

Hyperion Study Guide

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Themes: Themes and Meanings

The three main themes of *Hyperion* are: process, power, and poetry. The epic narrative examines how change in status and perception is a characteristic of all process. The conflict between generations of gods is a dramatization of the resistance of the past to claims of the present; while the poem focuses on the utterances of the Titans as signs of recovering energy, its thrust is toward the futility of efforts by the Titans to prevent their defeat. History is a succession of discrete generations, governed by a universal law of change. Whether Oceanus's interpretation of this process as progressive is correct the poem does not confirm, because it does not conclude.

Certainly, however, the poem confirms the pain of dislocation and disorientation which occurs in the process of transferring power, as the Titans are impressively miserable in their monumental, static condition. They barely relieve their misery by talking about it, yet that is the only means available to them for mitigation of their humiliation. There is irony at work in the poem's use of changing point of view, because the huge Titans ineffectively bluster about revenge while the young, troubled Apollo wanders aimlessly toward his divine destiny. In all instances, furthermore, the heroic gods are guided by heroic goddesses, to suggest that the physical power of males is administered by the greater power of females (manifested in their pity, their sensitivity, and their respect for the past).

The feelings of Thea, Clymene, and Mnemosyne are focused by their responses to the new powers of beauty manifested in the Olympian gods; that beauty is especially promised by the young Apollo, who will inspire a new era of civilized loveliness. Since Apollo is particularly the god of poetry, his birth into divinity is a fitting climax to a poem which ends without concluding. A new kind of poetry is born with the birth of a new god.

The meaning of *Hyperion* is caught by the crossing of these three themes. History and nature command change as a universal law of process, affecting the gods themselves. Natural process passes through discontinuous stages of self-awareness (the generations of gods and creatures), but it is also continuous, because it is a passage of power. The assumption of power by a new generation, a new body, and a new consciousness is the responsibility of all successive life, including the poets who, like Keats, suffer for their talent as they follow their inspiration by Apollo and reject the past of Hyperion.

Critical Essays: Introduction

Hyperion John Keats

The following entry presents criticism of Keats's epic poem *Hyperion*, comprised of two unfinished versions, written in 1818 and 1819 respectively. See also, [John Keats Criticism](#).

Constructed as two poems, *Hyperion* and its attempted revision as *The Fall of Hyperion* are considered important works by John Keats. Although both were unfinished, these poems are some of Keats's most ambitious and successful writings, within which he integrates his theories of aesthetics with his ideas on mortality and morality. In drawing upon mythology and earlier poets' works in the *Hyperion* poems, Keats addressed issues that were pivotal in the Romantic period, including concerns about beauty and truth, imagination, knowledge, and the connection between art and life.

Biographical Information

Hyperion was undertaken during what many critics consider Keats's most intense period of creative productivity, a period also marked by personal difficulties. After embarking upon a walking tour of Scotland and the Lake District, Keats returned home creatively energized. His publication of *Endymion* in 1818 drew harsh reviews, some of which included personal attacks. More significantly, his brother Tom's tuberculosis had worsened, and Keats felt responsible for his brother's care. Letters Keats wrote to his friends during this period indicate Keats felt divided between his obligations to Tom and his obligations to his poetry. After Tom's death in December 1818, *Hyperion* remained unfinished; Keats abandoned the poem entirely by April 1819. Late in 1819, after he had met and fallen in love with Fanny Brawne, Keats began to revise *Hyperion* extensively. By that time Keats was suffering from the advanced stages of tuberculosis, which eventually precluded him from working and left the revision, like the first version, incomplete. *The Fall of Hyperion*, as it is now titled, remained unpublished until 1856, long after Keats's death in 1821.

Plot and Major Characters

Stylistically and thematically influenced by earlier works, the *Hyperion* poems demonstrate Keats's interest in and response to classic literature. *Hyperion* exists in two fragmented versions, with narratives drawn from Greek mythology, and the second poem attempts to revise the first. It is stylistically different from the earlier poem, adding a long prologue and altering the poem's structure and theme. Reactions to these two versions vary: some critics consider *The Fall of Hyperion* mostly a revision, others claim it is an entirely new work, and yet others see it as a continuation of the first version.

Hyperion relates the fall of the Titans, elemental energies of the world, and their replacement by newer gods. The Olympian gods, having superior knowledge and an understanding of humanity's suffering, are the natural successors to the Titans. Keats's epic begins after the battle between the Titans and the Olympian gods, with the Titans already fallen. Hyperion, the sun god, is the Titans' only hope for further resistance. The epic's narrative, divided into three sections, concentrates on the dethronement of Hyperion and the ascension to power of Apollo, god of sun and poetry. Book I presents Saturn fallen and about to be replaced and Hyperion threatened within his empire. At the council of the Titans, Book II, Oceanus advocates acceptance of their inevitable defeat, though his speech is contrasted with those of other Titans. In the unfinished Book III, Apollo undergoes his transformation into the new ruling god. He meets with Mnemosyne, or memory and the mother of the Muses, in order to assume his powers and to attain immortality.

The Fall of Hyperion is darker than *Hyperion*, with the former suggesting that beauty can only be achieved through pain, and that poetry is incomplete if it evades and leaves unexpressed the suffering of humanity. In this fragment, the poet occupies the space of the poem in a dream-vision. The Poet asks for help, and he receives the vision of the fall of Hyperion and the ascension of Apollo, elements which structure the first *Hyperion*. The action begins in a forest, where the speaker, consciously portrayed as the Poet, consumes fruits and drinks a toast to all poets. This drink initiates a dream-vision where the Poet meets a Muse figure, Moneta, who challenges the Poet to ascend to the world of art, where fame offers a type of immortality. Although humbled by this challenge, the speaker enters a holy shrine to poetry, where he undergoes a death and rebirth. The Muse and the Poet debate the nature of poetry, happiness, visionary experience, and the role of the poet in the modern world. Moneta distinguishes poets from dreamers, whose imaginations focus only

on individual ideals. True poets have awakened their imaginations to tragic pain but attempt to redeem sorrow with compassion and visionary acceptance. Moneta permits the speaker to enter the temple of Saturn, and she reveals to him her story. The Poet then describes Moneta's vision of the decline of the Titans. The speaker empathizes with the gods, and his ability to feel pain and suffering through imagination defines him as a Poet. The remainder of the poem narrates the laments of the Titans as they are replaced by the Olympian powers and led by Apollo. It ends with the introduction of Hyperion, who attempts to lead the final fight of the Titans against the new gods.

Major Themes

The thematic differences between the two versions of *Hyperion* have been extensively addressed by a wide variety of critics. In addition to Greek mythology, both poems draw from earlier poetic works, including Milton's *Paradise Lost* which is both imitated and challenged. *Hyperion* is often considered Miltonic in style and theme, and *The Fall of Hyperion* has been compared to Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, in terms of its structure as a dream-vision and in its use of a Muse figure.

Many themes introduced in the *Hyperion* poems are identifiable as those associated with Romanticism. *Hyperion*, which marks the exchange of the old powers for the new, addresses ideas about poetry, beauty, knowledge, and experience. These ideas are also present in *The Fall of Hyperion*. *Hyperion's* dominant themes address the nature of poetry and its relationship to humanity. The narrative suggests a thematic consideration of progress, particularly toward enlightenment and depictions of beauty, even as it evokes classical ideals found in Greek mythology. Visual and verbal representations, in the use of language and of Greek sculptural forms, contribute to this exploration. Through his representation of gods, Keats's commentary on Romantic opposites includes the real and ideal, history versus myth, finite versus infinite. The theme of truth is also prevalent. The speech of Oceanus and the ascension of Apollo both point to *Hyperion's* concern with truth and its relationship with beauty, knowledge, and suffering. Truth is closely associated with knowledge and both are acquired through pain, which results from the understanding and acceptance of change and impermanence. However painful, truth is pure and beautiful, and what is beautiful is eternal. It is this honorable truth that the human spirit strives to attain.

The structure of *The Fall of Hyperion*, assessed as a conscious integration of the Poet and his debates with Moneta, encourages a thematic consideration of the nature of art and beauty. In this version, the significance of the imagination is central. Here, the dream-vision structure emphasizes the Romantic tension between material representations and inner visions. The immortality offered by art, as opposed to human mortality or divine immortality, contribute to thematic issues with life and death. Like *Hyperion*, *The Fall of Hyperion* is concerned with both pleasure and pain as integral to life and asserts the predominance of suffering. Also expressed is the relationship between knowledge, suffering, and divine power. Perhaps the strongest theme presented by the poem is the Poet's identity and his responsibility to humankind.

Many commentators have noted that the *Hyperion* poems illustrate Keats's aesthetic theories. One dominant theme in the poems is Keats's notion of "negative capability," his assertion that the ability to entertain opposing ideas, images, and concepts without "any irritable reaching after fact and reason" is a poetic necessity. This aesthetic quality is believed to be present in those rare individuals who transcend Selfhood, leaving them able to identify with and express the experience rather than with their perception of the experience, and thus able to convey art's truth and beauty.

Critical Reception

The general critical reaction to Keats's *Hyperion* poems, like the reaction to much of his poetry, has focused on one of two dominant areas. Many critics examine the poems to illuminate Keats's life and aesthetic theories, while others use Keats's work to identify either characteristics of the Romantic period or to suggest

possible connections between Romanticism and other influences. Keats's letters remain important to scholarship as articulations of Keats's intentions. In most assessments, Keats's *Hyperion* poems are considered as valuable for their biographical and cultural revelations as they are significant as art in their own right. The various approaches to the *Hyperion* poems reinforce that Keats's works are valued by scholars as representations of his developing aesthetic theories and as expressions of Romanticism.

Paul Sheats notes Keats's growth as a poet in the *Hyperion*'s increasingly restrained use of imagery and intensity of sensation. Marlon Ross, in examining Keats's patriarchal discourse, suggests Keats attempted to position himself as a "great poet" through the use of an obtuse language which would distinguish himself from those poets whose work he mimicked.

Those who primarily concentrate on the poems as demonstrations of Keats's aesthetic concerns are especially interested in *The Fall of Hyperion*. Irene Chayers looks at Keats's focus on the composition of poetry as demonstrated within that work, particularly in the passage which juxtaposes the poet and the dreamer. Responding to the poem in a similar manner. Stuart Sperry views the poem as an allegory for poets and poetry. Other critics discuss Keats's articulations of artistic development as evidenced in the poems. Geoffrey Hartman (see Further Reading), considers both *Hyperions* as a single work that offers a divine world representing Keats's struggles with artistic identity. Similarly, Christoph Bode characterizes the *Hyperion* poems as a developing expression of Keats's poetics and of his understanding of his "negative capability."

Both *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* also have been examined for their embodiment of Romantic ideals, particularly in terms of Keats's influences. Paul Sherwin's examination of *Hyperion* asserts the poem is a response to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, evoking the poem yet attempting to subvert its message. Johnathan Bate claims that both *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* are attempts to create a more progressive poem that minimizes the influence of *Paradise Lost* on the works. In her analysis of Keats's use of mythology and divine speech, Anya Taylor focuses on reflection of Romantic period traits, as do Warren Ober and W. K. Thomas, whose analysis of Keats's use of Pan as an embodiment of the Romantic Imagination

In addition to the two main schools of critical analysis of *Hyperion*, commentators have offered a variety of approaches. In her examination of masculinity and homoeroticism in the *Hyperion* poems, Ellen Brinks posits that a Gothic subtext is present, while Joel Faflak looks at connections between Romanticism and psychoanalysis in *Hyperion*. Carol Bernstein illustrates connections between *Hyperion* and modernism and postmodernism. Keats's *Hyperion* poems, as unfinished fragments, continue to generate scholarly analysis of ideas, development as a poet, and position as a Romantic.

Critical Essays: Principal Works

Poems (poetry) 1817

Endymion: A Poetic Romance (poetry) 1818

Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems (poetry) 1820

Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats (letters and poetry) 1848

Another Version of Keats's "Hyperion" (poetry) 1856

Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne (letters) 1878

Letters of John Keats to His Family and Friends (letters) 1891

Criticism: Bruce E. Miller (essay date 1965)

SOURCE: Miller, Bruce E. "On the Incompleteness of Keats's *Hyperion*." *College Language Association Journal* 8, no. 3 (March 1965): 234-39.

[In the following essay, Miller asserts that Keats left *Hyperion* incomplete because he could not resolve the philosophical dilemma created through his profession that the world will inherently improve over time and his uncertainty regarding universal fate and individual will.]

Scholars have asked why Keats did not finish a poem which begins as prosperously as *Hyperion*. As for explanations, Thorpe has indicated the possibility that Keats' love affair may have interfered with work on a heroic poem;¹ Colvin has suggested that Keats' sympathetic portrayal of the goodness and beauty of the Titans was so fine that he found he could not go on to express adequately the surpassing excellence of the Olympians, as the plan of the poem to be inferred from Oceanus' speech would require;² Shackford thinks that Keats ran into difficulties because he had with Oceanus' expository speech vitiated the interest of the narrative;³ and Murry believes that the poem is in a sense complete as Keats left it, that it expresses as much as Keats at that time had in mind about the progress of a young poet (which Murry takes to be a major theme of the poem).⁴ There is at least one other possible reason which has not, I think, been described. It is that in *Hyperion* Keats may have expressed through the narrative a philosophical problem which he could not solve. Unable to solve the problem, he was unable to complete the action.

To present this possible reason why Keats did not finish *Hyperion*, it is necessary to begin with the meaning. The most common view of *Hyperion* is that the basic meaning of the poem has to do with the gradual bettering of the world through the activity of some principle of beauty.⁵ At least in its general direction this interpretation is probably right, for Oceanus' crucial speech (II, 167-243) clearly suggests a notion of cosmic process working out ever nobler designs, and this speech is followed by the confirming address of Clymene (II, 252-299), who has heard in the calling of Apollo's name a concrete realization of the principle which Oceanus has just given.

Hyperion is not the first document by Keats in which the idea is stated; we also have it in the letter of 3 May 1818 to John Hamilton Reynolds, the Mansion of Life letter, in which Keats expresses a notion first of the gradual advancement of a single intellect through successive stages and then goes on to assert that there has been in England a "general and gregarious advance of intellect," as a result of which Wordsworth stands higher than Milton.⁶ Not only, he appears to say, do men advance individually, but together they improve so as to constitute a "general" betterment of the whole world. Keats deals quite explicitly with this point, asking what conclusions are to be drawn from Wordsworth's intellectual superiority to Milton (though he was not more highly endowed) and answering: "O many things—It proves there is really a grand march of intellect—, It proves that a mighty providence subdues the mightiest Minds to the service of the time being, whether it be in human Knowledge or Religion."⁷

This letter and the speech of Oceanus are clear and emphatic: in 1818, at least, Keats believed that the world evolves toward better conditions. This belief did not attain to Godwinian complacency, however. We have as evidence Keats' rather slighting reference to Dilke as "a Godwin perfectibil[it]y Man,"⁸ and there is also the vision of "an eternal fierce destruction" in the verse "Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds." In the journal letter of 14 February-3 May 1819, written when Keats was finishing as much of *Hyperion* as he was ever to compose, he speaks of "a World of Pains and troubles" which disciplines the heart.⁹ Keats' perception of evil and suffering is not inconsistent with his belief in some evolutionary scheme of things, but it does qualify that belief. He seems to have thought that even though the world improves, it has a long way to go and much evil

to overcome before it attains a state that will nourish human happiness.

Probably that is what most of us think. And indeed, it is the basis, if ever scholars and men generally try to justify their work, for that justification. The world, we incline to believe in our happier moments, progresses, but still there is much to be done, and so we feel obliged to hasten and strengthen the progress. Thus it is that we defend humanitarian endeavor: good overcomes evil, and men can help.

But an entirely different inference can be drawn from the belief that the world improves. If betterment comes about because of some evolutionary principle inherent in the world—and Oceanus' speech in *Hyperion* and the Mansion of Life letter indicate that to be Keats' belief—then it may be concluded that improvement is necessary and that we live in a determined universe. And in a universe that is determined—whether toward good or evil does not affect the matter—what place is there for individual purpose and effort?

For Christians who believe that the world progresses the problem may not exist, for they hold that betterment comes about as the result of the will of a personal God abetted by the acts of men who love and obey Him. But Keats was not a dogmatic Christian, and although he was not strictly a scoffer except perhaps now and then at Hunt's instigation, he did not have when he wrote *Hyperion* the sort of belief which would have permitted him to adopt a Christian view of this question. And so, believing as he did that the world progresses toward better things according to some inherent, and therefore determining, principle, he would have had to work out for himself some resolution of the problem of universal fate and individual will.

There are some indications that Keats saw—or perhaps sensed—this problem when he wrote *Hyperion* and that his consciousness of it works into the poem. The first such indication, perhaps, is the letter that he wrote to Haydon suggesting that *Hyperion* would make a better subject for illustration than *Endymion*:

... one great contrast between them will be—that the Hero of the written tale [Endymion] being mortal is led on, like Buonaparte, by circumstances; whereas the Apollo in *Hyperion* being a foreseeing God will shape his actions like one.¹⁰

Endymion had been molded, Keats says, by circumstance, but Apollo will be aggressive; he will work effects upon a world which, in *Hyperion*, itself tends inherently to progress.

When Keats first had *Hyperion* in mind, then, it seems that he intended to make Apollo a master and not a subject of the world. In the hundred thirty-five lines (all of the third book) which deal with Apollo Keats did not fulfill this aim. And in the light of his description of the Titans it appears that Keats did not fulfill his aim with Apollo because he could not, because he was not able to work through the philosophic problem involved. The description of the Titans in their council shows that, much as they try to assert themselves, still they cannot prevail against the forces inherent in nature. When Saturn asks why the great primeval gods

Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
Is untremendous might,

(II, 154-155)

we are apparently to take seriously his estimate of the Olympians' strength, for Keats refers to a later attack of the Titans which forced the Olympians to disguise themselves in the shape of animals.¹¹ Yet Iapetus, Creus, Enceladus, and Hyperion are all pictures of futility.

Of course Oceanus' explanation of nature's law of progress toward better and more beautiful things interprets the Titans' powerlessness to a degree. But one crucial question it leaves unanswered: What are benevolently disposed persons (like the Titans) to do in a world which is determined toward the good? Keats leaves no

doubt at all that the Titans are benevolent; even the fierce Enceladus grieves most of all for the serenity which the revolt of the Olympians has destroyed. Saturn's lament for his lost dominance is an expression of almost perfect love and goodness.

And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
Of admonition to the winds and seas,
Of peaceful sway above men's harvesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in.

... I am smothered up,

(I, 106-112)

He predicts ultimate victory for the Titans (I, 126-134), and he asks

Another world, another universe,
To overbear and crumble this to naught?

