

Critical inquiry of the Greek myths in Endymion Book II of John Keats

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Abstract

The purpose of this document is to read and analyze one of the major works of John Keats, the poem Endymion, carefully. Due to the use of classical [primarily Greek] tales and mythology, this poem is regarded an outstanding work. The primary aim of this article is therefore to demonstrate how Greek stories, heroes and symbols of ancient Greek gods help form the plot, mood and significance of the poem's second novel ' The Underworld. 'Endymion is being likened as a lengthy narrative story portrayed in impressive passages and contrasted with the ancient myths it uses. It would also like to point out Keats ' attempt to authentically make these classical allusions and myths his by a re-creation authority. Perhaps it will be hard for modern readers to find out the valuable significance of Keats ' splendid verses complete of gods, thoughts and wisdom no longer common names, but this poem was a mandatory element of higher education for John Keats and his generation. Then let the beautiful shepherd Endymion look through the

eyes into the imaginative world of the poet and find out if the main goal of this paper is being fulfilled.

Key words: gender study, depression, nationality, Freudian theory, relationships, separation, autonomy, patriarchy, psychology, socio-cultural conditions.

INTRODUCTION:

The narrative of Book II takes its readers to the world that is shrouded in: “the mist of passed years.” (Bullett 1967: 74) Through Keats’s imagination we can return to the days which grew to be famous because of brave warriors and their brave deeds. What does the poet want to express via the verses full of the previous glory? If readers go deeper to the meaning, they will see Endymion as a thirsty and worn-out wanderer, struggling for his love and asking himself who cares for such an astonishing history, who cares for him and for the long pilgrimage that he has determined to take up in the title of high-quality love. But in spite of all the sorrow and ache which Endymion now feels, he will alternatively upward jostle up: “like legioned soldiers” (Bullett 1967: 75) who fought for their international locations and kings, than rest: “in chafing restlessness” (Bullett 1967: 74):

“Fearfully....

.....Love’s standard on the battlements of song.”(Bullett 1967p: 74; Book II)

As Endymion, “the brain-sick shepherd prince is descending into the silent mysteries of the world” (Pettet 1957: 161); we can see via his eyes the unhappy story of Troy with all the woes it caused. We can imagine Trojan towers – solid and undefeated – and the troops of

Greek army forming into traces in front of its gates. This is the scene which Keats describes in his remarkable verses:

The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,...

.....Struggling, and blood, and shrieks.

A lot of courageous men were killed or taken as prisoners on each facets of the battlement, but a few of them saved their lives to inform us their sad story. The title of some standard warriors who fought for the honour of Greece was once Odysseus, Achilles, Patroclus and Aias. On the different hand, Hector, the son of Priamos and Hecuba, used to be a brave Trojan hero. Maybe currently readers do no longer comprehend a good deal about these gallant men, however they are taught at school that the battle of Troy took 10 years, that Odysseus used to be a brave admiral, who had to go through a lot of hazardous adventures to see the banks of his native land and that Achilles' body was impenetrable except his heel. The mighty city of Troy and its warfare are section of a length full of woe whose cause was once love – love between Paris and Helena – love which now feels Endymion to his Cynthia – love which delivered tears, grief and pain to Troilus and Cressid:

Yet, in our very soul, we feel amain

The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.

Keats as an admirer of the top notch English playwright Shakespeare probable let himself inspired via one of his historic plays. Shakespeare in his play depicts these two younger humans as enthusiasts who had to sacrifice their deep emotions because of the war. So

when Keats writes about the woe of war, he also writes about the woe of unfilled love. In the verses which follow readers can find the name of Juliet, which is even a better instance of the poet's thoughts:

Juliet leaning....

.....Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow.

But as a ways as Greek mythology concerns, Keats additionally factors out such names as Pallas Athena. This deity used to be the goddess of wisdom, crafts and artwork and the protector of bravery and justice. In the historical records Athena is pictured as a sensible owl which devotedly escorted Odysseus on his lengthy voyages. Keats uses this fable to write:

What care, though owl did fly

About the great Athenian admiral's mast?

(As readers need to now know), Odysseus or Ulysses was once a courageous sailor. On his way he met masses of a range of creatures and had to go via plenty of tough tasks. One of his memorable acts was the battle with horrific giants referred to as Cyclops. The Cyclopes had been wild and brutal ogres who preferred violence to peace. They had solely one eye in the middle of their forehead and ate human beings. Their solely task used to be to seem after their herds. When Ulysses bought on the island the place the superb creatures lived, he used to be compelled to put out an eye of one of them to retailer himself and his fellows. Keats describes this story with verses:

Though old Ulysses tortured from his slumbers

The gluttoned Cyclops, what care?

