The "Hymn to Pan" and thematic structure in "Endymion"

Nancy Kathryn Bost

College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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THE "HYMN TO PAN"

AND

THEMATIC STRUCTURE IN ENDYMION

A Thesis

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Author

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Nathaniel Y. Elliott
Thomas L. Headox
Terry L. Meyers
ABSTRACT

The "Hymn to Pan" in Book I of Keats's Endymion has often been singled out for commendation by critics unenthusiastic about the poem as a whole. It has been noted that not only does it anticipate the later odes in language, metaphor, and theme, but it also stands as a masterful ode in its own right. As well as looking ahead to Keats's later poetry, however, the "Hymn" serves as a valuable tool in untangling the thematic thread from the often confusing Endymion; in it, Keats succinctly encapsulates the thematic movement of the larger poem that frames it. This he does by drawing throughout the poem an extended comparison between Endymion and the god Pan as he is portrayed in the "Hymn," making a specific identification between the two.

With this identification, it can be argued, Keats sets up in the first book of Endymion a pattern which adumbrates the hero's quest-journey in pursuit of ultimate union with his dream-goddess, Cynthia, and immortality. Pan embodies a balance between the real world and the ideal; he is an immortal who assumes a protective role in the mortal realm. Pan incarnates as well the "stages" which Endymion delineates as necessary to attain a "fellowship with essence": a sympathy for and identification with nature; friendship; and love in a beneficial, "blessing" capacity. Endymion, who initially desires to leave the real world for an immortal union with his dream-goddess in the ideal world, himself progresses through these spiritual stages. In so doing he becomes more and more Pan-like, until, at the end of the poem, he is fully aligned with Pan and accepts his own role in the real world.

Although critics have argued that Endymion's immortalization (which makes his identification with Pan complete) may appear hastily contrived and unconvincing, a close examination of the text reveals an extensive groundwork laid throughout Endymion which prefigures its occurrence. When viewed as the culmination of the movement of the poem as a whole towards this end, the immortalization of Endymion appears much less problematic.

Keats reinforces the theme of the poem, as well, in his use of mythological figures other than Pan—Venus and Adonis and Alpheus and Arethusa in Book II, and Glaucus, Scylla and Circe in Book III. In all of these cases, Keats structures their stories to provide parallels to or warnings of the dangers inherent in Endymion's own quest-journey, thus reinforcing his idea of the need for a reconciliation between the real world and the ideal. This structuring of mythological stories, along with the identification which Keats sets up between Pan and Endymion, would seem to imply a more deliberately executed and consistently applied theme than Endymion has generally been credited with.
THE "HYMN TO PAN"

AND

THEMATIC STRUCTURE IN ENDYMION
Although dismissed by Wordsworth as a "very pretty piece of paganism,"¹ the "Hymn to Pan" in Book I of *Endymion* has more often been singled out for commendation by such critics as W. J. Bate, Douglas Bush, and David Perkins, critics otherwise unenthusiastic about the poem as a whole.² For not only does it anticipate the later odes in language, metaphor, and theme,³ it stands as a "masterful" ode in its own right; Perkins hails it as "the first of Keats's great odes."⁴ As well as looking ahead to Keats's later poetry, however, the "Hymn" serves as a valuable tool in untangling the thematic thread from the kaleidoscopic maze of events and images in *Endymion*; in it, Keats succinctly encapsulates the thematic movement of the larger poem that frames it.⁵ This he does by drawing throughout the poem an extended comparison between Endymion and the god Pan as he is portrayed in the "Hymn," making a specific identification between the two.

With this identification, it can be argued, Keats sets up in the first book of *Endymion* a pattern which adumbrates the hero's quest-journey in pursuit of ultimate union with his dream-goddess, Cynthia, and immortality. This would seem to imply a more deliberately executed and consistently applied theme than the poem has generally been credited with, an idea which can be supported, as well, by examining the ways in which Keats has employed mythological figures other than Pan—Venus and Adonis and Alpheus and Arethusa in Book II, and Glaucus, Scylla, and Circe in Book III—to reinforce the theme of the poem.

Before exploring the ways in which the "Hymn to Pan" reflects the
general theme of *Endymion*, however, a discussion of this theme is necessary. Keats's intent in the writing of *Endymion* has long been a subject of critical debate. The earliest critics of the poem for the most part saw it as "a matchless tissue of sparkling and delicious nonsense" with "no connecting interest to bind one part to another." Some critics by their own admission were unable to "get beyond the first book," and even Shelley, who readily acknowledged that *Endymion* was "full of some of the highest & finest gleams of poetry" felt that "the Author's intention appear[s] to be that no person should possibly get to the end of it." All in all, in the nineteenth century, "whether or not the poem was liked, few pretended to see much point to it."

Frances M. Owen, in 1880, was one of the first critics to examine *Endymion* thematically. In *John Keats: A Study*, Owen posited that, far from "delicious nonsense," Keats had written a "story of the Spirit of Man, the spirit which sleeps till wakened by higher spiritual power." Owen's allegorically oriented examination of *Endymion* represented one of the first of many efforts in the hundred years succeeding its publication to unlock the meaning of this lengthy and often confusing poem.

Twentieth century critics, while finding *Endymion* no less tedious than their nineteenth century counterparts, generally agree that the poem has a "meaning," although the exact nature of that meaning remains a matter of critical debate. Until recently, critics primarily took one of two antipodal approaches to the poem. Following Owen's lead, a number of critics, notably Ernest de Selincourt, Sidney Colvin, Claude Finney, and Clarence Thorpe have interpreted the poem as a Platonic or Neo-Platonic allegory of the poet's longing, search for, and attainment of a union with "essential Beauty" or "ideal Truth." Taking the opposite position,
critics such as Newell Ford and E. C. Pettet have espoused Amy Lowell's belief that *Endymion* contains no allegory whatsoever, but rather represents "an idealization of sexual love" that "owes a good deal to the poet's own secret dreams and unsatisfied erotic impulses."

More recently, critics have called into serious question both of these readings of the poem. The interpretation of Ford, et al., which posits as the goal of *Endymion*'s quest a passionate immortality in a "voluptuous heaven," has been disputed at length by a number of critics. In general, their dissatisfaction stems from the seeming contradictions this interpretation raises in relation to the content of Keats's earlier poems, which, together with the body of letters written before and during the period of *Endymion*'s composition, reveal a constant concern with the nature of poetry, the role of the poet, and Keats's oft-confessed aspiration that his poetry might be "a Spear bright enough to throw . . light to posterity." As Bate has pointed out:

When the poem is considered in the context of Keats's life and the rich body of letters we have available, we begin to sense—at the very least—an urgency of purpose . . . in which this self-imposed stretch of exercise would not have been regarded by him as genuine or fruitful had it not also involved a search for meaning.

The Platonic or Neo-Platonic reading of the poem, however, has not been so summarily dismissed, for critics have been loathe to part completely with the idea that the poem has a certain allegorical bent. The allegory they would find in the poem, like that of the Neo-Platonic interpretation, centers on the nature of the poet and poetic experience, but is modified in the sense that the poet, rather than winning unity with an ideal world which supersedes the real one, achieves a balance
between the two: "the poet cannot directly realize an abstract ideal but must come at it by way of common, concrete experience."  

In spite of this tendency to treat the poem as an allegory, however, most of these critics acknowledge the difficulty of definitively proving an allegorical intention on the part of Keats. W. J. Bate admits that "if Endymion were encountered completely in vacuo, it would be difficult to argue that there was an active allegorical intention"; nonetheless, he is unwilling to separate the poem from "biographical considerations," labelling it an "allegory manqué" in which the allegory "becomes thinned, distracted and ultimately divided." Douglas Bush calls the poem "an ambitious effort to express the thoughts and feelings about the nature of the poet and the poetic senses and imagination," but he must base this idea, like Bate, primarily on ideas gleaned from the earlier poems and letters, for "the letters written during the period of Endymion's composition tell us of Keats's states of mind, but, until the end, not much about the poem itself." Stuart Sperry also applies the term "allegory" to the poem, but again on the basis that "it is difficult not to see an important connection between the problems left half-stated in the early poems and the theme and ultimate concern of Endymion."  

