

Answer ONE question on your chosen text. Begin your answer on page 25.

**You must select a poem from the prescribed list for your studied collection.
The poems are listed in Section B of the source booklet on page 10.**

Romantic Poet: John Keats

Prescribed text

Selected Poems: John Keats, editor John Barnard

EITHER

- 13** Explore the ways in which Keats presents the prospect of death in '*When I have fears that I may cease to be*' and in **one** other poem. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 13 = 30 marks)

OR

- 14** Explore the ways in which the power of imagination is presented in *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* and in **one** other poem. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question 14 = 30 marks)



Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

28^{secB}

Chosen question number: Question 3 ☒ Question 4 ☒ Question 5 ☒
Question 6 ☒ Question 7 ☒ Question 8 ☒
Question 9 ☒ Question 10 ☒ Question 11 ☒
Question 12 ☒ Question 13 ☒ Question 14 ☒
Question 15 ☒ Question 16 ☒ Question 17 ☒
Question 18 ☒ Question 19 ☒ Question 20 ☒
Question 21 ☒ Question 22 ☒ Question 23 ☒
Question 24 ☒ Question 25 ☒ Question 26 ☒

In both 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer' and 'Ode to Psyche' by John Keats, the power of imagination is presented through multiple facets; both as a tool to worship and glorify and as a means to wonder and explore the world around us. Keats, a man who, according to childhood ~~first~~ friend Charles Brown was 'From earliest boyhood' obsessed with ideas of beauty and imagination, viewed the personal tool of creativity and wonder to be among the best assets a man could have. His writings on 'Negative Capability' - the idea that writers must delve into the unknown and imagine, even if at first this is painful, as well as his preference for 'men of genius' - creative types - over 'men of power' - those more physical and brutish - confirm his



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deep and adoring relationship with the Imagination which is expressed best in these two poems.

In the sonnet 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer', Keats conveys the great sense of wonder he feels when reading the translated works of the great Ancient Greek writer Homer. ~~Letter~~

Through the use of a Petrarchan sonnet form - thus translating ideas of change and renewal following the octave and the volta after the eighth line - Keats displays his devotion to the work via a metaphor of being an explorer in a new, unfamiliar territory. Throughout the sonnet, Keats uses assonance to portray a sense of richness and wonder, with a rhymescheme incorporating words such as 'gold' 'told' 'bold' and 'loud', reflecting the richness and wonder Keats feels at imagining this new and exciting piece of literature. In particular, there is a refrain of treasure and precious artefacts - 'gold' 'kingdoms' 'expanse' - that could be seen as Keats acknowledging the fact he is taking advice from Homer's work and incorporating his skill into his own writing, like a treasure hunter taking gold home to study. It also conveys the precious and 'golden' nature



of Homer's writing in a time where translated works would have been a rare treasure.

Another conceit of astrology - with Keats describing himself as a 'watcher of the skies' when a 'new planet swims into his ken', compares the writing profession as being similar to watching the stars; like an astrologer building a map of the world from the sky, Keats is using Homer's work as a base from which his own imagination can spread and develop, thus conveying the true power of imagination in relation to literature - that one can use a work such as Homer's as a point or a guide from which to explore the power and expanse of one's own imagination to pursue a career as a poet. Keats wrote 'Chapman's Homer' as a lonely student at Guy's Hospital where he was training to be a surgeon in 1816; it is possible to argue that literature provided him with comfort and companionship despite the fact he lacked friends. From a wider contextual perspective, 1816 is a notable year for romantic poetry in that it was known as the 'Year without a summer'; on account of a volcanic



explosion in what is now Indonesia, there was little sunlight and in some parts of the northern hemisphere there was snow in June and July. It is interesting, then - and perhaps a testament to the power of Keats' imagination - that he is able to paint vivid pictures of nature with an allegory to astrology despite these circumstances.

'Ode to Psyche' follows 'Chapman's Homer' chronologically in Keats' life, but also reflects themes of boosting and improving the power of one's own imagination through drawing inspiration from a literary or mythological source. Like in 'Chapman's Homer', Keats uses astrological and supernatural analogues to convey his deep fascination with the art in front of him; 'Ode to Psyche' can almost be considered a piece of ~~ex~~ euphuistic writing for this reason. Keats describes the bower in the woodland with unnatural synaesthesia, with a 'whispering roof' of leaves and unusually coloured 'blue, silver-white' flowers hinting at the mysteries that are to be found in nature and art; this, again, reflects the power of the imagination of Keats and of the reader of any Green mythology as a



whole. Again he makes reference to astrology, comparing Psyche to other worshipped goddesses; 'sapphire-regioned star' and 'amorous glow-worm of the sky' both juxtapose the senses with a combination of colour, light and physical sensation being used as a frame to describe a loving goddess. The contrast in images through the use of synaesthesia poses a real challenge to the imagination and also foreshadows the divine and human nature of Psyche. Ambiguity is also used in this way, with 'pinnons' not only referencing the intertwined legs of the lovers ~~Edo~~ Cupid and Psyche, but also the flight feathers of a bird, again foreshadowing the lovers' winged, divine nature in a similar way to how Chapman's Homer sees Homer's work as something 'gold' and divine due to the effect it has on the imagination.

Contextually, 'Ode to Psyche' is an important poem of Keats' in that it is the first of his great odes, written in the April of 1819 after resigning from Guy's Hospital to devote his life to poetry. It is for this reason that some critics see 'Psyche' as



being a metaphor for Keats' love of poetry; he describes himself as a 'pale-mouth prophet' building temples to her in the 'untrodden regions of [his] mind', perhaps a description of how the use of his imagination is almost an act of worship to poetry itself. This poem also places value on leadership and royalty, something Keats may have been particularly aware of as this poem was written following the Napoleonic Wars (1803-15) which killed over 311,000 Britons and ended with the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in France with the new king Louis XVIII. It is for this reason that