Keats also makes use of the title of Alexander the Great as a symbol of the gallant warriors to whom this ruler of Macedonia inconsiderably belonged. His teacher Lysimachus known as him Achilles because he was once as handsome, courageous and skilled as the Greek hero was. The Macedonians believed that their commander was once the deity; in any other case they would now not obey his orders. Alexander and his troops even fought in India, the place they travelled alongside the Indus River. The marketing campaign was obviously very famous due to the fact Keats uses it in his poem:

“What care, though striding Alexander past
The Indus with his Macedonian numbers?”

All these heroes are legends now powerful. Their stories are full of enthusiastic human love, love that on the one hand is lovely and joyful, but on the other hand linked to sorrow, sadness and woe. The same emotions torture the soul of Endymion as he wandered for several days:

For many days,....

.....Of the lone woodcutter.

It may also seem to readers that Keats uses the words: “the lone woodcutter” (Bullett 1967: 75) as an allusion to the ancient delusion about Picus and Circe, the daughter of the sun god Helios. Picus was a handsome young prince and husband of the fairy Canens. Once Picus and his pals

had been looking when the effective witch Circe spotted them. She fell in love with the stunning youth. Nevertheless, Picus refused her due to the fact he loved his spouse greater than whatever else. Circe promised to take her revenge and turned the adolescence into a woodpecker. Even if woodcutter uses his arms and woodpecker his beak, they both beat a tree to name for help. Readers can now see Endymion sitting with the aid of a spring, plucking a wild rose and placing it into the clear water. Suddenly the flower starts to bloom and in the center of its bud the shepherd can see a golden butterfly. The lovely creature unexpectedly flies up and interested Endymion starts offevolved to comply with it. The winged information leads the childhood to: “a splashing fountain’s side.” (Bullett 1967: 76) There the magic creature disappears leaving Endymion searching for it, however in vain. Tired after the long journey, he lies down onto the grass. Suddenly he is disturbed by way of a mild voice of a fountain’s nymph. The nymph says that she would like to do something to assist him, she would even offer her: “crystal coffer/To Amphitrite” (Bullett 1967: 76), but the solely issue she can do is to pity him on this day.

I’ve been thy guide; that thou must wander far...

...I have a ditty for my hollow cell.

The disappearance of the nymph begins long before Endymion's death. He tells his readers that he knows how "death is so peaceful." (Bullet 1967: 77) What he wants: "A fog, stand / stand on the head of the land" (Bullet 1967: 77) where he will not feel pain.

No, he is not worth writing. In his fantasy, Orpheus is seen playing a slow vein to his Eurydice. Keats wants to compare the grief of the shepherd with the grief of Orpheus. According

to legend, Eurydice was bitten by a poisonous snake and therefore left her lover in the underworld. Orpheus could not bring her back among the mortal men.

No, no; and by the Oephean lute,....

.....With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek.

Endymion asks Cynthia: "the meekest dove /of heaven" (Bullett 1967: 77/78), give him a helping hand: and "scare the dreadful might/and tyranny of love." (Bullett 1967:78) He needs her to tie her reasonable wings around his shoulders and take him up into the unsteady sky. However, at that point he can see the goddess' eyes and yells:

Those twilight eyes? Those eyes! – my spirit fails -

Dear goddess, help! or the wide –gaping air

Will gulph me – help

By shouting these verses out of Endymion's mouth, Keats can see in the stunning prince ancient Deucalion and blind Orion. Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha have been the only human beings who survived after the horrible flood despatched on the Earth by way of the mighty god Zeus with the assist of Poseidon. It used to be a punishment for human degeneracy. The entire mainland used to be underneath the strength of water and only two justest people survived. Keats apparently wants to use his allusion to specific the sorrow which the historical man felt when he noticed such a painful disaster. And Orion? He was a man blinded due to the fact of his dishonour of the king Oinopion's family. He was once bitten by means of a big scorpion of angry Artemis. In the poem he is depicted as a constellation which longs to go away the morning sky and as a consequence break out the gods who are irritated with him due to the fact of his boasting:

Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the flood,

Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.

While the young shepherd is lifting his fingers to the moon, he can hear a voice which: "had been frozen to senseless stone." (Bullett 1967: 78) The voice invites him to the underworld.

