

THE EFFECT OF SHAKESPEARE UPON KEATS, DEVELOPMNT AS A POET

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Keats' work has ,over the years , continued to offer a challenge to critics and researchers of particular interest to everyone is the contrast between his short life and his productive genius . This contrast reveals the development of a poetic genius and a soul's spiritual climb through several phases of doubt and despair .Any great poet is influenced by the seveal currents of the age, literary, social and historical. In addition, following a stream of writers, both contemporary and of the previous ages ,the writer is bound to come underthe influence of other great masters. The influence of Shakespeare on keats' poetry is very clear .

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Keats' poetry is personal, and the subjective nature of his poems offers us a wide and clear view of the innermost feelings and thoughts of the poet, of his personality, and his relationship with his friends and those literary figures whom he admired, the foremost of these is undoubtedly Shakespeare. The influence of Shakespeare is apparent not only in Keats's poems, but also in his letters; Keats's letters are a personal record and offer an insight into the workings of his mind and imagination. It is in these letters that Keats not only makes frequent references to Shakespeare, but also formulates his ideas regarding poetic character, and indeed life in general. The poetic masterpieces of Keats were all written during the period that he was reading Shakespeare and had begun to look on him as his mentor and presider. Shakespeare, his presider not only left his mark on Keats's poetry, but also guided his attitudes towards himself and others.

For Keats Shakespeare was the supreme example of: "Negative Capability", of the disinterested creative imagination unfettered by "Consequitive Reasoning" personal prejudice, or doctrine.

Shakespeare's poetry was the example that Keats followed but as his own poetic powers matured, he also displayed an individuality of his own. Douglas Bush writes:

*"For Keats Shakespeare was the universal
monarch of poetry: Milton and Wordsworth
were Lions under the throne" (1)*

The continued appeal of Keats' poetry is testimony to its universality . His standing in the literary world is matched by Shakespeare. Keats would certainly have regarded this coupling with his mentor as a great tribute .

Keats' innate poetic sense not only led him to become a mature poet in only four years of time ,but it is also the source that affected his choice of poetic models to educate himself through the greatest poetry of the past ,and helped to ripen his intellectual powers both as a poet and a critic .

With his innate flair for poetry, Keats was able with his unpoetic origin ,to stand among the great Romantics and he succeeded in surpassing Wordsworth in the sonnet form who was the major Romantic craftsman in that form. Wordsworth, William Blake, Coleridge, Hunt, Shelley and Byron all wrote great poetry which represents the main characteristics of the Romantic age. All of them believed in being guided by instincts and emotions rather than reason . They were looking at the world in new striking ways and their poetry reflected a revolt against conversational diction, formality and shallowness. These poets believed in writing

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new kinds of literature in seeking new verse forms, in finding new expressions for their thoughts. Romanticism as a way of thinking and as an approach of literature is associated with vitality, powerful emotion, limitless and dreamlike ideas. In varying degrees, those poets shared many qualities of Romanticism such as the strong sense of the beauty of the world around them, an interest in ancient legends and traditions, a sense of melancholy or loneliness, a belief in liberty for the individual, a deep sympathy with humble people and a vivid imagination capable of constructing fantastic dream worlds. Nonetheless, in describing Keats, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron and Hunt as Romantics, we are using a crude piece of shorthand to connote a highly complicated set of attitudes and beliefs; these beliefs appear in very different forms, and we shall soon be involved in absurd contradictions if we lump together the poets who have been mentioned, without seeing how radically different they are. Yet, all the Romantics have a common faith in poetry which bound them together. As men and their achievement must be seen in relation to the age in which they live, Keats, then was a Romantic poet who like anyone of them, took his materials from the past, legends, myths, folk tales and reshaped them into vivid and beautiful expressions of new ideas and feelings.

Yet, Keats was different in everything from his contemporaries. He only lived less than twenty-six years. But his poetic productions were in quality, and quantity as good as the best amongst the Romantics. He was not like Shelley who saw poetry as the hope of the world, and the poets were the prophets of the future, they were, to Shelly, the "unacknowledged legislators" for mankind. To him, the poet is a lover of true beauty wherever it is found, and Keats like all Romantic poets was a devoted lover of nature. While Wordsworth spiritualised nature, and Shelly intellectualised nature, Keats loved it purely for its own sake. His love for nature was not of the moral or reflective kind, he painted it not with his reason but with his imagination. Nature, to Keats, is a store-house of sensuous delight.

Although he knew no Greek, he loved Greek mythology and he was in his thoughts and inspiration an ancient Greek. This element is clear in his passion for beauty; in his simplicity and directness of expression, in his passion for the personification of the powers of nature as in the "Ode to Autumn" in the human interest and delight in art in general. The Romantic element in Keats appears less than in his manner of treating them. The spirit of nobility and chivalry, the weird and the adventurous touch of fairyland, are all found in his poetry. Keats, as a poet, was extremely sensitive to beauty so much so that he sought for the

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principle of beauty in all things with a remarkable singleness of purpose. It was beauty for beauty's sake, with none of the moral overtones of Wordsworth or Shelley, but with the unreasoning rapture of love. Keats, in short, is a worshipper of beauty. He always longed for a life of sensation rather than of thought. He got sensuous delight from each and every form of beauty. Beautiful objects of nature, power, imagination, pieces of art and literature gave him immense delight. Afterwards, when he matured as a poet he sang for beauty not because of sensuous happiness only but because it elevated and purified the mind as well.

The ripening of his intellectual powers is due as he realized, to the study of the Elizabethan poet Shakespeare. None of the Romantics had ever have written poetry and carried it to the heights and richness which were reached and accomplished by Keats in his poems specially the odes of 1819. He could within only a four years period, from 1817 till 1821 write 150 poems, the majority of them written in sonnet form, narrative poems and odes. Sixty four of them are sonnets with most of them composed during the early stage of his poetic development as a poet and written in Shakespearean form which reflected his intensive study of Shakespeare specially during the second stage of his poetic development. The following period indicates his efforts to find the ideal form to establish his originality within the

sonnet framework ,and this is clear during the writing of “Hyperion” and “ Isabella” ,which is in the third stage of his development as poet .At last ,keats reached a mature way of thinking which his ballad “La Belle Dame sans Merci” , and others narrative poms such as “Lamia”,”The Eve of St . Agnes”. His poetry could only as most of his contemporaries and many critics said ,be matched by Shakespeare his mentor and guide .

The influence of Shakespeare upon the and poetry of keats is recongized and reported by his close friends such as Woodhouse who wrote to John Taylor ,keats’ publisher, explaining how keats’ concept of the poetic character is basically Shakespearean and he is similar to Shakespeare in exhibiting the poetic quality that he called” Negative Capability” :

“ Shakespeare was the only one besides keats who possessed this quality in an extra degree so as to be a feature of his works” (2)

Moreover, in a letter to Richard Monckton Milnes, John Hamilton Reynolds said that keats

“He had the greatest power of poetry in him, of anyone since Shakespeare” (3)

In Sir Sidney Colvin's John Keats, he deals with the extent of Keats' absorption in Shakespeare. He comments :

"He was reading and rereading his Shakespeare with passion, and phrases from the plays come up continually in his letters, not only in the form of set quotations, but currently, as though they were part of his own mind and being"⁽⁴⁾

Colvin confines his study to biographical data and the relationship between Keats and Shakespeare generally, so that he does not draw enough parallels between Keats' poetry and Shakespeare's works specially in the sonnet form. This book was followed by the two-volume biography by Amy Lowell in which she concludes that

"Keats and Shakespeare are cousins German in their poetic points of view, however much the older poet surpassed the younger"⁽⁵⁾

John Middleton Murry's "Keats and Shakespeare" is a useful study in which he explores the similarities between Keats and Shakespeare in theme, style, technique and philosophy in a general way, he calls Shakespeare

"keats' forerunner and secret-sharer not merely in literature but also in life"⁽⁶⁾

In brief ,Murry's study indicates that the influence of Shakespeare on Keats extended beyond his longer poems and beyond the two obvious sonnets "On the Sea" and " On Sitting Down to Read king Lear Again." The first attempt to list and date keats' sonnets appeared in H.W Garrod's book keats through which he made his major observation about the sonnet's role in the development of keats' ode stanza by showing how he combined the Petrarchan and Shakespeare sonnet forms⁽⁷⁾ .

