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Staging Creative Experience

‘Ode to a Nightingale’ and ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’

by John Keats

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Introduction

The Odes and the Sonnet-Rhetoric

In form, Keats's two odes are modelled on the sonnet. The two poems 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' and 'Ode to a Nightingale' both consist of a Shakespearean quatrain (*abab*) followed by a Petrarchan sestet (*cde cde*) (Bate, Part 2: Chapter 5: The Odes of May, 1819 131). The only minor variations are the presence of a *cad cad* rhyme in the second stanza's octave in the first, and a corresponding 1st and 5th stanzas have a *cde dce* and a *cde ced* rhyme-pattern in the latter (131-132).

Experimentation in form was nothing new among Keats and his contemporaries. Stuart Curran explains in his book *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (1989) that the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century marked in British literature "an intense and largely isolated engagement with its own past (22)", where the forms of literature inherited were transformed through experimentation (Chapter 3: The Sonnet 5). Walter Jackson Bate explores this further in his book *The Stylistic Development of Keats* (1962). Arguing a change in the style in Keats's sonnet-writing in the period of January 1818 preceding the writing of the odes (118), Bate argues that it reveals Keats's gradual move away from "the conventional style of the century before (7)" and to instead increase "the intense and weighted expression which was a conscious goal in all his verse." (7). Such changes, argues Jackson Bate, additionally reveal perhaps just how influenced Keats was by his poetic predecessors, enabling him to adapt "stylistic devices to fit his immediate purpose" (7).

This ability, however, can affect influence in various ways. And it might not indicate conscious intent, but rather, as Curran's quote shows, an inherited pressure of tradition:

There is no such thing as automatic writing in the making of a poem. A meter, perhaps a rhyme scheme, thus a form, then likely as not a genre: each step adds to a tendentious process that fulfills itself in closure, even if an indeterminate one. Each step constricts the process further in the interests of that closure, and each is in some measure an ideological constraint – or, to be sure, an enabling mechanism for the imagination that plays best when it knows the dimensions of the sandbox (12).

Curran's quote manages to stress the presence and influence of the past on the present of poetic creation, and even more importantly its effect on the future. The knowledge of the structures, effects, and rhetoric inherent in poetic form can affect writers. To what extent, and in what ways are of course highly individual. But none the less real. And when Keats makes use of the rhyme-pattern of a sonnet, however much he changes it or connects it to the ode, it

is interesting to look closer at what that implies in other ways. Describing the sonnet, Curran argues that its rhetorical form of polarity is so marked, that however much a poet might attempt to avoid the topic, “the very absence would call itself to the educated reader’s attention, establishing a spectral presence in the void (10)”.

What are the rhetorical structures of a sonnet? How might they be connected to rhyme-schemes? David Fairer explains in his chapter titled ‘The sonnet’ from *An Oxford Guide to Romanticism* (2008) that the ‘Italian’ and later ‘English’ forms of the sonnet emerged and developed because of their linguistic challenges. The first was developed from the 1230’s onwards and was most commonly associated with Petrarch and Dante. It consists of an octave and a sestet. The octave is eight lines grouped in a constellation of four (two quatrains), forming the rhyme-pattern *abba abba* (two quatrains, together forming an octave). This is followed by a sestet, in which the rhyme-pattern often varies from *cde cde* to the common variants such as *cdc dcd*, or *cde ced*. In the same way as the quatrains, these form lines of three, thus making them tercets (293).

The ‘Shakespearean’ or ‘English’ sonnet-form consists of three quatrains and a couplet, grouped together in seven rhymes (*abcdefg* grouped as *abab cdcd efef gg*) instead of four or five (for example *abcde* grouped as *abba abba cde cde*) (293). It gradually made its way to England in the 16th century, particularly through translations by sir Thomas Wyatt the Earl of Surrey of Petrarch’s poems (293). Here it faced challenges; the adaption of the English language to fit the flow of the Italian form posed difficulties of finding “four rhyming words for the Petrarchan octave (293)”, resulting in modified versions, and eventually the ‘Shakespearean’ form (293).

But these forms are not only resulting developments of linguistic challenges. These variations also carry with them changes in rhetoric; indeed, the way they are structured as rhyme-schemes also exert rhetorical influence. The traditional effect of an Italian sonnet-form is the sense of a so-called ‘turn’ by the changing rhyme-schemes from the octave to the sestet, making the poem able to “move dramatically from statement to counter-statement, or more organically from a situation to its implications’ (293). The Shakespearean form, on the other hand, with its three quatrains and a couplet, result in a rhetorical build of “three equal stages (293)” finding “a kind of resolution at the end” (293). This allows it to have “a final dramatic turn (293)”, in contrast to the possibly more ambiguous Petrarchan sonnet-form (293).

Curran develops these points further by arguing that the most central effect of the Italian sonnet is its effect of “polarity (10)”, built through these devices of rhyme: the octave,

“with its two *abba* patterns, also exerts a pressure for return and doubling. The logical result of these formal pressures is an assertion first made, then reaffirmed or extended, and finally turned or countered: “yes – yes, indeed – but” (10)”.

Being structured around such rhymes, the pattern becomes, according to Curran, “both instrument and subject matter of the Italian sonnet (10)”. It creates polarity, something which is mirrored by the speaker’s position within the sonnet toward an object he desires, often in the form of lovers divided. This positional relation between the two is in the Petrarchan tradition often a symbol for greater constellations of tension: past and present, the self and the other, divinity and humanity, microcosm and macrocosm (10, 56).

It is important to recognize how inherent rhyme-schemes are in structuring and developing the rhetoric of a poem. The tradition of the sonnet-form is immersed in rhetorical structures. These structures are the foundations on which the form’s rhetoric is built. If, as Curran shows, experimentation is present, it does not necessitate a break from the past, but rather a dialogue and engagement with it. Form structures and affects the writer, and Keats’s two odes are examples of this by being adapted versions of the sonnet-form. Keats is indeed, as Jackson Bate argued, able to make use of tradition to shape his poetic expression.

But he also brings with him, inherent through the structures of rhyme, a form of rhetoric affecting his odes. According to Curran, polarity created by the rhyme-scheme becomes “essential to the sonnet as genre (56)”, and even the reason “why it so naturally adopts the timbres of a complaint (56).” Because Keats bases the rhyme scheme of these two odes on the sonnet tradition, he inherits more than patterns of rhyme. He also inherits its rhetorical structure.

This thesis focuses on the two poems ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ and ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ by John Keats, written in 1819. Comparing them to some rhetorical structures present in the tradition of Renaissance love-sonnets, this thesis argues that Keats’s odes are similar. By adapting and experimenting in form according to contemporary ideals of the sonnet- and ode-tradition of his time, Keats’s two odes go on to reflect not only how traditions in form blend together, but also how such traditions are closely connected to developments in aesthetic ideals.

On the one hand, the sonnet’s fundamental structures of a speaker directing his focus toward an object of desire. This Renaissance tradition makes use of paradox to allow the speaker and poet to engage with the functions of such desire, and to deliberately stage and prolong it. It functions as an inspirational force; the poet makes use of it to channel and explore creative urge. Yet polarity stands at its very center; as much as the poet tries to

contain his experience of desire in written form and thus make it immortal, so is his own existence, which both conditions and performs the desire it tries to represent, in essence temporal.

On the other hand, Keats's contemporary sonnet-tradition and own writing explore the presence and function of a similar polarity. By additionally directing attention toward a search and exploration of the emotional workings of the mind, the sonnet- and ode-tradition stage similar tensions between the inner and the outer world; the microcosm and macrocosm. Keats's two odes stand as hybrid forms of these two traditions. Using rhetorical devices such as questioning, process, interrogation, reiteration, and paradox, their unison effect can be argued to enact for the speaker a moment of aesthetic reverie and source of inspiration. Yet it can also be argued to have other effects - implicating the reader through such same rhetorical devices to stage and re-create, in microcosmic form, a similar experience of creative urge.

Considering the two odes in light of this context is important because it directs attention toward the presence and necessary components of process and uncertainty in any endeavor. It points to some of the ways past aesthetic traditions have engaged with, represented, and perceived creativity and poetic function. And in turn it also shows how these have been adapted and developed through experimentation in form and content to suit modes of poetic expression.

As representations of such rhetorical traditions, the two odes transcend the boundaries of poetic form in such a way as to teasingly nudge each new reader into processes of search, inspiration, frustration, and uncertainty in a myriad of productive ways.

This thesis begins in its first chapter with an analysis of the presence in the two odes of the rhetorical model inherited from the Renaissance love-sonnet as explained by Catherine Bates in her chapter on 'Desire, discontent, parody: the love sonnet in early modern England' from *The Cambridge Companion to the Sonnet* (2011). In chapter two the criticism and interpretation of Keats's odes by Helen Vendler in her book *The Odes of John Keats* (1983) and Stuart Sperry's *Keats the Poet* (1973) will be compared and contrasted.

Then the third chapter will present a discussion surrounding the sonnet- and ode-form and their various rhetorical functions and themes among Keats and his contemporaries as argued by Stuart Curran in his book *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (1989). The fourth chapter will center on other rhetorical elements present in the two odes and their potential effect on readers, as argued by Susan J. Wolfson in her book *The Questioning Presence: Wordsworth, Keats, and the Interrogative Mode in Romantic Poetry* (1986), and additionally further arguments stated by Sperry in relation to his above mentioned analysis of the two

poems. In the conclusion some further arguments by S. K. Heninger from his book *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (1974) will be presented in the final discussion to draw comparisons between some historical aesthetic ideas on poetic function from the Renaissance to come into play with the argued rhetorical effect of the two odes, allowing a final reflection on the various ways tradition can come into play through experimentation with form.

The literature used in this thesis includes some works based in New Criticism, Deconstruction, and Reader-Response. While engaging with both these traditions of literary criticism, this thesis also makes use of a mixture of Structuralism and New Historicism. In doing this, the shortcomings of this thesis will become apparent. By basing itself on two odes Keats's odes alone, it is only able to engage with in-depth analysis of their similarities to the sonnet-tradition, without being able to place these within a greater context of Keats's poetry. Examples of this shortcoming might be the lack of comparison between Keats's own sonnets-structure (which he wrote extensively before the odes), in addition to his interest in Shakespeare's sonnets. Such similarities do however appear as a theme and is referred to through the use and discussion by critics of Keats, in particularly the way 'To Autumn' can be compared and contrasted with these two odes through its structure and rhetoric.

However, as the analysis of Vendler and Sperry will show, to consider Keats's poems in such a way can lead to some restrictions of consideration. In this light, this thesis might be argued to function as a contribution to highlight the virtues of directing close attention to the details in these two poems, while not attempting to reject or diminish the importance and achievements of such detailed and contextualized analysis by either critic.

The edition of Keats's poems used throughout this thesis is the Longman edition from 1970, titled *The Poems of John Keats* and edited by Miriam Allott. All references and quotations from Keats's poems are from this edition, unless otherwise stated.

The decision to avoid using "Romantic" or "Romanticism" or other such similar terms is intentional, as its function is believed to cause more ambiguity and problematic interpretations of meaning than participating in clarifying any. Instead, "contemporary" or other such derivations is used. However, the use of the term "Renaissance" is present, only in so much as it is meant to refer to a context in which the sonnet-form originated and developed its various forms and rhetorical functions, and some of the aesthetic ideals to which it was associated. While engaging in ideas of aesthetic theory as outlined by S. K. Heninger, there is substantial danger in seeing this thesis as an attempt to argue deliberate intentions by Keats to re-represent old aesthetic ideals and ideas of poetic endeavor in his odes. Such is however not

the case; rather, the aim is to show that the effect of the rhetoric of the odes, being influenced by the sonnet-form, should instead be considered as a development and experimentation upon such traditions, and in engaging with them allows the full play of their possible meanings to be reflected.

Chapter 1

Analysis of the Two Odes Part 1: The Rhetorical Models of Speaker, Object, and Paradoxical Desire in Renaissance Love-Sonnets

Catherine Bates presents in her chapter 'Desire, discontent, parody: the love sonnet in early modern England' from *The Cambridge Companion to the Sonnet* (2011) the typical components of an English Renaissance love-sonnet. The speaker is positioned in a state of desire toward an object. His emotional state is one where he experiences a "negative condition (106)"; a frustration which he attempts to solve. His focus is directed toward a symbol of his desire (often in the form of a woman). However, she is often a metaphor for something other than sexual attraction or love. The speaker's "focus of interest is not the desired object but the desiring subject (107)"; the concept is that the speaker be in a position where he channels and interacts with himself in a productive way. The object of desire functions in this way as a fixed point toward which the speaker positions himself, and the distance between them is that which creates and constitutes the situation at hand.