Cannot I fashion forth

(I, 142-144)

Yet the reader sees in this momentary optimism only a bitter irony, and later at the council of the Titans there is nothing but despair.

At his first appearance Hyperion is impatient and anxious because of his forebodings. He rushes to the chariot of the sun to drive it through the sky, but the fixed order of nature prevents him:

He might not:—No, though a primeval God:
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.

(I, 292-293)

A few lines later, Coelus, Hyperion's father, whispers encouragement to him. Coelus admits himself powerless to do anything, but he says to Hyperion:

But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van
Of circumstance.

(I, 343-344)

Yet even as Coelus speaks, the sky mocks his words with its imperturbable stillness:

And still they were the same bright, patient stars.

(I, 353)

This, it seems, is as far as Keats could go early in 1819. In a fated universe the man who yearns for good must await the unfolding of world processes to which he can add nothing. Apparently when Keats conceived *Hyperion* and began work on it he had hoped really to resolve the metaphysical and moral problems inherent in his theme, for at the outset of his argument Oceanus promises “much comfort will I give.” (II, 179) Yet even the deep-thinking Oceanus can offer only sorrow. He sees his supplanter Neptune and says:

I saw him on the calmed waters scud,

With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell
To all my empire. ...

(II, 236-239)

In *Hyperion* Keats' vision of life is somber. Keats feels no resignation, for he knows of nothing that can be done about evil; there is only dejection. *Hyperion*, I think, expresses not only Keats' grief as he watched by Tom's deathbed; it sorrowfully describes a world which evolves to its predestined end without any account of Tom's or anyone's suffering.¹²

Notes

1. Clarence D. Thorpe, ed. *John Keats. Complete Poems and Selected Letters* (New York, 1935), p. 309.
2. Sidney Colvin, *John Keats: His Life and Poetry; His Friends, Critics, and After Fame* (London, 1917), p. 435.
3. Martha Hale Shackford, "Hyperion," *SP [Studies in Philology]*, XXII (January, 1925), 48-60.
4. John Middleton Murry, *Keats and Shakespeare* (London, 1926), pp. 82-83. "For the first *Hyperion* was, as I have said, essentially the poem of Apollo, the poem in which Keats was to reveal the secret of the poetic nature. When he had finished it he had told all he knew of that nature, which was his own; he could tell no more because he knew no more. Three months later he did know more, because his own life had taught him more; and he was impelled to add that knowledge to his poem.
5. E. g., Shackford, 58. "Meditation on this passage [*Hyperion*, II, 212 ff.] must persuade any one that Keats had grasped the principle that is the foundation of all liberal views,—the belief that there is, through all the sin and sorrow and accident of life, a determining purpose, a forward progress, a developing perfection. This advance is due to an inherent order in the universe, a cosmic harmony:

That first in beauty should be first in might.

See also Ernest de Selincourt, ed., *The Poems of John Keats*, 5th ed. (London, 1961), xli; Claude Lee Finney, *The Evolution of Keats's Poetry*, II (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1936), 503 ff.; Edward B. Hungerford, *Shores of Darkness* (New York, 1941), p. 142, who makes a specific application to poetry of the idea of progress; Kenneth Muir, "The Meaning of 'Hyperion'" in *John Keats: A Re-assessment* ed. Kenneth Muir (Liverpool, 1958), p. 109.

6. *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Hyder Edward Hollins (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958), I, 281 (hereafter referred to as *Letters*).
7. *Letters*, I, 282.
8. *Letters*, I, 397.
9. *Letters*, II, 102.
10. *Letters*, I, 207.
11. *Hyperion*, II, lines 70-72.
12. Murry disagrees with this assessment. In *Keats and Shakespeare* (p. 85) he writes: "There is no sadder poem in English than *Hyperion*; but its sadness is not the icy chill of intellectual despair, but the warm, rich, still sadness of a suffering heart determined to control its pain." Murry seems to find in the poem only Keats' response to Tom's illness and death, not the despondent reflections to which I think he was led.

Criticism: Irene H. Chayers (essay date 1967)

SOURCE: Chayers, Irene H. "Dreamer, Poet, and Poem in *The Fall of Hyperion*." *Philological Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (October 1967): 499-515.

[In the following essay, Chayers considers Keats's thematic and stylistic use of the composition of poetry in *The Fall of Hyperion*. Chayers focuses on the dialogue between the first-person narrator and the priestess Moneta, as well as the passage which reflects on the poet versus dreamer, as a representative example.]

How much toil!

How many days! what desperate turmoil! ...
Ah, what a task!

—"Sleep and Poetry"

Although Keats's other major poetry has been extensively reinterpreted and revalued in recent years, the critical view of his two unfinished *Hyperion* poems has been remarkably stable. Now as a generation ago, the earlier *Hyperion* is likely to be considered the better poem, and the chief attraction for commentators in *The Fall of Hyperion* continues to be a passage of some seventy-five lines which is usually taken out of context and read almost as though it were a theoretical essay by Keats himself. The passage, too familiar to need recapitulation, is the often-quoted dialogue, or debate, between the first-person narrator and the priestess Moneta on the "poet" versus the "dreamer" (I, 136 ff.). The debate is confused by incomplete definitions and distinctions on both sides, which have nothing directly to do with what happens when the scene is over, and it is quite possible that on reconsideration Keats would have deleted the more troublesome lines, just as he apparently intended to delete the narrator's gratuitous attack on the popular poets of the time.

The many attempts over the years to explicate this passage in its own terms¹ have done little to clarify it or turn the speeches into coherent aesthetic arguments, while they have distracted attention from the rest of the poem. Yet the rest of the poem makes the particular terminological difficulties of the debate irrelevant—not because the question of poetry and the poet is irrelevant, but because that is precisely the concern of the whole work. Like *The Prelude*, "Kubla Khan," "Dejection: An Ode," "Ode to the West Wind," and Keats's own "Sleep and Poetry" and "Ode to Psyche," *The Fall of Hyperion* is one of the Romantic poems which in one way or another have the composition of a poem as their subject. Often enough, as in the twentieth-century novels which are organized around a similar reflexive relation between process and product, author and work, the poem being composed is identical with the account of its composition. *The Prelude* begins from Wordsworth's wish to compose a major work and his quest for an appropriate subject, which eventually he finds in the preparation of the poet for his great task; when the poet is ready, when his mind has reached its fullest "growth," the poem too has been completed. "Sleep and Poetry" deals with a somewhat similar experience, compressed into a single night. As he lies awake, the speaker meditates on what he must do if he is to become a poet; at the conclusion, he discovers that the experience itself has given him the subject for a poem by which he can try out his powers:

And up I rose refresh'd, and glad, and gay,
Resolving to begin that very day
These lines; and howsoever they be done,
I leave them as a father does his son.

(401-04)

The Fall of Hyperion is far more complex, combining the subjective preparation of the poet with a process of objective poetic creation which takes place in two different phases and on two different levels; during the course of this, two different poems are being composed, one serving to lead the way to the other. The double process has not been completed by the time the narrative breaks off; but up to that point, genre and aesthetic theory, myth and ritual, structure and style, literary history and literary autobiography, have all found places in

Keats's most forthright exploration of the nature of the creative act, poetry as an art, and the special role of the poet.

II

The Fall of Hyperion has a subtitle, *A Dream*, which in itself indicates how radically Keats was reorienting the comparatively little material—amounting only to two abbreviated scenes, the second incomplete—he chose to carry over from *Hyperion*. Whereas *Hyperion* is an imitation epic, with classical and Miltonic echoes, *The Fall* is equally an imitation of a very different genre—the dream-vision, whose tradition goes back not only to Dante's *Divina Commedia* (often associated with Keats's poem on other grounds) but also to the mediaeval courtly poems stemming from *Roman de la Rose*, such as Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, and *The House of Fame*. Keats had already drawn on the dream-vision in "Sleep and Poetry," which has a Chaucerian quotation as its epigraph, and the form was peculiarly appropriate to a work dealing with poetic composition. The elaborate, framing devices in the dream-vision convention suggest a conception of the creative process that oddly anticipates the aesthetic theories of the later eighteenth century, which Keats seems to have known and to some extent accepted.² For such philosophers of that period as Lord Kames, Dugald Stewart, and Archibald Alison, both the experience of reading a poem and the original experience by which it was created by the poet were passive, occurring in a state of reverie; at such a time, emotions were called out and the imagination was kindled, at either first or second hand, precisely because the mind was "vacant and unemployed."³ In the typical dream-vision, similarly, the familiar preliminaries of reading or unusual wakefulness, unexpected sleep, and accommodation to the new world of the dream emphasize the difference between everyday reality and the special reality of art, and imply that the latter can be approached only when the ordinary controls of will and consciousness are relaxed. Often there is a further distinction between the initial dream and the particular "vision" the dreamer is allowed to see or participate in once he has entered his new state: the proceedings of the bird parliament, the elaborate organization of the House of Fame, the lover's allegorical progress into the rose garden. It is here that the formal subject of the poem is likely to be introduced, and the unfolding of the inner vision is in effect the process by which the poem about it is composed; but objectively this appears only as a passive, presentational experience for the poet, who stands as an ingenuous and receptive witness before marvels he may be the last to discover.

As it happens, the 1816 publication of "Kubla Khan," which then was called "A Vision in a Dream," could have shown Keats quite early how a conventional dream-vision frame might be combined with a modern account of the creative process. With its unusually precise details of the lonely farmhouse, the "anodyne," the quasi-magical act of reading, the lapse into sleep, and the miraculous gift of a poem in the form of a vision, the famous anecdote in Coleridge's prose note amounts to a standard dream-vision prologue, preparing the way for the verse text, which it offers as the presented poem itself. The text, in turn, describes a similar vision and then outlines the steps by which the recollection of it can be used in poetic composition of an entirely different kind.⁴

Like Guillaume de Lorris' induction to *Roman de la Rose* or Chaucer's proem to *The House of Fame*, the first eighteen lines of *The Fall of Hyperion* are concerned with dreams and their significance. Although he agrees that dreams are universal, accessible to the "fanatic" and the "savage" as well as to the poet, Keats's narrator distinguishes carefully between dreams that are experienced but left unexpressed or unrecorded, and those that are "told":

For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,—
With the fine spell of words alone can save
Imagination from the sable chain
And dumb enchantment—Who alive can say,
"Thou art no Poet—mayst not tell thy dreams"?
Since every man whose soul is not a clod
Hath visions, and would speak, if he had lov'd,

And been well nurtured in his mother tongue.

(I, 8-15)

Here, with a similar shuffling of terms and distinctions, is an anticipation of the famous debate with Moneta; but the answer comes disarmingly in advance of the problem Moneta's speech will raise. Granted that he is the inferior of the two, how can a dreamer redeem himself and become a poet? According to the narrator himself, if "dreamer" means most simply one who dreams, and if he has the requisite powers of language, he need only "tell" his dream afterwards, preserving what otherwise would be lost, and leave the verdict to posterity:

Whether the dream now purpos'd to rehearse
Be poet's or fanatic's will be known
When this warm scribe, my hand, is in the grave.

Its very position gives authority to this passage, which both logically and chronologically takes precedence over Moneta's denunciation. The debate occurs early in the dream; when the narrator begins his induction, the dream has ended, and his indirect definition of a poet is the product of his total experience.

The important step of "telling" a dream seems to involve not only the verbalization of what is recollected after waking but also the nearly mechanical act of writing down an account of the experience in verse, tracing "upon vellum or wild Indian leaf / The shadows of melodious utterance" (I, 5-6). What is "told," on the evidence of the poem that actually follows, consists of scenes and events within the dream, the silent thoughts, feelings, and observations of the dreamer while the dream is going on, his speeches to Moneta, and words other than his own, spoken by persons in the dream and exactly reproduced in the text he offers as a record. These distinctions are consistent and significant, and will become an important key to what is happening during the dream. There are distinctions also in point of view. In both the induction and the concluding lines of Canto I, the point of view belongs to the later, waking state, when the narrator, like "the Author" in Coleridge's note to "Kubla Khan," is engaged in writing down what he recalls from the dream. These two passages form an outer frame for the narrative portions; they are part of the final poem, *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, but not of the dream itself, which remains within its own temporal bounds while it is being "told." Such a divided point of view is most familiar today as a device in the novel, and although he probably believed he was following strictly the conventions of the dream-vision, Keats uses it in almost a novelistic way, which gives both perspective and unity to the poem.

When the dream is "rehearsed," it includes the most conventional elements of the courtly dream-vision: the archetypal images (or, alternatively, *topoi*) of a garden and an architectural edifice, which also had been used together in "Kubla Khan";⁵ the narrator's lapse into sleep and reawakening in a dream; the strange scenes and events before which he is privileged to stand as an observer and eavesdropper, with an omniscient guide; the appearance of characters from myth and legend as live persons who can be seen and heard talking about themselves. For many, perhaps, "allegory" is still an unwelcome word in relation to Keats; yet in the account of the dream there are parallels also, highly important ones, with the passages of allegory that are a prominent part of the dream-vision of the Middle Ages. As early as *Endymion*, Keats had used narrative and description of a kind which, although it need not begin from an abstraction, often is not complete until it has yielded a further meaning on a level other than its own. Even if there were no precedents for it elsewhere in Keats's poetry, something very like allegory would have arisen in *The Fall* through the emphasis on the visible and the step-by-step succession of episodes which the dream circumstances entail.

The encounter with Moneta, too, is conventional, corresponding to the interludes of reception and instruction that prepare the dream-vision poet for the greater scenes to come. Moneta has had many different associations for critics of the poem and as the dream advances her role changes, but primarily she is a personification, like Keats's Melancholy or Autumn. Her closest kinship is with two other Keats figures who are female but not in

any real sense women: Mnemosyne in *Hyperion*, the goddess of memory and mother of the muses, whose name on two occasions in *The Fall* (I, 331; II, 50) is used in error for Moneta's; and the allegorical Poesy of "Sleep and Poetry," whose throne and wings (392-95) mark her, in turn, as an imitation of Chaucer's goddess Fame.⁶ By its description (I, 81 ff.), indeed, Moneta's temple might almost be an impressionistic version of the one in *The Temple of Fame* (65 ff.), Pope's eighteenth-century adaptation of *The House of Fame*, and the giant statue of Saturn above the altar recalls the pillar figures of both Chaucer and Pope, personages from literature and legend who have been accorded perpetual honor. In its own way, the temple in *The Fall of Hyperion* is a temple of fame also. But what the statue of Saturn commemorates is not achievement but defeat, and Saturn's fame is known only to Moneta, who is "sole priestess of his desolation" (I, 226-27).

Both "Sleep and Poetry" (171-74) and "Ode to Psyche" associate imagery of generalized religious worship—an altar, a chanting choir, a priest performing devotions—with poetry in its most flourishing state, equally honored and bestowing honor on those it celebrates. In the context of an experience in poetic composition, the lone statue of Saturn in the neglected temple therefore would represent a kind and a standard of poetry which at the time of the dream has fallen into eclipse. ("Yes, a schism / Nurtured by foppery and barbarism, / Made great Apollo blush for this his land," says the speaker in "Sleep and Poetry" [181-83].) As a modern and more complex goddess Fame, Moneta in her first guise is the embodiment of the collective memory of tradition by which such poetry is kept alive for later generations of poets, and at least at the beginning it is only as one of these that the narrator is received; even before Moneta addresses him as a member of "the dreamer tribe," he finds traces in the garden of others who have come before him along the same path (I, 30-34). Only Moneta has the power to make the story of Saturn known to him, the latest aspirant to reach the temple and stand before her. What she communicates, however, is not a collection of facts or events in the abstract but concrete, pictorial "scenes," which she holds unchanged in her mind: "Still swooning vivid through my globed brain, / With an electrical changing misery" (I, 244-46). The first scene she shows him, Saturn's awakening and conversation with Thea, which was originally at the beginning of *Hyperion*, is objectified so completely that the temple setting is replaced by the vale of the Titans and both Moneta and the narrator move to the sidelines. Together, they are overshadowed by a new kind of reality, a vision that assumes independent existence in the dream they both inhabit, just as the dream itself has assumed an independent existence in the mind of the dreamer.

In Canto II there is a similar, incomplete vision of Hyperion's palace, and a similar use of lines from the earlier poem. The reminders of Keats's abandoned epic have a function in both visions, but they surely do not mean what some commentators seem to have believed—that thenceforth the story of the Titans would have been the main subject of *The Fall*, with everything preceding it reduced to an elaborate but extraneous prologue. In "Ode to Psyche," the poet is about to use Apuleius' fable as the subject-matter for a new poem of his own, and by his priestly invocation he prepares for a reenactment of the union of Cupid, the god of love, with Psyche, the personification of the human soul. Similarly in *The Fall*: in keeping with the metaphor of the temple, as images projected outward from Moneta's mind the two visions would represent a whole body of material for poetry, forgotten and supplanted but still viable, on which the novice can learn to draw in his own career; here, too, the original events of the myth are reenacted before the poet's eyes. And as carefully ordered poetic scenes in their own right, with echoes of an existing text by Keats himself, they acquire a more important meaning, by another kind of metaphor. In accepting the revelations of Moneta, the narrator is in effect taking part in a highly formalized creative experience, during which two fragments of a poem are bestowed on him from without, independently of any choice or intention of his own. This is the kind of experience implied in the courtly dream-vision when the central vision is unveiled by the poet's guide, who often, like Moneta, delivers a commentary as well. It is made explicit in the headnote to "Kubla Khan" and Coleridge's account of the process by which "all the images rose up before [the sleeper] as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort." What is even more relevant, in view of the special literary associations of the two Titan scenes, is that something very similar, the visual, and visionary, presentation of a poem to the poet who is about to compose it, is found among the conventions of the classical epic.

The scene in the vale appears in response to what the narrator calls a “conjunction” (I, 282-91), which is very nearly a conventional epic invocation addressed to Moneta: ““Shade of Memory!’ / Cried I, with act adorant at her feet.” Her first words as the new setting slowly becomes visible are not so much an explanation as a narrative introduction, ““So Saturn sat / When he had lost his realms—”” (I, 301-02), which might become a line in a finished poem. (Actually they are adapted from *Hyperion* I, 4, “Sat gray-hair’d Saturn, quiet as a stone.”) Through both word and image, Moneta here is providing exactly the kind of help the epic poet, even if he is a Homer or a Milton, seeks from his inspiring muse when he is about to begin composing. Passive reception is his ostensible stance, too, if only to call attention by contrast to the high degree of artistry in the poem he is actually offering. By the conceit of the epic invocation—on occasion, Keats approached this in his incidental, rhetorical apostrophes to the muses, which like other standard devices of epic style he was capable of using in an entirely conventional way⁷—it is Calliope who sings the wrath of Achilles and Urania man’s first disobedience. Moneta differs from these only in being a visible and audible presence and in actually doing what the traditional muse is besought to do.