His study shows generally a clearer recognition of the sonnets in the poet's overall development , but it does not present comprehensive view .. In keats Craftmanship M.R Ridley discusses Shakespeare's influence on the style of the odes and longer poems and also keats' dissatisfaction with the sonnet form and his effort to create a new one. ⁽⁸⁾ A study of keats in relation to his sources is done by Claude Finney The Evaluation of keats' Poetry in which he recognizes

"Shakespear's influence on certain poems in inspiration ,genre ,versification and diction"⁽⁹⁾

paying more attention to Keats' other works and leaving out the sonnets. A very important study in the area of style is done by Walter Jackson Bates "The Stylistic Development Of John Keats"⁽¹⁰⁾ which is, to Bates, the definitive study in this area. However, Bates' comprehensive study of Keats' sonnets is confined to stylistic devices that Keats gleaned from Shakespeare but it does not extend beyond this area.

Caroline Spurgeon summarizes very effectively the extent of Keats' preoccupation with Shakespeare, in her book Keats Shakespeare⁽¹¹⁾, but this study did not deal with the full impact of Shakespeare upon Keats' sonnets and its role in his development. Similarly, Miriam Allott's The poems of John Keats⁽¹²⁾ also makes no attempt to synthesize all aspects of this influence. The aim of this study is to identify and synthesize obvious Shakespearean influence, upon early and late poetry of Keats as revealed by statements in letters by Keats, in critical commentaries and in an analysis of some of Keats' sonnets, lyrics, ballads and odes. Two very good biographies written with genuine perceptiveness and unusual liveliness of style are Bates' John Keats⁽¹³⁾, and Aileen Ward's John Keats the Making of a Poet⁽¹⁴⁾. Ward's study does not trace Shakespeare's influence in all of Keats' works, though it represents Keats with full understanding and knowledge that it is in short the life of Keats while Bates'

study pays a close attention to Keats' style throughout his different poetic stages .

Keats was constantly concerned with matters relating to the nature and purpose of poetry and the craft of the poet and his art .The relationship between the artist's mind and art was of primary importance to him as a poet .

To him a great poet must understand reality and art and possess the creative ability to fuse these two qualities ,so as to control and discipline structure and substance in order to express his imaginative insights .To attain these goals ,Keats turned to a study of models ,including Shakespeare .

Keats acknowledged Shakespeare as a “ good genius” who guided him in writing his early poetry and then later on in his great poetic enterprise .

He once said “Thank God I can read and perhaps understand Shakespeare to his depths”⁽¹⁵⁾

He frequently quoted from King Lear and Hamlet ,and he attained a certain Shakespearian presence in most of his poetic idioms either in the form of allusions or quotations which were totally absorbed till his later works such as the “Odes of 1819” “Otho the Great” and “Eve of St .Agnes”

that reflect the influence of Shakespeare. The close bond between Keats and Shakespeare was remarked upon even by his contemporaries such as John Hamilton Reynolds and Richard Woodhouse, they compared Keats to Shakespeare in their earliest works, Woodhouse believed that :

“ If his ‘Endmion’ be compared with Shakespeare’s earliest work (his Venus and Adonis) written about the same age, Keats’ poem will be found to contain more beauties, more poetry (and that of a higher order) less conceit and bad taste and in a word, much more promise of excellence than are to be found in Shakespeare’s work”⁽¹⁶⁾.

The real study of the Keats-Shakespeare relationship appeared in 1880 by Matthew Arnold. In his Essays in Criticism, he speaks about Keats “yearning passion for the Beautiful”. He finds that there is a close kinship with Shakespeare as the quotation shows :

“No one else in English poetry, save Shakespeare has in expression quite the fascinating felicity of Keats, his perfection of loveliness. “I think” he said humbly, “I shall be among the English Poets after my death. He is with Shakespeare”⁽¹⁷⁾.

The first appearance of Shakespeare in Keats' poetry was in February 1815, in his poem "Ode to Apollo" in which Keats gives him a place among many poets. By analyzing this poem, B.H. Gloster, in her dissertation explained what Keats learned and comprehended from both Spenserian and Shakespearean poetry:

"Spenser's poetry of romance and Shakespeare's poetry of passion point to the two main courses. Keats' art was to follow a concern with poetry as a means of capturing beautiful sensations and of poetry as an agent for providing consolatory function" (18).

Also his first appearance in Keats' letters as presented by Rollins appears in the poetic epistle to George Felton Mathew in the second entry. He wrote it in November, 1815, to celebrate the "brotherhood in song" which the two poets enjoyed, and hoped that they could find a place to

*"sit, and rhyme and think on Chatterton,
And that warm-hearted Shakespeare sent to
meet him" (19)*

Shakespeare here is also the only one of the great inspiring masters such as Alfred the Great, Burns, and the Romantic young poet Chatterton. Moreover, an early reference to Shakespeare appeared in his poem "Imitation of Spenser". According to Gloster's study, he found out that

"though the poem was frankly an imitation of Spenser, who was Keats' first poetic model, there is still a reference to Shakespeare"⁽²⁰⁾.

If Keats possessed sufficient poetic power, as he was saying, could "rob from aged Lear his bitter teen", an idea that heralds his later description of the power of poetry to

"lift the hearts and minds of man". The word "teen" though a Spenserian archaism, appears in The Tempest, Richard III. and Venus and Adonis a fact first noted by Richard Woodhouse".⁽²¹⁾

After a gap of almost a year, comes the next reference to Shakespeare, in the letters. In this second reference, in 9 October 1816, Keats demonstrates his rebellion against the lack of critical insight among his friends and he wishes to have more perceptive companions. He sent the letter to his

friend Charles Clarke to express his joy and to tell him that he looked forward to meet Leigh Hunt so as to become

“acquainted with Men who in their admiration of Poetry do not jumble together Shakespear and Darwin” (22) .

Keats, in his early poems and letters used Shakespeare's language and it appeared here and there in the form of allusions or echoes which reflected Keats' reading of Shakespeare's plays. A clear instance is Keats' poem "To Hope" written in February, 1815, which has several echoes of Shakespeare. Keats' first lines in "To Hope".

*When by my solitary heart I sit
And hateful thoughts enwrap my heart in gloom
when no fair dreams before my 'my mind's eye' flit
And the bare heath of life presents no bloom (23)*

(1 : 4)

Keats' use of "mind's eye" which apparently shows that it has been taken from the following phrase in Hamlet (24). In my mind's eye, Horatio ...” the reader sees a similarity in structure between the first stage of "To Hope" and Shakespeare's sonnet 29 in its characteristic sonnet method:

*When in disgrace with fortune and men's eye
I all alone beweepe my outcast state'
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate*

(1 : 4)

Furthermore , Keats' lines "O let me think it not in vain" to sigh out" and "In the midnight air" : are reminiscent of Silivius words to Corin in As You Lik It. "Though in thy youth thou wast as true / As even sigh'd upon midnight pillow ... (11.. 1v. 26 - 27) This play also has an echo in Keat's poem "I Stood Tip-toe Upon a Little Hill .

*And watch intently Nature's gentle doings :
they will be found softer then ring-dove's cooings .
How silent comes the water round that bend ;
Not the minutest whisper does it send
To the o'er hanging shallows : blades of grass
Slowely across the chequered shadows pass ..
Why , you might read two sonnets , are they reach
To where the hurrying freshnesses aye which preach
A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds. (lines 9 : 19)*

The "Nature's gentle doings" which preach/ a natural sermon O'er their pebly beds "especially is an echo from this passage in As You Like it :

*“And this our life exempt from public haunt
finds tongues in trees , books in running brooks,
sermons in stones , and good in everyting .*

(2. 1. 15 - 17)

Keats’ early poems have many echoes of A Midsummer Night’s Dream . keats’ poems “on Receiving a Curious Shell “and a” Copy of Verses from the Same Ladies” are again reminiscent of Shakespeare A Midsummer Night’s Dream is an obvious source of Keats’ fairy references. Also keats’ phrases “ this little dome” is a reminiscences from Hamlet’s description “if earth and heavens to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern :

*This goodly frame the earth , seems to me a
sterile promontory ‘ this o’er hanging
firmament this majestic roof fretted with
golden fire (2.2. 298 - 300)*

Moreover , the influence of reading A Midsummer Night’s Dream is found in the epistle “To My Brother George” and in “Sleep and Poetry ” Shakespeares’ views regarding the poet and his faculties are expressed by Thesus:

The poet’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling ,

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*Doth glance from heaven to earth , from earth to heaven
And as imagination bodies forth
The form of things unknown . the poet's pen
Turns them into shapes , and gives to airy nothings
A local habitation and a name (v.i, 12, 17)*

In Keats' epistle "To My Brother George" similar ideas regarding the poetic trance are expressed :

*.... When a poet is in such trance ,
In air he sees white coursers paw , and prance
Bestriden of gay knights , in gay apparel ,
Who at each other tilt in playful quarrel ...
When the bright warder blows his trumpet clear ,
Whose tones reach naught on earth but-poet's ear .*

(Lines 25 - 32)

Gloster has commented on this reference that Keats' advances are an analogous theory of poetic inspiration through which natural objects are transformed⁽²⁵⁾ This shows Keats' facing his central problem that of the function of poetry in his early period of development . Moreover, Finney draws parallels between lines from Shakespeare's King Lear, cliff, whose high and bending head/looks fearfully in the confined deeps" ⁽²⁶⁾ and lines from Keats' earlier poem "To

My Brother George” “Lofty clift, which proudly towers /
Above the ocean - waves” .