Hence, these critics all in some sense interpret Endymion as an allegory in which Endymion is equated with Keats or "the poet." Yet as persuasive as the evidence they present might be, all such arguments must take at some point a leap of faith that this was what Keats himself had in mind. As Bate has pointed out, "It is indeed possible to go too far in our resort to the context of the letters and his other writing," and all evidence in such an attempt is necessarily circumstantial, given
the fact that Keats himself never confided any allegorical purpose to his friends.29

While not arguing for or against the existence of such an allegorical intention on Keats's part, however, it is possible to deal with the poem as a thematic whole, and for this purpose the theme of the poem delineated by such critics as Bush, Sperry, and Bate on which they predicate their allegory proves useful. That is, that Endymion, who initially pursues the ideal (Cynthia) hoping to escape the real world, ultimately is made aware that fulfillment can only come through comprehensive awareness of the real world and sympathy for it; that it is not possible to live outside the world, that he must accept the concrete before the ideal can be realized.30

This contrasts directly with the Neo-Platonic notion that Endymion ultimately escapes the dross of the real world to enter into the superior realm of the ideal (whether that ideal is conceived to be "Beauty" or "Truth"). Thus, the state of immortality which Endymion reaches, as Sperry, et al., suggest, does not represent an eschewing of the real world of concrete experience in favor of the ideal, but an acceptance and marriage of these worlds.

That Endymion's life would eventually embody such a reconciliation of the ideal world with the real one is prefigured in the introduction to Book I of the poem.

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits.

As the poem opens, Endymion clearly exhibits a state of despondence; however he might strive to "hide the cankering venom, that had riven /
His fainting recollections" (I, 396-97), his sister cannot fail to notice that he has lost "all [his] toil breeding fire, / And [sunk] thus low" (I, 537-38). Essentially, Endymion seeks "a thing of beauty" in the person of his dream-goddess, and, through many "gloomy days," he is made to traverse the "o'er-darkened ways" of the underworld, the sea, and the sky. It is not until he realizes that he must bind himself to the things of the earth that the "shape of beauty" can "move away the pall from [his] dark spirit." Indeed, the "shape of beauty" literally takes away Endymion's darkened spirit; at the end of the poem his unhappiness is not dispelled until he is granted immortality by Cynthia.

Endymion himself adumbrates the stages through which he will have to progress before he can attain "a sleep / Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing." When Peona chastises him for seemingly wasting his life in pursuit of "No higher bard than simple maidenhood" (I, 276) and "pierc[ing] high-fronted honour to the quick" (I, 759) for a dream, "seeing they're more slight / Than the mere nothing that engenders them" (I, 755-56), Endymion emphatically defends the validity of his vision:

"Peona! ever have I long'd to slake
My thirst for the world's praises: nothing base,
No merely slumberous phantasm, could unlace
The stubborn canvas for my voyage prepar'd--
Though now 'tis tatter'd; leaving my bark bar'd
And sullenly drifting: yet my higher hope
Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope,
To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks." (I, 769-76)
His only happiness, Endymion continues, lies in "that which becks / Our ready minds to fellowship divine, / A fellowship with essence" (I, 777-79). He goes on to outline a hierarchy of stages through which one must progress before this "fellowship" can be won. The first of these is an appreciation for the beauty inherent in nature: "Fold / A rose leaf round thy finger's taperness, / And soothe thy lips" (I, 781-83); this appreciation in turn inspires an imaginative identification with nature, indeed, imbues it with a life of its own--"from the turf, a lullaby doth pass / In every place where infant Orpheus slept" (I, 793-94). Hence, man's relationship with nature progresses from his delight in the beauty he finds there to a sort of empathic entry into it, an imaginative feeling for it:

"Feel we these things?--that moment have we stept Into a sort of oneness, and our state Is like a floating spirit's." (I, 795-97)

The next stage which must be attained is friendship, which implies an active humanitarian role, a sympathy for others. Above this, at the "tip-top" (I, 805) of Endymion's metaphorical crown of which friendship is "All its more ponderous and bulky worth" hangs "an orbed drop / Of light, and that is love" (I, 803, 806-07). Endymion then goes on to extol the powers of love, which not only induces man to surrender all worldly ambition, but might also "bless / The world with benefits unknowingly" (I, 826-27). Through the love of his immortal dream-goddess, Endymion hopes to achieve the "fellowship with essence" for which he longs.

Yet, ironically, while Endymion outlines to his sister the progression which he himself will make, he does not at this point recognize
his own position in the hierarchy which he has delineated. Just how far he is from reaching the "fellowship with essence" which he seeks is apparent as he expresses to his sister the alienation from nature which he has felt since his dream-vision of Cynthia. The beauty of nature is temporarily lost to him; thus, Endymion has not even advanced to the first stage of his hierarchy:

"Away I wander'd--all the pleasant hues
Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest shades
Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny glades
Were full of pestilent light; our taintless rills
Seem'd sooty, and o'er-spread with upturn'd gills
Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns out-grown
Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird
Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd
In little journeys, I beheld in it
A disguis'd demon, missioned to knit
My soul with under darkness; to entice
My stumblings down some monstrous precipice." (I, 691-703)

It is clear, as well, that Endymion has sorely neglected his duties to his people; this is expressed metaphorically as Endymion makes his appearance at the Pan festival: "oftentimes the reins would slip /
Through his forgotten hands" (I, 180-81). This has obviously not gone unnoticed by his subjects, for "there were some who feelingly could scan /
A lurking trouble in his nether lip" (I, 178-79); all creative power gone, Endymion at this point is associated with the death-like images of autumn and winter:

... then would they sigh,
And think of yellow leaves, of owlet's cry,
Of logs piled solemnly.--Ah, well-a-day,
Why should our young Endymion pine away! (I, 181-84)

At the festival, they watch and worry anxiously about their shepherd-prince.
. . . Now indeed
His senses had swoon'd off: he did not heed
The sudden silence, or the whispers low,
Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe,
Or anxious calls, or close of trembling palms,
Or maiden's sigh, that grief itself embalms. (I, 397-402)

Far from functioning as a protector of his people, Endymion, in his
grief-struck state, arouses in them worry and sorrow. His obsession
with his dream-goddess is, in fact, so great that he tells Peona that
"the stings / Of human neighborhood envenom all" (I, 621-22).

Even the love which Endymion feels for his dream-goddess seems alien
from that which would "bless / The world with benefits unknowingly"
(I, 826-27); at this point, it has only served to alienate him from the
real world, not bind him to it. Defending love, Endymion refers to it
as "ardent listlessness," as an almost death-like passivity—"sleep[ing]
in love's elysium" (I, 825, 823). This clearly is not love in its
creative, "blessing" capacity. In truth, Endymion, in his obsession with
Cynthia, has given himself over to an egocentric wallowing in the "down-
sunken hours" of what he perceives as "the ebbing sea / Of weary life"
(I, 708-10). Alienated from nature, isolated from his people, and numbed
into passivity by his love, Endymion has not been on the path to winning
the "fellowship with essence" which he so confidently elaborates to Peona.
By his own definition, his bark is "bar'd / And sullenly drifting"
(I, 773-74). Yet Keats, by allowing Endymion this glimmer of insight as
to the path he is destined to pursue, gives the reader a hint of the plan
which the poem will follow.

In the "Hymn to Pan," Keats represents in microcosm the stages
through which Endymion must progress to reach a Pan-like state of
immortality. As previously noted, Endymion, at the outset of the poem,
is far from attaining his goal of immortality; it will be necessary for him to progress, in the course of the poem, through a series of trials and resultant spiritual changes to reach his goal. Pan, as Keats portrays him in the "Hymn," embodies an ideal against which we measure Endymion's progress, and reflects in small the stages through which Endymion moves. Unlike his counterpart Endymion, Pan incarnates the three "stages" which must be internalized before one wins a "fellowship with essence": a sympathy for and identification with nature; friendship, i.e., an active sympathy for one's fellow man; and love in a creative, generative sense. In the poem, Endymion, as he himself has prefigured in the "fellowship with essence" speech, moves through these stages, gaining first a love of nature, than a humanitarian sense of responsibility towards others, and finally a love which binds him to the earth. As he becomes more and more like Pan, he moves ever closer to a Pan-like state of immortality.