After she has passed successively from guardian to hierophant to mediator to guide, it is as muse to the novice poet who has come under her tutelage that Moneta settles into her chief role. In the fragmentary Canto II, she appears at last in full character. For all but the last eleven and a half lines, it is she who is speaking, openly reciting, or dictating, an account of Hyperion’s arrival at his palace, which is borrowed from *Hyperion* (I, 166 ff.) and precedes the arrival itself; again, her words bring about a change in the objective setting, which now becomes a light-filled hall. Between Moneta and her listener, and between what he sees and what he hears, there is complete harmony, the fullest realization of what in the preceding canto he has described as an ideal aesthetic experience,

... that pleasant unison of sense
Which marries sweet sound with the grace of form,
And dolorous accent from a tragic harp
With large-lim’d visions.

(I, 442-45)

The narrator now is not only an effortless creator but a spectator and even a participant as well. When the canto suddenly breaks off, he is placed so centrally in the scene which has materialized around him that when Hyperion rushes by in flaming robes he, the poet, almost seems to be touched by his own epic hero.

The Fall of Hyperion, then, the dream which is being “told” as a poem in one genre, is concerned in part with the composition of a poem in another genre, by another process that develops roughly in parallel with the “telling.” There are indications that the later compositional process is dependent in some ways on the earlier, so that what the narrator learns during the dream applies to his waking effort also, on a higher level. Similarly, there are parts of the dream process that are clarified by what is taking place during the “telling.” By the end of Canto I, the two processes have drawn even with each other, as the narrator interrupts a speech by Moneta to speak of it from his later point of view: “And she spake on, / As ye may read who can unwearied pass / Onward from the Antechamber of this dream” (I, 463-65). This and the scene in Canto II are both made possible, however, only by the emergence of still a third process, the personal preparation of the narrator for his poet’s role, which begins with his entrance into the dream and in a crucial episode in Canto I merges with the dream composition itself.

III

Although Moneta’s tutelage is essential to his progress through the dream, Keats’s narrator does not win it automatically when he enters the temple. Before even the dialogue on the poet and the dreamer can take place, on Moneta’s command he must pass a test—crossing the marble floor and ascending the steps to the altar

where she is sacrificing—that involves a symbolic death and rebirth. Not a few commentators have pointed out the resemblance of the scene (I, 106-36) to an ordeal of initiation; the temple setting, the incense, veils, and sacrificial fire, and especially the presence of Moneta, give it the formal character of a ritual in one of the great classical Mystery cults. This is not the only such scene in *The Fall of Hyperion*, however, nor even the first; and it is not the most important. With respect to the narrator himself, the whole dream is an initiation ritual in which he does not know what he is going to find but is able to move on from one stage to the next by successfully passing a series of tests that become increasingly challenging as he advances and increasingly profound in their effects on him personally. Since the tests lead into the vision episodes, a process that is primarily aesthetic and creative, directed toward the ultimate production of a work of art, becomes also the way to enlightenment and maturation for the one taking part in it.

The first test occurs during the opening scene in the garden, and it is by this that the dream events are set in motion. In compressed form, it recapitulates a typical experience from Keats's early poetry—the solitary enjoyment of the pleasures of the senses, which here begin in sound and scent (I, 22-25) and then are concentrated in taste as the dreamer shares in the ritual meal of the other candidates who have preceded him. This is, quite simply, a test of pleasure, and all it requires is that he submit himself passively to the stimulations of sense as he meets them. When he drinks finally from the “cool vessel of transparent juice,” with a toast to both living and dead, he falls into a “cloudy swoon” that becomes the means by which he passes from the garden, the first stage of the dream, to the next, the temple, in which he wakes.

The second test, the passage to the altar, is almost the opposite of the first in the demands it makes on the candidate. In order to cross the temple floor to the stairway, he must make a painful effort of will and resist the “palsied chill” that rises from the pavement, a threat of death different only in degree from the swoon he succumbed to at the climax of the feast. In spite of Moneta's original command (I, 107-17), it appears to be the effort rather than the actual ascent that is the point of the test; for when he reaches the bottom step, life seems to “pour in at the toes” and he is enabled to mount up the whole flight “As once fair angels on a ladder flew / From the green turf to heaven” (I, 132-36). The elevation, when it comes, is a reward for his successful use of the powers he has been forced to discover in himself; he has “dated on” his “doom,” Moneta informs him (I, 141-45). After the debate on the poet and the dreamer, which follows, he wins association with Moneta as his muse and is enabled to pass on to the third test.⁸ This, the crucial one, combines an intense experience of sense, as in the first, with an intense effort of will, as in the second, and leaves him to confront a different kind of “doom,” which not even Moneta can help him escape.

For Keats, sense experience tends to be hierarchical, as in the famous Pleasure Thermometer passage in *Endymion* (I, 777 ff.), and a similar rising pattern appears from time to time in other poems, even though the scale may be incomplete.⁹ In *The Fall*, there is the suggestion of such a pattern in the “melodious” sound of the poet's verse, the pleasures of scent and taste in the garden, and the ideal union of sight and sound in the epic visions, especially in Canto II. When the narrator finds himself in the temple, Moneta's first command is registered on the same two senses through which she later is to communicate to him as his muse:

I heard, I look'd: two senses both at once,
So fine, so subtle, felt the tyranny
Of that fierce threat and the hard task proposed.

(I, 118-20)

But during the intervening scenes, the emphasis is increasingly on one sense alone—sight, which the eighteenth-century aestheticians associated most closely with the operations of the imagination.¹⁰ Appropriately, at the beginning of the first vision, the narrator prepares to be a passive spectator, concentrating his attention on what can be seen:

Upon an eagle's watch that I might see,
And seeing ne'er forget

(I, 308-10)

But even then, and although the vision is objectified from her memory by Moneta herself, the scene in the vale comes to life only gradually, as though by the slow accommodation of the observer's sight. Like a travelling camera, his gaze moves from the trees and grass, to the stream and the “large footmarks” along its margin, and finally discovers the sleeping figure of Saturn, which earlier had seemed only “an Image huge,” like the statue in the temple. Thus what he sees depends not only on what Moneta chooses to show him but also on what he is capable of seeing, both with the “outward eye” of ordinary sense and with a new, inner power of imaginative perception, which he acquires when Moneta begins her narrative commentary:

... whereon there grew

A power within me of enormous ken,
To see as a god sees, and take the depth
Of things as nimbly as the outward eye
Can size and shape pervade. The lofty theme
Of those few words hung vast before my mind
With half-unravell'd web.

(I, 302-08)

The inspiring vision that acquaints the novice poet with his new subject-matter also provides him with his first experience in recreating it; as he learns to “see” it—“see” is the key verb in the creative process here, as “tell” is to be later—he shares in the task of literally bringing it back to life.

The awakening of Saturn (I, 319 ff.), obviously adapted from Satan's awakening at the beginning of *Paradise Lost*, proceeds by degrees also. Most of the text is from the opening section of *Hyperion*, but before the awakening has been completed, between the end of Thea's lament and Saturn's first movement, there is a passage that is new, an expansion of *Hyperion* I, 83-88 with a very different meaning. While the narrator watches, the action suddenly comes to a halt and the two Titans remain as they are at that instant, “postured motionless, / Like sculpture builded up upon the grave / Of their own power” (I, 382-84). The effect is cinematic, as though a sudden failure in the projection equipment had left a single still frame frozen on the screen before a waiting audience. (In implying something very like a theater analogy in lines 308-10, Keats was being more prescient than he could have guessed.) The offscreen voice of Moneta is silent, and as a third figure Moneta herself enters the scene she has been preserving in her mind. Sound and motion both vanish, leaving only objects of sight and a lone spectator.

Critics who have passed over this passage with a minimum of comment—and to my knowledge they are all who have discussed the poem in print—apparently have understood the stillness here as little different from the atmospheric stillness described in lines 310-18, at the beginning of the vision, or from the original attitude of Saturn and Thea in *Hyperion*.¹¹ But the new stillness is a lapse, a cessation of action already under way, and hence it is a threat to the whole vision—even, since Moneta too is involved, to the dream itself.

From the standpoint of the two parallel creative processes that are going on in *The Fall*, the lapse in the vision of Saturn may be the kind of threat the poet refers to in his induction, the “sable chain / And dumb enchantment” from which the work of the imagination in a dream can be saved only by Poesy's “fine spell of words.” Or it corresponds to his hesitation at the end of Canto I, as he looks ahead to the cantos still to be written and tries to remember Moneta's narrative: “Even at the open doors awhile / I must delay, and glean my memory / Of her high phrase:—perhaps no further dare” (I, 463-68). In the classical epic, a similar hesitation, a confession of weakness and a plea for help from the muses, are part of the conventional rhetorical

preparation of the poet for an especially difficult passage, such as the famous catalogue of the Greek forces in the *Iliad*. But Keats's narrator as yet has no words of his own to use, and his muse has deserted him. In the terms he himself has introduced, the total lapse in his epic vision before it is properly under way would be due to the failure of his new power of inward sight. When Thea ceases to move, she is bowed down to the earth, weeping; Saturn is already bent, as though “no force could wake him from his place.” Since the novice cannot yet “take the depth” of their sorrow, the two figures from myth, and Moneta the guardian and muse along with them, become little better than statuary, lifeless monuments to a world and a type of poetry which for the moment it seems impossible to revive.

A familiar motif elsewhere in Keats's poetry is the potentiality of life and power in movement that has been arrested or interrupted, whether in sleep, death or art; in “Sleep and Poetry,” Poesy itself is identified by an image that is partially recalled in the bent figure of Saturn—“might half slumb'ring on its own right arm” (237). To turn stillness of this sort back into motion is typically the major task of the Keatsian hero, in narrative and lyric alike. So Endymion in the Glaucus episode revives the drowned lovers by magic; in “The Eve of St. Agnes,” Porphyro wakes Madeline from her dream and Madeline in turn calls Porphyro back from the stillness with which hers infects him; the poet-priest in “Ode to Psyche” first discovers Cupid and Psyche asleep in the grass, in an interrupted embrace which is to be completed in his poem; by his meditation, the speaker in “Ode on a Grecian Urn” is in effect trying to restore the sculptured figures to the moving and changing life they have left behind for the perpetual arrest of art. So, too, in *The Fall of Hyperion* the dreamer in course of becoming a poet must pass the third test of his initiation by somehow reanimating the three still figures before him, the unfamiliar and intractable material of not one but two future poems.¹²

... A long awful ti

I look'd upon them: still they were the same;
 The frozen God still bending to the earth,
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet,
 Moneta silent. Without stay or prop,
 But my own weak mortality, I bore
 The load of this eternal quietude,
 The unchanging gloom, and the three fixed shapes
 Ponderous upon my senses, a whole moon.

(I, 384-92)

Of the narrator's three encounters with one form or another of death, this the last is the greatest test of his personal resources. His only “stay or prop,” his “weak mortality,” is his radical difference from the unchanging figures, in contrast to whom he ages and declines as he waits: “every day by day methought I grew / More gaunt and ghostly.” That the objects of his gaze are “ponderous upon” his senses recalls Keats's own complaints in his letters that the “identities” of others, including his dying brother Tom,¹³ sometimes pressed on him with such weight that he was forced to flee their presence. But the watcher here cannot escape, and his own death, which would be a release, this time is denied to him. With no one to appeal to and his “power of enormous ken” fallen into abeyance, he is obliged to be a spectator in desperate earnest, preserving the remnants of both the creative dream and the inspiring vision by the sheer effort of will and the limited power of his inferior “outward eye.” Eventually, like Endymion and Porphyro and unlike the speaker in “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” he is successful; Saturn finally does wake, vision and dream are properly separated again, and the interrupted action is resumed:

... Gasping with de

Of change, hour after hour I curs'd myself;
 Until old Saturn rais'd his faded eyes,
 And look'd around and saw his kingdom gone,
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
 And that fair kneeling Goddess at his feet.

(I, 398-403)

IV

With its intense compression of meaning in the most concrete terms, the scene in the vale is the most important in *The Fall of Hyperion*—a turning-point in the complex action that is proceeding along three separate and converging paths, and the best indication of what later course the poem might have taken. As a stage in the narrator's personal initiation, it enables him to transform his private ordeal of endurance into a positive moral achievement, objective and even altruistic in its effects: if he had not endured, the implication is, Saturn, Thea, and Moneta and all they represent would have been irretrievably lost. The nature of his ordeal, in turn, gives it a place in the creative process that is being dramatized in the Titan episodes. If the awakening of Saturn is stalled because the novice cannot, or believes he cannot, comprehend the deposed god's suffering, his own experience of pain and despair during the lapse teaches him how to use his newly acquired power of inner sight. Correspondingly, when it becomes known, the suffering of Saturn is more comprehensible to him in human terms than either Moneta's or Thea's before it. In the temple, when Moneta parts her veils, her face is "Not pined by human sorrows, but bright-blanch'd / By an immortal sickness" (I, 257-58). Thea's grief is "nearer woman's tears" (I, 338) but still superhuman as she addresses Saturn in "solemn tenour and deep organ-tone" (I, 350). ("How frail / To that large utterance of the early Gods!" the poet thinks of his own version of her speech.) But when Saturn himself finally speaks (I, 412 ff.), in another passage drastically revised from the original in *Hyperion*, it is weakness that he both laments and reveals: "Weak as the reed—weak—feeble as my voice— / O, O, the pain, the pain of feebleness." When the half-hearted prayer for restoration is finished, the narrator is reminded not of an exalted literary or mythological comparison but merely of "some old man of the earth / Bewailing earthly loss" (I, 440-41).

In "Sleep and Poetry," the speaker wishes for "a nobler life, / Where I may find the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts" (123-25). At the time, this lies beyond his available experience as a poet and also is opposed by his "sense of real things," which threatens to "bear along" his soul to "nothingness" (157-59). In *The Fall of Hyperion*, his successor does find such a "life," but within poetry and the poetic experience itself; he is able to find it just because he has passed through the pain of beginning imaginative creation and has admitted a "sense of real things" into his experience. The discovery of Saturn's "mortality," moreover, fleetingly seems to open the way for a new stage in the creative process. It is at this point that the ideal union of sight and sound is defined, not by its presence but by its absence: "nor could my eyes / And ears act with that pleasant unison of sense," etc. Again, the passive, spectatorial pleasures of the vision are disrupted, and Saturn once more is motionless, sitting "fix'd" under the "sable trees"; but this time the watcher is not at a loss. In one of the fullest of the descriptive passages that are his own contribution to his account of the dream (I, 445-54), he is able to combine acute physical observation with an understanding of Saturn's peculiar "depth" which at last puts the whole scene in a unified poetic perspective. The trees are half animate, with "arms spread straggling in wild serpent forms" and "leaves all hush'd"; Saturn in turn seems a part of nature, although his stillness now reveals the truth about his condition rather than concealing it:

(Now all was silent) gave a deadly lie
To what I erewhile heard; only his lips
Trembled amid the white curls of his beard.
They told the truth, though, round, the snowy locks
Hung nobly, as upon the face of heaven
A mid day fleece of clouds.

... his awful presence there

For a moment, as the vision is about to end, his successfully functioning double sight gives the new initiate independent control of a portion of it which might be transferred from the dream to a poem with no assistance by Moneta.

Thus, even though Keats's narrator returns to his dependence on Moneta as a muse, by the close of Canto I there has been a hint that ultimately the presented vision of the Titans and the conceit of the poet as a passive aesthetic spectator may be replaced by a more direct method of composition and a more humanistic subject-matter. The metaphor with which the canto concludes, the “ante-chamber” and “open doors,” seems to anticipate a number of later episodes in which there might be further tests and discoveries, until the creative process going on in the dream and the later process of “telling” the dream became one. The finished work as it stood then perhaps would be the last revelation of all of what a poem should be about and how it should be composed.

Perhaps. As *The Fall of Hyperion* actually stands, the dreamer becoming poet has barely passed out of the “antechamber” when the text breaks off. The proliferating serial structure of the dream-vision was evidently a hazard even in the Middle Ages, for both *Roman de la Rose* and *The House of Fame* remained unfinished. Typically, also, the Romantic poem about the experience of poetic composition is open-ended, even when it is finished in a formal sense; its final completion, whether in achievement by the poet or effect on an audience, is likely to be left to some future time or some different situation. *The Fall* is especially complicated by its place in the whole *Hyperion* project, which occupied Keats for more than a year and underwent an obvious evolution of its own. By the third book, the subject of *Hyperion* was no longer the Titans and Olympians but Apollo, the god of poetry; it was Apollo's physical transformation, his painful “dying into life,” abandoned in mid-sentence, out of which *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* arose. When *The Fall* was abandoned in turn, although evolution was part of its theme and there was no third version to replace it, the reason may have been simply that the complex process it dramatized was being transferred from the poem to its author's literary biography. Keats, if not his narrator, may have felt that he had already learned what he needed to know in order to become a poet.

Notes

1. The most intensive remains that of J. M. Murry; see *Keats* (4th ed., 1954; reprinted New York, 1962), chap. 9. Recent discussions include Bernard Blackstone, *The Consecrated Urn: An Interpretation of Keats in Terms of Growth and Form* (London, 1959), pp. 249-52; Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* (New York, 1961), pp. 417-19; W. J. Bate, *John Keats* (Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 598-600; E. E. Bostetter, *The Romantic Ventriloquists: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Byron* (University of Washington Press, 1963), pp. 164-69; Karl Kroeber, *The Artifice of Reality: Poetic Style in Wordsworth, Foscolo, Keats, and Leopardi* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), pp. 149-52; Walter H. Evert, *Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of Keats* (Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 295.
2. See J. R. Caldwell, *John Keats' Fancy: The Effect on Keats of the Psychology of His Day* (Cornell University Press, 1945). Recent discussions of the aestheticians are W. J. Hipple, Jr., *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1957), and E. L. Tuveson, *The Imagination as a Means of Grace: Locke and the Aesthetics of Romanticism* (University of California Press, 1960), chaps. 6-7.
3. Archibald Alison, *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (5th ed.; Edinburgh, 1817), i, 10-11. Cf. Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism* (5th ed.; Edinburgh, 1774), i, 93; Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (Boston, 1836), i, 373.
4. See my article, “‘Kubla Khan’ and the Creative Process,” *Studies in Romanticism*, vi (1966), 1-21.
5. On the *topoi*, see E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W. R. Trask, Bollingen Series xxxvi (New York, 1953), p. 198. The description of the garden in *The Fall of Hyperion* (I, 19 ff.) is specifically cited by Curtius (p. 195) as an example of the “grove” or “mixed forest” *topos*. Cf. also p. 102, on dreams and visions.
6. See *The House of Fame* III, 1356-1418; *The Temple of Fame*, 248-75.
7. See *Endymion* II, 717-19, III, 939-40, IV, 1-9; *Hyperion* I, 72-79, II, 41 ff., III, 3-13, 28-30; *The Fall of Hyperion* I, 271-75 and 372-78.