He ne'er is crown'd.....

.....The silent mysteries of earth, descend!

Venus and Adonis's myth:

Endymion is excited by the music since he again feels the hunger for adoration which torches everything with its expending fire. The music accompanies the young until he happens upon a knoll which is secured by little: "Cupids a-sleeping on their pinions reasonable." (Bullett 1967: 82) Cupid or Eros is an image of affection and Keats makes reference to this god as a flag-bearer of the adoration tune Endymion has tuned in to. Endymion is charmed by the magnificence of the chamber, yet for the most part by a resting youth who is lying in it. The Venus-Adonis story, which is covered up in the writer's sections, is "a vegetation fantasy about recently awoken nature ascending in spring-break of the desolateness and demise of winter." (Pettet 1957: 167) Endymion can see the god encompassed by blossoms and green plants as an image of Flora who escorts Adonis when he returns from the black market to his goddess. At the point when Endymion enters, the winged Aphrodite's children – Cupids – simply begin to wake the resting youth up by shaking scents from a willow branch on his head, by drizzling violets upon his shut eyes and by contacting the strings of a lyre. The short of breath Latmian comes eagerly to the winged lyrist who murmurs to him:

Though from upper day.....

.....As now'tis done to thee, Endymion.

Cupid additionally offers the drained shepherd some sustenance lying close by. Thus Endymion can taste such luxuries as shining wine sent by Ariadne which has never tasted better since she turned into a spouse of the god Dionysus. Sweet are likewise succulent pears which were given to Adonis by the god Vertumnus. Keats delineates the lord of the seasons as a man who fears being declined by his sweetheart Pomona. Pomona was a pixie who taken care of different natural product trees and shrubs. She had her own plantation where she spent numerous hours from other ladies and particularly men. At last the pixie conceded the god's desire and turned into his ruler. Keats remembers to insinuate Amalthea and her goat whose milk she provided for little Zeus:

Here is wine,.....

.....For the boy Jupiter.

Endymion may also attempt the taste of "manna selected by three Hesperides." (Bullett 1967: 84) The Hesperides were three siblings, Night's daughters, who lived far east. They spent their whole time singing and watching as a wedding present a tree with golden apples provided by Gaia[Earth] to the goddess Hera. Keats connects this myth with another about the infidelity of Zeus in his verses. It says how Io, who bore him a beautiful son called Epophus, was in profound love with the god. The child was abducted and taken to Syria by the jealous Hera:

And here is manna pick'd from Syrian trees,

In starlight, by the three Hesperides.

Also the winged lyrist is ready to tell Endymion the whole tale about the love of Adonis-Venus, the love whose strength over death triumphed. Keats through the words of Cupid portrays the sadness and grief of the [Aphrodite] sea-born goddess who lost her mortal youth. How she became "distract and mad / When the boar tusked" (Bullett 1967: 84) and murdered him like that. How she decided to: "fly / to the elevated throne of Jove, and by her plainings drew / Immortal tear-drops down the Thunderer's beard." (Bullett 1967: 84/85) The mighty god decided to restore Adonis to life every summer. Aphrodite then placed the injured body in the room and with her tears cured it. With sweet visions, she filled the dreams of her lover and ordered all Cupids to guard him. But now readers look! Adonis's hand starts slowly moving and: Once more sweet life begin! The renewed lifestyles makes all the dwellers joyful and they hurry to call for their candy queen. Then a chariot appears in the sky from which Queen Venus leans downwards to embrace her lover. Endymion is certainly honored to see the triumph of the passionate and sensuous love. Even the poet himself describes the first moments of the couple's meeting with verses:

But meeting her blue orbs! Who, who can write...

.....To embracements warm as theirs makes coy excuse.

When Endymion can see how completely satisfied these enthusiasts are, he can't control himself any more, bends down and begins to winged about his woe. But Venus, who has constantly felt sympathy for the gentle early life since she first noticed him and who knows everything about his sorrowful pain, assures the negative Latmian that even he will be blest one day. Then the entire parade disappears above Endymion's head. The early life is once

more lonely in the remarkable darkness, however this time he is full of hope for higher days

Arethusa and Alpheus's myth:

Endymion is now reluctant to get up and cross forward. In front of his eyes are floating a range of visions: "that might have dismayed/Alecto's serpents." (Bullett 1967: 94) Keats have to suggest quality visions of justice due to the fact Alecto used to be one of the pitiless and just avengers of crime, in particular murder. These creatures – sisters – had been called Furies and they have been offspring of Night. They various in number, but are ordinarily depicted as three girls who bore serpents in their arms or hair and carried torches or scourges. "They represent the code of an eye for an eye, a teeth for a tooth inside a circle of a family or a clan." (Morford, Lenardon 1985: 278) The youth's emotions are even brighter than "Hermes' pipe." (Bullett 1967: 94) Hermes was Zeus's messenger. Endymion does now not dare to continue on his way; as a substitute he maintains sitting and thinking about all his life. He tries to think about each moment from his childhood until the day he first spot his Cynthia:

On all his life: his youth, up to the day.....

