It is Analysis of Literary Texts in which some poems are taught. Besides, the Eighteenth Century Poetry and Drama, together as one course, is taught in the second semester of the third year.

In the first semester of the fourth year, the Twentieth Century Poetry is taught. The aim of this course is to develop in the students, a critical and historical awareness of