8. It is not usually noticed that even before Moneta makes her categorical condemnation, the narrator has shown that it does not apply to him. According to Moneta (I, 170-76), the dreamer is one who confuses joy and pain; whatever her new candidate may have been like in the past, the first two initiatory tests do in fact show him experiencing first pleasure and then pain, each separate and distinct from the other. Somewhat later, she assures him that he will be able to behold the scenes from her memory “Free from all pain, if wonder pain thee not” (I, 247-48). This, too, will be proven wrong when in the third test pain comes to serve a positive creative end.

There need be nothing inconsistent in Moneta's serving as guide and muse and at the same time committing errors of judgment. She is omniscient only with respect to the past and the traditional subject-matter of poetry, and in presiding over the initiation of the poet she is concerned only with the challenge and reward involved in each test in turn; anything else, including the personal qualities of the narrator that make him different from his predecessors, is quite literally none of her business. On the other hand, that she is capable of error about him in particular prepares for his eventual graduation from her tutelage, which he rehearses during the third test.

9. On this point, see E. R. Wasserman, *The Finer Tone: Keats's Major Poems* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1953), *passim*.
10. See, e.g., Stewart, *Elements*, I, 355.
11. *Hyperion* I, 85-86: “And still these two were postured motionless, / Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern.”
12. On the awakening motif from the standpoint of myth, see Dorothy Van Ghent, “Keats's Myth of the Hero,” *Keats-Shelley Journal*, iii (1954), 7-25. For a fuller discussion of Keats's odes, see my “Rhetoric as Drama: An Approach to the Romantic Ode,” *PMLA* [*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*], lxxix (1964), 74-77.
13. See *The Letters of John Keats, 1815-1821*, ed. H. E. Rollins (Harvard University Press, 1958), i, 369. Cf. i, 387, in which the statement that a poet has no “identity” leads into an allusion to *Hyperion*.

Criticism: Paul D. Sheats (essay date 1968)

SOURCE: Sheats, Paul D. “Stylistic Discipline in *The Fall of Hyperion*.” *Keats-Shelley Journal* 17 (1968): 75-88.

[In the following essay, Sheats asserts that the style of *The Fall of Hyperion* utilizes a restrained use of imagery combined with intensity of sensation, which demonstrates Keats's growth and artistic discipline.]

The summer of 1819 abundantly fulfilled Keats's prediction, in June, that his “discipline was to come, and plenty of it.”¹ In virtual retirement from the world at Shanklin and Winchester, he apprenticed himself to the new styles and forms of *Otho* and *Lamia* in a deliberate attempt to become a “popular writer” (*Letters*, II, 146). During these months he observed and welcomed the growth in himself of another sort of discipline, a “healthy deliberation” that could bear the buffets of the world calmly and with dignity. As he put it to Reynolds in July, he was “moulting: not for fresh feathers & wings: they are gone, and in their stead I hope to have a pair of patient sublunary legs” (II, 128). On the last day of the summer he acknowledged to his brother that a similar change had taken place in his poetry. “Some think I have lost that poetic ardour and fire 't is said I once had—the fact is perhaps I have: but instead of that I hope I shall substitute a more thoughtful and quiet power” (II, 209).

Perhaps the most direct expression of this artistic and personal self-discipline is *The Fall of Hyperion*, which was substantially complete by the summer's end.² As several critics have noted, the style of this fragment, as well as its “purgatorial” theme, reveals a radical change in Keats's practice of poetry.³ He not only moderated the “artful” and Miltonic idiom of the first *Hyperion*, as his own comments suggest (*Letters*, II, 167), but went

on to relax the prosodic discipline that had been one of the great achievements of his stylistic development. As W. J. Bate has observed, the “entire metrical character” of the *Fall* abandons the ideal of “intensity” that had guided his artistic self-discipline through 1818 and the spring of 1819.⁴ As fundamental a break with the past is revealed by aspects of this style that have received less critical attention than its prosody. The imagery of the *Fall*, in particular, seems the product of a “more thoughtful and quiet power,” and offers additional evidence that in this last attempt on the “cliff of poesy” Keats deliberately sought an artistic self-discipline that was ethical and philosophic in its authority.

The characteristics of Keats's earlier style are not only famous but distinctive, and detailed description would be superfluous.⁵ The odes of April and May 1819 may be viewed as the culmination of his continuing attempt to achieve a complete poetic statement of concrete sensuous richness. A concrete thing typically becomes the object of a contemplation that willingly abandons discursive or “consequitive” modes of apprehension, and seeks instead an instinctive “intensity” of sensation that is communicated by patterned vowels and consonants, a weighty and predominantly spondaic rhythm, and densely clustered, often synaesthetic images. Keats's imagery frequently implies a physical approach to the object contemplated, as his imagination “pounces upon” and “gorges” its beauty.⁶ The empathic identification that often results, as David Perkins has observed, is “so massive that it obliterates consciousness not only of self but also of anything other than the object focused upon.”⁷ Nearly all the odes of the spring, for example, are structured by an approach to and withdrawal from an object that promises (or threatens) “intensity” of sensation, and several display a concurrent “rise,” “progress,” and “setting” of imagery. In the third book of *Hyperion* Keats's impulsive apostrophe to the isle of Delos becomes a lingering appreciation of its sensuous richness:

Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade.

(iii.24-27)⁸

When Apollo enters the poem, a few lines later, he seems less of an autonomous character than a vehicle for the poet's further imaginative approach to the “leafy luxury” of the setting:

Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.

[He] wandered for

(iii.33-35)

In the last line Keats characteristically employs a suggestion of tactual intimacy to convey utter abundance of luxurious sensation.

When he revised *Hyperion*, Keats transferred this passage to the prologue of the *Fall* and converted it into an allegorical representation of the first phase in the development of a poet.⁹ Although several particulars remain the same (“palm” and “beech”), the character of the imagery is drastically changed:

Methought I stood where trees of every clime,
Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech,
With Plantane, and spice blossoms, made a screen.

(i.19-21)

This rapid roll call of unqualified specific names prevents the “intense” contemplation of concrete particulars, and serves instead to exemplify logically the unnatural variety of this allegorical garden. Fixed at a uniform

distance, the setting functions to “screen” and conceal rather than to surrender itself to the imagination of the beholder.

A similar discipline is imposed on imagery throughout the nearly four hundred lines Keats added to the poem during the summer of 1819.¹⁰ He represses any manifestation of an instinctive “intensity,” and emphasizes instead the logical, thematic, or moral significance of concrete particulars. Extended passages in the prologue, for example, establish patterns of abstract categories within which images, if they occur at all, function as typifying examples. The “sort of induction” that opens the *Fall* distinguishes two species of dreamers, the “fanatic” and the “savage” (i.1-4), each of whom is associated in the following lines with appropriate images (“vellum” and “indian leaf” [i.5]). These species are then subsumed within the genus of inarticulate dreamers, and opposed to the poet who can tell his dreams (i.8). A final evaluation of the fame (and by implication the validity) of the present “dream”—the *Fall*—is then conceived as a suspended classification within the relevant categories:

Whether the dream now purposed to rehearse
Be Poet's or Fanatic's will be known
When this warm scribe my hand is in the grave.

(i.16-18)

In beginning *Endymion*, over two years before, Keats had proceeded from an initial generalization to restatements that synthesize rather than analyze and categorize concrete particulars. The “thing of beauty” of the first line becomes all beautiful things, and every image that follows embodies but diverts attention from the initial abstraction. Within a few lines, the poet's spirit openly “clings and plays about its fancy” (i.620-621) with more concern for the sensuous richness than the logical significance of, for example, “clear rills / That for themselves a cooling covert make / 'Gainst the hot season” (i.16-18).

Later in the *Fall* (i.147-202) Moneta divides men into four sharply defined groups: the disinterested and the selfish, the practical and the visionary.¹¹ If the vigor of her discriminations promises a logical coherence this draft did not attain, the rigorous classification of concrete particulars remains an expression of moral judgment, as it is throughout the *Divine Comedy*. The “things” that had puzzled the will and tempted the imagination “out of thought” in the “Epistle to Reynolds” (lines 76-77), fifteen months earlier, Keats here sorts and classifies with something of the authority of a Minos.¹² He passes over whatever “intensity” they may offer the senses, and seeks to determine instead their “moral properties and scopes.”¹³

In those passages of the *Fall* that are primarily descriptive, Keats frequently selects imagery that possesses a broadly thematic significance. A number of images refer to sickness and medicine, for example, and repeated images of cold and the color white endow both sensations with obvious moral implications.¹⁴ Purity of character is on occasion summarized by the physical setting, as, for example, when Moneta sits “on a square-edg'd polish'd stone, / That in its lucid depth reflected pure / Her priestess garments” (ii.51-53).¹⁵ Similes refer to theme with a conscious allusiveness new to Keats's poetry: the mention of Eve (i.31) implies the consequences of the Dreamer's “appetite” (i.38), and Proserpine (i.37), like the Dreamer, knows “what 'tis to die and live again” (i.142).¹⁶ As Ridley and Muir have shown, Keats revised the first *Hyperion* so as to clarify relevance and coherence of imagery. The excised “green-rob'd senators of mighty woods” (*Hyperion*, i.73) added little to the relevance of the simile it adorned (which was concerned with a sound) and did not point to a theme of the narrative.¹⁷ The artful but thematically irrelevant similes that had emphasized Thea's size (*Hyperion*, i.26-33) are replaced in the *Fall* by a brief but more efficient comparison of Saturn to his image in the temple (i.298-300).

Like the painting that in 1817 inspired Keats's formulation of the ideal of “intensity,” the external world depicted by the prologue offers the reader “nothing to be intense upon” (*Letters*, I, 192). Although the garden

and sanctuary contain objects that promise sensuous luxury to and evoke an intense response from the Dreamer, the style itself remains detached, and neither displays nor encourages imaginative entanglements with physical things. Objects that promise intensity of sensation are half-concealed from the reader by a veil of generalized diction, which parts to reveal images that frequently discourage or repel imaginative approach. The Dreamer comes upon

a feast of summer fruits,

Which nearer seen, seem'd refuse of a meal
 By Angel tasted, or our Mother Eve;
 For empty shells were scattered on the grass,
 And grape stalks but half bare, and remnants more,
 Sweet smelling, whose pure kinds I could not know.

(i.29-34)

Unlike its predecessor in “The Eve of St. Agnes” (lines 264-270), this feast is generalized and visual.¹⁸ On closer approach the mildly pleasant “summer fruits” are “seen” as “refuse”—Keats’s sole use of the unlovely noun.¹⁹ This generalization is then resolved into concrete particulars that discourage the involvement of taste and touch, and emphasize privation rather than abundance: the shells are empty, the stalks half-bare. In the “Nightingale” ode the privation of sense had stimulated a compensatory effort by the imagination to “guess each sweet” (line 43), but these “remnants” evoke no impulse whatever; the Dreamer records his inability to classify them—“whose pure kinds I could not know”—and passes on. The simile that follows diverts our attention from the “plenty” it sets out to describe:

More plenty than the fabled

Thrice emptied could pour forth, at banqueting
 For Proserpine return'd to her own fields,
 Where the white heifers low.

(i.35-38)

Keats’s imagination passes rapidly over several associations he had explored in earlier poems, and moves from the concrete abundance of the feast to the “fair field / Of Enna” (*P.L.*, iv.269-270), which he touches with a gentler pathos than Milton, reminding us not of the young girl’s violent abduction but of her return from the dead.²⁰ The starkly unqualified final image suggests a beauty that lies beyond the grasp of the guesto and perseverance Keats had praised in *Paradise Lost*, and conveys a pathos that like Dante’s is “brief.”²¹

Throughout the following descriptions the imagery remains brief and sensuously neutral. The Dreamer’s desires are detached from the concrete objects that evoke them by solitary abstractions: “And appetite / ... Growing within, I ate deliciously; / And, after not long, thirsted” (i.38-41). If the “full draught” that relieves this thirst performs the functions of the wine in the “Nightingale” ode, it is purged, as an image, of all but the most delicate promise of sensuous richness: “a cool vessel of transparent juice, / Sipp’d by the wander’d bee” (i.42-43). The potency of this drink is not manifested stylistically, by clustered and synaesthetic imagery, but by a spare statement of its dramatic effect: “the cloudy swoon came on, and down I sunk” (i.55).

The rapid movement of the Dreamer’s attention becomes more striking in the following description of the sanctuary, the proportions of which are established by broad, sweeping movements of the eye. The relics littering the pavement are enumerated rapidly and with deliberate vagueness:

strange vessels, and large draperies,

Which needs had been of dyed asbestos wove,
 Or in that place the moth could not corrupt,
 So white the linen; so, in some, distinct
 Ran imageries from a sombre loom.

(i.73-77)

Unlike those carved on Madeline's casement (*St. Agnes*, lines 208-216), these “imageries” are not approached or explored, even though they are explicitly “distinct.”

Keats's revisions of *Hyperion* also suggest his desire to prevent prolonged contemplation of concrete things. He deliberately split the opening scene (i.1-14) by introducing a long passage that describes the dynamic growth of the Dreamer's powers of vision (*Fall*, i.297-310).²² The interpolation tends to prevent absorption in the concrete setting of the shady vale, and to dissipate the mood of intense stasis it had implied. Later in the *Fall* Keats abstracts and names this mood—“eternal quietude” (i.390). He clarifies the significance of imagery but moderates its power to evoke intensity of sensation.

The many organic images in the *Fall* act more emphatically to discourage sensuous contemplation. References to the human body are anatomically exact and highly concrete: the carotid arteries become “those streams that pulse beside the throat” (i.125), and the mouth the “roofed home” of the tongue (i.229). Keats disciplines the tactual suggestivity of the adjective “globed,” which he had exploited in the “Ode on Melancholy” (line 17), by applying it to the “brain” (i.245). The focus of tactual imagery in the *Fall* is often anatomical and painful. Cold is mentioned most frequently, and the sensuous appeal of warmth is checked in both of its appearances by immediate shifts to the thought of death (i.18, 98).²³ The imagery of the *Fall* is clearly not selected for its beauty or its promise of sensuous luxury. Like the “dead stiff & ugly” Angela, whom Keats introduced into the final stanza of the “Eve of St. Agnes” in August (*Letters*, II, 163), this imagery specifically avoids allowing the sense of beauty to overcome “every other consideration” (*Letters*, I, 194).

A further effect of stylistic discipline in the *Fall* is to discourage empathic identification with natural objects. The Dreamer is consistently stationed at a definite distance from his surroundings, and the senses he most often invokes are those that imply distance, particularly the sense of sight. If tactual or kinesthetic imagery occasionally suggests an intimate apprehension of external objects, such as the blooms that swing “light” in air (i.27), or the “soft smoke” that rises from the altar of the sanctuary (i.105), the more frequent focus of tactual imagery on the Dreamer's anatomical self encourages a centripetal movement of attention that is the opposite of empathy. A similar effect results from Keats's frequent references to the process of sensation, a characteristic of this style which may reflect his study of Dante.²⁴ A “scent” is known to the “woodland nostril” (i.406), and the Dreamer's shriek stings his own ears (i.127). His eyes “fathom the space” of the lofty sanctuary (i.82, or “ran on / From stately nave to nave” (ii.53-54). Even at moments of extreme emotion the diction notices the autonomous functioning of the Dreamer's senses:

I heard, I look'd: two senses both at once
So fine, so subtle, felt the tyranny
Of that fierce threat.

(i.118-120)

The pathetic contrast between Saturn's words and his appearance elicits a similar formulation:

And ears act with that pleasant unison of sense
Which marries sweet sound with the grace of form. (25)

Nor could my eyes

(i.441-443)

Such rigorous segregation of the different senses is the antithesis of synaesthesia, which Keats had employed in earlier poems to render heights of intense sensation. Of the three examples of this figure in the *Fall*, only

one encourages imaginative apprehension of a distant object—the “soft smoke” noticed above. The synaesthetic images evoked by the fragrance of roses and the sound of fountains act quite differently:

In neighbourhood of fountains, by the noise
Soft-showering in mine ears; and, by the touch
Of scent, not far from roses.

(i.22-24)

Tactual imagery (“touch,” “soft-showering”) here suggests neither proximity to nor identity with the things observed, but rather affirms their distance.²⁶ As generalized sense-impressions (“noise,” “scent”) impinge upon the tangible periphery of the Dreamer's mind, sensation becomes a process of conscious inference that is far removed from the instinctive outrush of empathy characteristic of the chameleon poet. Keats's attention here moves from the object beheld to the mind that beholds it, and perception results not in self-forgetfulness but in self-consciousness. Like the speaker in the first and last stanzas of the “Nightingale” ode, the Dreamer is firmly stationed within his “sole self,” and any instinct to “dissolve” or “fade away” is vigorously controlled by the style. When the pain of self-conscious thought becomes unbearable, he finds solace not in the absorbing beauty of the physical world, but in a moral reality that transfigures that world:

Deathwards progressing

To no death was that visage; it had pass'd
The lily and the snow; and beyond these
I must not think now, though I saw that face—
But for her eyes I should have fled away.
They held me back, with a benignant light. ...

(i.260-265)

However we describe it, the Dreamer's passionate response to Moneta's eyes is hardly aesthetic. Applied to this wan countenance, the “artful humour” of Keats's earlier phrase—“sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self” (*Hyperion*, i.36)—seems slightly irrelevant.²⁷

The stylistic discipline of “intensity” is obviously relevant to the allegorical form and the “purgatorial” action of the *Fall*. Detachment from the physical world emphasizes the supersensory power of a vision that “can see as a God sees, and take the depth / Of things” (i.304-305). The sharp delineation of the Dreamer's consciousness asserts the integrity of his identity, which it is the task of the prologue to establish, and implies that escape from the pain of his initiation, or from the vision that follows it, is impossible. If the style fails to display empathy, the Dreamer is characterized by a sympathy, for both his fellow men and the fallen and humanized Titans, that brings him pain.²⁸

The discipline of “intensity,” however, is not limited to the *Fall* itself. Keats's own sense of estrangement from the physical world is clear in several letters he wrote during the summer. He grew “accustom'd to the privations of the pleasures of sense” (II, 186), and took particular delight in the “beautiful” blank wall beyond his Winchester window (II, 141). If he displays an undiminished power to relish physical sensation, it is mingled with a detached, and amusing, perspective on himself that on occasion seems almost a parody of “intensity.” “Talking of Pleasure,” he wrote to Dilke in September, “this moment I was ... holding to my mouth a Nectarine—good god how fine—It went down soft pulpy, slushy, oozy—all its delicious embonpoint melted down my throat like a large beatified Strawberry. I shall certainly breed” (II, 179). A more painful focus for Keats's powers of imaginative “intensity” was provided by Fanny Brawne, whom he struggled to put out of his mind (II, 137), or imagined behind a veil of mist (II, 137, 140), like the roses and fountains of the *Fall*. He took on the hardness of sensibility the Dreamer displays: a letter is “flint-worded” (II, 142), his heart “iron” (II, 141, 146). “A few more moments thought of you would uncrystallize and dissolve me,” he wrote to

Fanny. "I must not give way to it" (II, 142).

