1

John Keats, uncertainty and Easter
John Keats was one of our greatest poets, a master of rich and sensuous language. He died in
1821, tragically young at just 25, but left a body of work that will never die, so long as
humans read and can feel. Here is how he opens his Ode to a Grecian Urn, speaking to a two
thousand year old vase:
 “Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster child of silence and slow time,”
The six odes that John Keats wrote in 1820 are his greatest achievement but he is also
remembered for his letters, written to his brothers and to the woman he loved, Frances
Brawne. These ideas then filtered through into his poetry – consider this thought, written in a
letter:
"I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of
Imagination – What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth – whether it existed
before or not.”
Consider the similarity to the final lines of Ode to a Grecian Urn, where he speaks directly to
the ancient vase:
“When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty" - that is all m

2

But we also value creativity, poetics, and artistry. And our ability to develop knowledge and
to engage in rational thought is enhanced when we can think creatively, when we can
cultivate our negative capability.
 So how does a capacity for uncertainty aid in the quest for
knowledge?
 Well
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 uncertainty and science are not alien to each other.
Uncertainty is built
into quantum theory

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