The "Hymn" reflects another movement in the larger poem as well. Endymion, while drawing ever closer to immortality, must simultaneously accept the fact that this immortal state cannot be gained at the expense of the world as he knows it. Thus he starts out with the attitude that

"... Where soil is men grow,  
Whether to weeds or flowers; but for me  
There is no depth to strike in: I can see  
Nought earthly worth my compassing ...." (II, 159-62)

but he ultimately accepts the fact that he cannot divorce himself from the real world but must rather assume responsibility within this world. Pan, as characterized in the "Hymn," embodies a balance between the immortal and mortal, between heaven and earth, which Endymion too must strike. By the end of the "Hymn," Pan literally becomes a symbol for the
very "essence" with which Endymion longs to align himself. Yet Pan, immortal though he may be, remains very much of this world.

In Sandys' commentary on Ovid's Metamorphosis, a book Keats was well acquainted with, he particularizes this dual role of Pan, who functions in both realms and achieves a balance between them:

And as Patricia Merivale points out in Pan the Goat-God, "the paradox of being half goat and half god is the very core of his nature." The figure of Pan as Keats and others were familiar with him served as a perfect model for Endymion, who by the end of the poem would achieve a similar balance between the real world and the ideal.

This identification between Endymion and Pan functions in the sense that, in a general way, Endymion will ultimately possess those characteristics which Pan epitomizes; Keats reinforces this identification by setting up specific parallels between the two, and the first of these parallels is made obvious even before the "Hymn" in honor of Pan is sung. At the Pan-festival, both Pan and Endymion are associated with the natural bounty the shepherd-folk have enjoyed.

"... in good truth
Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.
Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than
Night-swollen mushrooms? Are not our wide plains
Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not rains
Green'd over April's lap? No howling sad
Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had
Great bounty from Endymion our lord." (I, 212-19)
Both Endymion and Pan are referred to in similar terms. While Pan is saluted as the "satyr king" (I, 278), Endymion's garments reveal him as a "chieftain king" (I, 172). Pan is venerated by the shepherds as "our great god" (I, 213), while Endymion is called a "demi-god" (I, 724) and addressed by the shepherds as "our lord" (I, 219). Pan holds the status of "shepherd-god" (I, 226), while Endymion, who throughout the poem will move closer and closer to a Pan-like state, at the outset of the poem appears as a "brain-sick shepherd prince" (II, 43). In our first glimpse of Endymion, we see that "beneath his breast, half bare, / Was hung a silver bugle" (I, 172-73); we are later told that it has been his role to "make [his] horn parley" and to lead his "trooping hounds... around the breathed boar" (I, 479-81). This is reminiscent of Pan, addressed in the "Hymn" as a "Winder of the horn, / When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn / Anger our huntsmen" (I, 281-83).

As the "Hymn to Pan" opens, Keats places Pan in the context of his forest-kingdom. The overhanging trees of the forest comprise the roof of Pan's "mighty palace," and this setting, in which the trees

"... overshadoweth
  Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
  Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness" (I, 232, 233-35)

foreshadows the scene of Endymion's first vision of his dream-goddess:

"... in that nook, the very pride of June...
  There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed
  Of sacred ditamy, and poppies red:
  At which I wondered greatly, knowing well
  That but one night had wrought this flowery spell;...
  ... through the dancing poppies stole
  A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul;
  And shaping visions all about my sight
  Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light;
  The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,
And then were gulph'd in a tumultuous swim:  
And then I fell asleep." (I, 545, 554-57, 566-72)

It is the "birth" of the flowers that casts Endymion into the state of "heavy peacefulness"—sleep—which induces his visions. After his ecstatic vision ends, he grieves for the loss of his too-briefly met love.

In our first glimpse of Pan, he, too, plays the part of the melancholy lover as he mourns the lost Syrinx. This description mirrors the image of Pan in Keats's earlier poem "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill."

[Tell] us how fair, trembling Syrinx fled  
Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.  
Poor nymph,—poor Pan,—how he did weep to find  
Nought but a lovely sighing of the wind  
Along the reedy stream; a half heard strain,  
Full of sweet desolation—balmy pain.34

Likewise, the Pan of the first stanza of the "Hymn" spends his hours in "balmy pain":

"And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken  
The dreary melody of bedded reeds—  
In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds  
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth;  
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth  
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx." (I, 238-43)

Endymion's state of mind at the outset of the poem reflects that of Pan, the melancholy lover. Like Pan, he spends long hours sitting by the water in "desolate places" hidden by "strange overgrowth," contemplating his lost (as far as he knows) love. As he explains to Peona:

"Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,  
Which we should see but for these darkening boughs,  
Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged brows
The passage is a section from a poem that describes a natural setting with trees and bushes. The poet mentions the difficulty of navigating through these elements, as well as the peaceful atmosphere of a shaded spring. The poet also reflects on the passage of time and the contemplation of natural phenomena, such as the collapse of clouds into a mirror reflection.

There is a comparison made to Pan and Endymion, who both suffer from unrequited love. The poet draws a parallel between these two characters and the elusive women they loved, Syrinx and Diana. The passage highlights their longing and the inability of the lovers to reach their beloveds due to their transformation into non-human forms.

The poet also mentions a comparison between Syrinx and Diana, who are both described as elusive and beloved by Gods and Satyres. The passage concludes with a reflection on the nature of love and transformation, emphasizing the difficulty of reaching one's beloved.

In summary, the passage from the poem creates a vivid and evocative image of a natural setting, while also reflecting on the human condition of unrequited love and the transformative power of nature.
Syrinx eludes Pan in the shape of reeds, and Diana, afraid of discovery among those of her own realm, withdraws from Endymion by reverting to her form as the Moon. Just as Pan is led by Syrinx, as the "Hymn" attests, through "all the trembling mazes that she ran" (I, 245), so Endymion is led by Diana through the underground, beneath the sea, and into the sky before they are united.

Both Pan and Endymion, initially portrayed in a static, melancholic state, move out of this passivity into action. In the second stanza of the "Hymn to Pan," Pan is addressed as he to whom

"... turtles
Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,
What time thou wanderest at eventide
Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side
Of thine enmossed realms." (I, 247-51)

Endymion, too, "like a new-born spirit" passes "Through the green evening quiet in the sun, / O'er many a heath, through many a woodland dun" (II, 70-72), as he begins his journey towards reunion with Cynthia and resultant immortality. The butterfly which leads Endymion to the cavern opening into the underworld—the first stage of the journey he will undergo—also links him, at this stage of his development, with the first function of Pan the forester. We see, in the "Hymn," that "pent up butterflies" foredoom "their freckled wings" to Pan (I, 258-59). Endymion's butterfly is similarly "pent up" before he frees it:

... he doth see
A bud which snares his fancy; lo! but now
He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water: how!
It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his sight;
And in the middle, there is softly pight
A golden butterfly; upon whose wings
There must be surely character'd strange things.

(II, 56-62)
It must be recalled at this point that Endymion, in his earlier outline of the stages which must be internalized before one reaches a state of "fellowship with essence," had delineated as the first step an appreciation for and an identification with the beauties of nature. Before beginning his journey, however, he had experienced an alienation from the natural world. As he sets out on his quest, beginning a movement through the stages which he had earlier outlined, he must first regain his former love of the beauty of the natural world. Pan, ever Endymion's model, represents the pinnacle of this necessary intimacy with nature. Indeed, the natural world offers up "its completions" in homage to him.

"... O thou, to whom
Broad leaved fig trees even now foredoom
Their ripen'd fruitage; yellow girted bees
Their golden honeycombs; our village leas
Their fairest blossom'd beans and poppied corn;
The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,
To sing for thee; low creeping strawberries
Their summer coolness." (I, 260, 251-58)

Endymion, by contrast, leaves the natural world to descend into the "silent mysteries of the earth" (II, 214) without hesitation:

He heard but the last words, nor could contend
One moment in reflection: for he fled
Into the fearful deep, to hide his head
From the clear moon, the trees, and coming madness.
(II, 215-18)

In this underground maze, he is totally divorced from nature, and therefore diametrically opposed to Pan who is in constant communion with it;

He cannot see the heavens, nor the flow
Of rivers, nor hill-flowers running wild
In pink and purple chequer, nor, up-pil'd,  
The cloudy rack slow journeying in the west,  
Like herded elephants; nor felt, nor prest  
Cool grass, nor tasted the fresh slumberous air;  
But far from such companionship to wear  
An unknown time, surcharg'd with grief, away,  
Was now his lot. (II, 285-93)

Thus deprived of "such companionship" which the beauty of the natural world provides, Endymion quickly tires of the "new wonders" (II, 274) which the underworld offers. The shepherd prince, having abandoned his kingdom, now longs for just those pleasures which he had earlier renounced so easily. He pleads for help from the goddess Diana:

"Within my breast there lives a choking flame—  
O let me cool it the zephyr-boughs among!  
A homeward fever parches up my tongue--  
O let me slake it at the running springs!  
Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings--  
O let me once more hear the linnet's note!  
Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float--  
O let me 'noint them with the heaven's light!  
Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white?  
O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice!  
Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-juice?  
O think how this dry palate would rejoice!  
If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,  
O think how I should love a bed of flowers!—  
Young goddess! let me see my native bowers!"