If "intensity" became something of a personal threat to Keats during the summer of 1819, he perceived its inadequacies as broadly philosophical and ethical. The antithesis he had drawn the year before between "luxury" and "philosophy" (I, 271) was sharpened and resolved largely in favor of philosophy. He repeatedly questioned the veracity of the imagination at this time, and on one occasion opposed an erroneous but instinctive sympathy for Fanny to the criticisms of a cold but veridical philosophy (II, 127).²⁹ Perhaps his most pointed philosophical criticism of "intensity" occurs in the journal-letter of March 19, 1819, where in a deservedly famous passage he recognizes that the poetry of "intensity" is one expression of an instinctive egoism that impels the life of nature as well as most men (II, 78-81). The eagle that he chooses as an emblem for poetry (II, 81) suggests the predatory pursuit of beauty, and, as a concrete and enthralling thing, itself teases us out of thought, as does "intensity." Above the eagle, poetry and instinctive self-interest—which at one point he calls, suddenly, "sin" (II, 80)—Keats ranks the ideal of philosophical disinterestedness, a "pure desire of the benefit of others" (II, 79) which he was to embody in the impartial benignity of eyes that "beam'd like the mild moon / Who comforts those she sees not" (*Fall*, i.269-270).

That the disciplined style of the *Fall* expresses its author's concern for disinterestedness is suggested by the "system of Salvation" the poem offers, which everywhere insists on the primacy of selflessness. Moneta condemns those men in the outer world or in the temple who cannot feel the misery of their fellows. The suffering, compassionate Titaness herself is the moral opposite of the amused and detached "superior beings" (*Letters*, II, 80) of the journal-letter.³⁰ The "vision" is granted as compensation for the suffering peculiar to the disinterested poet, who cannot act to relieve the misery he perceives. The Dreamer exhibits an acute sensitivity to excessive desire; he represses the impulse to hasten toward the altar of the sanctuary as "too unholy there" (i.94), and implicitly judges his craving for vision by comparing it to the "avarice" of a search for gold (i.271-277).³¹ Unlike the paradise of the "fanatic" or "savage," the spectacle of the fallen Titans inflicts pain, from which the Dreamer fervently desires to escape: "Oftentimes I pray'd / Intense, that Death would take me from the vale / And all its burthens" (i.396-398). This intense desire for dissolution is not indulged, as it was in the "Nightingale" ode, and it seeks escape not into vision but from it. The "vision" of the *Fall*, that is, no longer subserves the desires of the poet, but disciplines them, just as the style disciplines our instinctive desire to "gorge" the beauty of the physical world.

A major effect of the revised form of the *Fall* is to divest the epic narrative of *Hyperion* of a theme that had rendered artistic disinterestedness difficult for Keats—the initiation or birth of a poet. The entrance of this theme in the third book of *Hyperion* had provoked an impulsive departure from the style (and seemingly, the action) of the previous books. By transferring this theme to the Dreamer and working it out in the prologue of the *Fall*, Keats altered the epic narrative itself, as we have seen he altered the imagery of his style, diminishing its "intensity," asserting its distance and impersonality.³² We may speculate that such a change would have facilitated the deliberate invention necessary to the poem's completion.³³

The impersonality of the epic narrative, thus revised, is apparent when it is compared to the sensuous or erotic subjects of earlier visions, such as the "Nightingale" ode or *Lamia*. There is also evident in the *Fall* an abatement of the epistemological criticism to which these earlier visions had been subjected with a severity roughly proportional to their "intensity" and implicit egoism. The imaginative approach to the nightingale proves ultimately self-exhausting and of uncertain validity, and Lamia's illusory beauty is exposed and destroyed by the pitiless "demon eyes" of the philosopher Apollonius. Despite the Dreamer's self-doubts and uncertainties about the value and truth of poetry, he accepts the vision offered him by Moneta gratefully and without question. This vision is seemingly guaranteed by the "prodigious" toil and proven disinterestedness of its beholder. In the ode "To Autumn," which in several respects profited from the more deliberate discipline of the *Fall*, epistemological uncertainties have disappeared completely.³⁴

Especially in its attempt to control what Samuel Johnson called the “hunger of the imagination,” Keats's late style seems anti-romantic in tendency.³⁵ It recalls the later development of Wordsworth, who came to doubt the adequacy of “chance-desires,” and who sought to anchor his faith in a firmer ground than the “poet's dream.” If Keats sought to free his style from absorption in the compelling intensity of concrete beauty, he did not, however, dedicate it to the abstract and metaphorical exposition of the “invisible world.” His moral and artistic vision remains fixed on a reality that is sublunary and a world in which, as a younger and more hopeful Wordsworth had said, “we find our happiness or not at all.” The style of the *Fall* morally informs and chastens our perception of concrete things, and may be said to purge and redeem the “poet's dream” instead of denying it.³⁶ The Dreamer of the *Fall* neither seeks nor receives an “unfeeling armour,” but rather opens the “horn-Book” of his heart to the pain that thought and experience inflict on Titans and men alike. His vulnerability is his strength. If these contrasts between Keats and Wordsworth measure the resilience of the former's youth, they also suggest the specifically artistic promise inherent in a “more thoughtful and quiet” poetry that, as W. J. Bate has said, was less an ending than a “final beginning.”

Notes

1. *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Hyder E. Rollins (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), II, 116. Subsequent references will be given in the text.
2. There is no reason to doubt Brown's testimony that Keats continued to remodel the *Fall* throughout the late autumn of 1819, (*The Keats Circle: Letters and Papers 1816-1878*, ed. Hyder E. Rollins [Cambridge, Mass., 1965], II, 72). The inclosure of the introduction to the second canto in a letter of September 21, 1819 (*Letters*, II, 171) suggests, however, that a draft of the poem as we have it was complete by that date.
3. Although not all critics have agreed with Middleton Murry that the *Fall* is the “profoundest and most sublime” of Keats's poems, many have noted its philosophical and emotional maturity. Recent assessments include those by W. J. Bate (*John Keats* [Cambridge, Mass., 1963], pp. 585-605); Kenneth Muir (“The Meaning of Hyperion,” *John Keats: A Reassessment*, ed. Muir [Liverpool, 1958], pp. 102-122); and Stuart M. Sperry, Jr. (“Keats, Milton, and *The Fall of Hyperion*,” *PMLA* [Publications of the Modern Language Association of America], LXXVII [1962], 77-84).
4. *The Stylistic Development of Keats* (New York, 1945), p. 176. The following discussion is indebted to this, the most thorough study of the style of the *Fall*, as well as to Muir (pp. 114-119) and M. R. Ridley (*Keats' Craftsmanship* [New York, 1933], pp. 274-279), who discuss and defend Keats's revisions of *Hyperion*. The influence of Keats's apprenticeship to the drama has been suggestively noted by Bernice Slote (*Keats and the Dramatic Principle* [Lincoln, Neb., 1958], p. 207, n. 12). Many critics have paid brief tribute to the maturity, compression, and naturalness of this style, and W. R. Manierre has specifically praised its imagery, with an emphasis considerably different from mine (“Versification and Imagery in *The Fall of Hyperion*,” *TSLA* [Texas Studies in Literature and Language], III [1961], 264-279).
5. Bate's study of the stylistic development is complemented by R. H. Fogle's *The Imagery of Keats and Shelley* (Chapel Hill, 1949), which describes the synaesthetic and empathic aspects of Keats's imagery in detail (pp. 106-122, 152-177).
6. As Keats (following Hazlitt) described Milton (*The Poetical Works and Other Writings of John Keats*, ed. H. B. Forman [New York, 1939], V, 304).
7. *The Quest for Permanence: The Symbolism of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 210.
8. All references to the poetry are to *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, ed. H. W. Garrod (Oxford, 1958).
9. Keats drew as well on Clymene's description of Delos (*Hyperion*, ii.262-264), in which the movement of attention is slowed by her childlike and admiring repetition: “I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore, / Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land / Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.”

10. These lines comprise the prologue (293 lines) and eight major interpolations (105 lines) in the narrative of *Hyperion*.
11. I paraphrase (in part) Moneta's description of these categories. In the disputed lines (i. 187-210) she further subdivides the genus of visionaries (those who enter the temple) into "dreamers" and "poets." For a detailed analysis of her frequently contradictory discriminations, see Brian Wicker's "The Disputed Lines in *The Fall of Hyperion*," *EC [Essays in Criticism]* VII (1957), 28-41.
12. In July 1818, Keats had associated the judge of Dante's *Inferno* with the vigorous and absolute discrimination between a genuine reality and a morally infirm and subjective imagination: "For who has mind to relish, Minos-wise, / The real of Beauty, free from that dead hue / Sickly imagination and sick pride / cast wan upon it?" ("On Visiting the Tomb of Burns," lines 9-12). The *Inferno* of course displays many acts of moral judgment that take the form of classifications within the categories of Hell.
13. Keats inscribed this line from *The Excursion* (i.169) on the title page of his copy of Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespear's Plays (The Poetical Works and Other Writings, V, 280)*.
14. The integrity of the sickness-medicine imagery has been noted by Karl Kroeber, in "The Commemorative Prophecy of *Hyperion*," *TWA [Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters]*, LII (1963), 203 n.
15. As several critics have noted, this passage may echo *Paradiso* ii.32 and *Purgatorio* ix.85-87.
16. Sperry has noted the relevance of the allusion to Eve, and compares it to *Paradise Lost* (p. 78).
17. Ridley (pp. 276-277) and Muir (pp. 115-116) discuss this passage.
18. In Keats's first version of the feast in *Lamia* sensuous "intensity" is controlled not only by brevity of reference, but by a rollicking rhythm and a paralleled syntax: "Gush came the wine, and sheer the meats were slic'd. / Soft went the Music; the flat salver sang / Kiss'd by the emptied goblet" (*Letters, II, 159*).
19. A substantial number of the words that characterize the diction of the *Fall* occur only there. Several of these suggest the new purposes of Keats's style: "repress" (i.94) and "confus'd" (i.78). Abstract uses of "form" (i.443) and "kinds" (i.34) are limited to this poem, as are the memorable Latinate polysyllables that dignify its relaxed syntax: "superannuations" (i.68), "fauture" (i.70), and "adorant" (i.283), among others. "Ascend" (i.107, 124), which is common in *Paradise Lost* and Cary's *Dante*, Keats used only in the *Fall*.
20. The sacrificial animals of ancient Greece had attracted Keats's attention in *Endymion* (i.214) and the *Epistle to Reynolds* (line 21), as well as the *Grecian Urn* (lines 33-34). In earlier poems he had associated Proserpine with Hades and death ("Melancholy," line 4; *Endymion*, i.944), and in *Lamia* (line 63) had pictured her weeping for her "Sicilian air," like Ruth among the "alien corn." In the *Fall* he touches the myth, more benignly, at a time of fulfillment and restoration, and returns the girl to her "own fields."
21. In his comments on *P.L.* iv. 269-270, Keats had compared it specifically to the "brief pathos" of Dante (*The Poetical Works and Other Writings, V, 302*).
22. Ridley notes this interpolation, but does not discuss its effect on the "intensity" of the original passage (pp. 274-275).
23. References to cold occur six times, whereas the more pleasant "cool" is mentioned only once. Precedents in the imagery of the *Divine Comedy* have been noted by J. L. Lowes ("*Hyperion* and the *Purgatorio*," *TLS [Times Literary Supplement]*, Jan. 11, 1936, p. 35).
24. The action of the eyes, for example, is mentioned thirty-nine times in the verses Keats composed during the summer. In four hundred lines of *Hyperion* (i.1-ii.43) I have counted twenty-two. Corresponding figures for other senses: auditory 21 and 7; olfactory 3 and 0; tactual 6 and 3; gustatory 0 and 2.

A similar formulation of perception is common in the *Divine Comedy*, where the senses are frequently personified. Among the passages in the *Inferno* that Keats marked we find, for example, "my ken discerned the form of one" (i.59), "his eye / Not far could lead him" (ix.5-6). See also, ix.73-74,

x.126-127, xi.11, xv.19-25, xxiii.27-29, for other explicit references to the process of sensation. (For transcriptions of Keats's markings, see Robert Gittings, *The Mask of Keats* [Cambridge, Mass., 1956], pp. 144-161. All references to the *Divine Comedy*, here and below, are to Cary's translation, 3rd. ed. [London, 1831].)

25. Cf. *Purg.* x.54-55: "One sense cried 'Nay,' / Another, 'Yes, they sing.'"
26. This description of the perception of roses should be compared to the synaesthesia of *Hyperion*, i.209-210: "like a rose in vermeil tint and shape, / In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye."

Of the five examples of synaesthesia that Keats revised, three are retained in the *Fall* (*Hyperion*, i.130, 186, 219; *Fall*, i.435, ii.30, 55). He may have intended to use the others (*Hyperion*, i.206, 210) later in the narrative.

27. Muir praises this passage as "perhaps Keats's greatest achievement as a poet" (p. 113), and suggests that its source was the Miltonic "turn" of *Hyperion* i.36 (p. 115).
28. Several interpolations within the narrative of *Hyperion* emphasize the Dreamer's participation in the pain of the fallen Titans, who, as Muir has pointed out of Saturn (p. 119), are consistently humanized by the revision. See particularly i.331-332, 390, and 441.
29. Keats blamed his troubles on the imagination, and implied their unreality, in May (II, 113) and September (II, 181, 186, 210). He continued to rank poetry, despite its acknowledged greatness, below "the human friend Philosopher" (II, 139) and "fine doing" (II, 146).
30. The Dreamer refers to his salvation as an "award" (i.185), and Moneta grants him the vision out of kindness (i.242). His own disinterestedness is made explicit in two lines that were deleted from the Woodhouse transcript: "Mankind thou lovest; many of thine hours / Have been distempered with their miseries" (i.166/167).
31. Cf. *Purg.* iii.10-11: "his feet desisted (slack'ning pace) / From haste, that mars all decency of act." Keats could not fail to find confirmation of his concern for disinterestedness in the *Divine Comedy*. Although such contact cannot be measured by textual parallels, it is interesting to note that he reserved his most emphatic marks for those lines in the *Inferno* that describe the wolf of avarice: "Full of all wants" (i.47; see Gittings, p. 145). As was first pointed out by Bridges, one of the most striking similes in the *Fall* (i.97-101) echoes a passage from the *Purgatorio* that describes Dante's departure from the circle of the gluttonous (xxiv.142-145). The following lines might have seemed a "greeting of the spirit" to Keats: "Blessed are they, whom grace / Doth so illumine, that appetite in them / Exhaleth no inordinate desire / Still hung'ring as the rule of temperance wills" (xxiv.148-151). If, as John Saly has most recently argued ("Keats's Answer to Dante: *The Fall of Hyperion*," *K-SJ*, [*Keats-Shelley Journal*] XIV [1965], 65-78), Keats read parts of the *Purgatorio* in the original, the relevance of this passage to his own poetry would have been more striking: "che l'amor del gusto / nel petto lor troppo disir non fuma, / esuriendo sempre quanto è giusto."
32. The "subjectivity" of the *Fall* has been noted by several critics, and much of the present discussion demonstrates that the Dreamer of the revision serves as a spokesman for subjective response to the epic narrative he witnesses. The "framework" of the poem, as D. G. James has written, is subjective (*The Romantic Comedy* [Oxford, 1948], p. 145). My point here, however, is that the epic narrative itself is purged of themes we may also describe as "subjective," and that one of Keats's aims in this revision was to free his material from the instinctive demands of his own ego. In this sense, the "subjectivity" of the *Fall* resembles that of the *Divine Comedy*, and it is to be distinguished from romantic expressionism. Two minor revisions of Saturn's speech bear on this point, for they delete statements that were more appropriate to the "camelion Poet" than to the fallen Titan. In language that echoes Keats's perhaps contemporary letter to Woodhouse (I, 387), Saturn complains that he has lost his "strong identity" and his "real self," and that he is "smother'd up" by his loss of sovereignty (*Hyperion*, i.114, 106). Keats deleted the first reference entirely, and changed the second to the less idiosyncratic "we are swallow'd up" (*Fall*, i.412).
33. There is substantial critical agreement that by working out the Apollo theme in the prologue Keats doomed the *Fall* to incompleteness. At least two questions arise here: whether he was capable of the

invention required to complete the poem, and whether his material—the Titanomachia—is relevant to the themes advanced in the prologue. If the answer to the first question cannot be known, we should not underestimate Keats's powers of dramatic invention, and it is difficult to agree with D. G. James that in the *Fall* “‘invention’ has been defeated” (p. 146). The relevance of the Titanomachia to Keats's maturing philosophy may be questioned, but it is not obviously inappropriate to the prologue, which seeks, like Keats's other “systems of Salvation” (*Letters*, II, 103), to justify human suffering and to reconcile it with art. The fall of the Titans would provide, one might guess, an opportunity to demonstrate the possibility of disinterestedness under tragic circumstance, and, in its relation to the Dreamer, might embody a vision informed by the same value. One might speculate further (since all discussion of this point is speculation) that the Apollo of the *Fall* would have been clearly differentiated from the mortal Dreamer, and that he would bear little resemblance to the bewildered and “intense” youth of *Hyperion*.

34. The subject of *Autumn* is similarly impersonal and benign. The speaker's presence is felt primarily by his quickness to comfort and reassure. If the imagery of *Autumn* is less austere than that of the *Fall*, it is organized in terms of the subject itself rather than by the poet's needs.
35. Several critics have commented on the anti-romantic tendencies of the *Fall*. Edward E. Bostetter finds that the “despondency” of the *Fall* arose out of Keats's “questioning of the fundamental tenets of Romantic Poetry” (“The Eagle and the Truth: Keats and the Problem of Belief,” *JAAC*, [*Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*] XVI [1957], 371). According to Robert D. Wagner the basic structure of the *Fall* “suggests nothing less than a *revaluation* of romantic values” (“Keats: ‘Ode to Psyche’ and the Second ‘Hyperion,’” *K-SJ*, XIII [1964], 36).
36. This, perhaps, was the point of T. S. Eliot's statement that the *Fall* exhibits traces of a “unification of sensibility” (“The Metaphysical Poets,” *TLS*, October 20, 1921, p. 670).