In “Sleep and Poetry” Keats’ presentation of the Charioteer a symbol of the creative imagination is a further parallel of Shakespeare’s description of “the poet’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling”. As Miriam Allott points out in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, the poet’s eye” glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven and Keats’ Charioteer in “ Sleep and Poetry “ “descends to earth and experiences his vision of “ delight, mystery, and fear ...” before returning “ into the light of heaven (27). Keats and Shakespeare had the same point of view regarding the imagination; both poets see it as a creative power, that ability which to Shakespeare turns the “form of things” into “Shapes” that gives to “Airy nothings” a “habitation and name” and to Keats endows mind with creative powers. This similarity between the two poets’ concepts of imagination was noticed by Leigh Hunt very early and has been pointed out more recently by Finney (28)

Keats also read Romeo and Juliet and was influenced by it. The influence is seen in Keats’ opening line in “I Stood Tip-toe Upon a Little Hill” in Finney (29) sees a similarity to lines 9 and 10, jocund day / Stands tip-toe on the misty mountain topos” from Act III Scene iv in Romeo and Juliet

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Also Selincourt sees a similarity between the lines 93-94 in Keats' "Calidore" in which he gives a description of "adimpled hand / Fair as some wonder out of fairy land" and Shakespeare's line 36 "The white wonder of dear Juliet's hand" in Act IV, Scene iii from Romeo and Juliet.⁽³⁰⁾

When Keats embarked on a systematic study of Shakespeare, there is a marked transition and this can be seen in his sonnet "On the Sea" which was inspired by Keats' reading of King Lear and he follows it by "Endymion"

In his early letters, he quoted or referred to: A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest, As You Like It, Henry IV, and Macbeth. In his later letters the tragedies such as King Lear, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, and Troilus and Cressida are most quoted. These references are indicative of Keats' progress as a poet, his mature philosophical approach, the preoccupation with death and the attaining of wisdom.

Keats' in two of his letters used quotations, the letters were written to Clarke: on 31 October 1816 he ends the letter with a phrase from Hamlet (IV.V.41) "God yield you"⁽³¹⁾; the other quotation was to come in the following month, in the second letter to Clarke. In this letter Keats

makes a slight adaptation from Macbeth (I.vii.20) "I rest your Hermit" (32) He also adapts from the first part of Henry IV in a discussion about health when he writes a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds on 17 March 1817 .

*Banish money ... Banish sofas ... Banish wine
Banish Music ... But right Jack Health ... honest
Jack Health , True Jack Health banish health
and banish all the world. (33)*

This quotation presents the words which are said by Falstaff in the mock-trial when he defends himself

*No, my good lord, banish peto , banish
Bardolph , banish pions ; but for sweet Jack
Falstaff , kind Jack Falstaff , true Jack
Falstaff , valiant , being , as he is , old Jack Falstaff,
banish not him they Harry's
Company , banish not him thy Harry's company :
banish plump Jack , and banish all world .*

(II. IV. 520 - 527)

Keats began his study of Shakespeare as an aid in writing "Endymion" and he planned to study A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest because he knew that they would be helpful to him in portraying the supernatural in

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“Endymion”. Keats's letters of May 10-11, 1817, indicate that it was Benjamin Haydon who suggested that Keats read A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest.

Keats' reaction to this study can be followed in the letters he wrote to his brother and friends. The effect of this study on Keats appeared only two days after beginning it as revealed in his letter to Reynolds on 17 April 1817, in which he described the place where he stayed.

and at the moment I am about to become settled for I have unpacked my books' but them into a snug corner ... pinned up Haydon .. Mary Queen of Scots, and Milton with his daughters in a row. In the passage I found a head of Shakespeare which I had not seen before ... It is most likely the same that George spoke so well of; for I like it extremely ... this head I have hung over my Books; just above the three in a row, having first discarded a French ambassador ... now this alone is a good morning's work. (34)

Keats felt he would be able to start his second book of “Endymion” in an atmosphere like this, surrounded by men like Shakespeare and Milton. He wrote a letter to his brother on 15 April 1817, from Southampton expressing his

loneliness that morning , “so he went and unbox’d a Shakespeare ... “There’s my comfort” (35)

Because Keats was a self-critical and self-directed poet, he had consistent thrust in that direction towards independence as a poet in his own right . His method of achieving this independence was obtained through intensive study of life and art side by side . In Keats’ view Shakespeare was the best artist who combined art and life , to Keats both art and life are intertwined , so Shakespeare became his chief exemplar from whom he got inspiration and guidance . From the very beginning of his study , Keats was inspired by Shakespeare . In his letter to Reynolds on 17 April 1817 Keats admitted his intense interest in Shakespeare’s language, he said :

“From want of regular rest, I have been rather nervous ... and the passage in Lear , Do you not hear the Sea ? has haunted me intensely” (36)

Immediately , Keats translated his interest of this passage into a sonnet “On the Sea” in which he misquotes Lear (IV : vi - 4) “Do you hear the sea? ” a phrase that also denotes that he was recording from his memory . Moreover , in that letter he suggests to Reynolds :

.... Whenever you write say write say word or two on some passage in Shakespear that may have come rather new to you ; which must be continually happening , not withstanding that we read the same play forty times . (37)

Then he quoted two passages of special interest to him and continued :

I find that I cannot exist without poetry ... with eternal poetry ... half the day will not do ... the whole of it ... I began with little , but has mad me a leviathan I had become all in a tremble from not having written anything of late ... the Sonnet over leaf did me some good. (38)

The Sonnet "On the Sea" which keats wrote under the effect of Shakespeare's king Lear, and it was written out of necessity before any work on "Endymion" could commence. This play had the most profound effect on keats, as it was by king Lear that keats was directly inspired to write sonnets, the first one "On the Sea" and the second one came after he had reread it six months later. In a letter to Bailey on 23 January 1818, he said: "I sat down to read King Lear yesterday, and felt the greatness of the thing up to the writing

of a sonnet” (39). Meanwhile he wrote a letter to his brother in which he copied out for them the entire sonnet “On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again”. The sonnet displays Keats’ feelings and ambitions to be a poet and admits that it is through his study of Shakespeare that his own best talents in poetry will be released ; in the sonnet he prayed to Shakespeare to give him , new phoenix-wings, so that he may fulfill his poetic ambitions .

Keats discovered that Shakespeare was enough for him as a poet because he replaced all poets such as Spenser , Hunt and even Wordsworth and all his previous masters in poetry(40) . Shakespeare was the poet of all poets for him . Keats, echoing Hazlitt’s remark recorded a hint of a slight change in his mind that was taking place during that spring . Aileen Ward said that Keats at this time .

“ was drawn to Shakespeare by the most elusive of essences, his outlook of life, the honesty , the saneness, the depth of his humanity in confronting the whole range of human experience” . (41)

This change in Keats’ way of thinking was consequently revealed in his “Endymion” . This poem was to be a test of his powers of invention, a trial, as he said in a letter to his brother “to make 400 lines of one bare

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circumstance and fill them with poetry”⁽⁴²⁾. Keats' plan was to send Endymion on a Journey through the elements in search of his goddess, describing the strange world through which he passes and telling other myths along the way. Keats divided the legend of Endymion winning immortal youth through the love of the moon goddess into four books and he has to fill it with living characters. Keats wrote to George :

*“Do not Lovers of poetry like to have a little Region
to wander in where the images are so numerous
that many are forgotten and found new in second
reading”⁽⁴³⁾*

When he started the poem, he was not sure of the direction it would take . A year later he said : “Before I began I had no inward feel of being able to finish ; and I proceeded my steps were all uncertain”⁽⁴⁴⁾ . Keats, begins in the first book when Endymion tells his sister Peona that he has fallen in love with a mysterious bright being who is the goddess of the moon . He sees her three times in his dreams in the sky in a well and in a cave . Because he has fallen in love with her he has to search for her through three regions : earth , water and air . He begins by going forward into the depths of the earth .