This space between the speaker and the object is termed by Bates as "a relational field [...] to enable subjectivity (107)". Within this the relation of the first is able to make use of the latter as a "personification (110)"; a way which allows "the speaker to stage – in conspiracies, conversations, struggles – encounters with what is basically its own experience: to engage with its own desire, as it were, face to face (109)". His longing might therefore not always be a single point of focus but might take the shape of other figurative forms such as "Love, Amor, Cupid, Eros or Desire (109)". Engaging with these various forms, the speaker creates his own paradox; on the one hand he experiences the "negative state" of wanting something, while simultaneously the "positive state (105)" of the same longing (108). These opposite emotional perspectives create a tug of war for the speaker's desire, leading to a 'circular' motion of a sonnet's argument; the agonizing and thrilling present situation of longing (110). Bates reveals that this is the underlying reason why sonnets often have a strong element of repetition in their structures or arguments which seem to go in circles; it mirrors this paradoxical desire (110).

‘Ode to a Nightingale’

A state of longing between a speaker and an object of desire can be found in ‘Ode to a Nightingale’. In the first stanza it takes the form of the physical effects experienced by the speaker toward the bird’s song; “happiness (lines 5-6)”. His desire in the next stanza is described as a longing to “fade away into the forest dim – (20)” and “leave the world unseen, (19)”. It is staged and compared similar to the effects of wine; “Tasting of Flora and the country green, (13)”, and the flirting and seducing image of it with its “beaded bubbles winking at the brim, (17)”. In stanza three as a state where he is ‘dissolving’ and ‘forgetting’ (21), a release from the “weariness, the fever, and the fret (23)”. In stanza four the sensation of longing becomes an image of movement and flight; and in stanza five it seeps into his surroundings, enveloping them in darkness. There it manifests itself as heightened perception, animating his natural vegetation of flowers and transferring onto them the same intensity as the bird’s song. As this desire increases and eventually peaks, the speaker’s longing directs itself toward the symbol of death as something alluring; it is “easeful (52)” and he is “half in love (52)” with it in stanza 6. From there it seems to gradually dissolve as the bird’s song “fades (75)” away toward the end and is lamented in the last stanza with its “Forlorn! (71)” and “sole self! (72)”.

These are all variations and engagements with the effects and reactions the bird produces in him. But if this object of desire at first glance seems to be the bird and its song, it might instead rather stand as a symbol for something else –perhaps the speaker desires to immerse himself in an intoxicated state (stanza 2) and move away from earth and human troubles toward the sky (stanza 3). The way to reach such a desire is therefore not through wine, but by using the “wings (33) given through poetry – they are “viewless (33)”, yet have the same ability as the bird’s song to elevate – the speaker linking the imagined suspension of the bird to that of the effect of poetry.

The image of the sky with its “Queen-Moon (36)” and “starry fays; (37)” represents a possible means for him to reach his object or aim of desire. He attempts this by creating similarities in description of the bird’s abode and the fantastic effects which poetry can produce. This approach continues as his surroundings are gradually infused by similar imaginary depictions of nature – right up until stanza six. Here death becomes yet another way of visualizing his desire, and in such a way that it poses a solution through which he can achieve it. He is faced with a paradox; unable to find release in his present state, he comes

face to face with the realization that to die would necessarily remove, rather than fulfil, his desire. It would remove the necessary condition for its existence; his position as a listening and experiencing entity to the bird and its song.

The distance between the two – the speaker and the object of desire – is present in the poem through the image of the bird and its song belonging to the unreachable plane of the sky and living among the trees is “Of beechen green, and shadows numberless, (9). It is necessarily of a separate species because it means that it exists beyond the reach of the speaker, yet it is able, through the effect of its song, to transform him. Paradoxically, he is at once both able to “fly to thee, (31)” and be elevated through the experience (of poetry or song) to a state of heightened sensation, while at the same time also being trapped in his physical form and by his surroundings (however much these too are infused by the aid of the speaker’s perception in his half-transformed state in stanza 5).

Stanza six does not only manifest the speaker’s desire as mentioned above; it also forces him to face another paradox. Believing it will bring him release (by becoming seemingly at one with the bird and the songs’ existence), he recognizes that it will in truth only cancel out his state of desire. The distance between the two is a necessary component for its existence, as is him as a performer of that desire. If he ceases, the present experience will end, yet the effect is continuous; the speaker realizes that the bird and its song in essence is the very opposite of death; “Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird! (61)”. As “Poesy, (33)” is compared to the effect of the bird’s song, so too will it never cease to be; it can be re-created and repeated again and again: “The voice I hear this passing night was heard / In ancient days by emperor and clown: (63-64)”.

In the final stanza, the distance between the speaker and the object of desire is at its peak, and as the bird and its song literally flies away, the speaker is unable to follow. But he is left behind in a lingering state of elevation – between waking and sleeping, between his human existence and the bird’s immortal one. The ode’s speaker is the desiring subject, the bird and its song the object, and the human plane of existence divides it from the divine powers of the bird’s song and element. The state of desire between the two is paradoxical in its impossibility; the speaker can never reach the bird and its music, but this scenario is in truth the necessary component and reason why he is able to experience it.

The poet’s interaction with the bird and its song is indeed a space in which the speaker is able to ‘stage’ an interaction with his own desire, and as it follows the circular pattern of argumentation towards paradox, so, too does it engage with both negative and positive states of desire. In the first stanza, the speaker “aches, (1)”, and his senses are filled with “a drowsy

numbness (1)” which “pains (1)”. This negative state changes within the stanza – that he is experiencing such pain because of “being too happy (6)” in his reaction to the bird’s song filled with “ease (10)”, creating a sense of “summer (10)”. The motion within the first half of the stanza is downward; the speaker seems to lose control. This lack of control links together with the physical and human reactions he experiences; the physical palpitations or pain of the heart, the gradual “numbness (1)” of his senses, and the effects of the narcotics of hemlock and opiate give this form of desire an almost negative undertone, something the “Lethe-wards (4)” confirm. These physical effects are described in words indicating downward motion; the intoxicated effect threatening him are mirrored in the “emptied (3)” liquids which “drains (3)” and the ‘sinking’ motion in line 4. As a contrast, the motion of the bird is upwards; it is “light-wingèd (7)” and although being “of the trees, (7)”, its song and imagery is “Of beechen green, and shadows numberless, (9)” (perhaps indicating the patterns formed by leaves and light in the canopy of such trees), and its vigor of “full-throated (10)” and “ease (10)” stands as contrasts to the speaker’s ‘weak’ and intoxicated existence.

In this sense, the state of desire for the speaker is negative, while the bird is positive; something which is mirrored through downward and upward motion. The argument of desire therefor moves in opposite directions. The speaker has posed the interaction with his desire in such a way that it is not possible for him to achieve it; it is futile. Therefore, he must find a different way of approach, something he proceeds with in stanza two.

The speaker ‘re-phrases’ his physical experience by attempting to compare it to the intoxication created by wine. In doing so, he imagines “That I might drink, and leave the world unseen, / And with thee fade away into the forest dim – (19-20)”. He is re-staging his desire, attempting to imagine that a way of achieving his goal would be possible through the pleasure-filled mode of wine. He also seems to decide that his desire is to “fade away (20)” and to “leave the world unseen (19)” – that is, to avoid something which his present life entails.

While the first stanza focuses on the physical pains of the speaker, the second attempts to direct attention on the pleasant way to remove such pains. The desire is here fueled by positivity; uniting images of nature with wine. Yet the stanza attempts, in a rhetorical circular motion, to persuade the remedy or solution posed by wine as first “Cooled (12)” and then as “warm (15)”. The wine is linked to nature; it is of the “earth, (12)”, and its very taste is of the same; “Flora and the country green (13)”, “sunburnt mirth! (14)” even, as the bird itself – “song (14)”. And it has the physical effects of being “blushful (16)”, “winking (17)”, and giving its drinker a “purple-stainèd mouth, (18)”. Surely it must be similar to that of the bird,

and a more fruitful way for the speaker to achieve his aim? Yet where desire takes on a positive effect in stanza 2, the negative effects of that same desire are listed with contrast in stanza 3; what the speaker believes his desire will lead to, and what the bird “hast never known, (22)” is the inevitable effects of human life; “The weariness, the fever, and the fret (23)”, and change is unavoidable; “youth grows pale, (26)”, and “Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes, (29)”.

But the argument changes again in stanza 4, when the speaker instead of wine might reach his desire through another method; “the viewless wings of Poesy, (33)”. This realization is revealed again through motion; “Away! away! (31)” dismisses both the ‘spiraling’ effect of negative listing created by the stanza with its repeated word “Where (25, 26, 27, 29)”, and signals again an upward motion mirroring its new and positive attitude. The speaker “will fly to thee, (31)” of the same motion, and even with his own “wings (33)” – mirroring the bird. As the bird’s habitat of the sky with its moon and stars is linked with a “throne, (36)”, “Queen-Moon (36)” and “fays (37)”, so does the poetic imagination unite with the abode and nature of the bird. This is taken even further; the bird’s element of air is united with “heaven (39)” and “light (38)”, the effect of both seems to be transferred to the speaker only “with the breezes blown / Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways (39-40).

This seems to transform the argument of desire toward something which is without substance; believing he has partly resolved his state of desire, the speaker has in truth only intensified it. The song and bird are only the figureheads of that desire; it is now transferred from the bird’s element of air and spread through his natural surroundings in stanza 5. The movement thus goes fast upward with the bird in exaltation, and then slowly back down again with the “breezes blown (39)”.

The argument moves with a circular motion; although he has to some extent been united with the bird’s song and habitat, yet he has not reached any conclusion. Instead he is returned to a different, yet similar position as his initial state – but this time with an intensified desire; his surroundings are infused with similar intoxicating effects. His inability to “see what flowers are at my feet, (41)” is due to the deciding force of his experience dominating; “here there is no light (38)” except what is directed down to him from these forces at work. Stanza five, with its listing of natural effects are neither negative or positive in argument, but rather a mixture of both; the season and month of May (48) is “sweet (43)” darkness is not threatening but “embalmèd (43)”, the incense is “soft (42)”, the fruit tree “wild – (45)”, the violets “Fast fading (47)”, the rose “full of dewy wine, (49)”. The flies both “haunt (50)” as much as they too belong to “summer eves. (50)”.

The argument reaches its paradox; his surroundings are of both of the immediate present while at the same time also in motion forward to temporal decay. In stanza six the speaker attempts to further a resolve through death. Movement is again a mode through which the speaker stages his desire; through death he will move further up – “take into the air my quiet breath; (54)”, and the bird’s song is continuous since it is “pouring forth (57)” “In such an ecstasy. (58)”, infusing the speaker’s idea of death as “easeful (52)”, “rich (55)” and “with no pain, (56)”. The positive is again balanced, as in stanza 5, with the negative. As the argument again reaches an impasse at the end of stanza 6. The speaker reaches the realization that death, too, would not unite him with his desire, since it is in truth his human form and emotions which necessarily constitutes it, as well as the present experience. Death would not allow him to be united with the bird and its song, but instead simply make it cease. The desire and beauty of the bird and its song is only possible to experience for the speaker by an acceptance of the inevitable feeling of suffering which accompanies it. All it is able to do is to stand as a dual symbol of both, and to console and inspire in the present moment. Although humans are “hungry (62)” and “tread (62)” on others, the symbol of the bird and its song holds endless comfort. But also forward direction; it “found a path / Through the sad heart of Ruth, (65-66)” and is capable of “opening (69)” up the imagination to “magic (69)” and “fairy lands (70)” with its “foam / Of perilous seas (lines 69-70)”.

Movement, especially that of the bird’s song, has the ability of transforming and revealing space. In the last stanza the argument, reaching its happy and positive attitude in the previous stanza, is suddenly robbed of its flight with the bird’s song, and the speaker returns down to “my sole self! (72)” from the experience of desire. He is again back to his initial position, sad yet not disheartened by the bird’s disappearance; it is adoringly termed a “deceiving elf. (74)”. The speaker’s desire is not resolved, but neither is it still present – it is temporarily at a stand-still. The bird and its song will return, as the lines from stanza 7 revealed; “The voice I hear this passing night was heard / In ancient days by emperor and clown: (line 63-64)”.