(II, 317-31)

To Pan, the "chuckling linnet" offers its "five young unborn / To sing for [him]" and the "low creeping strawberries" offer "Their summer coolness"; now Endymion pleads to Diana for these very treasures. Not long after making his plea, Endymion is rewarded with a sudden effusion of "flowers, and wreaths, and ready myrtle crowns / Up heaping through the slab" (II, 342-43). In fact, he becomes, like Pan, the progenitor of this luxuriant growth.

... the floral pride
In a long whispering birth enchanted grew
Before his footsteps. (II, 345-47)

Previously similar to Pan only in his guise as a melancholy lover, Endymion now assumes, like Pan, a creative role in nature. It might be noted as well that the second stanza of the "Hymn" which celebrates this creative influence which Pan exerts upon the natural world is set in the summer, when fig trees, beans, and corn reach fruition; indeed, it is their "summer coolness" which the strawberries offer. At the point in the poem where Endymion regains his bond with nature, it is summer as well, as his encounter with Adonis ascertains: "Clear summer has forth walk'd / Unto the clover-sward" (II, 502-03). Endymion, previously associated with death-like autumn images (I, 178-84), now becomes associated with the generative imagery of summer.

Endymion's encounter with Adonis reveals another identification which Keats sets up to reinforce the theme of Endymion. But whereas Pan stands in the poem as an ideal for Endymion to emulate, Adonis serves as a warning of the dangers inherent in the quest for union with an immortal. Like the "young handsome Shepherd" Endymion, Adonis, a "youth / Of fondest beauty" (II, 393-94), became the object of love of an immortal; just as Cynthia had "grow[n] mad in Love" with Endymion, so Venus "pin'd / For a mortal youth," striving "to bind / Him all in all unto her doting self" (II, 458-60). But unlike Endymion, who abandoned all to pursue his immortal love, Adonis was "content to see / An unseiz'd heaven dying at his feet" (II, 463-64).

Hence Adonis, killed by a wild boar, lives at all only because of the intercession made by Venus to Jove. This life, however, is one completely divorced from the actual world, for Adonis lies in a death-like
state each winter when he is separated from Venus. His death-like trance reflects Endymion's own position before beginning his movement towards a Pan-like state. Initially, Endymion appears alienated, like Adonis, from the real world:

His senses had swoon'd off: he did not heed  
The sudden silence, or the whispers low,  
Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe, . . .  
But in the self-same trance he kept,  
Like one who on the earth had never stept—  
Aye, even as dead-still as a marble man.  
(I, 398-400, 403-05)

Adonis's appearance, too, is marble-like: "Sideway his face repos'd / On one white arm" (II, 403-04). His slumber recalls as well Endymion's description, to Peona, of those who "sleep in love's elysium" (I, 823); in fact, upon Endymion's first appearance in the poem, we are told that "he seem'd . . . like one who dream'd / Of idleness in groves Elysian" (I, 175-77), an image directly mirroring the state of Adonis's existence.

In that Adonis exists solely for his yearly reunions with Venus, who at these times carries him off to the sky in her "floating car" (II, 580), he seems to objectify Endymion's initial desire for a union with Cynthia totally removed from the real world. As Sperry points out, "the Bower represents that perfectly self-contained world of sensuous and imaginative experience for which Endymion longs, idealized beyond all threat of interruption." But rather than the Bower of Adonis being "the kind of apotheosis [Keats] intended for his hero," as some critics have suggested, Adonis would seem to represent quite graphically the dangers of such a withdrawal from the world. For Endymion can only achieve his immortality by moving away from his initial notion of love as "ardent listlessness"—a listlessness epitomized by Adonis, who
appears to be totally lifeless, even after his awakening. Like Pan, Endymion's destiny lies within the real world, not apart from it, and he gradually moves away from his earlier egocentric preoccupation with other-worldliness.

After leaving the Bower of Adonis, heartened by Venus's sympathetic promise that "one day thou wilt be blest" (II, 573), Endymion once again is visited, and quite passionately, by his mysterious love. These visitations would seem to serve as a catalyst for Endymion's spiritual development, always occurring, as they do, before Endymion makes a transition to a higher state of being. As Endymion had previously professed to Peona, each time he had seen his "fair enchantment" he had been "tortured with renewed life" (I, 918-19). This time proves no exception, for Endymion, who had previously abandoned his principality and his role in it, now begins a movement back to an active sympathy for others, the second level of his delineated hierarchy.

The third and fourth stanzas of the "Hymn to Pan" prefigure this stage of Endymion's development, that of his sympathy for his fellow man. Pan, as we see, is he

"... to whom every faun and satyr flies
For willing service; whether to surprise
The squatted hare while in half sleeping fit;
Or upward ragged precipices flit
To save poor lambkins from the eagle's maw;
Or by mysterious enticement draw
Bewildered shepherds to their path again."

(I, 263-69)

Endymion first evidences an active sympathy for others in his encounter with Alpheus and Arethusa. Overhearing these unhappy lovers who are in the form of two rivers, Endymion follows them "for it seem'd that one / Ever pursued, the other strove to shun" (II, 927-28) and listens to their
plaintive conversation. Arethusa, like Syrinx, has been transformed at her request in order to escape an ardent lover, in this case, Alpheus. And yet, as Endymion detects, her heart has softened, and she longs for a reunion with her erstwhile violator. 

Ironically, Arethusa fears Diana's recrimination: "Dian stands / Severe before me: persecuting fate" (II, 1005-06). Little realizing that her mistress is now in a similar plight, Arethusa wishes on her a grief like her own.

"O, Oread-Queen! would that thou hadst a pain Like this of mine, then would I fearless turn And be a criminal." (II, 961-63)

Alpheus, in a far closer perception of the truth, reassures Arethusa: "Dian's self must feel / Sometimes these very pangs" (II, 984-85). The situation of the two rivers provides, in a sense, an analogue to that of Endymion and Cynthia. The conversation between Alpheus and Arethusa, in fact, recalls the conversation which has just taken place between Endymion and Cynthia, during which "there ran / Two bubbling springs of talk from their sweet lips" (II, 737-38). Like Arethusa, Cynthia is in love but fears divine recrimination if her love is discovered; as she has just told Endymion:

"Yet can I not to starry eminence Uplift thee; nor for very shame can own Myself to thee... And wherefore so ashamed? 'Tis but to atone For endless pleasure, by some coward blushes: Yet must I be a coward!--Horror rushes Too palpable before me--the sad look Of Jove--Minerva's start--no bosom shook With awe of purity--... my crystalline dominion Half lost." (II, 777-79, 787-92, 793-94)

It is this fear, focussed primarily on her own loss of innocence, that
haunts Arethusa as well.

"... every sense
Of mine was once made perfect in these woods.
Fresh breezes, bowery lawns, and innocent floods,
Ripe fruits, and lonely couch, contentment gave;
But ever since I heedlessly did lave
In thy deceitful stream, a panting glow
Grew strong within me: wherefore serve me so,
And call it love?" (II, 965-72)

Both Endymion and Alpheus have a similar reaction to this grief expressed by their respective ladies; to Endymion "that grief of [Cynthia's]" is "sweet paining on his ear" (II, 855-56), while Alpheus tells Arethusa that "[Her] fitful sighs / 'Tis almost death to hear" (II, 981-82).