The mood in which Keats wrote his fourth book of "Endymion" was full of different incidents and events, some of them sad and others happy. During this period he had the opportunity to visit Oxford and to hold long discussions with Bailey about poetry, Coleridge's idea of imagination, Hazlitt's essay on Religion, and Plato and Socrates. Bailey was providing Keats with the interest in Wordsworth's theory of myths as told by Bailey that in his own opinion, were not only "lovely tales" expressing the ever changing beauties of nature, but they included universal truths or the embodiment of such truths. Aileen Ward stated in a note that The Excursion written by Wordsworth had a slow influence upon Keats, "Endymion". (45)

Also Shakespeare may be the source for references to mythological characters that appeared in "Endymion" in Book I I (41-44) Keats described Apollo wandering in exile and a similar story appears in The Winter's Tale (Iv. iv. 30) by Shakespeare. Keats also describes "Nibe, all tears 'in' Endymion" (l.33-343) and she is mentioned in Hamlet (I.ii.149), too, the story of "Venus and Adonis" is mentioned in "Endymion" (I I. 400) as well and it may be the influence of Shakespeare's "Venus And Adonis". De Selincourt points to Spenser and Ovid as probable sources for all three previous references. (46)

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Here we can say that Keats, while writing the earlier part of his poem was under the dual influence of Spenser and Shakespeare who comes later and lasts forever. In Book III (97-99) Keats points to three mythological characters which may have come from The Winter Tale; and they are Ophreus, Leander and Pluto. All these references Keats may have come across in Shakespeare and they reflect not a shallow influence.

There are numerous real echoes in "Endymion"; two of them were taken from Hamlet in Book I (501) Endymion's spirit is seen to "melt away and thaw" which is a clear echo of Hamlet's wish that his body "would melt, \ Thaw and resolve itself into a dew" in Act one, scene I I (129-139) and in Book I of "Endymion", (I.295) "the very bourne of heaven" is also from Hamlet's "bourne of Heaven" (I I . I. 78-80) Lowell found that Keats speaks of "every wind that nods the mountain "in" Endymion" (I, 261) and this line is also there in "Sleep and Poetry" and he suggests Cymbeline (Iv. ii . 174-175) or The Merchant of Venice (Iv. I. 57-77) as sources.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Do Selincourt also found another possible echo in Endymion's words to the Indian Maid : "Thou art my executioner" (Iv. iii) and we find a similar image in As you like it (III . V.8) "I would not be thy executioner" . He compares Keats' phrase "My herald thought" (I.59) with "my herald thought" in two plays one is Two Gentlemen of

Verona (I I I .I. 144) and the other is Romeo and Juliet “love’s heralds should be thoughts”(II .v.4) and at last he compares Glauco, “I sue not for my ruddy drops of life” (I I . 546) with lines from Julius Caesar”(48) The ruddy drops \ That visit my sad heart “ II.i 289-290) There are echoes which show only a knowledge of lines, meanwhile, there are different sorts of reworking of images, phrases and passages in Shakespeare that show Keats, deeper understanding in reading the plays and his attempt to put into his poetry what he had learnt from Shakespeare . There are many echoes all of these mainly from the two plays mentioned previously, which Keats studied writing of “Endymion” they are : The Tempest and A Midsummer Night,s Dream . Keats , in Book I (394) gave a description of Endymion , “whose eyelids curtain’d up their jewels dim “ and we find a similar idea and image in both plays : The Tempest (I. ii. 408). “ The fringed curtains of thine eyes advance “ and also in another play , Pericles Prince of Tyre :

*Her eyelids , cases to those heavenly jewels which
pericles hath lost , Begin to part their fringes of
bight gold . (III . ii . 100)*

De Selincourt believes that the two passages “combined in Keats, mind” (49) as one gives him” the image of jewels and the other , the image of curtains and both have

the image of fringes. Amy Lowell presents a similar adaptation in "Endymion" where Peona's arbour is described:

*Wherenested was an arbour , overwove
By many a summer's silent fingering;
To whose cool bosom she was used to bring
Her playmates , with their needle broidery,
And minsterel memories of time gone by .*

(1.431-434)

This passage could be compared with another one in A Midsummer Night's Dream which Keats had underlined and marked as Amy Lowell noted ⁽⁵⁰⁾ .

*We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion ,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key .*

(I I I .ii. 203-206)

There is a similarity between "Endymion" (I I . 277) "A mad-pursuing of the fog-born elf" and A Midsummer Night's Dream (I I.i.39) which speaks of Puck's proclivity to "Mislead right-wanderers, laughing at their harm. In The Tempest there is a close parallel which appears in the

treatment of the deluded drunkards by Ariel , who leaves the victims “the filthy mantled pool “(Iv.i.182) . In Book 2.280 of “Endymion” the elf’s pursuers are led “into the bosom of a hated thing”Keats underlined a description of Caliban as “hag-born” in The Tempest (I.ii.283) from which he may have taken “fog-born” which is more delicate . It is obvious that Keats, when he wrote his lines, was using Shakespeare as a source for the actions and habits of these creatures such as Ariel and Puck .

Many attempts have been made to explain some passages in “Endymion” such as the passage which describes “the ocean floor” Many critics have noticed the connections between the “ocean floor” passage in both Richard III and “Endymion” Keats described it in a long passage and gave a new and different sort of ocean floor for Endymion to pass through:

*For had he roam'd with nothing save the hollow
vast, that foam'd Above, around, and at his feet,
save things More dead than Morpheus, imaginings;
old rusted anchors, helmets, breast-plates large of
gone sea-warriors; brazen beaks and targets
rudders that for a hundred years had lost The sway
of human hand; gold vase embass'd with long-
forgotten story, and where in No reveller had ever*

*dipp,d a chin But those of saturn,s vintage; scrolls,
write in the tongue of heaven , by those souls .*

*Who first were on the earth; and sculptors rude
In ponderous stone, developing the mood
Of Ancient nox, ... then skeletons of man
Of beast, behemoth, and leviathan .
And elephant, and eagle, and huge jaw .
Of nameless monster . A cold leader awe .
These secrets struck into hin; and unless
Dian had chased away that heaviness
He might have died*

(I I I . 119-139)

Shakespeare described the bottom of the sea thus :

*What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears
What ugly sights of death within my eyes
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks:
Ten thousand men that fishes gnaw,d upon;
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones , unvalued Jewels,
All scatt,d in the bottom of the sea :
Some lay in dead man,s skulls; and, in those holes
As,t were in scorn of eyes , reflecting gems ,
That Woo,d the slimy bottom of the deep ,*

And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by
(I.iv. 22-33)

Miss Lowell thinks that Shakespeare's lines are "infinitely superior" because they are direct and unadorned while, Keats' are weakened using fine figures of speech, metaphors and allusion as she elaborates :

"Now take Keats, inversions, extraneous details, ancient gods called in to help out short lines or lend a circumstance to tag a rhyme. unnatural archaisms such as the ponderous stones of Nox, or behemoth and Leviathan, which come directly Milton and should have been left there, or at least reserved for some more appropriate occasion, cheap expressions, again in the cause of rhyme, as in the revellers who had never "dipp'd a chin" preposterous suggestions, as that of elephants and eagles at the bottom of the sea. we might be gazing at the wreck, of Noah's Ark. The mind is led away from the Scene in almost every Line by some impertinent interpolation" (51).

Miss Lowell regards Keats as an imagist poet who could not achieve the compressed intensity of expression as that Shakespeare achieves in his ocean-floor passage. This is true but as we see from the beginning Keats' purpose, he told Bailey was to "Make 4000 lines of one bare circumstance" so as to provide for

"Lovers of poetry a little Region to wander in where they may pick and choose "from among images which are" so numerous that many are forgotten and found new in a second Reading" (52)

" Thus his purpose is not to write imagist poetry and it is not the best poetry, but it was his idea of poetry at this stage in his development. Shakespeare's description is not to give a feeling of antiquity, while Keats' is to build up this feeling as the whole purpose to Endymion's visit to the ocean floor is foreshadowing here. The whole scene is to prepare us for the meeting between the aged Glaucus and Endymion who himself is a child of the misty, mythological dawn-era and Glaucus had been on the ocean floor for one thousand years.