Yet as the desire remains a paradox unfulfilled, the speaker, not stationary, imagines the following movements of the bird and its song “Past (76)”, “over (76)”, “Up (77)” and lastly beyond – “In the next valley-glades: (78)”. The object of desire has left, but the experience of its past presence remains. The last paradox – whether it is “a vision, or a waking dream? (79)” is mirrored by the speaker questioning his own transformation – “Do I wake or sleep? (80)”. If the song has disappeared, is he still within the experience it created? Is he transformed? Is he returned, or changed? And where does such an experience belong?

To the 'awakened' human state, or to the night and air, the bird's element and therefore 'sleep'? The paradox is of course summarized by being at the same time both and neither; a "vision, (79)" and "a waking dream? (79)". The motion of the argument is moving in endless circles, the last lines resulting in impossible questions mirroring the greater paradox of desire. They are, in the same way as the depictions of motion and the link between imagination and the bird's song, ways in which the speaker stages and engages with his desire. As they never lead to any resolve, they develop and change, creating circle upon circle of impossibilities.

'Ode on a Grecian Urn'

In 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' the speaker's state of desire is quite different – it takes on the form of intense focus; stanzas 1 is fueled by a steadily increasing curiosity on the part of the speaker resulting in the rapid succeeding six questions in its last two lines (8-10). Then, in the second and third stanza, the speaker's state of desire changes. First by accepting the urn's premise of being voiceless, and thereby attempting a slightly different approach by directing his focus in turn to each of the figures on the urn. While giving a steady rise to his desire also allows him to reflect on what their appealing effect. In the last stanza his desire results, as in 'Ode to a Nightingale', in a paradoxical state; he can never know the answers to his questions relating to the urn's illustrations and reason for his own curiosity, since the premise of them lies in his not knowing – something which the famous lines "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty' (49)" mirror. They stand both as reason and as answer.

The object of desire is in many ways the urn, or rather as it stands as a representation of something which is unreachable; the fascination created through curiosity - a longing for knowledge. The distance between the object of desire and the speaker is represented by a distance in time as well as by the urn's lack of a vocal form of expression. There might not be any physical distance which separates the speaker from the object, and as he possibly attempts to circle around it and focus in on its imagery, he is none the less completely unable to penetrate its "Cold (45)" and "silent form, (44)" and get at any answers. It is a paradoxical state of desire; the urn is impossible to reach, however much the speaker tries, and the space between them is marked by their different substances and forms of existence – one as a fixed and hard artifact, the other as a temporal and soft being. The object of desire and the desiring subject are locked in this position.

In contrast to 'Ode to a Nightingale', the speaker in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' stages and engages with his own desire not through his senses and emotions, but rather by posing

questions. The staging follows his development of argument; in the first stanza he first addresses the urn, and then goes on to formulate his desire – who, how, when, where, - but perhaps even more importantly, why his desire is piqued to begin with; “who canst thus express / A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme! (3-4)”. The whole approach of the urn is ‘more sweet’ (4) because it is a paradox; the rhymes created between the speaker and the urn are circular because they reflect back on the speaker and makes him continually re-stage his longing in an attempt to find a resolve.

The desire takes first on the form of a negative and lustful frustration, something which gradually increases in intensity and reaches its height with the rapid six questions of the last three lines of the first stanza. When these remain unanswered, the beginning of the second stanza allows the speaker to re-position himself. Instead, his next attempt is to give an answer to his previous attempt; the “pipes and timbrels? (10)” which are pictured are unable to give him any sound, since they are only image-representations. It is a paradox, and the speaker seems to recognize this by stating that melodies “unheard / Are sweeter; (11-12)”, and do not communicate to any “sensual ear, (13)”, but in other ways “more endeared, (13)”.

The argument moves in circles. The speaker has posed questions in the attempt at receiving an answer – a sound – which of course is impossible. The pipes and images have to be interpreted by other means. The speaker re-positions himself again and continues by describing and addressing what he sees on the urn. He is again playing on paradox in meaning; can the “Fair youth (15)” be either fair or a youth, or even sing, if he never changes? Is the “Bold lover, (17)” in reality bold, or a lover, if he is unable to kiss?

What conditions the terms and activities which these figures represent are in truth impossible for them to perform. Additionally, there are more layers of paradox; they are not only frozen in a fixed position, but also in mortal form - only endowed through the imagination of the speaker with such human qualities and abilities which he describes. They communicate and exist for the speaker in his interaction with them, yet he is unable to stage them in any other activity than the immediate one in which they are locked; the “Bold lover (17)” will always remain what he is because his depiction never changes, denying him his desire of a “kiss, (17)”, yet at the same time allowing him to “For ever [. . .] love, and she be fair! (20)”. He, just as the speaker, and the “Fair youth (15)” fixed in mid-song are caught in the paradox of desire. This longing is marked by sadness and impossibility; the youth “canst not leave (15)”, “nor ever (22)” the trees be bare, and the lover can “never, never (17)” kiss. But at the end of the second stanza, his attitude toward these images change for the speaker;

“do not grieve: (18)”, he urges, because this desire of the lover “cannot fade, (19)”, and will “For ever (20)” condition its existence.

Stanza three lets the speaker focus on the positive aspects of these eternal and frozen scenes. The “boughs, (21)” which “cannot shed / Your leaves, (21-22)” and forever in a state of “spring (22)” are “happy, happy (21)”, the “melodist, (23)” who can neither repeat nor compose anything new except his present song is also “happy (23)”. Love is “happy (25)” – the word is repeated three times. Yet emotional states of happiness are living and breathing human emotions, and impossible to be felt or expressed by such depiction. As the speaker engages with his desire, he allows it to transfer and animate the figures, and endows them with human qualities of “warm (26)”, “panting, (27)”, “passion (28)”.

But such “For ever (26)” fixed in states of happiness and love, however much they are similar to the speaker’s “human passion far above, (28)”, are impossible. Because such emotions, to exist and to be felt, necessarily must include the other effects of “a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed, / A burning forehead, and a parching tongue. (29-30)”. The positive attributes of happiness and love are conditioned by the negative experiences of sorrow and pain. They are yet again paradoxical. The speaker returns to his initial approach in stanza four, by continuing the staging of his desire by again posing questions – who, where, what, why? (31 – 37). But this time, the speaker desire is not filled with impatience and frustration.

Rather, his questions become almost melancholy and rhetorical; instead of focusing on individual figures, his desire embraces the greater context in which they are placed. A group led by a priest leads to questions of who and where they are going (31-34), where and what town they have left (35-37), and why they have chosen to do so (38-40). Because they are frozen in the present, they will never, just like the first stanza, be able to give answers. The last stanza recapitulates by returning to the speaker’s initial position; the circular motion of the argument has reached a paradoxical stop. The urn is both “Cold (45)” and “pastoral (45)”; however much the speaker is able to interpret its figures as representations of moments of human happiness, they are unable to express the full range of what that implies; the greater context which includes misery and pain. They are unable to give answers or relief to the speaker’s desire. The paradox and the irony of this are fueled by the last five lines of the last stanza. The urn will continually stand “a friend (48)” to humans with “other woe (47)” because it “dost tease us out of thought (44)”. Its continuous and silent existence as artifact stands in opposition to its representations of ongoing actions by human figures. When the urn is allowed by the speaker to give a response, it creates a double paradox. First in the representation of a possible speech act performed by an object without vocal expression

indicated by the quotation-marks. Secondly by what the urn then utters; “‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty’ (49)”. Repeated and gradually changing questions, as well as the attempt to infuse the figures with physical human attributes and emotions, are all techniques of staging for the speaker. Yet none of them succeed, instead creating continuous circles of argument. As with ‘Ode to a Nightingale’, the ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ reaches the final impasse with the “‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty’” – a sentence with a completely circular motion.

Chapter 2

Analysis of the Two Odes Part 2: The Rhetorical Models of Time and Circular Motion as Mechanisms for Creativity in Renaissance Love-Sonnets

Turning the focus toward the theme of time in sonnets, Catherine Bates argue that it can take on two figurative form; “along a vertical and a horizontal axis (110)”. The horizontal axis represents the narrative which moves together with the topics and events as they linearly unfold toward “the point at which the object will finally be possessed, or, failing at that, at which desire is renounced and given up for good (111)”. It represents desire a it can be related to a “historical sense of time (111)”. In contrast, the vertical axis of desire focuses on the immediate present and “ongoing situation (111)” in the sonnet and any events or allusions to the passing of time are at random and un-chronological, functioning only as a backdrop; “permanently arrested in the eternal moment of the present (111-112)”.

As these two axes function as various representations of desire, they also function for the speaker as a way of creating parallels in time between the macrocosmic force of such human experience, and the microcosm of his own ongoing situation. Such a moment is “the point around which everything else is oriented and form which both the past and the future is viewed (111)”. Any events or allusions to the passing of time are at random and un-chronological, functioning only as a backdrop; “permanently arrested in the eternal moment of the present (111-112)”. Bates argues that time and desire mirror each other; the desire or longing of the object or lady in the sonnet figures as the suspended moment of desire in the same way as the moment of time in the present – a “unique space (112)”. The sonnet captures, or more importantly “enacts (112)” in the same way as the poet him (or her) self does desire, “the experience of pure duration: of living without growing, of chasing without catching, of

running without moving forward (112)” - this state is just as circular as that of the poet’s desire (112). Bates argues further that the aim of the poet is actually “*to persuade* (her italics 112)”, that is, to “*write great poetry* (her italics 113)”. Drawing comparisons between Petrarch and his use of the figure and love of Laura as a “mechanism (113)” of creating poetry, Bates shows the ways in which a pun on her name becomes an allegory for both a laurel (*lauro*) as well as gold (*l’auro*), uniting the image of the Greek sun god Apollo (patron of poetry), his love for Daphne and the poet’s creativity (113-114); “desire for the Lady thus turns into the [...] desire to write (114)”, and although the poet is a slave to time and decay, the poetry itself becomes part of the eternal (114). Bates goes even further and suggests that Petrarch’s poems indeed play on this paradox by the very word ‘sonnet’ meaning “murmur, or merely empty sound (115)” (*sonnetto*) (115), and by him entitling his poems as *rime sparse*, meaning “scattered rhymes (114)”. Even Laura as a symbol of desire becomes “*l’aura*, the breeze (115)”; something fleeting. As the poems attempt to stand as eternal and permanent works of art, they are in fact the “written record (115)” of a moment which is necessarily linked to the subject performing the act of desire, who is inevitably mortal. Yet Bates argues that what the poet “actually does (115)” is to “create an arena for [...] endless staging (115)”.

‘Ode to a Nightingale’

In ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ the paradox of desire mirrors its representation of time. On the one hand, the present and immediate moment in which the speaker is positioned and in which the experience takes place. On the other hand, the greater historical backdrop of that time, which hold both decaying temporality and the eternal and continuous. This paradoxical representation of time becomes gradually apparent in the first and second stanzas through the imagery of the bird and wine; the first is fruitful and belongs to the blooming season – “green, (9)” and “summer (10)”. Then wine goes on in the second stanza to become a dual representation of time by its association to its traditional origin and its present physical effects on the speaker. It is “a draught of vintage (11)”, of “long age (12)” and “deep-delvèd earth, (12)” and represents the maturing and heightened flavor of history with its “Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth! (14)”. This “Cooled (12)” wine represents slow development, while the “warm (15)” wine signals the immediate effects – the “beaded bubbles (17)” and the “purple-stainèd mouth, (18)”.

The speaker focuses on the pleasures of the present, as a way of avoiding the contemplation of human fate. This becomes apparent in the next stanza as he stages his

longing of the bird and its song in relation to time; his desire is all the more strong because it is threatened by temporality - “where men sit and hear each other groan; (24)”. In contrast, the bird and its music “hast never known, (22)” and will never know such things, belonging as it does to the immediate present moment.