Endymion, in his encounter with Cynthia, celebrates her physical beauty and expresses a longing for a physical union with her:

"O known Unknown! from whom my being sips
Such darling essence, wherefore may I not
Be ever in these arms? in this sweet spot
Pillow my chin for ever? ever press
These toying hands and kiss their smooth excess?
Why not for ever and for ever feel
That breath about my eyes?" (II, 739-45)

Alpheus echoes Endymion's plea in a similar tribute to Arethusa.

"... O that I
Were rippling round her dainty fairness now,
Circling about her waist, and striving how
To entice her to a dive! then stealing in
Between her luscious lips and eyelids thin.
O that her shining hair was in the sun,
And I distilling from it thence to run
In amorous rillets down her shrinking form!
To linger on her lily shoulders, warm
Between her kissing breasts, and every charm
Touch raptur'd!" (II, 938-48)

And just as Endymion had asked Cynthia to "lift me with thee to some starry sphere" (II, 755), so Alpheus implores Arethusa to "let us fly /
These dreary caverns for the open sky" (II, 986-87). The two episodes bear an imagistic relationship to one another as well as a thematic one, for the liquid imagery in Endymion's encounter with Cynthia—the "bubbling springs," the "sipping" of darling essence, Endymion's desire to "entwine" Cynthia (as the rivers long to entwine), the "slippery blisses" of Cynthia's lips, Cynthia's wish to "melt into" Endymion (II, 738, 739, 752, 758, 815)—all prefigure the similar encounter between the two rivers. The two episodes, we see, are markedly similar in that both Endymion and Alpheus plead, in particularly graphic terms, for an everlasting union with their beloveds, and both Cynthia and Arethusa, while desiring such a passionate union, fear a divinely-inspired recrimination if they give in to their impulses. Arethusa and Alpheus, indeed, objectify the status of the relationship between Endymion and Cynthia at this point in the poem; they are desirous of one another, and yet are unable and unready to achieve a lasting union.

But this episode, aside from the parallels Keats draws between the two sets of lovers, stands as well as an important turning point for Endymion, for after listening to the expressed grief of Alpheus and Arethusa, he finds himself moved to tears. This represents his first movement toward a sympathy with others, as he intercedes with Diana to have pity on the two unhappy lovers:

... On the verge
Of that dark gulph he wept, and said, "I urge
Thee, gentle Goddess of my pilgrimage,
By our eternal hopes, to soothe, to assuage,
If thou art powerful, these lovers' pains;
And make them happy in some happy plains."
(II, 1012-17)

Although Endymion is unable to do anything for these lovers, his sympathy is important; he is finally beginning to see outside himself. In Book III
when he encounters Glaucus, this sympathy is translated into positive action, and Endymion further aligns himself with Pan, taking on a Pan-like role as the protector and guardian of his fold.

Finding himself, at the end of Book II, with "the giant sea above his head" (II, 1023), Endymion wanders the ocean floor, led on and inspired by Cynthia in the guise of the Moon, until he comes to Glaucus sitting "upon a weeded rock" (III, 193). At first Endymion recoils from the old man, fearing that some "horrid spell" (III, 276) will be worked upon him. It is a measure of how far Endymion has progressed that he can overcome this fear and realize the pain his reaction has caused Glaucus:

... Lo! his heart 'gan warm
With pity, for the grey-hair'd creature wept.
Had he then wrong'd a heart where sorrow kept?
Had he, though blindly contumelious, brought
Rheum to kind eyes, a sting to humane thought,
Convulsion to a mouth of many years?
He had in truth; and he was ripe for tears.
The penitent shower fell, as down he knelt. (III, 282-89)

Glaucus, it soon becomes obvious, has no desire to harm Endymion; rather, like the fauns and satyrs of the "Hymn to Pan," he "flies / For willing service" to the shepherd prince. Just as Pan functions in the "Hymn" as the "Dread opener of the mysterious doors / Leading to universal knowledge" (I, 288-89), so Endymion, Glaucus hopes, will be he who "openst / The prison gates that have so long opprest / My weary watching" (III, 295-97). Glaucus makes it clear that Endymion's presence is no accident: "hadst thou never lov'd an unknown power, / I had been grieving at this joyous hour" (III, 301-02). Endymion's encounter with Glaucus provides further reassurance of the validity of his quest.

Glaucus proceeds to tell Endymion his story, and like that of Adonis and Alpheus, Keats structures it to provide certain parallels with
Endymion's own situation. Like Endymion, Glaucus was a provider for his people: "The poor folk of the sea-country I blest / With daily boon of fish most delicate" (III, 368-69), but unsatisfied, like Endymion, with this role, he began to long for removal from the earthly realm.

"Why was I not contented? Wherefore reach At things which, but for thee, O Latmian! Had been my dreary death? Fool! I began To feel distemper'd longings: to desire The utmost privilege that ocean's sire Could grant in benediction: to be free Of all his kingdom." (III, 372-78)

Like Endymion, he "wasted . . . Long in misery" (III, 378-79) before, risking annihilation, he plunged into the sea. It was there that he chanced upon and fell in love with Scylla, who, like Syrinx, Arethusa, and Cynthia, led her would-be lover on a merry chase.

Glaucus, however, errs in assuming that reaching beyond his grasp is responsible for his thousand years of suffering. For this he cannot be blamed anymore than can Endymion. But unlike the shepherd prince, whose path towards union with Cynthia is governed by the wise and beneficent Pan, Glaucus seeks aid in his quest for Scylla's love from the evil enchantress Circe. Circe, like Pan, lives in a "mazy forest-house" (III, 468) and has a following of "waggish fauns, and nymphs, and satyrs stark" (III, 534), but her influence on the world around her, diametrically opposed to Pan's, perverts the natural order of that world. Whereas Pan functions as a creative, vital force in the world, Circe can only distort, torture, and destroy. Prayers are offered to Pan in thanks for the great bounty he provides his people, and Circe's subjects pray to her as well, but for release from the pain she inflicts upon them:

. . . "Potent goddess! chief
Of pains resistless! make my being brief,
Or let me from this heavy prison fly;
Or give me to the air, or let me die. . . .
Have mercy, Goddess! Circe, feel my prayer!"

(III, 539-42, 554)

Glaucus and Circe thus function as a sort of perversion of the Endymion-Pan relationship; whereas Pan symbolizes the generative essence of life for which Endymion strives, Circe is emblematic of death and decay which Glaucus escapes only through the auspices of Endymion. But Glaucus, in committing himself to Circe, albeit unknowingly, realizes the mistake he has made too late; a victim of Circe's wrath, he is banished to one thousand years of crippling old age before his release by death. His existence reduced to utter, helpless misery—for even Scylla has been destroyed by Circe—Glaucus's life slowly passes until he is given "a shine of hope" (III, 685), a scroll which promises life if he secures the bodies of all drowned lovers during his thousand years of imprisonment. After this time, he reads,

\begin{quote}
A youth, by heavenly power lov'd and led
Shall stand before him; whom he shall direct
How to consummate all.  
\end{quote}

(III, 708-10)

Upon hearing himself so mentioned, Endymion, becoming ever more Pan-like, welcomes this opportunity to perform a humanitarian service;

"Then," cried the young Endymion, overjoy'd,
"We are twin brothers in this destiny!
Say, I intreat thee, what achievement high
Is, in this restless world, for me reserv'd."

(III, 712-15)

Following Glaucus's directions, Endymion brings the dead lovers to life. He, like Pan, now possesses regenerative powers, for Pan, as proclaimed in the "Hymn" is "the leaven / That spreading in this dull and
clodded earth / Gives it a touch ethereal— a new birth" (I, 296-98).

Endymion is the leaven which gives the lovers "a new birth"; he "entices" them back to life much as Pan "by mysterious enticement draw[s] / Bewildered shepherds to their path again" (I, 268-69). Like Pan, and unlike Circe, Endymion functions as a life-giver, a vital force; he, like Pan, stands opposed to the death and perversion which Circe represents.

[He onward went upon his high employ,
Showering those powerful fragments on the dead,
And, as he pass'd, each lifted up its head,
As doth a flower at Apollo's touch.
Death felt it to his inwards: 'twas too much:
Death fell a-weeping in his charnel-house.
(III, 783-88)

After Endymion revives the lovers, homage is paid to him: the revived lovers "Felt a high certainty of being blest. / They gaz'd upon Endymion" (III, 795-96). This recalls the similar homage that the shepherds give to Pan: "see . . . / The many that are come to pay their vows / With leaves about their brows" (I, 289, 291-92).

