

John Keats on first  
looking into  
Chapman's Homer  
reflects the many  
aspects of Roma...



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The romantic era rose out of and in response to the logical, more restrained forms of literature composed in the age of reason. It promoted the exploration of creativity in thinking, the joys of discovery and the enthusiasm and wonder evoked by man's complex relationship with nature. John Keats' "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" in the latter part of the Romantic period yet accurately reflects many of the above mentioned ideas. In this poem, the excitable young poet passionately recounts his joyous response to "looking" at the ancient works of Homer (as translated by an Englishman). Typically for the Romantics, Keats uses comparisons, imagery and tone to demonstrate his feelings and reflects the aspects of Romanticism through the use of poetic techniques.

As this essay will now show. The poem expresses the intensity of Keats' experience and reveals his love of poetry. "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" opens with the phrase "Much have I travelled in the realms of gold". "Realms of gold" is a metaphor implying world riches. This phrase also symbolises the world of literature and imagination which Keats is greatly passionate about. The term "godly" in the phrase "many godly states and kingdoms seen" gives a pleasing appearance and raises its standards to a high level of appreciation.

"Round many western islands have I seen" is a reference to the Greek legend Homer's Odyssey and the voyages of the hero in the stories that Keats has accessed courtesy of Chapman's translation. The phrase "Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold" suggests that a poet composes songs of heroes to give tribute and loyalty to Apollo, the Greek god of poetry and music. Keats

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tells his reading experience like a Homeric voyage and explores the wonders of poetry. The poem moves to a new idea by the use of the term "then". The second idea tells of the consequences or results of reading Chapman's translation.

Keats reveals a new world which he expresses by extending the world to the heavens by the phrase "Then felt I like some watcher of the skies". Keats compares his discovery of Homer via Chapman like a planet discovered in the sky. He also compares his experiences to Cortez who discovers the Pacific Ocean on the peak of Darien. Darien refers to the mountain range which the Atlantic and Pacific oceans are visible from. The phrase "Cortez with eagle eyes" Keats emphasizes through simile Cortez's sharp vision like an eagle because of the discovery of the Pacific is a visual experience and the eagle is a noble creature. John Keats displays all his passion, emotion and nobility in his thoughts and feelings in his poem in a positive manner.

This reflects the aspects of romanticism as romantics insisted on the importance of feeling and passion over logic and reason. The poem gives a sense of adventure and exploration through the use of the Homer's legend "The Odyssey", the freedom to discover such a wonderful work and translation through the use of Cortez accounts, transporting the poet into a world of imagination and subjective perspectives. Imagination was important in Romanticism as it allows an insight into the truth of things, both natural and supernatural and this is demonstrated heavily in Keats poem of astonishment. John Keats "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" reflects the many aspects of Romanticism and showing us the positive views of his "first looking" towards Chapman's translation of Homer's Greek legend "<https://assignbuster.com/john-keats-on-first-looking-into-chapmans-homer-reflects-the-many-aspects-of-romanticism/>

Odyssey". As a poet from the second generation of the Romanticism era, he has demonstrated the subjectivity, passion, emotion and other important aspects insisted by the romantics as a change from the Neoclassicism era. Much of Keats poetry was known to be as pure as music.

He was a poet in the purest sense of the word and this poem was an example of one of his finest work.