Criticism: Stuart M. Sperry (essay date 1975)

Sperry, Stuart M. “Tragic Irony in *The Fall of Hyperion*.” In *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*, edited by M. H. Abrams, pp. 470-85. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

[In the following essay, Sperry asserts *The Fall of Hyperion* is an expression of tragic irony. The critic also considers Adam and his dream as an allegory for poets and poetry.]

As prelude to the dreamer's coming vision, the brief paragraph of eighteen lines with which the induction to *The Fall* begins clearly establishes Keats's major theme—the dream itself, taken, as from the first he always had, as the fundamental source of poetry:

Fanatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave
 A paradise for a sect; the savage, too,
 From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
 Guesses at Heaven; pity these have not
 Trac'd upon vellum or wild Indian leaf
 The shadows of melodious utterance.
 But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die;
 For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,—
 With the fine spell of words alone can save
 Imagination from the sable chain
 And dumb enchantment. Who alive can say,
 “Thou art no Poet—may'st not tell thy dreams”?
 Since every man whose soul is not a clod
 Hath visions, and would speak, if he had lov'd
 And been well nurtured in his mother tongue.
 Whether the dream now purpos'd to rehearse
 Be poet's or fanatic's will be known
 When this warm scribe, my hand, is in the grave.

(i.1-18)

The passage advances two different and even partly contradictory ideas. The first, dwelt on by Wordsworth in *The Excursion*,¹ concerns the *universality* of poetry. All men, from the fanatic to the savage, are dreamers and hence potentially poets. In one sense the poet is only he who can record his dreams, who writes them down as verse; for “Who alive can say, / ‘Thou are no Poet—may'st not tell thy dreams’?” At the same time, however, the passage strongly suggests a necessary criterion of value, a *qualitative* distinction between the poet as mere dreamer and the dreamer as true poet. “In dreams,” Keats says with Yeats, “begins responsibility.” The fanatic, who speaks only to a sect, may discourse or write in numbers but cannot claim the title of a poet, for poetry, in this further sense, requires a meaning relevant to all mankind, a deeper universality. Nor can Keats himself be certain whether the dream he is about to recite “Be poet's or fanatic's.” The introductory paragraph thus sets forth a necessary but complex relationship between the dream and poetry. Poetry commences with the dream, yet, in its further, ideal sense, transcends it. Indeed it is just the mystery of this relationship and the obvious questions that grow from it that is the primary concern of Keats's allegory.

The description of the garden where the dreamer finds himself is remarkable for its pastoral simplicity and quiet beauty; but it possesses also a special range of significance. Both in atmosphere and detail it recalls the Garden of Paradise and, more specifically, Milton's description of Eden in *Paradise Lost*. The “trees of every clime,” the “Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech” (i.19-20), recall those catalogued in Milton's Garden; while the arbor, wreathed in scents and flowers, brings to mind the bower of Adam and Eve, with “flourets deck't and fragrant smells.” The feast of summer fruits, or what remains of it, suggests the meal Eve prepares to entertain the angel Raphael. Even should the reader miss these echoes, the references to Proserpine, recalling Milton's famous simile, and more obviously to the “angel” and “our Mother Eve” (i.31) cannot readily be overlooked.

The use of such allusions creates a special context for interpreting the events the dreamer proceeds to relate—his eating of the fruits, his thirst and drinking of the mysterious vessel of juice, his deathlike swoon and sudden starting up “As if with wings” (i.59). On one level the meal constitutes, as Brian Wicker has perceptively written, “a substantial and sacramental union” between the poet and his present condition of awareness and the lost state of human innocence.² For it is significant that the feast is only the remainder of a meal and that it contains, as the dreamer tells us, remnants of “pure kinds I could not know” (i.34). Through partaking of the fragments, he achieves communion with a former innocence and, specifically through Eve, with the universality of human experience that has descended from its loss.

The implications of the feast, however, are carried further in the effects it induces. The remnants the dreamer eats bring on a powerful yearning for the vessel and its juice:

More yearning than on earth I ever felt,
Growing within, I ate deliciously;
And, after not long, thirsted; for thereby
Stood a cool vessel of transparent juice.

And appetite,

(i.38-42)

Like the glass of nepenthe in Shelley's *Triumph of Life*, a fragment that bears comparison in many ways with Keats's, the detail and its interpretation are of vital consequence. For the draught the dreamer drinks, pledging as he does so all the living and the dead, is the “parent” of his theme. Clearly Keats was partly returning to the ending of the old *Hyperion*, where Apollo longs for wings and gains divinity through the knowledge he reads in Mnemosyne's face—

as if some blithe

Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
And so become immortal.

(iii.118-20)

However the new setting of the garden in *The Fall*, with its reminiscences of Eden and its first inhabitants, provides a strikingly different context for interpreting the dreamer's desire and the events that follow. Thus the aroused "appetite" (i.38) that seizes him recalls both the "quick'nd appetite" of Eve in her prophetic dream of temptation (*Paradise Lost*, v.30-93) and the "eager appetite" that actually seizes her in the Garden (ix.740). The dreamer relates, immediately after drinking the potion, how "down I sunk" into his deathlike swoon, just as Eve relates to Adam how she "*sunk down, / And fell asleep*" (v.91-92) after tasting the fruit in her dream. Keats's dreamer starts up suddenly "As if with wings," as Eve herself is momentarily borne up into the clouds by her guide, and as the beguiled couple imagine "Divinitie within them breeding wings" (ix.1010) after they have both eaten of the tree.

In the induction to *The Fall* Keats was reworking his earlier conception of Apollo's longing for poethood and deification, but the allegoric framework he devised to dramatize that longing gives it a new and more profound significance. The remains of the feast of summer fruits the dreamer tastes provide substantial knowledge of lost innocence and man's subsequent decline throughout the course of history. But the draught he thirsts for and drinks and to which he owes the vision that immediately follows seems in its effects to represent his own re-enactment of the Fall itself—the poet's recourse to the transforming power of the imagination. Partly with the help of Hazlitt, Keats had come to see an important analogy between man's Original Sin and the primal act of poetical conception, between the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil and the power of the imagination. For it was possible to regard the latter faculty as something less than an unqualified blessing. Just here the subtlety and insight of Milton's larger treatment of the Fall was so suggestive. Satan had approached Eve first by night and in a dream tempted her with the promised power of the forbidden fruit:

Taste this, and be henceforth among the Gods
Thy self a Goddess, not to Earth confin'd,
But sometimes in the Air, as wee, sometimes
Ascend to Heav'n.

(v.77-80)

Later the erring pair had both been tempted to believe the fruit would prove

To open Eyes, and make them Gods who taste.

of Divine effect

(ix.865-66)

They had been cruelly misled. The fact remained, however, that the promise of new power had not been totally deceitful. The fruit of the tree had indeed proved a guide to higher knowledge but in a way that neither Adam nor Eve, in their innocence, could possibly foresee. Partly through Christ's merciful intervention and partly through Adam's acceptance of the hardship his progeny must endure, the apparent disaster of the Fall had been translated into a meaningful drama of spiritual progress and final Redemption. All of this, while hardly new to Keats, was more than ever germane to his preoccupation with the nature of imaginative experience. The *Fall of Hyperion* reveals the way in which the simple logic of his earlier metaphor of Adam's dream—"he awoke and found it truth"—could mature into a complex allegory of human suffering and tragic knowledge.

.....

The change from the light and incense of the garden to the grim solemnity of the ancient sanctuary is vital to the sense of Keats's allegory. The change is that of moving from the realm of "Flora, and old Pan" to concern with "the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts," or from "the infant or thoughtless Chamber" to preoccupation with the "burden of the Mystery" (i, 280-81). It represents that growth from unthinking delight in pleasure to vision into the true nature and suffering of humanity that Keats, with "glorious fear,"³ had eagerly anticipated from the outset of his career. Yet the development we sense in *The Fall* is not merely the change from immaturity to maturity, but from innocence to experience and responsibility, nor is it unmingled with misgiving and regret. The temple, with its store of treasures, houses the enduring remains of human art and culture, the artifice of eternity, but its interior is forbidding:

The embossed roof, the silent massy range
Of columns north and south, ending in mist
Of nothing; then to eastward, where black gates
Were shut against the sunrise evermore.

(i.83-86)

The shut gates symbolize the impossibility of a return to innocence or to the garden; they bring to mind the great eastern gate of Paradise which closes behind the human pair following their loss of innocence and exclusion from bliss. Once inside there is no turning back. The only way lies forward toward the knowledge written in Moneta's face and to the struggle to achieve the understanding and transcendence of her vision. The task is no longer glorious but stern and demanding.

The shift in tone and imagery between the first and second versions of *Hyperion* is a primary clue toward determining the bent of Keats's new allegory. In comparison with the earlier version, the induction to *The Fall* is more religious than classical in tone and detail, more Christian than pagan. The temple the dreamer must enter if he is to become the poet is the memorial of human achievement and therefore timeless and classic in feeling. Yet the "strange vessels," the "Robes," and "holy jewelries" it contains are all suggestive of religious ritual.⁴ Nowhere can the change be seen more clearly than in the contrast between Mnemosyne and Moneta. In *Hyperion* Mnemosyne is a "Goddess benign" whose gift to Apollo is the poet's golden lyre. In *The Fall* Moneta is a "Holy Power," a "priestess" who is first seen ministering before an altar where the dreamer later fears his mere utterance to be "sacrilegious" (i.140). She is not only a guide but a stern admonisher and judge, while the emblems that surround her and the words she speaks are both austere and holy. The speech addressed to him before her altar,

Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,
Will parch for lack of nutriment,—thy bones
Will wither in few years, and vanish. ...

(i.109-11)

recalls the sentence pronounced by Christ upon Adam—"know thy Birth, / For dust thou art, and shalt to dust returne" (*Paradise Lost*, x.207-208). Her altar, hidden at first from the dreamer by clouds of fragrant smoke, resembles Milton's description of the holy Throne, where "of incense Clouds / Fuming from Golden Censers hid the Mount" (vii.599-600). So also the golden censer she holds—except for her veils, perhaps her most important emblem—brings to mind the "Golden Censer" in which Christ, God's "Priest," mingles those "Fruits of more pleasing savour," the prayers of the repentant Adam and Eve, before his offended Father in *Paradise Lost* (xi.22-30).

Such parallels are important not because they suggest Keats had suddenly become a convert to Christian dogma but rather because they confirm that the framework central to the allegory of *The Fall* is the conception of sin and expiation. The dreamer's struggle, unlike that of Apollo, is now not merely for rebirth as poet but against an "unworthiness" (i.182) inherent in his very nature. As Moneta later makes plain, he is, like all visionaries, guilty of a culpability not fully realized until now, and his reprieve from death seems only partly the result of his own tremendous exertion and partly the intervention of something resembling divine grace. The life-and-death struggle with which the first *Hyperion* ends is carried over and expanded in the second, but its context is changed in such a way as to give it an entirely new significance.

Like Dante's *Purgatorio*, the structure and logic of *The Fall* is that of redemptive ascent. The altar toward which the dreamer advances represents the higher condition he must achieve in rising from mere visionary to poet. Just as the "floral censers" of the garden have given way to the golden one Moneta bears, so the "sweet food" she burns in sacrifice suggests a necessary transcendence of the sweet-smelling fruit the dreamer tasted earlier. It is precisely through the clouds of sweet but "sickening" incense, spreading abroad "Forgetfulness of everything but bliss," that he must ascend to clear perception of the pain written in her features. It is revealing to compare this progression to a passage from "Sleep and Poetry," the poem of purpose and self-dedication written three years before, at the outset of Keats's career, to which *The Fall* in so many ways looks back:

O Poesy! for thee I grasp my pen
 That am not yet a glorious denizen
 Of thy wide heaven; yet, to my ardent prayer,
 Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air,
 Smoothed for intoxication by the breath
 Of flowering bays, that I may die a death
 Of luxury, and my young spirit follow
 The morning sun-beams to the great Apollo
 Like a fresh sacrifice; or, if I can bear
 The o'erwhelming sweets, 'twill bring to me the fair
 Visions of all places.

(53-63)

Virtually all the major elements of the new induction are here—the notion of a poetic heaven or sanctuary, death and rebirth, sacrifice, the need to transcend the "o'erwhelming sweets" of verse, to achieve a point of vision—but jumbled incoherently together without the meaningful development and depth of Keats's allegory. For it is important to note that the draught the dreamer drinks—his rebirth in imagination—can lead as readily to a fool's paradise, the fate of those who rot upon Moneta's pavement, as to higher insight. His salvation is never possible until he has "mounted up" a *second* time: his swoon and starting up from the garden and his ascent of the stairs before Moneta's altar are central and contrasting movements.⁵ Clearly Keats's meaning is that the luxury and ease of imaginative enjoyment can obscure the hardship of the struggle for vision into the tragic nature of human existence that is required of the poet who would live.

The redemptive aim of Keats's allegory as well as its assimilation of the old epic elements is further clarified if we pursue the suggested parallel with *Paradise Lost*, now in particular in terms of the drama of Milton's closing books. Thus the command to the dreamer to "ascend / These steps" (i.107-108) recalls the direction given by the angel Michael to Adam after the Fall, "Ascend / This Hill" (*Paradise Lost*, xi.366-67). And Michael and Adam "both ascend / In the Visions of God" (xi.376-77), just as Moneta, now the dreamer's guide, presents to him the vision of Saturn's desolation, a panorama of the past hardly less tremendous than the vision of the future Michael reveals to Adam. So also the plea the dreamer addresses to Moneta,

"High Prophetess," said I, "purge off,
 Benign, if so it please thee, my mind's film,"

(i.145-46)

brings to mind the relation, only a few lines later in *Paradise Lost*, that

Michael from Adams eyes the Filme remov'd
Which that false Fruit that promis'd clearer sight
Had bred; then purg'd with Euphrasie and Rue
The visual Nerve, for he had much to see.

(xi.412-15)⁶

To some degree Eve's vain longing for divinity of knowledge is actually fulfilled through Adam's vision, but united now with full awareness of the tremendous agony and suffering he and his progeny must bear. In the same way the draught the dreamer consumes in the garden leads not to the experience of more intense enjoyment but to a deeper knowledge of human destiny and its pain.

.....

What Keats was attempting to accomplish in the latter part of *The Fall of Hyperion* is reasonably clear. He was seeking to interpolate important sections of the narrative of the earlier *Hyperion* into his text as a higher vision of human life and destiny. From the metaphor of the Fall and the account of the dreamer's struggle to ascend he fashioned an allegory of sin, expiation, and atonement that could give genuine relevance to the old epic action. Like Adam's vision from the mount, the knowledge the dreamer gains is not merely given but in great part earned, a vision dramatizing Keats's own peculiar sense of the hardships and compensations of imaginative experience. The dreamer may transgress by tasting the fruit of the imagination yet wins redemption, with Moneta's help and intervention, through dedication to the service of humanity. Like Dante's Beatrice or Milton's Christ, a major aspect of her role is that of a vicarious sufferer and redeemer. Although fated to survey "the giant agony of the world," he is to see it through her eyes and with her promise that what for her "is still a curse" shall be for him "a wonder," a vision "Free from all pain, if wonder pain thee not" (i.243-48).

As deeply relevant as it unquestionably is to Keats's new allegorical intention, the Christian story of the Fall and the various parallels it affords are insufficient fully to elucidate the fragment he again abandoned. For it is impossible to read *The Fall* through without realizing that the major issues it raises, and consequently its entire structure, are still in a process of evolution and that, as in so much of the earlier verse, its inner debate is never finally resolved. It is not just that the work is actively and progressively dialectical; the fact is that its dialectic is neither consistent nor conclusive. Much of the problem revolves around the conception of Moneta and the balance Keats had to strike between her role of interrogator and judge on the one hand and intercessor and redeemer on the other. The real difficulties become clear only when one examines in some detail the argument she addresses to her pupil.

Following his victorious struggle to ascend, Moneta makes the declaration that "None can usurp this height" but "those to whom the miseries of the world / Are misery" (i.147-49). However, when the dreamer looks about for others near him, those benefactors of humanity who, more like slaves than fellow men, "Labour for mortal good," he is disappointed in his search. Those whom he seeks are no visionaries, Moneta exclaims.

They seek no wonder but the human face,
No music but a happy-noted voice—
They come not here, they have no thought to come—
And thou art here, for thou art less than they.

(i.163-66)

Thus far the meaning of her words is clear and inescapable. The “height” to which the dreamer's struggle has carried him is not as eminent as it might at first appear. For what Moneta is saying is that the state of innocence—the freedom from imaginative longing and the knowledge to which that longing leads—is after all the best. Never to have thirsted for the juice of the garden, never to have entered the temple and struggled up its steps, but to have remained content with humbly toiling for humanity would have been a greater virtue. The life of the selfless, unimaginative laborer for human welfare is best. The lesson Moneta reads is essentially the same as that with which Raphael admonishes the too curious Adam before the Fall:

Heav'n is for the

To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
Think onely what concernes thee and thy being;
Dream not of other Worlds, what Creatures there
Live, in what state, condition or degree,
Contented that thus farr hath been reveal'd
Not of Earth onely but of highest Heav'n.

(viii.172-78)

However, like Adam, the dreamer has fallen and cannot recapture innocence. As we have seen, the whole design of Keats's allegory is an effort to define the way of his atonement. Through his struggle he has been “saved from death” (i.138). Though still tainted, a mere “fever” of himself, he nevertheless looks to Moneta to be “medicin'd / In sickness not ignoble” (i.169, 183-84), and, when he finally glimpses her face, he finds it blanched by “an immortal sickness” progressing not to corruption but toward a terrible purity. The seed of redemption lies in the very root of his illness. The logic of this progression, however, is violated by the unexpected fury of Moneta's violent condemnation in a passage that reveals how much the main lines of Keats's allegory were still susceptible to the pressure of major doubts and questions. There is no point in reopening the textual problem of the disputed lines (i.187-210), so often wrangled over in the past, except to observe that Keats undoubtedly wrote them, that they throw a revealing light on the development of his argument, and that our chief clue to interpreting them remains the note the careful Woodhouse made in marking the passage in his transcript, that “Keats seems to have intended to erase” them. Woodhouse's supposition appears correct, for the distinction Moneta proceeds to draw is potentially disastrous to Keats's argument:

Art thou not of the dreamer tribe?
The poet and the dreamer are distinct,
Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.