Endymion, growing into his god-like role, feels a great sense of fulfillment, the first non-selfish joy he has experienced in the poem:

The two deliverers tasted a pure wine
Of happiness, from fairy-press ooz'd out.
Speechless they eyed each other, and about
The fair assembly wander'd to and fro,
Distracted with the richest overflow
Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven. (III, 801-06)

Rather than wishing to withdraw from the world, Endymion is beginning to happily accept his role within it. Endymion, Glaucus, and the assembly of lovers now move to Neptune's palace for celebration, and Glaucus, committing himself to making Neptune, and not Circe, his patron: "Follow,
and pay / Our piety to Neptunus supreme" (III, 807-08), aligns himself with Endymion who follows Pan.

At the end of Book III, Endymion's dream-goddess once more makes contact with him, speaking to him in his sleep to assure him of his imminent immortality. This promise, echoing in his ears, provides him with the impetus to go on, and Endymion is now ready for the last leg of his journey, a journey which will end in his apotheosis to a Pan-like state of immortality.

Before he reaches an immortal state, however, Endymion must first reach the zenith of spiritual ascension, love. Obviously, the love for Cynthia which he has maintained throughout the journey is not the key, for as previously noted, it largely inspired him to long for a total removal from the earthly realm, and by his own admission he had sought her with a "deadly gasp" (I, 525). In Book IV, Endymion proves himself capable of loving a mortal, the Indian Maid, and in thus making a commitment to the real world, binds himself to the earth; it is because of this final acceptance of the earthly that he is at last rewarded with immortal bliss. Like Pan at last, Endymion will enjoy his immortality within the mortal realm, in a protective and generative role.

At the beginning of Book IV, Endymion happens upon the Indian Maid, and almost immediately succumbs to her beauty; in his new-found sympathy for others, he cannot ignore her sorrow. He grieves, however, for he feels certain that his new-born love for her has "stolen . . . away the wings wherewith / [he] was to top the heavens" (IV, 109-10). He fears that she has "murder[ed] half [his] soul" (IV, 309), the half that longs for immortality, and wishes that he "were whole in love" (IV, 472), not realizing at this point the significance of the fact that the earthly
and the ideal now make equally strong pulls on him. This represents an important change from his prior wish to escape the earthly altogether.

Endymion's confusion mounts as the fourth book progresses. He remains certain of the purity of his heart's affections for both the Indian Maid and his dream-goddess whom he now recognizes as Cynthia, but he simply cannot reconcile the two:

"... By truth's own tongue,
I have no daedale heart: why is it wrung
To desperation? Is there nought for me
Upon the bourne of bliss, but misery?" (IV, 458-61)

He agonizes over what seems to him an irreconcilable problem, and when the Indian Maid melts away from him as the moon rises, he fears that he has lost both of his loves. Thrown into despair at this prospect, he sinks into the Cave of Quietude, where his tortured soul derives some measure of peace.

When Endymion returns to earth, his unhappiness, initially, rushes back to him. Discovering that the Indian Maid has returned to him, however, he commits himself to her, accepting the earthly existence which this choice implies:

"Behold upon this happy earth we are;
Let us ay love each other; let us fare
On forest-fruits . . .
... By thee will I sit
For ever: let our fate stop here."
(IV, 625-27, 632-33)

He will no longer allow himself to vacillate between his earthly and heavenly loves: "Into a labyrinth now my soul would fly, / But with thy beauty will I deaden it" (IV, 630-31). This existence, Endymion rightly assumes, is the one which Pan himself would choose for him:
"... Pan will bid
Us live in peace, in love and peace among
His forest wildernesses." (IV, 634-36)

Whereas Endymion at the beginning of the poem was ready to abandon all in his longing for his dream-goddess—his appreciation and empathy for nature, his devotion to his fellow-man, and love in a creative, beneficial sense—he now realizes the folly of this neglect, of his attempt to escape the real world for the ideal:

"... O I have been
Presumptuous against love, against the sky,
Against all elements, against the tie
Of mortals each to each, against the blooms
Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs
Of heroes gone! Against his proper glory
Has my own soul conspired." (IV, 638-44)

In accepting his responsibility to the mortal realm, however, Endymion wrongly assumes that he must sacrifice one world for the other; the ideal world, he believes, is now lost to him. He raves that "I have clung / To nothing, lov'd a nothing, nothing seen / Or felt but a great dream" (IV, 636-38), bidding farewell to visionary experience. He attempts to assuage his loss of Cynthia by convincing himself that "The hour may come / When we shall meet in pure elysium, / On earth I may not love thee" (IV, 657-59), even though, as he would have her know, "so vast / My love is still for thee" (IV, 656-57). Endymion has clearly made his choice, and that his fevered, somewhat contradictory avowals are primarily attempts to make the acceptance of that choice easier, and not a heartfelt denial of the ideal world, is also clear, for as Keats tells us:

The mountaineer
Thus strove by fancies vain and crude to clear
His briar'd path to some tranquillity. (IV, 721-23)

Obviously then, this choice between the Indian Maid and Cynthia, between the earthly and the ideal, has been an agonizing one for Endymion. Once made, however, he stands in full alignment with Pan, having spiritually ascended the ladder of virtues which the forest god represents: a love of nature and an identification with it, an active sympathy for others along with a humanitarian sense of responsibility, and a love which binds him to the earth in a creative, generative sense. And although painfully unaware of his imminent apotheosis (for although Keats gives the reader a plenitude of hints to that effect, he keeps Endymion woefully in the dark), he is now ready to assume a Pan-like role in the forest kingdom.

Earlier in Book IV, Endymion, while dreaming he is in heaven, "blows a bugle" (IV, 420); previously, the bugle had merely hung from his neck, but now he, like Pan, becomes a "Winder of the horn." He will make his home not in the sky, but, like Pan, in the forest "under the brow / Of some steep mossy hill" (IV, 670-71), sheltered by ivy and yew trees. He assures the Indian Maid that "Pipes will I fashion of the syrinx flag, / That thou mayst always know whither I roam" (IV, 686-87), and goes on to enumerate the natural bounties he will provide for her.

When the Indian Maid tells Endymion that she cannot be his love, he is as saddened as Pan at the loss of Syrinx. The seeming loss of his love in Book IV parallels as well the loss of Cynthia Endymion had felt in Book I, arousing in him a similar sense of sorrow:

... He did not stir
His eyes from the dead leaves, or one small pulse
Of joy he might have felt. (IV, 785-86)
But whereas he had been previously numbed by this sense of loss into a melancholic passivity, Endymion now resolves to assume his rightful position as shepherd prince to his people. He will not be deterred, anymore than was Pan, from assuming his responsibility.

Having come full circle, Endymion finds himself by "the very stream / By which he took his first soft poppy dream" (IV, 785-86). And even though, at this point, he believes that his immortal love is lost to him, his own spiritual maturation, which will soon win him Cynthia and the immortality he has sought all along, are apparent to the reader:

\[\ldots\text{ on the very bark 'gainst which he leant}\]
\[\text{A crescent he had carv'd, and round it spent}\]
\[\text{His skill in little stars. The teeming tree}\]
\[\text{Had swollen and green'd the pious charactery,}\]
\[\text{But not ta'en out. (IV, 787-91)}\]

Endymion, despite his sorrow, has come home to assume his rightful throne, and Peona reminds him of this: "Endymion, weep not so! Why shouldst thou pine / When all great Latmos so exalt will be" (IV, 805-06). That Endymion, in his new role, has achieved a Pan-like status is made clear by Peona, for, as she tells him, "Pan's holy priest for young Endymion calls" (IV, 815). She tells the Indian Maid that "thou / Shalt be our queen" (IV, 816-17), implying that Endymion has now reached the status of king. Indeed, Endymion's return has brought joy to all his people:

"For the soothsayers old saw yesternight
Good visions in the air,—whence will befal,
As say these sages, health perpetual
To shepherds and their flocks." (IV, 829-32)

That Endymion is ready to take on this responsibility is apparent, as well, in his response to Peona's questioning about the nature of his
sorrow. In Book I, we may remember, Peona's concern elicited from her
brother sighs, moans, and a sad tale of woe. Now, however, Endymion
reacts quite differently, telling his sister that he has resigned him­
self to the earth and his place in it.