.....High with excessive love.

Suddenly Endymion is disturbed from his deep ideas by using some noise far away. He listens anxiously to the humming tone which comes closer and closer. In a brief while: "there as he lay/On both facet outgushed, with misty spray/Copious springs" (Bullett 1967: 95) spray on each facets of his bed. Endymion resolutely follows them thinking about the thriller hidden in the back of these two odd things. He can hear a whispering voice and gives his ear to listen to it. The final

of the primary episodes of Book II is Endymion's stumble upon with the river spirits, Alpheus and Arethusa. According to Greek mythology Alpheus was once the god of a move in which Arethusa pried her naked body. Alpheus fell in love with the beautiful fairy and desired to get keep of her. But the anxious beauty began running and so escaped from her pursuer. When she was out of breath, she prayed to her protector to rescue her. Artemis sent a cloud in which the fairy hid herself. But unfortunately, she slowly started out to flip into moisture. Arethusa became a pure current. Alpheus additionally changed his look and became into the stream to get her. Artemis once more tried to assist the terrible creature and opened earth beneath which the each streams disappeared. Keats via his charming verses displays the old story of unfilled love which is so extraordinary from the Venus-Adonis myth:

O Arethusa, peerless nymph! why fear.....

.....To entice her to a dive!

The start of the speech of Alpheus is certainly the whole myth. Even in this portion of the poem we can follow the lines that emphasize the physical type of love that in the whole theme implies so much:

O that her shining hair was in the sun,....

.....Touch raptur'd!

"Alpheus experiences all Endymion's pain of anger because he pursues one who seems unwilling to return his love." (Petter 1957: 174) Keats surprisingly finishes the two spirits' dialog with the following phrases: What can I do, Alpheus?

Dian stands.....

...A huntress free in.

After these last phrases, the two sad streams descend to: "a frightened dell." (Bullett 1967: 97) For such dissatisfied lovers, the Latmian's eyes are full of tears. He pleads with the gentle goddess of his pilgrimage to soothe the ancient pain and make Alpheus and Arethusa happy: "in some happy plains." (Bullett 1967: 97) Then Endymion turns over and heads for the gigantic ocean that is spreading with hope and delights.

Conclusion:

Despite his quick existence and career, John Keats is one of the "major authors" who affect younger poets struggling to locate association ground and whose poetry nonetheless pleads modern-day readers. Because his marvelous verses are full of wealthy classical allusions and myths, it may additionally see to be a difficult venture to expose their particular meaning. Therefore the important aim of this thesis is to make an attempt to analyse the real literary legacy of John Keats's poem Endymion. John Keats tried to embody in this high-quality work tons of the crucial Greek spirit. Maybe this is the purpose why he primarily based the foremost theme of the entire narrative poem on one of the historical Greek tales. Therefore this remarkable poet thru his vivid creativeness makes feasible for current readers to peep in the past times which are presently shrouded in mystery. In the underworld readers will spot the golden gate of Hell and hear the nervous bark of Cerberus. The drowsing adolescence Adonis and his charming goddess Venus [Aphrodite] will share with them the wonder of renewed existence and re-birth of nature. On the contrary, the unhappy existence story of the stream-god Alpheus and his stunning fairy Arethusa will provoke in them signs and symptoms of fruitless endeavour and frustration. But

the promise of Aphrodite, who protects Endymion's poor soul, will make their spirits upward push up and together with the younger shepherd enter the water world.

There, beneath the sea surface, readers will admire the fabulous objects hidden on the seabed and will try to touch the golden vase lying in their way. Then they might also be taken aback by the awful appearance of the terrible wretch Glaucus and the unhappy fate of his love Scylla. But when they see their courageous leader to take section in Glaucus and Scylla liberating from the horrible spell, at the cease of Book III, they will again fortunately be part of the heartbroken prince and escort him on a forsaken meadow.

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