(i.198-200)

Up to here the whole point of Keats's narrative has been that the poet *is* the dreamer but something more, that the essential distinction between them is qualitative, not generic.⁷

One may readily concede the probability that Keats recognized his error, that he clearly intended to omit the passage. Nevertheless there is little justification in therefore dismissing it as entirely irrelevant. The mere fact that he could compose the lines is of itself revealing. The passage suggests how much, despite the careful design apparent throughout the whole of the induction, the underlying question Keats had put so simply on March 19, “Yet may I not in this be free from sin,” remained unsettled in his mind. It suggests how much, despite an undeniable consistency of metaphor, the deeper evolution of his poem was once again the product not of any fixed intention but of an active process of self-interrogation and discovery. What the passage prepares us for, if by this time we needed any special preparation, is another work whose argument is exploratory and probational and never fully secure from the ironies of genuine uncertainty and ambivalence.

Such irresolution, barely sensed in the dialectics of Moneta's debate with her disciple, emerges more clearly as the poem proceeds. *The Fall* is a visionary work, and its mystery is more than anywhere expressed within its single most important passage—the dreamer's vision of Moneta's face. At the end of the first *Hyperion* Keats had presented the deification of Apollo merely through the “Knowledge enormous” he reads in Mnemosyne's countenance. The rush of names, deeds, and legends suggests only an intellectual enlightenment. The description of Moneta's features in *The Fall*, however, evokes an emotion equivalent to the far greater vision of the fallen Titans the dreamer is about to behold through her eyes, and thus effectively conveys its pain and sadness:

Then saw I a wan face,
 Not pined by human sorrows, but bright-blanch'd
 By an immortal sickness which kills not;
 It works a constant change, which happy death
 Can put no end to; deathwards progressing
 To no death was that visage; it had pass'd
 The lily and the snow; and beyond these
 I must not think now, though I saw that face.
 But for her eyes I should have fled away.
 They held me back with a benignant light,
 Soft mitigated by divinest lids
 Half closed, and visionless entire they seem'd
 Of all external things—they saw me not,
 But, in blank splendour, beam'd like the mild moon,
 Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not
 What eyes are upward cast.

(i.256-71)

The passage is central to an understanding of the events that follow, for the description of Moneta's features and the scene upon which she stares are related to each other as tragic perception and emotion are related to the essence of human experience. It dramatizes the truth of Keats's earlier conviction that “Knowledge is Sorrow” (i, 279) and that the poet must be one “who has kept watch on Man's Mortality” (i, 173). Only by sharing her vision of the downcast Titans and comprehending its sorrow can Keats's dreamer gain absolution from his curse and rise to the stature of a poet.

The description of Moneta's features seems calculated to invite interpretation by analogy; and unquestionably the most compelling has been that suggested by D. G. James, who, like many critics after him, saw reflected in them the agony of the suffering Christ.⁸ The parallel is no less striking than germane, for it supports the idea of her redemptive role implied throughout the course of Keats's narrative. Nevertheless the more one studies the passage within the context of what follows, the less such an interpretation seems, by itself, sufficient. The conception of Moneta's suffering as an “immortal sickness” involves a paradox not ordinarily associated with the finality of Christ's passion. Her suffering is a living death, a misery that never ends but must endure through countless ages. In the continuous wasting of her features, the mutable and the immutable, the temporal and the eternal are both contained and reconciled. Such agony is difficult even to imagine; yet there have been other attempts to portray it. While suggesting the agony of the Crucifixion, Moneta's suffering seems more nearly to recall the despairing words Adam speaks near the end of Book Ten of *Paradise Lost*, just as he begins to comprehend the destiny of his offspring, which he is shortly to behold in vision from the mount:

That Death be not one stroak, as I suppos'd,
 Bereaving sense, but endless miserie
 From this day onward, which I feel begun
 Both in me, and without me, and so last
 To perpetuitie.

(x.808-13)

Filled with new understanding and sympathy for his unfortunate progeny, while lacking any hope for their recovery, Adam laments that he is doomed to “die a living Death” (x.788), a fear justified by the epic spectacle of human misery about to unfold before him. In a similar way, the sorrow the dreamer finds in Moneta's face is the essential knowledge of the plight of Saturn and Thea, understood as a symbol of world fate, which he must perceive through her eyes.⁹

What is most significant about the dreamer's rapt perception of Moneta and her contemplation is the way it wavers between two orders of vision. The first is the type of Adam's divinely mediated vision from the mount; the other is his unreconstructed view of the hopeless misery of his fallen offspring. As we have seen, the main development of *The Fall* unmistakably suggests the intention to represent the dreamer's sin as expiable, as, in fact, a kind of *felix culpa* bringing a knowledge of higher good as well as an inevitable pain and hardship. When, through parted veils, Moneta offers to reveal the scenes contained within her brain, the dreamer, like Apollo, seems on the point of ultimate comprehension. The vision she reflects, however, even while mitigated by the light of her benignant eyes, is singularly cheerless and somber, a realization that is closer to resignation—perhaps even despair—than to hope. In the earlier *Hyperion* the myth of the fallen Titans had served as the background for a view of universal hope and progress. Despite their cruel heartbreak, there is no doubt that a power prevails within their universe working through destruction and perpetual change toward ultimate perfection—the theme of Oceanus's great speech. Moneta's gaze, however, seems to comprehend only a consciousness of endless process, an eternal “deathwards progressing / To no death,” an undetermined and interminable progression without apparent hope or purpose too terrifying to conceive (“I must not think now, though I saw that face”). It is the vision of the fallen Adam unrelieved by any promise of redemption, the vision of our modern age.

Keats's inability to dramatize any reconciling hope of comfort or assurance in Moneta's features is only too clearly reflected in what follows. The expected transcendence and breadth and grasp of vision are never realized. The power “of enormous ken,” the ability to “see as a god sees” (i.303-304) which the dreamer feels growing within him as he stands upon the height he has won, is slowly lost within the shadows of the solitary vale. Instead there are the terrible lines, among the last Keats added to the older narrative, that describe the dreamer's prolonged agony as he beholds, hour after hour, the misery of Saturn and Thea:

Intense, that death would take me from the vale
And all its burthens—Gasping with despair
Of change, hour after hour I curs'd myself.

(i.396-99)

The passage goes beyond the “vale of Soul-making,” the speculation invented in the spring to justify and explain “a World of Pains and troubles” (II, 102), to what Keats was to call his “posthumous existence” (II, 359). Only in his final letters can one find the counterpart of such despair. “Is there another Life? Shall I awake and find all this a dream? There must be we cannot be created for this sort of suffering” (II, 346). What had begun as the metaphor of Adam's dream was to end as the tragic and unfinished allegory of Keats's life, a drama mirrored in the inconclusive ending of *The Fall*. Throughout the agony of the dreamer's vigil one recollects the hardship of another spectacle and Adam's forlorn cry:

O Visions ill foreseen! better had I
Liv'd ignorant of future, so had borne
My part of evil onely, each dayes lot
Enough to bear.

.....

There can be no disputing that, had he lived, Keats might have gone on to revise and to complete *Hyperion*. The possibilities it contains for further development are myriad. Nevertheless we are left with the fragment he abandoned and with the mystery of his inability to complete the project that so preoccupied him, on and off, during the whole of his great year of poetic achievement. Although still occasionally presented in such terms, the deeper problem was not one of technical considerations, any more than it was that of supplying a mere termination to the poem. It was the task of reconciling the need for a coherent framework of traditional allegory with an entire openness to the full complexity of man's experience and with an emerging sense of the desolating loneliness and isolation of the modern poet's view. The poem derives its primary impulse from a commitment to the value and discipline of a form of spiritual and allegorical progression that can be traced as far back as "Sleep and Poetry," a form characteristic of all the great narrative poetry Keats looked to as his models. At every stage, however, within the gradual evolution of *The Fall*, the challenges and hardships to which the dreamer must submit become more arduous, the promises of consolation more uncertain, and the ascent more terrifying and insecure. The visionary framework cannot sustain the weight of human need and questioning it must support.

The root of the problem really lies in the distinction posed at the very outset of the poem's induction: that between dream and vision. The poem turns upon Keats's desire, indeed his vital need, to discriminate between the two, while at the same time preserving the grounds of a common unity. Like so much of his earlier verse from *Endymion* onward, but in a way that is more urgent, moving, and humane, *The Fall* represents his last effort to *spiritualize* the dreamer into visionary. It embraces the attempt to achieve the clarity of vision—in the full sense Keats intended—through entire fidelity to the imagination and its processes, to the creative potential of the dream. Yet the prospect that rewards the dreamer at the end of his struggle, the vision of Moneta's eternally wasted features, seems to hold only a recognition of ceaseless change and process. There is no discernible end to his vigil and no resolution to the pain he beholds. While straining toward the redemptive promise of the second Adam, the vision expresses the tragic knowledge of the first. The image of Moneta that the dream distills transcends the visionary framework that would contain it. It is rather the expression of a deeper honesty—a recognition that the pain of human consciousness must be borne without the hope of any divine intercession. *The Fall of Hyperion* is the final triumph of the metaphor of Adam and his dream. It is the supreme expression of tragic irony in Keats's work.

Notes

1. See the notes to the poem in Douglas Bush's *John Keats: Selected Poems and Letters* (Boston, 1959). Quotations from the poetry are from this edition and are included in the text. Quotations from Keats's letters are from *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1958) and are also included in the text.
2. "The Disputed Lines in *The Fall of Hyperion*," *Essays in Criticism*, VII (1957), 40, to which I am indebted. Wicker's interpretation of the dreamer's drinking the draught as a sacramental and therefore necessary communion with the past differs from my own reading of the episode in the light of man's fall and original sin; but I do not see the two emphases in the end (as my later discussion indicates) as mutually exclusive. See also the most recent study of the two *Hyperions*, Geoffrey Hartman's "Spectral Symbolism and the Authorial Self: An Approach to Keats's *Hyperion*," *Essays in Criticism*, XXIV (1974), 1-19, which sees the whole venture growing out of the theme of trespass and profanation. For helpful clues as to Keats's reinterpretation of *Paradise Lost*, I am indebted to John D. Rosenberg's suggestive discussion of Keats's relationship to Milton in "Keats and Milton: The Paradox of Rejection," *Keats-Shelley Journal*, VI (1957), 87-95.
3. "Sleep and Poetry," 128.

4. Lowes traced many details in this section of the poem to the description of the Covenantal Ark and Tabernacle of the Lord in the Book of Exodus, which Keats had probably been reading (“Moneta's Temple,” *PMLA* [*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*]li [1936], 1098-1113).
5. David Perkins has commented on this relationship in *The Quest for Permanence* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 281.
6. My italics, except for proper names. Undoubtedly Keats also had in mind a part of the invocation to Book III:

Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse,

the mind through all her power

(iii.52-54)

a passage of which he took special note in his copy of Milton.

7. The point has been convincingly argued by Murry in “The Poet and the Dreamer,” *Keats* (London, 1955), pp. 242-43. In *Keats and Shakespeare* (London, 1925), Murry had earlier placed his finger on the major confusion the disputed lines introduced, “because the word ‘dreamer’ now bears an utterly different sense. The ‘dreamer’ here is the mere romanticist” (p. 179).
8. See James's excellent study of the two *Hyperions* in *The Romantic Comedy* (London, 1948), reprinted in W. J. Bate's *Keats: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964), pp. 161-69.
9. Cf. Murry: “The fate of Saturn is a symbol of the destiny of the world, and Moneta is a symbol of the world made conscious of its own vicissitude” (*Keats and Shakespeare*, p. 182).

Criticism: Paul Sherwin (essay date 1978)

SOURCE: Sherwin, Paul. “Dying into Life: Keats's Struggle with Milton in *Hyperion*.” *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 93, no. 3 (May 1978): 383-95.

[In the following essay, Sherwin considers Keats's poetic reactions to Milton. He concentrates on *Hyperion*, noting both Milton's influence on its style, formal design, and mythological structure and Keats's attempt to create a poem of progress that subverts Milton's moral view.]

One of the most famous Romantic characterizations of Milton is Wordsworth's in the sonnet “London, 1802”:

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free.

The lines illumine Keats's “Bright Star” sonnet, which distinguishes two kinds of steadfastness and, by implication, two contrary poetic standpoints. The star of the octave, “in lone splendour hung aloft the night,” is an emblem of the Miltonic visionary, the sublimely self-sufficient artist who “abstracts” himself from nature and common humanity.¹ In the sestet there is a descent from the skies, a humanizing degradation of the bright star's regal solitude. What the star watches from its eminence far above “all breathing human passion,” Keats immerses himself in. Pledging himself to a sea of erotic desire, he becomes the “human shores” that are embraced by the “moving waters” of natural process. That watery embrace, Keats knows, is the prelude to a wintry shroud, and so he must pray for a steadfast commitment to a process that is at once self-renewing and self-obliterating.

The sonnet's stark opposition is paralleled in the letters by what may seem Keats's ultimate judgment on Milton: "Life to him would be death to me."² In Keats's greatest poetry, beginning with the "Ode to Psyche," Milton serves as an antimuse, less a "Covering Cherub" or traumatizing daemon than an antiphonal voice to be engaged in dialogue. Against Miltonic abstracted vision, which Keats fears may blast our natural faculties, and Milton's vatic estimation of the poet's role, which he suspects is self-inflating false surmise, he marshals his own comparatively unarmed vision.

The "Ode to a Nightingale," for example, is written in such a way as to dramatize Keats's differences from Milton. In stanza 5 Keats initiates a dialogue with "Lycidas" that recalls Milton's parodistic manipulation of tradition, except that, while Milton characteristically overpowers the past, Keats is willing to make do with less. The dialogue culminates in stanza 7,³ where the stunningly assertive peripety of "Lycidas" ("Look homeward Angel now, and melt with ruth: / And, O ye Dolphins, waft the hapless youth") is subdued to meditative surmise: the bird's immortal song, perhaps, "found a path / Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home, / She stood in tears amid the alien corn." Milton advances from "melt with ruth" to "weep no more," drying his own melodious tear. Keats, however, passes from Ruth to a forlorn prospect of those perilous seas that Milton abandons for his vision of the heavenly host and that he subsequently entrusts to Lycidas' guardianship. Sick for home, Milton looks homeward. At the very moment that the sun drops into the western bay, Milton himself is "mounted high," emerging as a new and greater sun: "at last he rose" to commence his prophetic exploits of raising a mortal to the skies. At the end of his poem Keats is alienated from his own visionary experience: the nightingale's song is "buried deep / In the next valley-glades."⁴ With nothing other than a natural homecoming to look forward to, Keats finds the proper emblem of his mode of being in the arresting image of Ruth, an alien doomed to perpetual homelessness.

Recognizing the dialogical element of the "Ode to a Nightingale" enriches one's understanding of the poem. Whether one conceives the ode, à la Bloom, as psychic battlefield or as playground probably reveals more about the interpreter's rhetorical strategy than about the poem itself. That is a measure of its strength. "Bright Star," however, demands to be read more as defensive warfare than as manipulative game. Here too Keats focuses on the distance between himself and Milton, but the distance is achieved at a terrible cost. Magnifying and distorting Milton's genius, Keats gives to his evocation of the star's splendor what is strongest in his own sensibility. To himself he gives a strained, uneasy rhetoric and a final "swoon to death," which wavers embarrassingly between anguishing and languishing. Keats's self-definition in reference to Milton, or the Miltonic, has driven him to an unnecessarily constrictive opposing standpoint, a modest counterassertiveness that renounces more than it redresses. Perhaps he cannot be where Milton is, but there is no need for Keats to shrink into less than he can be. Although a psychoesthetic reading of the "Ode to a Nightingale" can uncover a similar process of distortion and diminishment, the poem surmounts such reduction: Milton's life need not be Keats's death.

That Keats knew his distance from Milton is owing not only to temperamental but to temporal difference: the voice of an alien age, Milton's poetry had become a fixed star in the constellation of English literature, so monumental that it could not speak directly to a modern consciousness. That Keats should want or need to augment that distance indicates that for him Milton was a dangerous center of power, at once cherished and dreaded. Milton first becomes this ambivalent daemonic presence in *Hyperion*, the poem in which, as Bate remarks, "the powerful influence of Milton suddenly lifted Keats to the high plateau on which he henceforth proceeded" (p. 86). In terms of psychogenesis, *Hyperion* reverses the direction of "Bright Star."⁵ Keats's point of departure is the feverish press of his brother Tom's illness, a "hateful siege of contraries" that is assuaged by a "plunge into abstract images" (*Letters*, i, 369). Yet "those abstractions which are my only life" are also termed a "feverous relief" (i, 370). The press of mortal illness yields to, or merges with, the anxious press of Milton's influence, "an awful warmth about my heart like a load of Immortality" (i, 370).

Entering the threatening ancestral space of Miltonic epic and sublime fable, Keats endeavors to occupy and master it, making it his own by subduing the phantom he raises. To read *Hyperion* as "mental fight," as

More specifically, *Hyperion* is a poem about the progress of poetry, a major Enlightenment theme.⁷ Its chief concern is Apollo's coming of age, his mastery of the sun and his own poethood, and its fundamental cosmic law is that "first in beauty should be first in might" (ii.229). Progress or renewal here is effected via the displacement of an older generation by a younger, who are always more beautiful than their ancestors. Oceanus' lines on the young god of the sea who is his dispossessor reveals the manner in which Keats wants this transfer of power to take place:

"... Have ye seen his face?

Have ye beheld his chariot foam'd along
By noble winged creatures he hath made?
I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell
To all my empire: ..."

(ii.233-39)

Oceanus abdicates his realm when he beholds one who can fashion more "noble winged creatures"—that is, finer poems—than he can. His action is curious, but his reaction is even more so, for although he has no reason to exult, this is the only occasion in his speech when his rhetoric becomes impassioned. The passage becomes more telling if we recognize that the excitement of the Titan's esthetic response is in fact Keats's own as he glories in the foretaste of a "power for making" that will enable him to dispossess his precursors.