"Since I saw thee, I have been wide awake
Night after night, and day by day, until
Of the empyrean I have drunk my fill.
Let it content thee, sister, seeing me
More happy than betides mortality.
A hermit young, I'll live in mossy cave, . . .
Through me the shepherd realm shall prosper well;
For to thy tongue will I all health confide."
(IV, 852-60, 863-64)

Endymion has willingly bound himself to the earth, taking on a Pan-like
role in his kingdom; there remains, however, a "pall" on his "dark
spirit." Seemingly having lost both of his loves, Endymion confides
to Peona that "I would have command / If it were heaven's will, on our
sad fate" (IV, 975-76). And finally, in a somewhat anticlimactic
and artificial maneuver by Keats, Endymion's wish comes true. The
"shape of beauty"—the Indian Maid, revealing herself as Cynthia--
immortalizes her lover.

. . . "Drear, drear
Has our delaying been; but foolish fear
Withheld me first; and then decrees of fate;
And then 'twas fit that from this mortal state
Thou shouldst, my love, by some unlook'd for change
Be spiritualized." (IV, 988-93)

Keats has not left us totally unprepared for the eventuality that the
Indian Maid and Cynthia are one and the same, for several times in Book IV
he hints at this "secret." The Indian Maid vanishes when the moon
rises (IV, 497-510); Keats reveals her as smiling when Endymion is at
his most sorrowful:
... O treachery!
Why does his lady smile, pleasing her eye
With all his sorrowing? ... 
His lady smiles; delight is in her face;
It is no treachery. (IV, 797-99, 803-04)

And, most significantly, even Peona unwittingly intimates this identity, for she remarks to the Indian Maid that Endymion's "eyes are on thee bent, as thou didst poise / His fate most goddess-like" (IV, 843-44).

Keats fails to make us privy to Endymion's reaction to this "unlook'd for change" but it is clear that rather than the two lovers vanishing into the skies, they, like Pan, will rule in the earthly realm:

"... Peona, we shall range
These forests, and to thee they safe shall be
As was thy cradle; hither shalt thou flee
To meet us many a time." (IV, 993-96)

Thus Endymion's identification with Pan becomes complete; immortal, prepared to assume responsibility for the prospering of the shepherd realm, he is now worthy of the homage paid to Pan. He, like Pan, now embodies all the qualities necessary for a "fellowship with essence" which he had earlier outlined, and his apotheosis is complete.

Although this final book of Endymion remains problematic in its twists and turns of plot and Endymion's perplexing lack of self-recognition, and one suspects, as has often been suggested, that Keats made his protagonist's suffering unnecessarily lengthy and too hastily resolved as his predetermined plan of 1000 line books dictated, nonetheless, Endymion has clearly undergone a change, reaching the point prefigured in the first book of the poem and outlined in the "Hymn to Pan." And that Endymion's immortality has to be bestowed on him by
Cynthia, who appears suspiciously like a "dea ex machina" in so doing, actually is foreshadowed in the opening lines of the poem: "... yes, in spite of all, / Some shape of beauty moves away the pall / From our dark spirits . . ." (I, 11-13). And though it may seem that Endymion is thus immortalized through none of his own doing, it must be remembered that he has earned that honor through his own spiritualization. Perhaps, as Jacob Wigod has suggested, Keats is merely "concerned more with the process of Endymion's spiritualization-through-humanization than with the ultimate object . . . that the ultimate immortality ('enskying') of Endymion . . . is far less important to Keats than the means by which his hero achieves it on earth."47

Nor is this immortalization in any way inconsistent or unconvincing (albeit not particularly well handled),48 for Keats gives the reader ample hints throughout the poem that it is to come. As early as the first book of the poem, Peona, who represents, in a sense, the voice of reason which would discourage Endymion from pursuing something she feels he could never attain, hints at her brother's calling to the immortal.

"... "Brother, 'tis vain to hide
That thou dost know of things mysterious,
Immortal, starry; such alone could thus
Weigh down thy nature." (I, 505-08)

Peona's warning, however, that Endymion abandon his quest appears as the only real doubt cast upon Endymion, for throughout the rest of the poem, all signs imply that he will find, ultimately, what he seeks.

Shortly before Endymion begins his long journey in pursuit of his dream-goddess, a Naiad affirms the worth and necessity of his quest:

"... thou must wander far
In other regions, past the scanty bar
To mortal steps, before thou canst be ta'en
From every wasting sigh, from every pain,
Into the gentle bosom of thy love."

(II, 123-27)

As he descends into the underworld to begin his "far wandering," he is further urged on by a voice telling him that

"He ne'er is crowned
With immortality, who fears to follow
Where airy voices lead: so through the hollow,
The silent mysteries of earth, descend!"

(II, 211-14)

These intimations of Endymion's ultimate immortality continue as the poem progresses. Venus assures him that he will indeed reach his goal when she meets him in the Bower of Adonis: "Endymion! one day thou wilt be blest!" (II, 573) and again when she finds him in Neptune's palace: "What, not yet / Escap'd from dull mortality's harsh net? / A little patience, youth! 'twill not be long" (III, 906-08). Endymion's dream-goddess throughout the poem comforts him with the promise that they will eventually be together while implying that their union of immortality will take place on the earth:

"... we will shade
Ourselves whole summers by a river glade;
And I will tell thee stories of the sky."

(II, 810-12)

More than once Endymion himself senses that he is destined to achieve immortality, and as the poem nears its conclusion in the fourth book, the images of his impending marriage to Cynthia become more and more prominent.

Close to the end of the poem, when we find Endymion, despite all
prophecies to the contrary, still in a state of anguished misery, Keats himself breaks in to apologize for the delay:

Endymion! unhappy! it nigh grieves
Me to behold thee thus in last extreme:
Ensky'd ere this, but truly that I deem
Truth the best music in a first-born song.
(IV, 770-73)

But once again, the fact that Endymion will indeed win the immortality he seeks is left in no doubt:

Yes, moonlight Emperor! felicity
Has been thy meed for many thousand years;
Yet often have I, on the brink of tears,—
Mourn'd as if yet thou wert a forester;--
Forgetting the old tale. (IV, 776-80)

The abruptness of Endymion's immortalization by Cynthia thus becomes less problematic when viewed in the context of the extensive groundwork Keats has laid for its occurrence, and there seems no reason to doubt that Endymion actually is immortalized. It is this immortal state, finally achieved by Endymion, that makes his transformation into a Pan-like protector of his shepherd fold complete. He, like Pan, now bridges the gap between the real world and the ideal; both are now immortals assuming a protective role within the mortal realm. Even Cynthia herself embodies this theme of reconciliation. She initially cannot publicly acknowledge her passionate love for a mortal for fear of shame and recrimination, but gradually becoming more human, moves to an acceptance of her mortal love, even taking on an earthly guise, objectifying this reconciliation and providing Endymion with a means to attain his final spiritual stage of growth.

Although Endymion certainly cannot be viewed as a perfectly
executed piece--Keats himself called it a "feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished"—a close examination of the poem reveals a much more consistent thematic structure than many critics would grant it. This theme can be delineated and clarified by examining the identification which Keats sets up between Pan and Endymion, and by tracing Endymion's movement throughout the poem towards a Pan-like state of existence. Keats structures the stories of mythological figures other than Pan to reinforce and enrich the theme of the poem as well. And although the poem's ending—Endymion's apotheosis—may appear abrupt and hastily contrived, it nonetheless supports the movement of the poem as a whole towards this end. While rightfully viewing Endymion as an apprentice piece, a product of Keats's "inexperience" and "immaturity," and thereby excusing much of its problematic nature, one must recognize as well the craftsmanship of the developing poet one finds in the poem.
Notes


2 Bate, p. 179, calls it "masterful," while at the same time summarizing the general reaction to *Endymion* as a whole: "... that huge canvas of poetry—that alternately self-confident and inhibited filling of space—affects all but the most devoted student in the way that Haydon's room-filling paintings affected so many: it is known about; it is known to be large; and if it is once read (and most probably only in parts), it is rarely turned to again except for some special purpose. Nor have biographers and critics of Keats approached *Endymion* with much happiness, at least within the last few decades" (p. 168). Douglas Bush, ed., *Selected Poems and Letters of John Keats* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), p. 317, 232n, calls it "the first of Keats's great odes," as does David Perkins, ed., *English Romantic Writers* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1967), p. 1139. See also Heathcote Garrod, *Keats* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1926), p. 80, who calls the five stanzas of the "Hymn" the "highest points to which Keats' imagination had, at the time when they were written, attained."