Time is also mirrored in the words used to summarize such suffering; “youth (26)”, “Beauty (29)”, “lustrous (29)”, “new Love (30)”, stand up against “sad, last gray hairs, (25)”, “pale, (26)”, “spectre-thin, (26)”, “full of sorrow (27)”, “leaden-eyed despairs; (28)”. Time stands in between; “grows (26)”, “dies; (26)”, “to think (27)”, “cannot keep (29)”, “beyond to-morrow. (30)”, marking its influence and threat. In the next stanza the speaker positions the bird and its song above and beyond such powers, belonging instead to the “Tender (35)” and “haply (36)” un-changeable – the moon, the stars, heaven, and the work of imagination – the magical “light (38)” and afore mentioned “Queen-Moon (36)” and “fays (37)”.

The end of the fourth stanza turns its attention toward the speaker’s present surroundings, by invoking a comparison between the bird’s abode above; “But here there is no light, (37)”. Nature in stanza 5 is described in its temporary maturing splendor; “flowers (41)”, “soft incense (42)” and “White hawthorn, (46)”. The stanza reveals also that it is May, yet with it comes inevitable change and development; the violets are “Fast-fading (47)”, and the “musk-rose, full of dewy wine, (49)” is “coming (49)”, promising proceeding “summer eves. (50)”. The focus on the immediate present continues in stanza 6, where the speaker declares that “Darkling, I listen; (51)”, and the invoking “Now (55)” as he faces the prospect of “easeful Death, (52)”. Allusions to time is again present.

The speaker, considering both human temporality and nature’s similar maturing force, turns his attention to death’s inevitability. It is marked by the pairing of words; “many a time (51)” “Death, (52)”, “die, (55)”, “no pain, (56)”, “thy soul (57)” “midnight (56)” link together with “half in love (52)”, “easeful (52)”, “soft names (53)”, “musèd rhyme, (53)”, “quiet breath; (54)”, “rich (55)”, “pouring (57)” and “ecstasy (58)”, marking the transition between the present and the eternal as something almost seamlessly easy.

Stanza 7 turns the focus toward the contrasting and eternal; the bird is “immortal (61)” and its song will “still (59)” be sung in the future. Faced with these two representations of time, the speaker directs his attention towards his present. However much his immediate experience and life might be temporal, so too are they continuous; the bird and its song are “not born for death, (61)” because their united power and influence is always unfolding; repeated by every bird that ever has been in the past and ever will be in the future. So, too, will others be in a similar position as the one he presently finds himself in, and consider

similar topics in similar ways. This is marked by the use of words such as “generations (62)”, “passing (63)”, and “ancient days (64)”, as well as the image of Ruth. They all create modes for the speaker of linking the past to his present situation, as the image of how “She stood in tears amid the alien corn; (67)”, and her “sad heart (66)”, becomes almost animated to the speaker’s present. So too it points toward a future of creative possibility for the imagination; his desire is the same force which has “Charmed magic casements, opening of the foam / Of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn. (69-70)”. The last stanza returns to the immediate present. This is marked by the speaker’s farewell to the bird, the repeated “Adieu! (73, 75)”, and the second line; “back from thee to my sole self! (72)”. As the bird leaves, time gradually gazes towards the future; the bird’s song does not stop, it fades as it moves onward; ending up in “the next (78)” valley, where someone else will perhaps have a similar experience. Time also marks the last two lines. The experience he had “Was (79)”, but the last question concerns the present; “Do I wake or sleep? (80)”.

The speaker in ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ exists within a present moment of reflection on his immediate surroundings, linking his understanding of them to both the past and the future. The longing and desire he experiences create a suspended moment in which he is able to reflect on temporality and continuity. This moment holds a heightened intensity which he longs to resolve, yet also to continue; a moment where he is able to consider simultaneously the horror of death and the beauty of living. It is itself a paradox, yet one which the speaker is able to use - by engaging with his own desire and its effect upon him.

Comparing the experience of poetry to that of the bird’s song, the speaker is able to realize that the urge they create in him is similar; the ecstasy and desire felt through the bird’s song is possible to create or re-live through “the viewless wings of Poesy (33)” and imagination, seemingly belonging neither completely to the air nor to the earth. Just as the bird and its song is neither “waking (79)” nor a “dream (79)”, so does his experience belong somewhere in-between; it is neither “sleep (80)” nor “wake (80)”.

By placing poetry somewhere in the middle, above, or beyond, the speaker is able to wonder at the power of imagination, and whether it is able to transform and affect desire in similar ways to that of the bird and its song. In this way the topics of time and desire mix together for the speaker, allowing him to question and explore creative urge, and the effect such experiences can have upon humans.

‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’

The first stanza of ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ begins in the immediate moment, the speaker considering the urn before him. It is an artifact of history (“Silvan historian, (3)”), the title of the poem indicating its origin, and the speaker’s question reveals his focus as it seeks to link its images with his idea of that time. But, being simply a backdrop to the immediate situation he is in, the references does little more than place them in a hazy context with ‘the past’; the notion of a “leaf-fringed legend (5)” possibly referring both to the ornamentations on the urn or as an image of its old and half-forgotten history which “haunts about [its] shape (5)”. Does it depict characters and images of the past, such as those “Of deities or mortals, or of both, / In Tempe or the dales of Arcady? (6-7)”.

The speaker turns his gaze from the past toward the present in the second stanza. The previously “Heard melodies (11)” are known and less interesting, whereas those “unheard (11)”, unknown and possibly of the future are full of promise. The speaker directs his attention toward the images in his present moment. Addressing the “Fair youth (15)” and the “Bold lover, (17)” directly, even ordering “ye soft pipes, (12)”, to “play on; (12)”. Their fixed states reflect images of a past in which the images indicating motion are frozen in a present ongoing state– the kiss, the song, the trees and the changing seasons never achieve their goal or completion of their actions. By re-positioning his argument, the speaker choses at the end of stanza 1 and in stanza 2 to re-adjust his idea of time.

Instead of symbolising a stopped or negated development, the speaker gives the figures a sense of on-going motion, channelling it toward the future; if the couple are unable to kiss, they are always “winning near the goal – (18)”, and “cannot fade, (19)”. Their love is eternal, since even if it can never be fulfilled, so too will it never come to an end. This positive attitude to time is continued in stanza three, where the trees “cannot shed (21)” leaves, and the songs which are played by the pipes are “For ever (24)” ongoing, and love is “For ever warm (26)” and “panting, (27)”. Not only are these actions situated in the present, their meanings are also conditioned by continued and completed motion; the trees are in “spring (22)”, the very word a paradox, only holding meaning if it is able to function in a context where it can proceed to summer, autumn, and winter. Additionally, the songs which are played are “for ever new! (24)”; the last word implying previous and past ones, and “still to be enjoyed, (26)” indicating that it is actually impossible to know or achieve without the forward motion indicated by the speaker.

The same is indicated by the emotional and physical attributes he gives them; being “happy (23)”, “warm (26)” and “breathing (28)” – all are human attributes and only hold meaning if placed in an existence and context of temporality. Every one of these images symbolise the opposite of their essence. Playing on this paradox in the last lines of the third stanza, the speaker returns his attention to his present, commenting that “far above, (28)” these figures, “breathing human passion (28)” have additional effects too happiness – sorrow, illness and pain. In the fourth stanza motion and time continue as points of focus through mode of address; the “mysterious priest, (32)” is termed “thou (33)” and the procession he “Lead’st (33)” are actively “coming (31)” toward the sacrifice. However, the speaker not having received any answers, chooses to direct his attention back in time, toward the place this procession has left.

The “little town (35)” is not necessarily depicted as an image on the urn, as indicated by its uncertain surroundings of either “by river or sea shore, / Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel, (35-36), but it is none the less addressed as “thy (38)”. “this pious morn? (37)” positions the speaker in the present, and the last three lines of the stanza point both forward and backward, reminding the speaker yet again that the only images which the urn can show are frozen images; the streets of the town “Will (39)” be silent in the future, because movement is impossible. Likewise, it can “e’er return. (40)”, but remain empty and “desolate (40)”. In the last stanza the speaker is back to his initial position and in the immediate present, comparing the urn to eternity; it neither belongs to any fixed time but rather symbolizes time’s ever-expanding and ongoing motion toward the future.

It is a paradox of desire for the speaker by allowing him to see the beauty of his human temporal existence of mortality with maturing and aging while at the same time recognise, as symbolised by the urn, that such existence and desires depicted on the urn are not only continuous, but indeed eternal because of its depictions. The speaker realizes that the urn will continue “When old age shall this generation waste, (46)” to channel the same type of fascination in the future as much as it does in for him in the present moment. The circular movement of the speaker’s argument and struggle will because of this never end – it will continue, as the urn itself will, “a friend to man, (48)” by being a paradox of desire. The last lines stand as presentations of the present and future time; is the beauty the speaker experiences in the unchanging images of the urn conditioned by the truth that he is very own existence is temporal. The urn is able to express its existence both in past and the future time while being motionless, silent and fixed in the immediate present.

In 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' the speaker positions himself in the present, between the eternal and the temporal. Engaging and staging his own desire, he manages to gradually realise the paradox which it represents; that which is makes it desirable to him is exactly that it is simultaneously temporal and eternal, immediate and timeless, relatable and universal. The tug within this paradox allows the speaker to stage questions with himself, and to create a space in which he can engage with time in such a way as to be able to imagine and play with the past, present, and future, of human history.

He additionally does something slightly different from the speaker in 'Ode to a Nightingale'; instead of realising how the natural world can influence creativity, he experiences how a product of a possibly similar creativity in turn can engage and create desire in much the same way. And in doing so it is able to suspend time, allowing the experience to transcend the past and the present, guiding it toward the future; all that is and was are both at the same time about to become. Creativity and desire sparked through works of art like the urn with its images have a circular motion to their influence; just as they have inspired in the past, so they will continue to inspire again in the future.

However much Keats might have or have not intended to experiment with form in order to make use of the rhetorical structures inherited from the Renaissance love-sonnet, they are exerting their influence through these two ode. It reveals an interest in the past, but to what purpose? Bringing into play such various rhetorical techniques centring on polarity and paradox, it is interesting to examine next how critics have interpreted their function and meaning.

Chapter 3

Criticism: Creativity as Process and Inattention to Polarity

By looking at how two other critics have interpreted Keats's odes, it is interesting to compare their analyses with the rhetorical structures outlined above. For example, Helen Vendler's reading of six of Keats's odes in her book *The Odes of John Keats* (1983) show the presence and focus in the analysis of each poem of a "female divinity to worship (Vendler, *The Odes of John Keats* 233)" and a desiring force or "male sexuality (294)" with its "parching and cloying (294)" which is linked to the presence in the odes of a "rhythm of intensity followed by desolation (294)". She also links this function to creative urge and paradox:

[...] the irreconcilability of "mad pursuit" as romantic love, the wish for an unravished bride, the paradoxical nature of human passion that left him both cloyed

and parched, [...] the presence of melancholy in the ultimate recesses of delight, [...] the comparison of the mind to a womb, and the assertion of the possibility of a creative "pregnancy" within the brain (292).

Stuart Sperry does something similar in his analysis of Keats's odes in his book *Keats The Poet* (1973). Seeing the odes collectively as "closely related and progressive meditations on the nature of the creative process (243)" he finds that Keats's poems are explorations into how his imagination either "intensifies and distills (244)" the experience he has had, or whether he "transforms (244)" it "into abstractions from experience that are in certain ways unreal (244)". This stress on the process and experience of the poems in themselves and what they contain, is linked to Sperry's argument that the odes indicate that creativity is for Keats "an expression of an evolving state of consciousness (244)". Sperry's interpretation of the odes' importance is their ability to represent paradox and process; 'their quality of inconclusiveness (291). The two symbols in each ode, the urn and the bird, "provides the focus for a new and searching test of the nature of the creative process (262)". In the odes this manifests that "negative percept, when adopted as a cardinal tenet of poetic composition, culminates in a persuasive irony (291)".

For Vendler, the odes focus on the topics of art and poetry, and how it necessarily involves process. Vendler sees his poetic endeavor as one in which experience is attained through a gradual process "from dreaming to waking (287)" as a productive space in which a "transubstantiation (286)" happens as "drugged intoxication (286)" of "the beautiful appearances of sense (286)", which gradually becomes "intellectual creative work (286)". In such a process, "thought (286)" is given a "natural sensual topography (286)", which allows meaning to be gathered in various ways (286). In this way, Vendler views the meaning which Keats gathers from his odes as always multiple and continuous; the knowledge gathered from the writing of the previous moves forward to the next, and the completed experience of knowledge is immediately moving forward to the unknown and new (286). In this way, both critics' interpretations show the presence of the themes of creative urge, process, and desire as important components in Keats's odes.

