



John Keats (1795-1821)

The poet of
sensuous beauty

The movement of
“art for art’s sake”
may be traced to

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Keats

“Negative Capability” p. 1871

- *I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.*
- The excellence of every Art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth (“Romantic agony”)

“Negative Capability” p. 1871

- What Keats is advocating is a removal of the intellectual self while writing (or reading) poetry
- *Beauty is truth, truth beauty*
- *that is all Ye know on earth and all ye need know*
 - *Ode on a Grecian Urn*

Ode

- a lyric poem typically of elaborate or irregular metrical form and expressive of exalted or enthusiastic emotion.
- (originally) a poem intended to be sung.
(http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_an_ode&src=ansTT)

“On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” (1816)

- sonnet

“Ode to a Nightingale” (1819)

- Stanzaic form: iambic pentameter or trimeter
- Ababcdecde
- The daylight of material world—the dark mystery of being—the daylight of material world
- “romantic agony”

Question

- What is the state of mind the speaker wants to achieve in “Ode to a Nightingale”?

Question

- Can we think of the nightingale's song and its effects in terms of "negative capability"? How?



<http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/lctd/asp/works/1900/text.htm>

“Ode on a Grecian Urn” (1819)

- The power of imaginative art to seize the eternal essence of human experience
- Such art produces essential beauty and essential truth.
- Poet reconciled to the human situation.

Question

- Keats respectfully opposes Wordsworth's poetry of the "egotistical sublime." How does the present poem offer an alternative focus for poetry?

Question

- In Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn," what makes the speaker question the urn? Why are the figures on the urn called a "leaf-fringed legend"?

Question

- With the stories described on the urn in mind, we can then try to understand the metaphors and names for the urn in the 1st and last stanzas. Is there, however, a difference between metaphors in the first stanza ("bride," "child," "historian") and the names in the last ("attic shape," "fair attitude" "cold Pastoral")? If so, why?

“The Eve of St. Agnes” (1819)

- Story: *Boccaccio's Il Filocolo*
- Spenserian stanzas
- Dominant imagery: touch



<http://tw.search.yahoo.com/search?p=tiara++picture&fr=yfp&ei=utf-8&v=0>

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“The Eve of St. Agnes” (1819)



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“The Eve of St. Agnes” (1819)

- Hero and heroine: Porphyro (“purple”) and Madeline
- Outer frame: icy faith and chill of death
- Center: warm beauty of young love, the physical and sexual world
- Eastern objects and eroticism

Question

- What response is expected from the readers as the lovers escape? Are we expected to worry about their later lives?

Question

- What purposes do minor characters generally serve? In "The Eve of St. Agnes," what is the Beadsman's function with respect to Madeline?

“To Autumn”

- Basically iambic pentameter
- Ababcdecddde
- Keats accepts the life of man exactly as it is.

Question

- What does Keats celebrate in “To Autumn”?
How do we know that he is reconciled to human life as it is?

Summaries from Norton

- Romantic poems habitually endow the landscape with human life, passion, and expressiveness.
- Although we now know the Romantic period as an age of poetry, the prose essay, the drama, and the novel flourished during this epoch.
- Many writers of the period were aware of a pervasive intellectual and imaginative climate, which some called “the spirit of the age.” This spirit was linked to both the politics of the French Revolution and religious apocalypticism.