3 See, for example, M. Allott's notes on the poem in *John Keats: The Poems* (London: Norton, 1970), pp. 130-33, and Bate's similar discussion, pp. 179-80.

4 Perkins, p. 1139.

5 As Bate has pointed out, Keats "in trying to write a long poem ... often paused to put masterfully in a shorter one much of what he was trying to say" (p. 179).

6 Bush feels that "while Keats must at the start have had some general plan in his head, it was modified as he went along in accordance with new impulses and insights" (p. 315); Bernard Blackstone, in *The Consecrated Urn* (London: Longmans, Green, 1959), p. 116, asserts that the poem must be viewed "less as a consecutive narrative than as a storehouse of ideas and images"; Stuart Sperry, "The Allegory of *Endymion*, Studies in Romanticism, 2 (1962), 53, views the meaning of *Endymion* as one "that changed and developed as Keats wrote"; Robert Gittings, *John Keats* (Boston: Little, Brown Co., 1968), p. 139, goes so far as to note "little logic in the poem's construction."


11 Bate, p. 172.


16 Pettet, p. 153.


18 See, for example, Sperry, pp. 47-53, where he discusses "critics of the erotic school." Also see Douglas Bush, *John Keats—His Life and Writings* (New York: Collier Books, 1966), pp. 45 ff., who feels that these
critics are "able to hold such a view by ignoring or slighting the many parts of the poem . . . that make no sense in merely erotic terms"; and Jacob Wigod, "The Meaning of Endymion," PMLA, 68 (1953), 779-90.


20 Bate, pp. 173-74.

21 Bush, John Keats, p. 56.

22 A number of critics, however, make this identification without qualification. See, for example, Katherine M. Wilson, The Nightingale and the Hawk (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964), p. 20.

23 Bate, pp. 173-74.


26 Sperry, p. 42.

27 See Sperry, who sees the poem as "a reflection of Keats's concern with visionary experience" (p. 39); Wigod, who argues that "Keats shows us . . . a poet winning ideal beauty and immortal love through active human sympathy, compassion, and selflessness" (p. 786); Perkins, who feels that the poem represents "the need of the human imagination to accept the natural world with love before the 'ideal' can be known" (p. 1136); and Bush, John Keats, p. 56, who views Endymion as a "fable" of "a poet's progress."

28 Bate, p. 174.


30 Jacob Wigod, in The Darkening Chamber: The Growth of Tragic Consciousness in Keats, Salzburg Studies in English Literature, No. 22 (Austria: Universitat Salzburg, 1972), p. 52, likewise agrees that the theme of the poem deals with Keats's belief that "the ideal is attainable only through immediate sympathetic experience of the real" although he, too, interprets this as an allegory of the poet, poetry, and the creative imagination. See also Walter Evert, Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of


38 In both Ovid's and Shakespeare's versions of the Venus and Adonis story, more emphasis is placed on Venus than Adonis. In both, when Adonis dies, he is turned into a flower and does not come back to life. In Spenser's version of the story, Adonis, like Keats's Adonis, is kept "in secret . . . / Lapped in flowres and pretious spycery, / . . . hid from the world" (*The Faerie Queen*, III.vi.46) to be awakened and enjoyed at Venus's whim. Both Spenser and Keats portray Adonis as lifeless and passionless, living only through Venus's love.


40 Sperry, "The Allegory of Endymion," p. 50, submits that this critical interpretation might be valid. Newell Ford, *The Prefigurative Imagination*, p. 53, feels that Endymion's encounter with Adonis 'promises ultimate happiness to the wanderer and is thus a kind of equivalent in direct experience of a prefigurative vision.'

41 In Ovid's version of the story, Arethusa has no such change of heart.

42 Morris Dickstein, in *Keats and his Poetry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 68n, points out that this episode links
Arethusa and Diana in that both fear discovery, but carries the compari-
son no further.

43 In Ovid's version of this story, Glaucus does not function as a
humanitarian provider for his people. Nor is his plunging into the sea
a result of his longing for "the utmost privilege that ocean's sire /
Could grant in benediction." Glaucus had merely chewed some magical grass
which gave him a longing to plunge into the sea.

44 In Ovid's version, Glaucus refuses Circe's love, vowing loyalty
to Scylla; Circe, angered, thus changes Scylla into a monster, depriving
Glaucus of her forever.

45 Harold Bloom, in The Visionary Company: A Reading of English
Romantic Poetry (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961),
p. 364, points out that Glaucus is "a kind of shepherd of the ocean, a
follower of Neptune as Endymion was of Pan."

46 Keats interrupts the poem to apologize for this fact:

Endymion! unhappy! it nigh grieves
Me to behold thee thus in last extreme:
Ensky'd ere this, but truly that I deem
Truth the best music in a first-born song.
Thy lute-voic'd brother will I sing ere long,
And thou shalt aid—hast thou not aided me?
Yes, moonlight Emperor! felicity
Has been thy meed for many thousand years;
Yet often have I, on the brink of tears,
Mourn'd as if thou wert a forester;—
Forgetting the old tale. (IV, 770-80)

47 Wigod, "The Meaning of Endymion," pp. 787-88; Carroll Arnett, in
"The Thematic Structure in Keats's Endymion," Texas Studies in English
36 (1957), 109, expresses a similar belief.

48 Bate, p. 191, states that "Of course Endymion is not really 'ensky'd'
except through the most improbable deus ex machina. Because of Keats's
haste to conclude, the end may have been introduced more abruptly than
otherwise"; Fred Inglis, in Keats (New York: Arco, 1969), p. 86, similarly
believes that "Keats loses patience with the whole business, and hurries
to a brisk close, 'spiritualizing' and 'enskying' Endymion in the last
twenty lines"; Glen O. Allen, in "The Fall of Endymion," Keats-Shelley
Journal, 6 (1957), 47, feels that Keats merely "bowed to the authority
of tradition" in ultimately immortalizing Endymion. While these critics
argue that Endymion's apotheosis is unconvincing, others have denied
that it takes place at all. See, e.g., Milton Goldberg, The Poetics
Shortly after Endymion leaves the Bower of Adonis, Cynthia visits him, promising that immortality awaits him. Kissing him, she asserts that, although she cannot at this time

"... to starry eminence
Uplift thee . . .
... by that kiss I vow an endless bliss,
An immortality of passion's thine;
Ere long I will exalt thee to the shine
Of heaven ambrosial." (II, 777-78, 807-10)

At the end of Book III she speaks to him while he sleeps to assure him of the "immortal bliss" that awaits him:

"Dearest Endymion! my entire love!
How have I dwelt in fear of fate: 'tis done--
Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.
Arise then! for the hen-dove shall not hatch
Her ready eggs, before I'll kissing snatch
Thee into endless heaven." (III, 1022-27)

After meeting Venus 'in the Bower of Adonis, Endymion feels
"assur'd / Of happy times, when all he [has] endur'd / [Will] seem a
feather to the mighty prize" (II, 590-92). In Book IV, Endymion, asleep on one of Mercury's steeds, dreams that "he walks / On heaven's pavement" (IV, 407-08) and upon awakening, "Beheld . . . his very
dream" (IV, 436), and although he still at this point cannot resolve the conflict between his mortal and immortal loves, "His heart leapt up as to its rightful throne" (IV, 445).

Sleep, for the first time, leaves his cave in order to "hear the marriage melodies" at heaven's gate (IV, 383), for there had come to him in a dream a vision

... shewing how a young man
Ere a lean bat could plump its wintry skin,
Would at high Jove's empyreal footstool win
An immortality, and how espouse
Jove's daughter, and be reckon'd of his house.

(IV, 376-80)

Later, as Endymion remains plunged in despair, all heaven, unbeknownst to him, makes ready for his marriage to Diana (IV, 563-611).


John Keats, Preface to Endymion, p. 102.

John Keats, Preface to Endymion, p. 102.
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VITA

Nancy Kathryn Bost