But their contexts for interpretation, Keats's letters and poetry, frame their readings and make them somewhat neglect the topic of polarity and tension. Instead, their presence and function result in a less successful mode of expression in comparison with 'To Autumn'. For Sperry, such theoretical context entails the poet's focus on 'Sensation' and 'Thought' (Chapter 1: A Poetry of Sensation); "the question of the relationship between mind and object or the manner in which the imagination operates upon its materials (Preface ix)". As this is a

central concern among Keats's contemporaries (ix), Sperry links it to 18th century empirical philosophy, and in particularly *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* by John Locke (11). There develops a dichotomy between how the world is experienced through sense-impressions and how it results in knowledge, comprehension, or "the real identity of the objects (11)" perceived. This is then in turn linked to the relation between mind and body, physical and mental experience; the "transmission of perception to consciousness (11)".

For Sperry, 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' both focus on "the poetic symbol (262)", as a means of uniting or creating a 'bridge' between "the different values of both the worlds of timelessness and time (262)" (Chapter 10: Romantic Irony: The Great Odes of the Spring). These odes stand in the light of Sperry's philosophical context, and by being interpreted in this way stand as failed attempts at assimilation between thought and sensation. The odes, through their development of topics like polarity and paradox create an imploding effect where such "record of intense imaginative experience (262)" in the end "concludes in a form of recognition that is profoundly ironic (262)". Both odes stand for Sperry as the culmination of such irony, and the inability of any "process of imaginative creation (278)" to reach "clarity of reasoned thought (278)".

They implode; in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' by the impossibility of demanding it "to speak to us definitely (278)" and in 'Ode to a Nightingale' by the futile attempt to transform the image of the bird into an 'adequate' (266) means for expressing "the complex sum of human realization (266)". Sperry's focus and interpreted aim of the odes become the "accommodation between conscious intention and unconscious creativity, thought and sensation (291)", something which Keats "would surely have attempted had he lived and gone on writing (291)". While arguing the importance of not assigning any philosophical system of belief to Keats's poetry, since such was "a discipline he often regarded with misgiving (Preface ix)", Sperry is none the less himself caught up within it. However much he manages to avoid claiming any such philosophical intention on the part of Keats, his own interpretation of these odes fall victim of a contextual perspective which none the less shape his reading. Vendler's context of interpretation leads to similar challenges; the two odes' difficulty of achieving a sense of closure. Because she interprets the odes as linked, the development of each functions by "recall[ing] his previous efforts (6)" and "of commenting on earlier ones. [...] each ode both deconstructs its predecessors(s) and consolidates it (or them (Introduction 6)". By placing them in "the contextual frame of the Keats canon (supplemented by some of Keats's sources) (5)", and the aim is to view each ode as it stands in relation to the "totality of the other odes (6)". For her these odes give insight into Keats's struggle with "the life of

sensation and its proper language, and the life of thought and its proper language (7)". Here there is a similar sense of the dichotomy in Sperry's analysis; between Sensation and Thought. For Vendler, this becomes the central problem with 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', manifested through layers of paradox. In the latter poem, the interaction with the urn for the speaker is a way of testing various modes of approach as "hypothesis about what is offered to us by aesthetic experience, each provoking a different conclusion (118) (Chapter 4: Truth the Best Music: The Ode on a Grecian Urn)". These manifests themselves through "interrogation, that trope of the perplexed mind (117-118)". Such continuous and irresolute modes of thought and emotion which dictate the speaker's interpretation of the urn's figures are according to Vendler alternating (much in the same way as the circular structure of the poem itself) as that of "a lighthouse, the urn beams one message, then the other, as we respond alternately to its human verisimilitude (133)".

The two alternating experiences of the urn for the speaker are by Vendler termed a "paradoxical union of stimuli to sensation and thought alike (132)". According to her the speaker realizes the inevitable connection between sensation and thought as "an ineluctable process of consciousness (132)" at the end of the poem, making him able to address the urn with an "equilibrium of feeling (132)". Such an end is not resolved, but through a form of realization comes to a stand-still. Such a paradox is just one of several in the poem, and they constitute not only the circular form of the overall circular structure of argument for the speaker, but is also symbolized in the theme of time mirroring the temporality of the living speaker in opposition to the eternal figures on the urn. Vendler's analysis of the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' reveals that paradox lies in the very centre of its development of argument as a poem, manifested in the circular form of argument, and the trope of interrogation.

Vendler's reading of the 'Ode to a Nightingale' includes a structure of argument "of entrance and exit, of entrancement and disillusion (Chapter 3: Wild Warblings from the Aeolian Lyre: The Ode to a Nightingale 94)" which follows the movement of the stanzas' and poet's development; "from inception through intensity to desolation (86)" by "beginning with a repudiation of both the human world and of Bacchic intoxication, continuing with a descent into a disembodied but intense listening in a dark bower (94)". This is termed by Vendler as a motion not of "vanishing but a discovery (86)". Process is here essential and is exactly what the poet experiences in aesthetic reverie as he follows his "fancy to its completion (87)". The ending marks a "reentry into the world as soon as consciousness reawakens and trance is broken (94-95)", and "the departing flight of the nightingale (95)".

Vendler does not interpret the end of the poem as paradoxical. But through the trope of reiteration the stanzas represents an “experiment (87)”, and as the poet directs his attention toward “Each single object of attention (87)” he “says over and over what that one thing is, or what it is like, or how much it can be said to contain (87)” because he feels a necessity of it being “fully described (87)”, and thus accordingly “must exhaust its own significance (87)”. This makes the poem “an exercise upon itself, since each stanza generates a problem of expression or position which the next is designed to solve (97)”. Such a structure of argument circular, and for Vendler:

[...] does not in itself contain a structural and intentional principle which can move a poem forward. Like a reiteration which can go on forever, this ode could go on forever – until Keats allows his mind back into the poem, or, to put it another way, until he allows the bird to fly away (107).

This functions in Vendler’s eyes as a “static aesthetic injunction [...] and does not in itself contain a structural and intentional principle which can move a poem forward (107)”. It does, however, mirror the speaker’s own development within the experience of the bird’s song.

Time mirrors the trope of reiteration by its handling of the bird and the poet. Through achieving a form of expression similar the nightingale’s art, the speaker aims to escape the “sorrows of the world (81)”; leaving the human elements of his existence behind. This places the bird in connection with immortality and the continuous; “In the nightingale’s song there are only notes, there is no tale of death; [...] it is exempt from death or the consciousness of death, and goes on singing unconscious of the obliterations of time (94)”. The speaker, in being mortal, is bound to change and temporality. This sets up a “repeated antithesis between the earthbound poet and the free bird (83)”.

Vendler argues that the bird and its song, as a form of art, “has no conceptual or moral content (95)”, and “is a stream of invention, pure sound, in no way mimetic, on which we as listeners project our own feelings of ecstasy or grief (95)”. This music is a “pure self-expressiveness (95)”, which is present only through a “sensual trance (95)” of imagination without any “intelligence and consciousness (95)” of human life. This is only able to last a short while, because it is impossible for the speaker to disperse with thought entirely (95).

As Vendler’s analysis of the poem concludes that the speaker reaches a resolution by interpreting the bird’s form of art as one which stands as an impossible mode of expression for the speaker, because of the human necessarily linked response of emotion and thought to art. As an “artist (103)” creating, the bird is “immortal (103)”, yet its art is “not timeless but

changing in time (81)”; a “projection of beauty and sensation into an external medium (81)” which eventually vanishes (81).

This is closely linked of course, to Vendler’s interpretation of the poem as one in which the poet seeks to gain or know the power and origin of the nightingale’s song, as it is this motivation which drives him. The ending then, becomes for Vendler the point at which the poet ceases his reiteration of his experience:

[...] neither sensuous descriptive reiteration nor intellectual asserted proposition – is invoked for closure; and the vocabulary of physical state and music [...] is finally preferred, for speculative purposes, to a vocabulary of philosophical derivation [...]. The ode ends, then [...] to sensation rather than to thought (106).

In this way, the ending finds no resolution in the form of reiteration between the two modes of experience, but rather comes to a halt still within the ‘vocabulary’ of sensation, yet infusing it with the open-ended rhetoric of questions - “Was it a vision, or a waking dream? (79)”.

Paradox does not occur as a conclusion in Vendler’s analysis of the ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ yet is however present as an underlying theme throughout her analysis. The circular motion of argument and reiteration, or the attempt to abolish thought for sensation alone, brings the speaker in Vendler’s analysis to conclude with it being an impossibility, and thus ‘end’ the experience of the song. The speaker’s posing of questions at the very end of the poem is interpreted by Vendler as “the trope of interrogation (106)”. In this sense, the central theme or ‘conflict’ of the poem is abandoned, rather than resolved.

It seems somewhat strange, that both Sperry and Vendler do not consider the presence of conflict and polarity in more detail. Instead, she and Sperry turn to ‘To Autumn’ to be the one among Keats’s odes which does manage to achieve its goal. Here the tension between ‘Thought’ and ‘Sensation’ is eased. For Sperry it represents a unifying force by its ability to “resolved (338)” irony, in being “to the last a poetry of sensation (342)” while still reaching as far “toward a poetry of thought (342)” as possible (Sperry, Epilogue: "To Autumn"). It symbolizes the “acceptance of an order innate in our experience – the natural rhythm of the seasons (336)” which manages to balance and structure the process of creativity.

For Vendler, ‘To Autumn’ stands as the culminating point of a developing aesthetic experimentation and search for Keats within the odes (Chapter 7: Peaceful Sway above Man's Harvesting: To Autumn). The female divinity is here the season, yet she stands as a culmination of all the previous represented in the other odes. As she represents change, so too does her symbolic shape; “initially a bride, then as a goddess of fertility, as a careless dreamer, as a tired worker, as a patient vigil-keeper, and finally as a dying mother, mourned

by her children (294)” (Vendler, Conclusion). In contrast to the movement of the other odes, the longing which shapes the female symbol dissolves by being “the rhythm of a steady rising and setting, concomitant with rhythms of expansion and etherealization (294)”.

Because she becomes a fusion between the tension and desire between female and male, she is an ideal symbol for the poet and creative process; “an art both male, in idea and blessing, and female, in creative engendering and work and contemplation (285)”. The two are “a golden pair, inseparable (285)”, and as the sun’s maturing force unites the two; “Thought (as Apollo) and Sensation (as Earth) (285)”. Autumn is “the season-artist (285)”, who through process of “the production of the physical artifact – a grape, an apple – is at the same time a loading (in the physical world) and a blessing (as the embodiment of a divine idea) (285)”. Autumn is the object of “transiency (283)” by being the very symbol of change; “The day dies, the season ends, the vistas end in horizon and skies, the fruits end in oozings. The end is not exclusively tragic. If there is decline in the landscape, there is also expansion of view; if there is blankness to the eye, there remains memory, the source of art. [...] (283)”.

Vendler praises this ode for its multitudes and perhaps less ‘dramatic’ tone of conflict, in allowing the speaker and object of desire to apparently resolve their tension; the object of desire is reached and cancelled out by its transformation from figural object to the season of ‘Autumn’. The struggle is resolved when the speaker is consoled by recognizing art and nature as endless, multiple and continuous. By adapting the traits of nature, poetic creation is a process which works through experience, and, like the collection of odes are for Vendler, building blocks toward new experiences and art.

The attempt here is not to argue against such an interpretation of that particular ode, but rather to add more dimensions to it. If Vendler and Sperry see the odes as concerned with the topic of art and creative urge, they do so in the light of their ability to present solutions, and somewhat overlooks the ways in which the paradox and dichotomy can be interpreted differently. The rhetorical mode of struggle, questioning, and lack of any clear message in each of these two odes results in highlighting the presence of such aspects within them. Vendler directs attention to this tendency within her own analysis of the two poems by pointing at their tropes of ‘reiteration’ and ‘interrogation’, yet do not develop them further other than pointing to their inability to resolve. By instead comparing these tropes to the above detailed analysis of the two odes, their un-resolvability is exactly their purpose, because they function for the speaker as a way of staging his desire. The ‘female’ attributes of these figures are strategies of metaphors for the situation in which he is in, where the object which receives these attributes is a point which creates the ‘axis of desire’ termed by Bates,

one in which the speaker is able to position, and direct his ongoing longing, in order to engage with it. This interaction is the process in which the speaker attempts to keep his own desire to last. The speaker is desiring, the point of focus which his attention is directed is that which is impossible to ever reach, attain or become; a bird and an urn. This is intentional, because the speaker does in fact not desire to attain them in any way; he wants is to be in and prolong his state of desire.

