

Q. Consider PB Shelley's Adonais as a pastoral elegy.

Or

Q. Compare Shelley's concept of deity in the "Hymn" to his concept of deity in Adonais.

Answer: Shelley, one of the major English Romantic poets, was greatly influenced by myth.

Through the beauty of the ancient myths, Shelley shows us how his poems become ornamented and overwhelming. Shelley demonstrates his attention to the intrinsic form of the work as a means to express his use of myth and mythical ideas. His engagement with the classical tradition, showing that the poet viewed classical culture, especially the Greek poets' ways of handling myth, as creatively liberating and a force for good. It suggests that long before visiting Italy, he had a fully awakened sense of the possibilities for intellectual and political renewal which were latent in the classical tradition. In this respect, Shelley participated in a contemporary, Europe-wide movement that began some decades before his birth, and which aimed at finding in Greek literature and history the seeds of a new intellectual order that might liberate Europe from its oppressive superstructure of monarchy, aristocracy, and religious dogma.

English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote the poem "Adonais" (1821) in honor of his good friend, John Keats, who had died earlier that year from tuberculosis at the age of twenty-five. Its title refers to the Greek mythological figure Adonis, the handsome young lover of the goddess Aphrodite who also died an untimely death at a young age. Some scholars argue that Shelley's intent was to draw comparisons between the boar that gored and killed Adonis, and the critics who savaged Keats during his lifetime.

The poet weeps for Keats who is dead and who will be long mourned. He calls on Urania to mourn for Keats who died in Rome. The poet summons the subject matter of Keats' poetry to weep for him. Nature, celebrated by Keats in his poetry, mourns him. Spring, which brings nature to new life, cannot restore him. Other fellow poets also mourn the death of Keats: Byron, Thomas Moore, Shelley, and Leigh. Shelley blames anonymous Quarterly Review critic for Keats' death and chastised.

The poet now urges his readers not to weep any longer. Keats has become a portion of the eternal and is free from the attacks of reviewers. He is not dead; it is the living who are dead. He has gone where "hate and pain" cannot reach him. He is "made one with Nature." His being has been withdrawn into the one Spirit which is responsible for all beauty. In eternity other poets, among them Chatterton, Sidney, and Lucan, come to greet him. Shelley suggests that let anyone who still mourns Keats send his "spirit's light" beyond space and be filled with hope, or let him go to Rome where Keats is buried. He is with the unchanging Spirit, Intellectual Beauty, or Love in heaven. By comparison with the clear light of eternity, life is a stain and the poet tells himself he should now depart from life, which has nothing left to offer. The One, which is Light, Beauty, Benediction, and Love, now shines on him. He feels carried "darkly, fearfully, afar" to where the soul of Keats glows like a star, in the dwelling where those who will live forever.

Shelley gave his elegy a title that pointed clearly to his intention to attack the reviewers. Adonis in classical mythology, killed by a boar; killed by reviewers in terms of Shelley. It was in the

tradition of elegy to use proper names taken from classical literature. Shelley's coinage may have been intended to forestall the misapprehension that the poem was about Adonis. Adonais was close enough to serve his purpose.

To sum up the above, it can be said that Keats and Shelley belong to the second generation, along with Byron, who was older than they were by a few years. All three were influenced by the work of the writers of the first generation and, ironically, the careers of all three were cut short by death. Keats and Shelley had relatively few readers while they were alive. It was not until the Victorian era that Keats and Shelley became recognized as major romantic poets. Shelley's consolation in Adonais could hardly have been very consoling to Keats' relatives and friends. Adonais is, however, an often forceful and certainly generous defense of an insufficiently appreciated brother poet. In the end, the nature of a unique elegy is altogether questioned by the poet as its vain efforts of distinguishing poets in creative matters of life and death and Shelley proves himself successful in narrating so.