Shakespeare's The Tempest also served as an example of how to draw and paint a picture such as seen in Glaucus, description of a shipwreck :

*on a day
Sitting upon a rock about the spray
I saw grow up from the horizon's brink
A gallant vessels soon she seem'd to sink
Away from me again, as though her course
Had been resumed in spite of hindering forces
vanish'd : and not long , before arose
Dark clouds, and mutterings of winds morose.
old aeolus would stifle his mad spleen,
But could not : therefore all the billows green
Toss'd up the silver spums againts the clouds
The tempest came : I saw that vessel's shrouds
In perilous bustle ; while upon the deck
Stood trembling creatures . I beheld the wreck ;
The final gulping : the poor struggling souls :
I heard their cries amid loud thunder-rolls .*

(I I I-645-660)

Miranda , in this play , describes a shipwreck as well ; she says :

*O,I have suffer'd
With those that I saw suffer : a brave vessel,
Who had, on doubt , some noble creature in her,
Dash'd all to pieces . O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart . poor souls, they Perish'd .*

(I.i. 5-9)

It seems that Keats had this vivid description in his mind when he wrote Endymion, but he has not used Shakespeare's language exactly for "the tempest" and "poor souls". The second Book ends with Endymion's discovery of "the giant sea above his head" after a long image which describes the awakening of Adonis and the lament of Alpheus for Arethusa. In a similar way the third Book ends with Endymion suddenly transported from emotional scene of reunion of the lovers under the sea to a very calm scene in a "placid lake". The last Book, in which Endymion rejects his dream and then discovers that his love Cynthia is to be his sister all, Keats ends the poem in a slightly varied tone :

*Next Cynthia bright
Peona kissed, and blessed with fair good night :
Her brother kissed he too, and knelt adown
Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon .
She gave her fair hands to him, and behold,
Before thee swiftest kisses he had told,
They vanished far away ... Peona went
Home through the gloomy wood in wonderment.
(IV. 997-1003)*

Among the shorter poems Keats had written during the Endymion period, we can say that Shakespearean influence

is found not only in the sonnets but also in some of the shorter lyrics .The term, sonnet, as Gertrude white points out

“comes from the diminutive of the Italian suono, soundaccompanied by music, the form as developed by fra Guittone d,arezzo in the middle of the thirteenth century, embodied the characteristics now known as the Italian sonnet”. (53)

Keats' development as a poet parallels his extensive utilization of the sonnet form. The sonnet as content and form, was the suitable kind of poetry for him because it combined all the elements that he sought . As for the content, keats inherited a tradition of sonnet authorship, from past as well as contemporary sonneteers that contained a wide range of content which provided him with diverse themes as well as varied approaches that gave an enriching background for his sonnets. The sonnet was already an established important literary genre when keats began to write and it had been used by English writers whom he admired such as Milton, Spenser, Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt . Hence, the sonnet , as a highly structured form which had rigid fixed principles suitable for lyric and dramatic utterance provided the young Romantic poet with a medium suited to his needs as he was seeking ,mastery of his craft and thinking in terms of achieving universality, as well .

The three sonnet patterns : the Italian or the Petrarchan, the English or the Shakespearean, and the Spenserian were all established before Keats' time. Keats followed the sonnet tradition as he knew it except in the three experimental sonnets- "Fame", "To sleep" and "If By Dull Rhymes our English Must Be chained" .(54)

Bates in his book Stylistic Development comments that both sonnets, "To Ailsa Rock" and "On Hearing the Bagpipe" use a device which is Shakespearean that of "almost invariably" starting "with an end consciously in view" (55), so the last line reflects the first one or the last two lines reflect the first two in some way. The example is cited by Bates for first type is Shakespeare's Sonnet 19 :

*How heavy do I journey on my way ,
My grief lies onward and my joy behind*
(1-2)

And for the second type , he cites sonnet XIX :

*Devouring time , blunt thou the lion,s paws ,
And make the earth devour her own aweet brood ;
Yet , do thy worst , old time : despite the wrong,
My love shall in my verse live ever young .*
(3-6)

Keats, in his sonnet "To Ailsa Rock" used a similar technique :

*Harken : thou craggy ocean -pyramid
Another cannot wake thy giant size*

(2-3)

Between these two lines the poet discussed how the rock was beneath the water till the occurrence of an earthquake when its huge peak appeared above the surface, but this violent change did not weaken its dead bulk. The last line also repeats the same idea of the deadness of the "craggy" bulk and it will never "hearken" to the poet . In "On Hearing the Bagpipe " keats was very close to this technique, he says in this sonnet :

*Of late two dainties were before me plac'd,
Mum chance art thou with both oblig'd to part .*

(6-7)

In this sonnet keats described the pleasure of hearing the bagpipe and seeing the play and tells that he could not choose between them and he says that he must part with both. Thus the two sonnets in their form show and reflect Keats' reading of Shakespeare's sonnets . "On Visiting the Tomb of Burns" is also a Petrarchan sonnet of this period which has a strong Shakespearean overtone . Some critics

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have pointed out how Keats was influenced by Shakespeare in this sonnet .

De Selincourt quotes three lines from Hamlet's soliloquy :⁽⁵⁶⁾

*Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all.
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied O'er with the pale cast of thought .
(I I I.i. 83-85)*

He further comments that Keats, seems to be "Haunted by the reflections of Hamlet"

*For who has mind to relish, Minas-wise,
The Real of Beauty, free from that dead hue
Fickly imagination and sick pride
Cast wan upon it , Burns with honour due
I oft have honour'd thee . Great shadow hide
Thy face ; I sin against thy native skies .
(1-6)*

It is very clear that this is very close reminiscence of Hamlet's soliloquy as it echoes some of the words and the mood which proves the influence of Shakespeare, even during his walking tour. Keats wrote a Shakespearean sonnet

“When I Have Fears “ as a Romantic writer and with his emphasis on individuality and freedom. Keats tried to improve his poetic faculty by revising his poetic principles and techniques, to be based on the general study of Elizabethan literature and to pay special attention to Shakespeare as the ideal poet .

When he began his general study of Elizabethan literature in order to gain intensity and restraint in his poetic language, he later concentrated his effort and attention to the particular study of Shakespeare's poetry as he is the one poet amongst the Elizabethans who provided a comprehensive vision. Shakespearean characteristics did not appear in Keats' quatrains till he composed the sonnets on “Chapman's Homer” and “The Elgin Marbles.” In these sonnets he made allusions to Shakespeare's characters and plays which indicate his acquaintance with Shakespeare's dramatic works . In the next six months after Keats had composed “On First Looking into Chapman's Homer” in October 1816 , he wrote nineteen sonnets starting with “Keen, Fitful Gusts are Whisper'ing Here and There” and ending with “On the Story of Rimini” in March, 1817 . If we divide them thematically, we will see that two of them were composed on the subject of the Elgin Marbles following by two addressed to Benjamin Haydon , those four sonnets are the most Shakespearean in theme.

In this group of sonnets one sees the Shakespearean influence on Keats as J. Middleton Murry noted, for instance, that the sonnet "On Leaving Some Friends at an Early Hour" is similar to the "early music of Shakespear 65 Murry explains that similarity as follows :

" Shakespeare also , when he came from remote and placid Stratford to fervid life of London (keats had come from "remote and placid" Edmonton to "fervid" London) must have felt the same thrill of entering into consciousness of power". (57)

This similarity does not tink with the two poets' artistic parallels but with their development processes . The sonnet "On the Grasshopper and the Cricket" is Petrarchan in rhyme scheme, but it is Shakespearean in style , imagery, and in the working out of its thought pattern . The opening line , "The poetry of death is never dead" is followed by three introducing continual voices and noises of the grasshopper . The fourth line characterizes the grasshopper's song as "he takes the lead in summer's luxury" . Usually the eighth line in the Petrarchan structure indicates the "volta" or turn in thought, but in this poem the eighth line enlarges the basic introductory thought "The poetry of earth is ceasing never"

then is followed by a description of the cricket's song, and the two closing lines fuse together the music of both insects .

This sonnet is a picture of the cyclic movement of the seasons . Summer is shown as the season of fertility and regeneration these images , The "new born mead" "cooling trees" and "pleasant weeds". "The grasshopper's song completes the birds" music and continues in their silence when they are "faint with the hot sun". In winter the frost replaces the hot sun, the chill of a "lone winter the frost replaces the grasshopper's song. Shakespeare's approach in Sonnet 12 (When I do count the clock that tells the time) is similar to Keats' that of using contrasting images based upon the seasonal changes :

*When lofty trees I see barren of leaves
which erst from heat did canopy the herd
and summer's green, all girdled up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard .*

(1-4)

In addition , Keats' early sonnets are characterized by his use of feminine endings as an extra unstressed syllable at the close of a line regularly ending with a stressed syllable . He used it in most of his early sonnets and Bates attributes

Keats' use of this stylistic device to "the influence of Shakespeare's in using feminine endings in the sonnets". (58)

Another stylistic characteristic of Keats' early sonnets is the rhetorical patterns of parallelism through repetition of line, phrase, clause and word which show similarity to Shakespeare's method. Bates, in his stylistic study of Keats' early sonnets distinguishes Keats' sonnets from those of many of his contemporaries and predecessors by the use of this rhetorical pattern.