Vendler's insistence of the presence of sexual desire and its resolve in 'To Autumn' by assimilating both male and female misses their metaphorical function; sexual desire cannot last. As soon as the object of desire is achieved or won, the desire for it ceases. The very thing which constitutes desire, is also the thing which eventually will dissolve it. Prolonging a present, ongoing state of experiencing desire for the object is one which both heightens the intensity of that desire, while at the same time increases the threat of its extinction. This is of course the fundamental paradox in the sonnet-tradition, which the above analysis of the two odes in relation to Bates's structure of sonnet-rhetoric showed.

And here there is an important link between metaphors; the speaker's desire toward the object of desire is the same drive which constitutes the creative urge for the poet. At least this is possible to use as an analogy for now as Vendler's analysis argues the presence of both 'Keats' and 'poet' within her interpretation of the odes. It is exactly the metaphor she uses in 'To Autumn'; the season is possible for the poet to imitate, and mirroring its process of creation, is relieved of acute desire, tension and struggle.

As mentioned, Vendler argues that the two poems 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' are unable to reach or succeed as images of creative urge. But the irresolution of the two odes might signal their actual point of focus; as each centers on creativity and art, their aim is to capture in each a singular ongoing experience as it is evolving. This experience is not one which leads to creative urge after it is completed; rather it attempts to capture the very moment, in the present, in which creative urge is experienced. As with sexual desire between object and speaker, so is the relation mirrored between the poet and the effect the present state of desire has on him. How can such a moment of creative urge last? It cannot. As soon as the urge is manifested itself or achieved a in successful concrete form, that urge ceases. The very experience which creates that urge is one which is threatened by its own completion. Prolonged a present, ongoing state of experienced longing and creative urge is one which both heightens the intensity of that longing, while at the same time increases the threat of its extinction.

Polarity, paradox, tension, struggle, and intense emotional expression are present in these odes. For Sperry it represents the dichotomy between Thought and Sensation, a topic much debated among contemporaries in the field of empirical philosophy. As it is reflected in these odes, it highlights for Sperry a struggle and eventual unsuccessful attempts at assimilation. Considering the odes as interconnected, he views the last ode 'To Autumn' in contrast to the rest. While it is in itself is not problematic, he does it within a philosophical context which frames his interpretation. The polarity inherited from such theory pre-stages the principles for his reading. Seeing the presence of paradox and irony in the two odes, he finds it representing or inheriting the same method as empiricist philosophy. Within this context, problems are present because they out of necessity must indicate answer. Or at least the aim and process toward it. In this sense, dichotomy, paradox and irony stand as 'problems' in need or search of answer. And Sperry does not interpret the representation of paradox as an answer in itself; that the impasse these two odes represent in their structure could in themselves stand as the topic of interest.

Vendler is in the same situation. Struggle, sexual and emotional desire is present because it must find release. Not because it aims to represent polarity in itself. 'To Autumn' stands for both critics as a more interesting ode, because of its staging of struggle within a context which avoids acute passion or tension within its structures. It is released, or at least accepted to such an extent that the polarity and paradox avoids frustrating intensity. It builds throughout the poem, but then recedes. In 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' the opposite is the case; increasing until it implodes; curiosity reaching its peak. However much Sperry and Vendler directs their attention toward the necessary process represented in these odes, they tend to overlook the focus on unresolved tension as something fundamental. Conflict is at the very center of these two odes by Keats.

Chapter 4

Arenas for Staging Conflicts of the Inner Mind

Apart from mirroring the rhetoric from the love-sonnet, how does this polarity function? Placing it within Keats's contemporary context with the help of Stuart Carrant, some elements are striking; the way Keats's two odes make use of the dramatic effect produced by paradox, and how this is mirrors the ways in which the ode-form is developed to stage polarity and confrontation with the self. Returning to the contemporary interest in the sonnet-form, its

renewed interest and similarities in staging emotional and introspective turmoil creates an interesting similarity to the two odes. Indeed, taking a closer look at Keats's sonnets in the period before writing the odes, his mode of representing through the use of questions and paradoxes an attempted 'enactment of artistic experience' is very similar to the two odes. Showing these links between the writing of sonnets for Keats and how he develops the same tendencies in the two odes is important because it points toward their rhetorical effects; of staging and enacting experience through poetry.

The English ode, explains Curran in his fourth chapter titled 'The Hymn and Ode,' emerged among Keats's contemporaries as a hybrid between a Pindaric ode and the "meditative presence (71)" of a Horatian ode (71). The effect is a contemporary style in which the two blend together; where the speaker's attention is directed toward either "an external agent to celebrate or vilify or an objective antithesis to be balanced against his consciousness [...] where the tensions are both complementary and primary (79)". In doing this, the struggle which emerges becomes one which is "self-consciously staged (79)", but most of all a "dramatic confrontation (79)". The outcome of this struggle is one in which "it pretends to enact a crisis demanding firm choice only to undercut the value and even the possibility of such an outcome (79)". The interesting aspect here is its use of an inconclusive or open ending, which Curran further argues is a popular mode with the poets succeeding Coleridge and Wordsworth. Here the "antitheses (79)" of the endings are pushed even further, becoming "paradoxes (79)", and eventually "self-cancelling irony (79)".

This fits very well with the two poems 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', as they both have open endings, stage struggle and make use of paradox and irony. For Curran, this is a way of confronting "samenesses (81)" which are "unending (82)", but at the same time is also inevitably linked to "the sheer formal logic of the ode (82)", where "as Keats transposes the familiar contrary principles into a dramatic confrontation between alternate states of desire (82)" become "intense, palpable, a fusion of polar impulses (82)". In these two odes, this takes on the form of attempting to unify "contradictory elements (82)". The urn becomes "an impossible presence, drawing together a myriad of opposite qualities (82)" in the end becoming a presence which "contains multitudes and is without fixity itself (83)". The nightingale "recapitulates, with a total ironic effect (82)" because it "is a maze (82)" which "lead[s] inexorably back to the same center (82)". Interpreting them this way, the conflict within in each takes center stage, in opposition to what Sperry and Vendler argued. Curran sees it as necessary because it is linked to the tradition of the ode and its formal structures. Yet how does Keats then make use of both the rhetoric inherited from the sonnet-

form as well as the ode form? The central theme is engaging both with the inner-self, but also with the re-creation and staging of experience, as Keats's own writing of sonnets show tendencies toward.

The sonnet became popular after a long period of absence in the 1780's according to Curran, gaining particular popularity through Charlotte Turner Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784) (Chapter 3: The Sonnet 29-30). Curran highlights the form's stress on "internal states of mind (31)" used "to realize an expressive and conversational intensity (31)". Other important figures in the development of the sonnet was William Lisle Bowles, Coleridge, and Wordsworth (32, 34, 39). Whereas the continuation of influence of the traditional rhetorical form originating with the Renaissance sonnet varies with each, it is none the less present. For Lisle Bowles, the use of a what Curran calls "a Shakespearean scheme (32)" led to a staging of conflict where; "if a happy past is recalled in the octave, it will necessitate a sorrowful present in the sestet; similarly, a pastoral retreat in one part must be balanced by the world's harsh realities in the other (32)".

In his *Fourteen Sonnets, written chiefly on Picturesque Spots during a Tour* from 1789 (32), Lisle Bowles image of travels functions in this model as a way in which "he flees England to escape sad memories, (33)" yet "in the end they constitute the one stable referent to which he inevitably must return. The abiding continuity amid such disjunctions is his sheer emotional unrest; nothing but his acute sensibility is consistent (33)". This balance between the past and future together with the longing or tormented present alternates between an introspection of psychological reflection and the outer scenery of the world's landscapes; Curran argues indeed that:

The division between self and other on which these sonnets are structured cannot be sustained within such a grinding mill. Repeatedly, the formulaic – a natural object evoking a contemplative response – is engulfed by the mind's power to absorb, and the octave and sestet split not between self and other, but within the mind itself (33).

This is interesting, because it shows the way in which the sonnet became a way of rhetorically engaging with experience both of the outer landscape and inner emotion; the macrocosm and the microcosm. But most importantly, perhaps, it shows and *stages* the intense and confusing experience within the poem. Forcing the speaker to contemplate both simultaneously; he must absorb the contradictory elements and face his own response to that dichotomy.

An argument supporting that the interest of the sonnet was exactly the fundamental paradox and polarity which its rhetoric represented can be the fact that both Bowles and

Coleridge as writers of sonnets did not adhere strictly to any traditional rhyme-scheme when composing. For the latter, it was important to concentrate on the purely emotional; “sensitivity isolated through sorrow, love, social oppression (36)”, yet with less attention to “formal rules (37)” than “a characteristic mode of thought (37)”. In his “Introduction to the Sonnets (37)”, the traditional fourteen lines is “merely customary (37)” and it is the “poet’s mood (37)” which determines how the rhymes ought to be structured, or whether it ought to rhyme at all (37). If internal struggle and engagement with the self was staged through the sonnet-structure, it is interesting to look at what it can represent.

Comparing the sonnet-writing of Wordsworth and Keats, Curran finds that they both make use of the theme of polarity, and a direct Petrarchan and Shakespearean influence is detectable (in addition to a heavy influence from the sonnets of Milton (41)). For Wordsworth, particularly his “Miscellaneous Sonnets (42)”, three of which are titled “From the Italian of Michelangelo (41)”, Curran finds transformed traces of “Petrarchan thought (45)”. Making use of the “tension (45)” of the form, Wordsworth delves into themes where:

[...] moments of wonder all harbor a recognition of how the small and local can intimate the grand and universal; and the connection of the two produces a motivating force, a movement out and back, which, almost abstract, seems truly unmotivated, spontaneous, essential (43).

Curran’s argument is interesting because it highlights the way the sonnet-form is being “transfigured, its principles discovered to be those not of cosmology but of psychology (45)”. This quote can easily be linked to his previous examples of Bowles and Coleridge, while at the same time still retaining the interaction between the greater macrocosm of nature with the microcosm of the mind; “the primary means by which we recognize the workings of the imagination (43)” (45). By directing the focus toward process, but also a process which in itself centers on its gradual unfolding and step-by-step workings of the inner mind, this quotation by Curran reveals an interest in the ongoing experience within the poem. However, there is additionally to this theme an interesting difference between the sonnets of Wordsworth and Keats. While the first create the sense of “a dialectical rhythm within his unifying sensitivity (52)”, the sonnets of the latter “assert a raw tension between their contraries (53)”. Influenced by Renaissance poetry and in particular Shakespeare (52), Keats’s sonnets are centered on the topic of polarity, but through the staging of which achieves the effect of a “psychological confrontation in which he is simultaneously drawn

forth in attraction or admiration and repelled by his sense of the limitations and constraints of his existence (52)”.

As the sonnet increased in popularity, it was also adapted and developed. As Curran argued previously, experimentation fits the need and interest of its present as much as it might engage with its past. If the Renaissance love-sonnet can be argued to have supplied Keats with the rhetorical devices of staging a conflict of polarity in outer macrocosmic form of the object of desire and the female divinity, so could perhaps the contemporary tradition of sonnets and odes set the rhetorical devices needed to stage it as an inner and emotional struggle with the self. These are simplified terms, of course; the Renaissance love-sonnet does of course also stage inner conflict. But the degree of intensity and emotional turmoil, in addition to the focus on the ongoing process, situated in the present, which some sonnets seem to engage with indicate one of the ways in which that rhetoric was adapted to suit such forms of expression. In the two odes, the speaker is placed in a position where emotion and paradox function as forces which tear at the speaker’s psychology. This is staged in such a way that outer forces mirror the inner conflict.

In ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ the bird and its song, together with nature and time all function as manifestations of the speaker’s inner struggles. And they function as such through paradox; the bird becomes the symbol of poetic expression through song (as Vendler argued), and the speaker is attracted to its mode of expression, attempting (as Sperry argued) assimilation which is impossible because of their differences of nature. The same goes for ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’. The urn is of artistic creation toward which the speaker attempts assimilation, which is impossible because of their paradoxical situations and natures.

But these are only the points which fix the ‘axis of desire’, as Bates argued. They function by framing the ongoing experience for the speaker; marking the distance and space between him and the object he desires, in which he is able to stage the ongoing inner conflict or tension within unresolved polarity. Other factors belong to this outer manifestation of the speaker’s emotions; all response and ‘actions’ performed in the poems are staged internally. The speaker himself does not move. Yet progress is none the less made through in his response and imagination to his present situation. In ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ it is the speaker’s first created parallel between the bird’s song and wine which allows him to “fade away into the forest dim – (20)”, then he is able to “fly (31)” by means of poetry (33). Although winding back down again with the marked “But here (38)” in stanza 4, he is at a stand-still in stanza 5 and 6; he “cannot see (41)”, but only “listen (51)”, and eventually “Call[...] (53)”. Then a next parallel is created between “Death, (52)” and the bird’s song, allowing again motion “To

take into the air my quiet breath; (54)". Again returning "back from thee to my sole self! (72)" in the last stanza, he is able to imagine the movements of the bird after it has disappeared; "Past (76)", "over (76)", "Up (77)", "buried deep (77)", "Fled (80)". These motions indicate the progress and state of the speaker's inner development. They mark not only the effect and nature of the bird's form of expression, but also represent the effect of the experience on the speaker.

Similarly, in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', the motion is imagined by the speaker as he looks at the pictures on the artifact. They are in "mad pursuit? (9)", "struggle to escape? (9)" and "wild ecstasy (10)" in the first stanza. Imagined action is urged to "play on; (12)" by the speaker even if he initially has realized that the urn is of "quietness, (1)", "silence (2)" and "slow time (2)". Movement marks progress even if it is not visible or in fact are "unheard (11)", because it represents for him something "sweeter (12)"; that of internal engagement with his own imagination and experience. What perhaps marks this poem more than the previous in this regard is the blatant admission by the speaker of his own awareness of precisely this; it is made explicit in the descriptions and paradoxes created in the second stanza: "[...] happy boughs, that cannot shed / Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu; (21-22)". Action increases even as this admission is made, spilling over into emotion and imagined human responses; "warm (26)", "panting (27)", and "breathing (28)".

Taken to the utmost peak, it transcends even the figures on the urn. The fourth stanza marks this as it introduces the tentative repeated "or" in lines 35 and 36. The speaker's imagination is allowed to move beyond the actual depiction of the priest and his followers to consider their point of departure as well as their point of arrival; "To what green altar [...] (32)". Each motion and direction indicate the progress and ability of the speaker's inner thoughts and struggle. The images and symbols in both poems indicate paradoxes and polarity; the bird and the urn are unable to fulfil the speaker's curiosity and to relieve his desire. But it is because of their paradoxical nature, both through materiality, abodes, visual and auditive expressions, representations of time and mortality, that they are suitable for the speaker to stage an inner confrontation. Allowing his imagination full play, he is able to engage with his own experience. Keats places his speaker in a position where emotion and paradox function as forces which tear at the speaker's inner psychology, yet in such a way that it is represented through outer symbols. Standing put, the actions depicted within the poems are internal. They mirror the duration and gradual unfolding of experience within speaker's head.

Yet they also stand as representations of a larger pattern. On a microcosmic level they represent ironic motion; the figures on the urn are unable to move, the urn is unable to give answers, speaker cannot fly away and the bird is impossible to reach. Yet they all indicate progress on behalf of the speaker's inner development. In a similar way, that internal struggle is ironical. It advances as much as it also stands absolutely fixed. It is the great paradox of inner experience and the workings of conscience; it can produce and stimulate enormous action while standing absolutely still.

As Curran's representations on form has showed, Keats made use of polarity and inconclusiveness in his sonnets as well as his odes. As the contemporary tradition of sonnet-form indicates, there was an interest in staging and engaging with the emotional and psychological struggle, while at the same time recognizing the microcosmic and subjective inner workings of the mind in relation to the greater macrocosmic rhythms such as nature, time, society, and humankind. Possibly drawing on both the rhetorical traditions of the ode and the sonnet, Keats's two odes stage similar conflicts.

Curran argues of Keats's sonnets that he engages with tension through questioning in such a way that he is able in various ways "to record, or enact, an artistic experience (52)". This topic was touched on by both Vendler and Sperry; how the bird and the urn stand in a relation to the speaker in such a way that it represents an experience which focuses on creativity and the nature of poetry and art. However, as much as the urn might stand as a visual representational art and likewise the nightingale as auditory and musical, neither poem focuses entirely on each art-form. Rather, it is the experience they solicitate which is the focus of interest. And additionally, the speaker's reaction and engagement with that experience. Yet the rhetorical effect of such layers of paradoxes and questions also have other consequences; they stage a didactic exercise and engagement with the self as much for the reader as their speaker.

Chapter 5

Rhetorical Effects of Paradox and Questions

Directing attention toward the rhetorical effect on the reader is interesting, because it resonates with the tradition of the Renaissance love-sonnet. Just as that aesthetic ideal touched upon the staging of desire to mirror poetic endeavour, so too does it stand as a re-enactment of such experience. The various rhetorical functions at work all influence each other; paradox, questions, and circular motion of argument.

Yet there are additional effects. Susan J. Wolfson focuses on this in her book *The Questioning Presence: Wordsworth, Keats, and the Interrogative Mode in Romantic Poetry* (1986). According to her, Keats creates yet another layer of ambiguity as he balances the perspectives in his poems. Concentrating on the poetry of Wordsworth and Keats in how it can be argued to “express the questioning presence of the imagination (17)” by choosing “various voices, rhetorical structures, strategies of argument (17)” and “perceptions that provoke inquiry, experiences that elude or thwart stable organization, events that challenge previous certainties and require new terms of interpretation. (18)”. Wolfson terms this as “the interrogative mode (17)”, and argues that its aim is to show multiple and various forms of interpretation rather than any fixed conclusions, and attempt to successively in turn stabilize and “destabilize (20)” certainties. Rather than seeing these as “counterparts (20)”, Wolfson finds it more useful to think of them “in counterchange (20)”.

Basing herself on studies of irony and skepticism in poetry of this age, Wolfson finds such elements mixing together with rhetorical structures to create a linguistic mode of discourse “where answers, if they are accessible, are often ambiguous, inadequate, unstable, or so tidy as to appear to parody rather than confirm the desires they satisfy (21)” (20). Techniques for such things involve an ironic treatment of “interrogative authority (21)” itself, which by being treated with skepticism results in being “subjected to the principles of its own constitution (21)”.

Her focus on how the various rhetorical structures result in effects which are paradoxical. On the one hand, it has in “consequence (31)” the presence “indeterminacy (31)” which ultimately signals “a vacancy (31)” or “absence (31)”. On the other hand, it also “expresses a longing for presence and intelligibility (31)”. The play between the two modes comes in full effect through language; “loaded conditionals (28)”, “strained hypotheses (28)”, “whether-or (28)” and “either-or (28)”, or others such as ironies, assertions which in turn “generate questions (28)” or paradoxes, to only mention a few.

There is another element at work as well; the “*character* [...] as a device of authorial distance from the voice or voices of the poetry (34)”. For Wolfson, this marks an important difference in the poetry of Wordsworth and Keats. Whereas the first allows a much more significant and deliberate presence in his poetry of “the recognizable stamp of their author (35)”, the latter is attentive to how the “identifiable philosophies (35)” and “personal opinions (35)” assert influence or trace through his poetry.

Wolfson’s attention to rhetorical devices re-affirm many of the structures inherent in poetic form as argued by Curran. Yet she manages to push it further, and direct attention

toward how they function in other ways that for the speaker in each poem. As rhetorical devices might function both “explicit in syntax (28)” as well as in other more layered and subtle ways, they also “bring into play the reader’s own faculties of questioning (28)”.

This can be linked back to the presence and topic of process within Keats’s poetry, and particularly these two odes. However much Sperry might have argued their inconclusiveness and failed attempt at assimilation, his analysis of them none the less directs attention to their rhetorical effect in describing, staging or enacting process. Discussing the poems’ endings, he argues that they seem quite similar; the ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ concludes with “a set of questions (273)”, while ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ ends with “an assertion (273)”. Their functions are the same as they both offer alternatives for the reader.

In ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ it is whether the experience for the speaker was “[...] a vision, or a waking dream? (79)”. In ode on a Grecian Urn it is the question of who is speaking the last lines of the poem; “Is it the poet or the urn? Or the poet interpreting the urn? (274)”. The function of either of these alternatives is according to Sperry is to “invite the reader to reflect upon the poem but in a way that forces him to step outside its processes to a recognition of the incompatibility between such analysis and the inner life of his experience (273)”. The effect of which is, that whichever alternative the reader chooses in ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ will inevitably “take us back into the poem, but to push either set of possibilities is to destroy the vital rhythm on which the whole depends (273)”. The same happens in ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’, where the last lines of the poem exist for Sperry “both as a proposition and a conclusion [...]. It invites us to take it either way; it constitutes a paradox (274)”. But perhaps more importantly, either alternative points toward a greater theme; “what is the relationship between the formulated statement and the process of meditation that has preceded it? (274)”. Sperry’s question reveals the rhetorical effect of ambiguity, interrogation and paradoxes which are at play in these odes.

Yet Wolfson takes this point further by directing attention toward how questioning and rhetoric functions as a way to project and directly engage with the reader. She argues that it is important to interpret the two odes as communicating something other than solutions, but rather explore, contain, and remain within an experience of frustrated confusion (28-31).

A contrast becomes apparent again, as previously highlighted by Sperry and Vendler, between these two odes and ‘To Autumn’. Wolfson argues that however much this ode might represent and engage as “a moment of fruitful lingering (361)” and an “awareness of change (361)”, its mode of interrogation is one where there are “[...] tensions of understanding. These emerge in a drama that is different from the turns and counterturns of the “crisis” ode,

working instead through a rhythm of dilation, delay, and release (362)". For the reader of 'To Autumn', the "questions and the responses they produce are so deftly ordered within the overall rhythms of the ode, in fact, that they scarcely produce an interrogative event at all (362)". The other odes, then, have according to Wolfson in their "character (18)" a rhetoric which:

[...] is not simply a matter of syntax or a demonstration of Keats's characteristic pro and con but a medium for the reader's experience of language itself as a field of mystery. We become aware that mystery is an inescapable consequence of thinking and that certain questionings, [...] will continue to elude decisive answering (302).

Here we then have both the rhetorical mode and structure framing the interrogative mode. On the one hand we have the speaker within the poem "voicing affirmations with a ring of certainty only to hear a hollow echo, pursuing hopes no sooner stated than questioned (34)." On the other hand, we have "The play of their language" which "is the drama of imagination in pursuit of a mystery (301)". Both elements cooperate to create a maze of irony and confusion within the two odes; "both in the intelligence they reflect and in the reading experiences they require (301)". This layered interrogation and confusion reflects over on the reader. In her analysis of 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', Wolfson's attention to the various rhetorical staging of experience for the reader is apparent. The questions at the end of 'Ode to a Nightingale' "persist and, in fact, survive the song that had inspired them (317)". They "relentlessly presses [the speaker's] pro and con to a climax of explicit self-questioning both about how to interpret his quest – "Was it a vision, or a waking dream?" – and about how to interpret the interpreter – "Do I wake or sleep?" (311-312)".

If they do occur after the bird's song has come to an end, they are none the less present all throughout the previous lines; "predicted by the dramatic play of voice (312)", by "irony (312)", and "by the activity of the language in which Keats represents that voice (312)". Through "certain intractable perplexities of syntax (312)" the poem creates the interrogative mode of the poem entangles both speaker and reader. One of these effects is according to Wolfson the way in which:

[...] tension between the speaker's acts of surmise and the language in which Keats represents such acts works in a particularly forceful way between stanzas, for these are pauses of voice and blanks in the verse that open a space for the reader's questionings. Keats often begins a new stanza by repeating a gesture, sometimes a "very word," that sends the reader's attention back over this space, for these repetitions work to cast the implications of a previous stanza into bolder relief – to shape them, in effect, into a subject for new interrogation. (313-314)

As she turns to 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', Wolfson argues interestingly enough that it is quite similar to one of Keats's sonnets, the 'To Ailsa Rock' (317). The reason for this is the premise present in both of an artifact which in its "mystery in the paradoxical appearance (318)" is "at once natural creation and artifice (318)". The speaker in each poem attempts through questions which "expand in length and imagination (318)" to reach answers, yet the more he tries to achieve them, the more they "seem less important than what the very asking of questions produces – an emerging image of dormant power held under a spell (318)".