"The repetition or parallelism of phrase and of line is almost totally absent in sonnets since the Elizabethans, and equally lacking in the sonnets of Keats' contemporaries". (59)

According to Bates, this rhetorical pattern of parallelism through of line and phrase was not used in the sonnets of Wordsworth, Hunt, or even by Milton. As this device is a feature of Shakespeare's characteristic method it seems that Keats was influenced by the Elizabethan poet. Here are some examples from Keats' sonnets which illustrate his use of this device "My Love is a Fever":

*E'en then, elate, my spirit leaps, and prances
E'en then my soul with exultation dances.*

*Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily ,
Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,
Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair
.... think you he did not wait/
Think you he naught but prison did see,*

(1-7)

Keats employed another Shakespearean device in his sonnets that is antithesis . There are several phrases in his sonnets that show the use of this device , for instance, in "To Chatterton" an attempt made in line 8 . "How night was night to thy fair morning. In "To Lord Byron" there are phrases such as : "sweetly sad" and "pleasing woe" and in line 12 "And like fair veins in sable marble" how the poet used them to point out the contrasts , but he was not as skillfully as Shakespeare in using it in his sonnets . However, these stylistic patterns indicate Keats' early reading of Shakespeare's sonnets and, as Bates notes,

" subtler rhetorical devices of parallelism and antithesis which abound in the later sonnets and in which the influence of Shakespeare is clearly discernible" . (60)

Thus Keats' sonnets written before 1817 reveal Shakespeare's influence on the development of his thought. At this time

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keats began to lose interest in Hunt's art and came increasingly under the influence of Benjamin Haydon, William Hazlitt, John Hamilton Reynolds, each of whom was instrumental in urging keats' interest in Shakespeare. In addition keats' powers were ripe for new vistas, and the exploration of his own creative urges. On his tour of the Isle of Wight he carried with him his seven volume edition of Shakespeare's work to study them. From the day he had opened the first volume, he started the most intense and thorough study of Shakespeare and, henceforth, the Elizabethan poet moved forward to the centre of keats' life and mind and whatever he wrote after this time reflects Shakespeare's powerful influence.

The most representative sonnets that illustrate the influence of Shakespeare on keats' sonnets are: "When I have Fears That I May Cease to Be", "Four Seasons Fill the Measure of the year", "Time's Sea Half Been Five Years at its Slow Ebb" and "Bright Star! Would I Were Steadfast as Thou Art". Lawrence Zillman's book John Keats and the Sonnet Tradition has examined keats' themes so as to show the extent to which keats adopted Shakespearean content. Zillman finds that keats treated the Shakespearean themes of fame, time, love, and death⁽⁶¹⁾. In addition, Bates states that those sonnets explore the effect of time on human

endeavours and also “approximate the style of Shakespeare more closely than any other sonnets of the century” (62) .

Keats wrote another Shakespearean sonnet “When I have Fears” between January 22 and January 31, 1818, immediately after “On sitting Down to Read king Lear Once Again”. Not only is it Shakespearean in form but as Finney points out, its theme of the “mutability of life is a typical Elizabethan subject”(63) .

It treats the theme of mortality and mutability and links it to poetic art and love as in the first quatrain the poet states his fear that death may end his poetic career before its full fruition . This thought is asserted by using harvesting imagery in which the poetic fulfillment is a bath full of “ripen’d grain” , the poet’s pen is an instrument that “gleans” his teeming brain and high-piled books “are garners that contain his art or “character. The thought is developed in the second quatrain as the poet begins to describe the creative process , which leads to poetic composition and also describes his vision of the vastness of his ambition .

Here his imagery shifts from the earth to the sky . The “night’s starr’d face” with “its huge cloud symbols of a high romance almost reflects the very great numbers of glimpses

and “shadows” of yet unwritten compositions Keats is very concerned about time and he felt its pressure on two levels of consciousness: the quantitative time, which will allow him to write the amount of work he envisions, and the qualitative time that will permit maturity of thoughts and mastery of technical devices to express his conceptions with artistic proficiency. Another idea that the poet fears is that of unrequited love, appears in the third quatrain. This fear related to time and Keats expresses three concerns to reflect this relationship. The first is expressed in the phrase “fair creature of an hour” showing the poet’s awareness of the transience of beauty. Secondly the poet realized that time would separate him permanently from his beloved and by his death he will “never look upon thee more” Finally, the poet thinks deeply about the impermanence of life which prevents him from tasting and enjoying the immediate joys of love. At the end of the sonnet the poet in the couplet expresses his “deep despair which is caused by his fears”. This sonnet has close similarities to several written by Shakespeare. There is a similarity, as Miriam Allott sees, between the idea expressed in Keats’ first two lines and that in Shakespeare’s sonnet 107:

*Not mine own fears, not the prophetic soul
of the wide, dreaming on things to come.*

(3-4)

Moreover, she sees parallels in the movement of Keats' first quatrain .

*when I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain
Before high piled books, in character,
Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain*
(1-4)

and the beginning of Shakespeare's sonnet 12

*when I do count the clock that tells the time
and see brave day sunk in hideous night :
when I behold the violet past prime ,
and sable curls all silver, d o'er with white*
(1-4)

A few days after the composition of "When I Have fears " on february 4 ,1818 ,Keats composed another Shakespearean sonnet "Time's Sea Hath Been Five years at its Slow Ebb " which illustrates his study of Shakespeare's sonnets and reveals the style of Shakespeare in its theme, imagery and phrasing .De Selincourt calls this " the most Shakespearean sonnet that Keats ever wrote (64) .Keats' sonnet parallels Shakespeare's in rhythm , repetition of phrase , emotional structure and management of crescendo. It is as Shakespearean as " When I Have Fears That I May Cease to

Be”, in addition, Keats, theme of time and love is Shakespearean and the phrasing of the “Time’s Sea” sonnet is similar to Shakespeare’s sonnets 60, 98, and 104. Keats’ initial lines in this sonnet :

*Time’s sea hath been five years at its slow off .
Long hours have to and fro let creep the sand -*
(1-2)

reveals a similarity to the opening lines of Shakespeare’s lines in sonnet 60 :

*Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore
so do our minutes hasten to their end .*
(1-2)

Both Shakespeare and Keats use the sea as a symbol of time’s relentless effect .Also the movement of lines in both the sonnets utilizes the rhythmic motion of the waves .Keats’ rhythm reveals the waves constant swell and fall while Shakespeare’s parallels the waves , rolling on and moving forward and breaking and spreading on the “ pebbled shore”. Moreover one sees a similarity between these Keatsian lines

*I cannot look upon the rose, s dye
But to the cheek my soul doth take its flight :*

*I cannot look on any budding flower
But my fond ear ,in fancy to thy lips
(7-10)*

and Shakespeare's lines in sonnet 98 :

*Nor did I wonder at the lily's white ,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose :
They were but sweet ,but figure of delight
Drawn after you ,you patteredn of all those.
(6-9)*

Also keats ,closing lines :

*Thou dost eclipse
Every delight with sweet remembering
And grief unto my darling joys doth bring
(12-14)*

is a resemblance of Shakespeare's closing lines in sonnet 104:

*So your sweet hue ,which methinks doth stand ,
Hath motion ,and mine eye may be deceived :
For fear of which ,hear this ,thou age unbred
Ere you were born was summer,s beauty dead .
(11-14)*

Actually Keats' sonnet reveals close similarities to Shakespeare's, but it does not maintain of the Shakespearean couplet, as Selicount points out "the weakness in the twelfth line being its only flaw".⁽⁶⁵⁾ This weakness appears in "When I Have Fears" too because Keats began the conclusive thought in the middle of the twelfth line, instead of confining it to the concluding couplet. In Bates' opinion "Shakespeare maintains the integrity of the couplet almost exclusively"⁽⁶⁶⁾ Shakespeare himself in three sonnets 35, 153, 154 did the same as he started an idea in the last line of the third quatrain and carries it on into the final couplet, and in sonnet 154 Shakespeare has exactly the same sort of caesura in the twelfth line following by the run-on couplet just as Keats uses. In this respect, Keats has same precedent for the flaws in his first two Shakespearean sonnets.