Similarly, this ode makes use of "the drama of "cross-questioning" but manages its verbal play to produce and sustain a corresponding event in the mind of the reader (319)".

The speaker's mode of questioning creates a structure in the poem where every attempt at achieving answers circles and "doubles back on itself to reflect his own perplexities (319)" and is unable to reach any answers. This ironic function one which continues throughout the ode, and while seemingly being "a speaker in pursuit of interpretation (319)", is only able to "primarily express the ardor of the pursuer (319)". At the same time, the reader is caught in the same mode of inquiry; as the speaker stops questioning and instead turns to "muse on the very freedom of the urn from any finite significance (320)", the reader, according to Wolfson is left "with an ambiguously toned "that is all" just before [the speaker] becom[es] as silent as the urn itself (320)".

Using "visual repetitions and half-heard echoes (320)" together with a use of repetitions and language "functioning ironically to summon the questions it would suppress and surpass (321)", Wolfson argues that Keats's odes challenges us "To attempt to evaluate the syntax of these judgements (321)" while at the same time "find oneself repeating the speaker's own perplexity before the urn's images (321)".

It's famous ending is for Wolfson yet again the culmination of the interrogative mode of irony and circular form; the speaker ends up as silent as the urn itself, while the reader is left with the final lines which "plays ironically against the rhetoric of answering: it simultaneously invites and repels the possibility of understanding (327)" and by this "provocation of its silence (325)", it stands as both the "historian of urn readers and urn-reading (325)" as well as "a historian of the speaker's activity and our own (325)".

The multiple and various effect of the odes are summed up by Wolfson:

Keats takes us only this far, relinquishing us to an utterance that, like the contemplation of eternity, absorbs inquiry into silent thought. The play of questions with which the ode begins culminates in a linguistic limit that is both a parody of critical process and cunning expansion of mystery beyond the bourn of words (327-328).

Wolfson manages to highlight the way the presence and interplay of question draw the reader into play in a myriad of ways. Basing herself of Marshall McLuhan's "Aesthetic Pattern in Keats's Odes" (1943), she agrees with him when she states that rather than presenting conclusions, Keats's odes should be considered as "actions (317)" in the way the poems become reflections for both the speaker its readers; "what we know and how we know are subjects of questioning rather than the substance of answers (327)".

These various rhetorical ways of staging which Wolfson points toward draw on both the traditional structures of the sonnet and the ode, while also revealing the focus on the workings of the inner mind in relation to outer nature among Keats and his contemporaries. These factors function together in these two odes as a means for using the speaker as a medium or staging for the reader. In 'Ode to a Nightingale' as the speaker's questions and presence in the first-person pronoun, and in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' as an indirect and indeterminate invocation toward the urn. They both work to entangle the reader in such a way that their results transcend both the bird's flight in the first and the speaker's silence in the latter. Wolfson's argues that it is because of this that the odes stand "as a medium rather than a message (324)" and that they show that it is "not so much by what it yields to thought as by what it does to thought (326)" which is important.

The staging of the desire and longing of the bird and its song in one, and the artefact of the urn in the other manages to show the reader how such experiences constitute processes of creativity through their speaker's musings. In this sense, the questions of the latter become the questions of the first. And the circular and paradoxical irony affecting them both transfers over on the reader, allowing him or her to be caught in a microcosm of the same painful, wonderful and intense experience, and to engage with it. By creating a microcosm for the reader of such an ongoing experience not only positions itself in opposition to the traditional aesthetic ideals of poetic creation and function but manages to play upon its ideals to turn it on its head.

Conclusion

Staging Creative Experience in the Two Odes

Keats, like his contemporaries, experimented with poetic form. Having argued that the sonnet-form which the two poems 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' base themselves on influenced their rhetorical structure and content, this thesis has focused on how these can be interpreted to function. Basing the main analysis of them in the first two chapters

on Catherine Bates's discussion of the rhetorical mechanisms at work in love-sonnets from the early modern England, the argument of this thesis is that their similarities are striking.

Keats makes use of a speaker positioned in the present toward an object which he desires. Staging an interaction and engagement with his own desire, the speaker aims to prolong, test and question how the experience affects him. However much the goal might initially be to reach or 'solve' the ongoing emotional state of longing he finds himself caught in, the speaker eventually realizes the paradoxical factor in it; if he manages to attain his desire, its condition for existence ends. Within the desiring experience there is potentiality and urge. Deliberately exploring his desire, the speaker attempts to prolong the present moment in which it can exist. Mirroring this through expressing his longing through writing, the poet might re-create and contain such experience through poetry. Being separate from momentary and temporary human experience, the poem might transcend the conditions of desire which constitutes it.

The rhetorical mechanisms at work create myriad effects and modes of interpretation. As Helen Vendler and Stuart Sperry argued in their analyses of the two odes, they seem to centre on process and poetic endeavour. Yet as both see the presence of polarity and inconclusiveness of argument in both odes as unsuccessful attempts to which 'To Autumn' eventually will stand as a resolution, Stuart Curran's discussion of the sonnet- and ode-form reveals another context for interpretation. Polarity is in fact at the very centre of the sonnet-tradition, inherent in its rhyme-pattern and structure of form. Likewise, the ode has been used to create the effect of interaction and reflection. Keats and his contemporaries were interested in the self and inner mind in relation to the outer forces of nature and the world. This is perhaps putting it too simply, yet the general framework and relation such an analogy creates is one where poetry focused in on various processes of self-discovery and interpretations of them, in addition to the polarity between the inner microcosm and the outer macrocosm.

As with many of the sonnets of this time, Keats's two poems 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' engage with polarity in such a way that it functions as a middle space to stage moments of intense urge and longing. The experience in itself, in relation to the objects or symbols it directs its attention toward, is one in which the speaker stages his own desire and creativity as an ongoing process. Layers of paradox, questions, and irony work together in a similar way to what Susan Wolfson and Sperry both argued; to rhetorically stage the experience in such a way that it not only reflects the speaker's inner response but engages the reader in a similar manner.

The structure of the rhetorical form and rhyme-scheme of the love-sonnet based itself on ancient aesthetic ideals based on various principles of harmony and symmetry. S. K. Heninger argues in his book *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (1974) that poetry's creation was considered "to be a replica in small of the great world (365)" in which it mirrored, if not in mathematically proportions, at least a kind of "divine idea of cosmos (365)". Ways of doing this was to portray "a super-reality, a golden world, an Arcadian paradise, a reconstruction of perfection a it existed before the Fall, a replica refined of flaws (365)", or the doing the opposite; "as a means of defining the deficiencies of the actual (365)".

Either way, the literary microcosm of such ideals stood as symbols for a poetic endeavor where the cosmos is "reproduce [d] (364)", and the reader was expected to comprehend and decode the way the poet "in the act of making gives physical extension to an idea by means of characters, actions, and settings (364)". Fascinatingly, Heninger's description of such a failed attempt is eerily similar to what this thesis has argued:

When the poetic art is improperly executed, the necessary relation between words and subject matter is not achieved. The poet's utterance does not properly express the conceptual truth which should inform it. Then the meaning of the poem is quodlibet, whatever anyone wishes to make of it. Critical anarchy ensues. Without order in a poem, reproducing the relationship between concept and thing as established by the universal metaphor of God's poem, the reader cannot ascertain his bearings in the welter of the narrative. What should be a microcosm degenerates into literary chaos (389).

Heninger's description is fascinating because of its ability to not only highlight the way in which Keats's two odes does a little of both. On the one hand referring to the structure of a Renaissance love-sonnet, it indicates a tradition in which 'turns' and 'concluding couplets' are expected, but never fulfilled. The anticipated conclusion or answer is never given. The circular motion of the argument never ends. As Curran argued, the use of traditional form indicates certain formal expectations in the reader; Keats's two poems 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' do neither.

On the other hand, the two odes become the modern and developed version of such same principles; it is never-ending. The Renaissance love-sonnet indicated the struggle of becoming eternal and encapsulate the poet's present state of desire and poetic endeavour. So too do these two poems. As Curran argues, a deliberate engagement with the past tradition of poetry occurred among Keats's contemporaries, and poetry as a medium for experimentation; "form became a guarantor of intellectual freedom, at once a framework for psychological exploration and a means, through reimagining the past, to enlarge future possibilities (Chapter

9: Form and Freedom in European Romantic Poetry 217)”. The two poems examined in this thesis are examples of this. As products and witnesses of their contemporary culture and ideals, they both stage experiences of creativity which constitute their origins. And in doing so, they manage to propel the rhetorical and aesthetic tradition of the sonnet-form and its poetic endeavor toward the future. And even in such a way as to become eternal; with each new reading, creative experience is re-produced as a microcosm in its readers.

Keats’s other odes and indeed many other of his poems engage with forms of aesthetic experience. As argued by Curran, ‘On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer’ (1816) is a famous example of this, as is ‘On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again’ (1818) (Chapter 3: The Sonnet 52). What these poems do is to direct attention not only to particular sources of inspiration, but the moments of wonder and reflection which the reading of them can in turn create and attempt to contain in poetic form.

Likewise, some of Keats’s other odes can be interpreted as complex and layered rhetorical staging of similar experience. ‘Ode on Indolence’ (1819) places its speaker in the present directed toward three figures as he is caught in intense reflection and questions on their identity and effect upon him. ‘Ode to Psyche’ (1819) stage similar scenes of interaction for the speaker and the “happy dove (22)” of Psyche through the workings of imagination, nature and time, while ‘Ode on Melancholy’ (1819) is infused with layers of paradox; “[...] in the very temple of Delight / Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine, (25-26)”. ‘To Autumn’ (1819) unites almost all these rhetorical stagings, where the movements of nature stand in paradoxical relation to the fixed present moment in time.

Why is it useful to consider the odes in this way? Because the rhetorical tradition they engage with acknowledges the myriad effects of inspiration and delves deeper into how it can function. What the structure of the Renaissance love-sonnet can teach us is the universality of curiosity concerning the essence and function of poetic and artistic endeavor. What Keats’s odes can teach us is the importance of what being within such a creative conflict and struggle can teach us. As Wolfson pointed at when she argued the importance of focusing on ‘medium’ rather than ‘message’, the space which occurs and is created between the point and departure and place of ending in any endeavour is important. Yet often neglected as an important and influential part of creativity. Acknowledging that the process toward any knowledge, creation, or certainty necessarily involves a productive force is important. It allows us to recognize the importance of how creative urge functions, and not necessarily as artistic urge alone, but as a fundamental force of human endeavor.

The function and relation between experiences of paradox and creativity is something which the tradition surrounding the rhetoric of the sonnet reveals. By recognizing this, it is possible to trace the various modes of expression and forms which have been used in poetry to engage with such questions, and to realize that it is nothing new to aesthetic discussions. If Renaissance poetry often functioned and aimed to reflect the outer structures of God and the cosmos, so perhaps does the poetry of Keats and his contemporaries endeavor to reflect the inner workings of the mind.

Pushing away from such structures as Heninger argued the presence of in the Renaissance aesthetics, poetry of the nineteenth century can be argued to experiment with hybrid forms in such a way that it signals an engagement with what poetry can and ought to reflect. If its effect is to push the reader and writer into uncertainty, it allows as much reflection on the process itself as any possible outcome. It can allow the recognizable structures of form to come into play and make us question the very way they shape our notion perceptions of ourselves, society, and the world. Such a process is productive because it forces us to engage actively with our own perceptions.

Keats's two odes are important to consider in this way. Because it allows us to recognize how poetic ideals have been changed, adapted, and infused themselves in such a way that they function as almost invisible structures which rhetorically guide both writer and reader. However much experiences like these might push us into uncertainty, questions, and confusion, so too can they lead us out again; by returning to reflect back on what, why, and how something has affected us, we are perhaps able to consider uncertainty as a productive force and exercise in creative experience.

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