Despite the fact that this sonnet is full of parallels, it is possible to hear Keats' individual voice. While one of Shakespeare's characteristics is his use of the dark mistress as a corrupting agent, Keats' sonnet presents a new point of view, that of love as a restricting element and of beauty as an ensnaring force. The poet in the two last lines of the opening quatrain remembers lovely woman he knew five years earlier and he admits that he is still "tangled" in her "beauty's web". Moreover, the impression she has left on the poet is so intense that aspects of natural beauty such as "the

midnight sky” the “rose dye” and any “budding flower” reminds him of her memory and makes these delights vanish and brings the sorrow of absence. Many of Shakespeare's sonnets such as sonnets . 27 ,28 .43 .44 and 50 express the poet's sadness because of his absence from his beloved ,but none of them is exactly similar to Keats' view of the victim who is attracted greatly by any object of beauty . In Shakespeare's sonnets the poet hesitates between two types of love ; in the first case ,the love of idealistic affection for the fair young woman ,and the love of sensual attraction to the corrupting dark mistress .In the latter one ,the poet becomes a victim and slave to his fleshly desires ,unlike who is ensnared by “beauty web”. Almost ,all Keatsian heroes such as Endymion ,Porphyro ,Lycius ,as well as the knight of “La Belle Dame sans Merci” enjoyed transcendental beauty and happiness with females unlike Shakespeare's heroes who only found consolation in a fair woman .Keats envisioned love restrictive force long before he experienced it personally ,and later his conception of love as an ensnaring power has greater intensity when he fell in love with Fanny Brawne . At any rate the abstract view Keats has expressed in this sonnet has its roots and examples in Shakespeare's art.

Another Keatsian sonnet that reflects strong Shakespearean characteristics is “Four Seasons Fill the Measure of the Year” which was included in a letter to

Benjamin Bailey on March 13, 1818. In this letter he makes some comments on Shakespeare's reality and religion. He discusses the nature of reality and divides ethereal things into three categories: "things real, things semi-real and nothings" ⁽⁶⁷⁾. The definition of each also appears in the same letter, he says:

*"Thing real such as existences
of the sun, moon, and stars and passages
from Shakespeare ... things semi-real
such as love the clouds and company
which require the clouds and company
to make them wholly exist and Nothings
which are made great and dignified by ardent
pursuit" ⁽⁶⁸⁾*

He also discussed his idea on religion which contrasted with those of Bailey, who believes in the Wordsworthian principle of Christian humanitarianism, while Keats believes that there is "nothing" in this word that is proveable

*"and even poetry can be used as a "mere jack and
Lantern to amuse whoever may chance to be struck
with its brilliance" ⁽⁶⁹⁾ .*

keats also sees that:

“any view of an individual its value to an idea and that “ every mental pursuit takes its reality and worth from the ardour of the pursuer” .(70)

Hence ,keats applies the doctrine of Negative capability to religious beliefs and he encourages the open and receptive mind more that a mind which accepts any prefixed doctrines. Keats' sonnets contain this philosophy and belief .

Many of Shakespeare's sonnets are written in the same method that keats followed which moves from the universal to the particular .Shakespeare's method is to explore the effects of time on nature and human endeavour and then give it a personal application ,as in sonnet 65 ,he presents the operation and the effect of time on stone ,earth ,sea ,rocks, steel and beauty in general then relates the destructive forces of time to the decay of his life and love's beauty.This Shakespearean method is similar to the approach that keats used in his sonnet “ Bright Star”. In the octave the star is a universal symbol of “ nature patient ,sleepless eremite” that watches the magnificence of nature's active operations; the moving waters at their priest like tack snow marking “mountains and the moors” this perspective changes and shifts from an impersonal setting to a personal and individualized setting in the sestet ,the poet is still describing

the star as a changeless state though it is related to an intense personal participation. The line that expresses the poet's desire to remain pillowed forever on his "fair love's" ripening breast "parallels a thought expressed by Romeo, who wished that he, like peace could dwell on Juliet, breast. Moreover, Keats' star "steadfast still unchangeable" is just like Shakespeare's symbol of enduring love "ever-fixed mark" in sonnet 116.

As "The Bright star" was written in 1819, considered to be Keats' greatest year of his poetic achievement not only because of the quality of production but also because of the mastery of form and synthesis of philosophy, this sonnet coherently fuses Shakespeare's principles and Keats' own aesthetic philosophy. Not only does the sonnet reveal many parallels to Shakespeare's art but Keats' own poetic philosophy is also expressed very clearly. Aileen Ward comments that it voices many of Keats' philosophic principles:

"The contemplating consciousness here imaged in the star, the abstract calm of some, superior being, looking down on the vicissitudes of earth, is implicit in negative capability poetic identity, and ... ultimate vision in which truth and beauty

become one” .(71)

In addition ,Ward's analysis of the sonnet points out to an important difference between aesthetic views of Keats and Shakespeare .Ward explains this difference as follows

“The delicate links by which Keats tried to bind the star and the lover are snapped in the final plunge toward unconsciousness” . (72)

as Keats' line “and so live ever or else swoon to death”, here he expresses a deep wish to make the intense moment of pleasure much longer rather than to break with reality or to “plunge toward unconsciousness”. Thus ,the steadfast quality of the star is transforming Keats' wish to sustain the summit of an emotional experience . In a letter to Benjamin Bailey in November ,1817 ,occurs the beginning of this idea as he writes that his thought of heaven is as earthly happiness “repeated in a fine tone and so repeated” and that to achieve this state in life ,there is only one way is that through the imagination .

To escape from his loneliness and sad thoughts ,Keats went to live with Brown in Hampstead near the Dilkes and here he met Fanny Brawne to whom he was later engaged .In early part of the year 1819 he wrote two very different ,long poems : “The Eve of St .Agnes “ and “Hyperion “ both

considered to be a remarkable achievement. His new verse carried evidence of Keats' poetic talent, richness and maturing powers as both these long poems contain lines full of echoes of Milton and Spenser. He wrote in May, the "Ode to a Nightingale", "the Ode on a Grecian Urn", the "Ode to Melancholy" and the "Ode to Indolence." Thus Keats came up from the crisis with renewed vigour because he never lapsed into self-pity. He always turned outwards towards the constant novelty and challenge of life and people around him.

When Keats spoke of the "life of Allegory" he means to explain the difficulty of really knowing any person from his own actions and statements, for our innermost thoughts were usually hidden behind a facade of banter, but we boast about the things we feel most deeply. Keats also knew that "though very few eyes can see the mystery" it can be read in the works of poets by anyone who has the power to read with perception, and who does not "take everything literally". Keats' "Negative Capability" formulation includes his idea that "with a great poet the sense of Beauty is over other consideration", and it is an act of intensity on the part of the poet, the reader and the work itself that makes "all disagreeables evaporate". Keats says that Shakespeare "lived a life of Allegory" (73) "and that is like Keats who had his private world of thoughts and emotions from the outer world

,but at the same time "his works are the comments on it" thus ,to Keats "a great poet must be one with Negative Capability"⁽⁷⁴⁾ writes his works by an act of intensity and he has to have a "life of Allegory" just as Shakespeare who has made poetry of his grief and frustrations and by the acts of intensity involved has made them acceptable. Keats too started to live a "life of Allegory" he hid his innermost thoughts especially about his love for Fanny Brawne and the pain it caused him. The poems which set forth in symbolic form his passionate feeling for Fanny are many such as "The Eve of St. Agnes" and "La Belle Dame sans Merci" where the poet allegorizes both fear that love might destroy him as a poet as might prevent him from writing poetry, and allegorizes Keats', pangs of jealousy.

"La Belle Dame Sans Merci" is a ballad appeared in Keats' journal -letter to his brother George and his sister-in-law without any introduction in 1819. In it there is a kind of emotional intensity that allows us to accept the tragic event. The poem narrates a tragic event that symbolizes Keats' destructive love for Fanny, where Keats is the infatuated "knight-at-arms" and the reluctant sorceress is Fanny, the knight has enjoyed ideal beauty, love, music, and rest, but this happiness is momentary and illusory, the only effect of such pleasure is to leave his life meaningless, empty and lonely as the countryside grows colder and winter approaches.

The opening lines of “ La Belle Dame “ indeed the first three stanzas are spoken by a narrator and describe the condition of the knight-at-arms .It begins and ends with the same picture and the same words .

*O what can ail thee ,knight-at-arms
Alone and palely loitering ?
The sedge has withered from the lake
and nobirds sing !*

*O what can ail thee ,knigt-at-arms ,
so haggard , and so woe begone ?
The squirrel,s granary is full
And the harvest,s done .*

*I see a lily on thy brow
with anguish moist and fever dew,
And nowthy cheeks a fading rose
fast withered too*

(lines 1 : 12)

Keats ,moreover ,wrote a brief Ode to Shakespeare and the dead and gone Elizabethan poets who were his patrons, the ode is “ On the Mermaid Tavern “ The “ Mermaid Tavern “ was the main gathering place at which the

Elizabethan dramatists poets , and writers used to congregate. In the ode Keats can hardly believe that even in the Elysian fields they find better cheer or entertainment than at their old haunt .

There is another ode written for the Elizabethan age, it is the ode to " Bards of Passion " which is found in Keats' copy of the plays of Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, so it seems to be addressed to these Three " Bards " in particular. They were among the later Elizabethan dramatists and for them Keats wrote this ode in which he declared in the opening quatrain that they still live for us in their works and he went on to ask whether they have a second soul , a dual existence , in the Elysian fields . Then he answered his question in the affirmative and gave a description of the life of the Bards in the other world and , he ended the ode by declaring that the souls of the poets , as they live for us in their works on earth , serve as prophets to teach us wisdom and to lead us to the same place where the other souls have gone before . This ode written in the rondeau which is an elaborate fixed form of verse contains refrains or repetitions of the same line on the Shakespearian way .

"Ode to Nightingale " and " Ode to a Grecian Urn " as in Shakespeare , Keats' tragedy involves not conflict and destruction but also a promise of renewal . Thus a tragedy has

process of self creation that Keats called "soul making" which his view of the way the human soul and the poetic sensibility developed and matured he said in "Ode to Grecian Urn":

*Call the world if you please "The vale
Of soul-making I say, soul Making,
Soul as distinguished from intelligence
There may be intelligence or sparks of
the divinity in millions -but they are not
Souls till they acquire identities, till
Each one is personally itself*

(7-13)

In the odes Keats reached the apex of his poetic powers. He fused into these odes "To Psyche", "To a Nightingale", "To a Grecian Urn", "To Melancholy" and "To Autumn", all of the important concepts he had derived from his master Shakespeare and his own experience such as the principle of intensity, the doctrine of "Negative Capability", the movement of imagery, the acceptance of sorrow and pain and also the relationship between beauty and truth. His magnificent expression of these principles and concepts is heightened by his technical virtuosity. In effect, Keats' intense study of Shakespeare's philosophy and art and his experimentation with the Shakespearean sonnet form

provided a technical and aesthetic apprenticeship that prepared him for the success which he achieved in the odes .

The centres of interest in the odes are different ,the most obvious one is the structure that is almost the same in all of them except in the " Ode to Psyche". In each case in the odes we find an opening phrase to prepare the way for an intense central experience .This preparatory phrase has one of two forms .In the first ,Keats begins with the fact of intense experience and rejects any possible ways of making its intensity, less conscious and thus more endurable ,but instead ,the poet to accept the intensity and to experience pain and sadness ,as well .This introductory form which begins with alternative responses to the heightened experience is represented by " Ode on Melancholy " and " Ode To a Nightingale"

The impact of Shakespeare upon Keats' odes goes deeper than the form ,for he puts into the ode form all the lessons that he learned from Shakespeare : the four major odes show very clearly the various form of intensity ,the relationship of "Beauty and Truth" ,the concept of "Negative Capability" in action ,the concept of "Movement of Imagery" ,and also shows how Keats allegorizes sorrows to make them acceptable .

“Ode To Nightingale “ the first of the last four odes ,contains some of the elements mentioned above .In the first stanza ,we find the most intense emotinal experiences in literature which keats created by contrasting his aching numbness to the “ light -winged “ bird ,s “ full- throated ease “ The first three lines of the last stanza of the “ Ode to Autumn “ can be taken as emblematic of keats progress and development as a poet :

*where are the songs of springs ?
Ay ,where are they ?
Think not of them ,thou hast thy music too*
(50-52)

the songs of spring the early poems of “ rapturous glow and profuse magnificence” give way to the deepened maturity of the later poems ... deepened ,indeed, ,but therefore also containing an undercurrent of sadness ... the poet must “ burn through life “ keats maturity lies in his awareness and acceptance ...he has learnt with delight and sorrow these are inextricably linked as he says in “Ode to Melancholy”

*“ Ay in the very temple of delight veil,d Melancholy
has her sovran shrine “*
(24-25)

Shakespeare's influence must not, however, be seen in terms of conscious imitation. If it were so, it would be against the very ideals that Keats formulated regarding the poetic character, and then Keats' poetry would have a palpable design on the reader.... he himself would be "the most severe critic of such poetry"⁽¹⁵⁾, it is a matter of useless speculation as to what Keats would have achieved had he lived longer and what future graph his development would have taken suffice it to say that in the brief span allotted to him he was a most ardent devotee of his patron Shakespeare and to the Muse :

*"Opoesy ! for thee I hold my pen
That am not yet a glorious denizen
of thy wide heaven
(" sleep and poetry" (lines 1 : 3)*

Notes

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- 2- Hyder Rollins ,ed The Letters of John Keats ,2 vols . (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1965) vol 1 : p390
- 3- Hyder Rollins ,ed The Keats Circle ,2vols . (Cambridge : Harvard University Press ,1965) vol p .95
- 4- Sidney Colvin, John Keats : His Life and Poetry. His Friends, Critic and Afterfame (London: Macmillan and co .Ltd ., 1920) p135
- 5- Amy Lowell , John Keats , 2 vol ., (Boston : Houghton Mifflin co ., 1925) vo2 : p 363
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- 10- W.J . Bates , The Stylistic Development of John Keats . (New York: The Humanities press, 1958) p.64
- 11- see Caroline Spurgeon , Keats' Shakespeare , (London : Oxford University Press , 1929 .)

- 12- see Miriam Allot ,The Poems of John Keats ,(London , Longman,1976)
- 13- see W.J . Bates, John Keats, (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1963) .
- 14- see Aileen Ward, John Keats : The Making of a Poet , revised ed . (New york : Farrar , traou and Groux .1986)
- 15- H.E .Rollin ed p .13.
- 16- Ibid, P.15 .
- 17- Matthew Ar nold, Essays in Criticism: the Study of Poetry: John Keats ed . Susans . Sheridan , (Boston & Chicago, C . 1896) p .43 .
- 18- B.H Gloster ,The In Fluence of Shakespeare upon the Sonnets of John Keats , ph . D. Dissertation . (Atlanta , Georgia , 1972) p. 28
- 19- H. E . Rollins , p.15.
- 20- B.H Gloster , p . 27 .
- 21-Ibid, P 29. Also see Miriam Allott (mentions the same idea about Richard Woodhouse's notice of Keats using Shakespeare in this poem. P 42).
- 22 -H.E Rollins , p .19 (Darwin here is Erasmus Darwin , physisian and author of The Botonic Garden .
- 23- John Bernard ,ed . John Keats : the Complete Poems , (London ,Penguin Books , 1973) .p. 14. All the subsequent references in parenthesis are quoted from this edition.

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- 24- G. Blake more Evans , ed The Riverside Shakespeare.
Houghton Mifflin Company , Boston 1974)
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parenthesis are quoted from this edition.
- 25- see B .H Gloster ,P 31.
- 26- see Claud lee Finney ,vol p.16.
- 27-Allott ,P .75.
- 28- Finney ,vol , 1 P .164 .
- 29- I bid ,P .174 .
- 30- Ernets De Selincourt ,The poems of John Keats ,
(loudan Methem press ,1926) p. 391 .
- 31- Rollins ed ,vol I ,P 115 .
- 32- I bid ,vol I ,P .116 .
- 33- I bid vol ,125.
- 34- I bid , vol I , P 230 .
- 35- I bid , vol I , P .128.
- 36- I bid ,vol I , p. 132 .
- 37- I bid ,vol I ,P . 133 .
- 38- I bid , vol I , P . 133.
- 39- I bid , vol I, P 135 .
- 40- I bid , vol I, P 140 .
- 41- Aileen Ward , P . 120 .
- 42- Rollins ed , vol I , P .184 .
- 43- I bid , vol I, P 185 .
- 44- I bid , vol I, P 187 .
- 45- Aileen Ward , p . 427 .

- 46- Ernest De Selincourt, P. 422.
- 47- Amy Lowell, Vol I P. 147.
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- 61- Zillmam, P. 48.

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- 63- Finney, Vol, P. 164.
- 64- De Selincourt, P. 542.
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- 66- W. J. Bates, PP. 119-120.
- 67- Rollins, ed, Vol I, P. 115.
- 68- Ibid, Vol I. P. 116.
- 69- Ibid, Vol I. P. 125.
- 70- Ibid, Vol I. P. 230
- 71- Aileen ward, P. 298.
- 72- Ibid, P. 300.
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