In order to realize his desire Keats must first transcend the stage of poetic consciousness represented by the Titans. Their situation, of course, is largely derived from that of the fallen angels in the first two books of *Paradise Lost*, but they are more radically "Miltonic" than that. Unlike the Satanic host, but like Milton himself in Keats's view, the massive yet crude Titans are the victims of evolutionary progression. Gods of the "infant world" (i.26), they correspond to Milton as he is characterized in the grand-march-of-intellect letter: "From the *Paradise Lost* and the other works of Milton, I hope it is not too presuming ... to say, his Philosophy, human and divine, may be tolerably understood by one not much advanced in years" (i, 281). Displacement of the Miltonic Titans is as natural as the passage from youth to maturity or—to borrow a favorite metaphor of the progress myth—as the westering passage of the sun across the heavens. In *Hyperion* Keats preserves the traditional geographical direction of the progress poem but foreshortens it, delineating a westward movement from the Asiatic Titans to the purer gods of Hellas.⁸ Milton's devils are similarly often portrayed as Oriental powers; yet there is again a parallel to Milton himself, a Hebraic avatar of that "eastern voice of solemn mood" Keats refers to in his brief account of poetic progress in *Endymion* (iv.10).⁹

A further index of Keats's intentions is his description of Hyperion at his final appearance in the poem as he stands majestically above the disconsolate Titans:

Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East:

(ii.372-75)

Keats seems to be directly responding to his friend Hazlitt. Contemplating the general decline of poetry since Milton's time, in his *Lectures on the English Poets*, Hazlitt says of the great masters of the past: "These giant-sons of genius stand indeed upon the earth, but they tower above their fellows; and the long line of their successors, in different ages, does not interpose any object to obstruct their view, or lessen their brightness" (*Works*, v, 45). Keats counters this rich gloom with the proposal that the *genii* of the past are self-eclipsing. His own dazzling god of the meridian will supplant that giant brood as effortlessly as Milton's babe routs the

hapless pagan oracles in the “Nativity Ode.”

But unlike Milton, who, despite some nostalgic misgivings, remains an audaciously confident displacer or redeemer of all imaginative traditions whatsoever (including Christianity), Keats is not at all self-assured when he sets out to transcend the Titanic powers in Book iii of *Hyperion*. Waylaid in the dark passages between youth and maturity, he cannot transfer the torch of poetic consciousness from the ancestral sun god who is setting to the new god who is waiting to dawn. What, then, perplexes Keats's program? Perhaps, as has frequently been argued, he cannot proceed because he has given too much of his sympathy to the Titans. Many, too, have felt that for similar reasons there is a falling-off in *Paradise Lost* after the richness of its first two books; but Milton is able to continue in spite of his achievement, indeed to build upon it, because he possesses a vision large enough to counter, if not wholly displace, his portrait of hell. Keats, however, has only his surmises about progress to guide him, and his predicament stems from the nature of the progress myth itself.

His dilemma is an evolutionary one, the same that confronts any authentic historiography or psychology of personal growth. He must decide whether change is to come by gradual adaptation or by mutation. Is the progression a chain of causal enlinkedness, a continuum marked out by an interpenetrating series of graduated stages, or does transition between stages necessitate abrupt, fortuitous leaps? Although Keats's firmly naturalistic sensibility and his desire to extend the achievement of the past ally him with the former position, it would seem that he would have to embrace the latter, given his catastrophic myth of war in heaven and his need to assert his authority vis-à-vis the past.

In *Hyperion* Keats's myth of progress occupies a middle (or muddled) position between these options, affording him a precariously discontinuous continuity with the world of natural process and poetic tradition. So far as the literary past is concerned, the issues are how much of the old the new must absorb to progress beyond it and how much alike the lineaments of the old and new will be once that progress is achieved. In the first two books, where he respects, however guardedly, his continuity with Milton, Keats writes self-consciously, yet powerfully, against the grain. But in Book iii, when he needs to assert himself, the voice we hear, full of inner haltings, is that of *Endymion*, indicating that he has not progressed at all. Despite Keats's intentions, *Hyperion* is an unmoving sequence of liminal moments; it is a poem eager for crossing that remains a passenger, a prisoner of the passage.

Milton's preemptive presence helps to explain Keats's unsuccessful passage. There is, of course, the matter of his reliance on Milton's stylistic mannerisms, the primary scandal according to Keats (*Letters*, ii, 167). At least equally oppressive is his strict adherence to the formal design of *Paradise Lost*, which he regarded as “Apollonian.”¹⁰ In addition to inhibiting his invention, this dependence impels him to betray his poem's fundamental truth. Keats wishes to tell a story of progress, but, in opposing hell and heaven in the opening books of *Paradise Lost*, Milton intends to define the locus of choices available to the inhabitants of our pendant world—man being the dramatic fact of Milton's poem, hell and heaven its logical necessities. Why should Keats follow him, polarizing the darkening world of the Titans and the dawning world projected in Book iii? His puzzlingly hasty account of Apollo's development may simply be a not so finely toned repetition of the invocation to light in Book iii of *Paradise Lost*. What makes Keats's repetition of the Miltonic pattern disastrous is that it all but eliminates the human middle ground of *Paradise Lost*, the only realm in which genuine progress can occur.

Willfully entering and yet unwillingly constricted by Milton's epic universe, Keats suffers what Paul de Man, following Binswanger, calls “harassed confinement.”¹¹ To remedy his situation he must establish his most advantageous relationship to Milton, affirming his own truth as opposed to Milton's error and thereby overcoming Milton's authority even if he cannot undo Milton's priority. The distance from Milton, an experiential fact that Milton's eighteenth-century epigones felt as an anguished separation, must widen, for Keats, into a generative void. Representation recognizes a void and hopelessly tries to fill it; misrepresentation

claims it as the space of free creation. At its most benign, Keats's project is re-creative, not only of himself but of Milton as well, since Milton's poetry is liberated by Keats's revisionary labor. Misrepresentation, however, also soothes an absence. In *Hyperion* Keats revises *Paradise Lost* in such a way as to void it of presence, to limit its demands, but those demands keep pressing back, and as a consequence Keats's own presence is severely limited. The void is at least as much in Keats as in Milton. It is not so much that Keats's consciousness willingly dissolves into the impersonality of the first two books, and even less that it has merged with the object of its desire, as that it is hiding there, unable to emerge in its own right, falling back on Milton so as not to lose itself utterly in its own void.

The continuous transfigurative thrust of *Hyperion* is to shrink Milton's cosmos to a manageable size in order that it may be mastered. Mnemosyne, the muse of Keats's heliocentric universe, is the bearer of the cumulative report of historical memory, but Milton's theocentric universe demands a muse whose voice is unmediated by time or place. Milton ventures a takeover of all time and all space, both beginnings and endings, and although he experiences a horror of the abyss in his explorations of hell and chaos, he cannot fall except within the purview of an omnipotent and merciful God. In *Hyperion* there is only a dim sense of "beauteous life / Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space" (i.317-18), a mysterious force whose ways cannot be justified, and if one is defeated by natural process, there is no reason to suppose that this loss will be redeemed beyond time and space as we know them. The upper spatial bound of *Hyperion's* universe is that of the shadowy Coelus, regent of what Milton scornfully calls "the middle air," the Olympians' highest heaven (*PL* i.516). Curtailing Milton's expansiveness, Keats also refuses, despite Miltonic precedent, to follow Hyperion through the void when he plunges to earth at the close of Book i. There is, in fact, no movement or action on a grand scale in *Hyperion*, only static moments of reflection or passion. An epic less Miltonic in spirit would be difficult to imagine.

The epic poet traditionally soars, but the gravity of Books i and ii of *Hyperion* precludes the possibility of flight. Behind Keats's methodical ponderousness is a temperament resolutely at odds with Milton's. Although espousing an ethical doctrine of patience in *Paradise Lost*, Milton continually displays an impatience with whatever checks the spirit's flight, whether the recalcitrance of familiar nature or the "slow-pac't evil" of fallen human time. He journeys forward and back through space and time, unwilling to be constrained by a horizontal narrative progression. His similes, for example, tend to be vertical explosions that serve less to retard the text than to suspend it, inviting us to dream of other imaginative worlds. The focus of one of Keats's similes, probably the finest in *Hyperion*, is "dreaming" oaks (i.72-79). The passage, however, does not turn in upon itself; magnifying its immediate subject rather than our consciousness, it represents neither a shift in tone nor even a true shift in subject (the reference to oaks is in keeping with the Druidic imagery applied elsewhere to the Titans, and the landscape evoked is consonant with the theme of their naturalization). Keats's treatment of the epic simile is symptomatic of the manner of the first two books. Their most distinctive characteristic is a slow, undeviating "march of passion and endeavour" (*Letters*, i, 207), an insistent linearity that verges on punctuality.

"Whose head," Keats writes, "is not dizzy at the possible speculations of Satan in the serpent prison? ... No passage of poetry can give a greater pain of suffocation" (*CW [The Complete Works of John Keats]* iii, 30). Yet, though Milton has Satan express humiliation at being reduced to so mean a stratagem, he never attempts to induce the effect Keats describes. Keats is lavish in his praise of Milton's talent for "stationing," what Bate terms "the dynamic caught momentarily in repose" (p. 584), but the restless vitalism of material and spiritual forms in Milton allow for nothing comparable to the smothering up of energy in the opening tableau of *Hyperion*:

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;

Forest on forest hung about his head
 Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
 Not so much life as on a summer's day
 Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
 But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
 A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
 By reason of his fallen divinity
 Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
 Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

(i.1-14)

There is a surprising echo of *Paradise Lost* here. The movement from morn to noon to eve in lines 2-3 and the use of “summer's day” in line 8 and “fell” in line 10 recall Milton's account of Mulciber's fabled fall from heaven:

... from Morn

To Noon he fell, from Noon to dewy Eve,
 A Summer's day; and with the setting Sun
 Dropt from the Zenith like a falling Star,
 On Lemnos th'Ægæan Isle:

(i.742-46)

As Hartman argues, Milton counterpoints his treatment of Satan's minions, adopting a rhythm reminiscent of the Book of Genesis in order to suggest the ease of divine creativity.¹² Keats, however, tropes against his source, transforming the free fall of Milton's breathing space into a saturnine fixation so intense that, as Thea says, “unbelief has not a space to breathe” (i.67). It can be argued that Keats is pressed down by the burden of Milton's influence—his “divinity / Spreading a shade”—but he is also choosing to submit to realities beyond his control: the suggestion, throughout Books i and ii, is that the patience he exhibits is what both we and the Titans are most in need of, as he makes us suffer, along with them, the unremitting pressure of existence within the spatial and temporal confines of our natural condition.

While exaggerating Milton's propensity for physical stationing, Keats voids his poem of Milton's great intellectual fixation: his doctrine of a heaven and hell in which all intelligent beings will eventually be stationed according to God's judgment. Good and evil “abhor to join” (*PL* xi.686) is the principle upon which Milton's visionary cosmos is founded; yet Keats's marginal notes on *Paradise Lost* underscore the likenesses between Milton's heavenly and infernal regions. “Hell is finer than this” is his telling remark beside a passage describing the bliss of heaven (*CW*, iii, 26). For it is in the portrait of hell—with its “darkness visible,” its fiery darkness, where “the parching air / Burns froze, and cold performs th' effect of fire,” and its desperate union of melancholy and magnificence—that Milton captures with greatest intensity those warring natural contraries that, although often modulated into a “sweet unrest” (“Bright Star”), are the basis of Keats's human reality.¹³

It may be inferred, then, that the humanizing aim of Keats's revisionism is to preserve the element of dynamic contrariety in his precursor while purging the moral dualism—the cloven fiction of good and ill—that fetters Milton's genius. Yet, in recoiling from what he saw as disastrous finalities in Milton, Keats turns to an esthetic order that is ultimately more static and constrictive than Milton's ethical order. Despite his belief that good and evil abhor to join, Milton knows that *in our world* they are cunningly interinvolved; and although the two never enter into the synthesizing dynamics of a dialectic, the obligatory task of culling and sorting them out is an ongoing, heroic labor of self-creation. There can be no self-development of this kind in the deterministic universe of *Hyperion*. To exist here is to confront, not spiritual options, but the fated conditions of fortune and misfortune: all that remains for the fortunate (more beautiful) is to fulfill the law of their being, while the

unfortunate (less beautiful) must either suffer the bewildering fact of their doom or, like Oceanus, will to become a sod. Indeed, it is not Apollo, less choosing than chosen, and certainly not the unwieldy giant Hyperion, but Time that is the true hero of *Hyperion*. For it is the grand march of esthetic progress, a fond hope hardened into necessitarian doctrine, that assumes the burdens of choice and change, releasing the newcomer from the agonizing labor of displacing his ancestors and of making his destiny his choice. The final irony here is that Keats *is* fated, although not in the way he wishes to be, and that it is the vicissitudes of time that subvert his spatial metaphor of progress.

Thus far I have been concerned largely with what Keats purges and preserves in Milton, or preserves so as to purge. Still to be considered is his most obvious and puzzling debt to *Paradise Lost*, his retention of its mythological superstructure. Is there not something anomalous about a stridently modernist “progress” poem that uses regressive machinery to express its vision? The grand-march-of-intellect letter suggests that the great modern theme is necessarily “the Mind of Man,” its quest for self-realization in a world such as ours; yet how can Keats do justice to this subject if he refuses to exile the outmoded gods of tradition?¹⁴ *Hyperion* is a poem in which two generations of immortals are heading in opposite directions: the Titans are being humanized, and the Olympian Apollo is passing from humanity into divinity. Keats's design is such that he inevitably sympathizes with the Titans and, one can surmise, would inevitably have been estranged from the deified Apollo, who embodies his aspirations. Surely he could have avoided many difficulties by dispensing with surrogates and telling the story of John Keats's emergence, or attempted emergence, as a poet.

There are manifold reasons why he did not, and I can only suggest a few of them here. He is drawn, nostalgically, to the old sublime mythologies, unwilling to sacrifice their amplitude and charm to the modern spirit of reflection. More important, he turns to them because he is uncertain of his way; lost in himself, he needs some authoritative or authenticating principle to hold on to. The mysteries pressing upon him are the uses of this world, historical change, vocation, identity—all of them elusive, all virtualities that can be inexhaustibly represented but never understood in themselves. He is concerned, moreover, with their relationships—the world's role in the formation of identity, the link between personal and historical development, the modern poet's stance in relation to his precursors—and in the letters, one sees his speculations taking shape through the agency of such genetic myths as the “Grand March of Intellect” and the “Vale of Soul-making.” Sequential, hierarchic narrative organizes Keats's inner life, giving it substance and direction. The visionariness of myth allows his speculations to assume palpable form, and its structures provide an emergency bridge between speculation and speculation. Yet, in addition to mediating potential discontinuities in thought, myth serves as a vehicle to guide him beyond, or protect him from, his thoughts. Turned reflectively upon himself and weighing his own endowment against the accumulated wealth of tradition, Keats is treading on dangerous ground, spiritually as well as intellectually. He requires a certain measure of distance from his thoughts, which is just what the cosmic myth of *Hyperion* promises to afford.

The complicating factor is that Keats remains a self-conscious modern despite his embrace of old-style myth. Insofar as he shares the impulses of the past but not the substance to which they were attached, he is conscious, always, of standing over a void, and—unless he is to be a vacuous archaist—he must allegorize or internalize his myth to an extent that Milton need not have done. New-style Romantic myth, then, is a device of art rather than an object or outgrowth of belief, differing most dramatically from traditional myth in that it is turned principally toward art, the reservoir of forms and psychic energies from which it draws its being. Keats's inspiring recognition in the “Ode to Psyche” is that he can see what is not palpably present in the great writers of tradition, the inner light that survives their outmoded forms:

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,
 Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
Yet even in these days so far retir'd
 From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,

Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd.

In *Hyperion*, a confrontation with Milton on Milton's own ground of sublime fable, Keats wrestles both with Milton's forms and with his inwardness, extroverting the former and submerging the latter. Since Keats is not yet ready to proclaim his own truth, or perhaps not yet sure what it is, his poem is less an elaboration of his own vision than a systematic dismemberment of Milton's.

Launching his argument in *Paradise Lost*, Milton tells us that Satan lay vanquished on hell's burning marl for nine days and nights after his fall, but he presents only the headlong rush of his descent (the ultimate mythic version of the birth wound) and his violent stirrings into wakefulness. At the outset of *Hyperion* we encounter another leader of a band of fallen celestial powers; Keats, however, overlooks Saturn's actual descent, presenting only its paralyzing aftershock. Frozen into nature and bound to an aching present, Saturn has little of Milton's Satan in him, despite the many superficial resemblances between them. The Satan of Books i and ii is never so humanly pathetic, and never for a moment does he lose consciousness of his own strong identity, as Saturn does. Instead, Keats models his hoary Saturn chiefly on Milton's God, imagining an enthroned Jehovah's reaction to being cast from his starry fortress. A fallen Satan can feed his guilt with prophecies of vengeance, but a fallen Jehovah, remembering that once "Fate seem'd strangled in [his] nervous grasp," might well become "smother'd up" like Saturn. A baffled sky god reduced to the status of a chthonic deity, he is powerless to act upon his vague longing to destroy the universe and fashion a new one in its stead.

There is as well a likeness between Saturn and Milton, the visionary who awakens from his dreams of heaven to discover himself famished on the cold hillside but also, and more important in this context, a giant of the imagination fallen out of the literary canon.¹⁵ If one listens carefully to Oceanus' address to Saturn, one can hear Keats's ghostly confabulation with his poetic father:

Hast sifted well the atom-universe;
But for this reason, that thou art the King,
And only blind from sheer supremacy,
One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
Through which I wandered to eternal truth.
And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
So art thou not the last; it cannot be:
Thou art not the beginning nor the end."

"... thou

(ii.182-90)

"Standing aloof in giant ignorance," Milton could not see what Keats sees.¹⁶ According to the grand-march-of-intellect letter, Milton was blinded by a naïve religious dogma. With the advent of a more enlightened age, Milton's celestial Urania would avail him no more than Saturn's outmoded bible ("that old spirit-leaved book / Which starry Uranus with finger bright / Sav'd from the shores of darkness" [ii.133-35]) can teach him what has become of his former power. Yet "aye on the shores of darkness there is light" ("To Homer"): Saturn's darkness is Oceanus' light, even as Keats's perception of Milton's blind spot guides him to the "eternal truth" that is his own salvation, the doctrine of progress that enables his "youngling arm" to topple the edifice of Miltonic epic.

In my earlier consideration of why Keats retains the old mythological machinery I omitted one explanation I find increasingly persuasive. What better means is there to "violate" the "slumbrous solitude" of the ancients (i.69), to stage a meeting between the living and the mighty dead? This confrontation is founded upon a lie against time, a literalization of the poets' claim to immortality. Yet, in accordance with Keats's wishes, it is an unequal confrontation; for although the dead live again in *Hyperion*, they are shorn of their power. Their loss of creative power is, of course, no lie: fixed in the past, the dead are a "mammoth-brood" (i.164) that cannot

evolve in consciousness, and if Saturn cannot fabricate another universe, neither can Milton write any new poems. But when Saturn laments that he is “buried from all god-like exercise / Of influence” (i.107-08), Keats lies against the real immortality of the dead.

That Keats's progress trope is a trope, a necessary lie, is evidenced by the psychic and temporal displacements of his allegory. Who, if not Keats—“cowering under the Wings of great Poets” (*Letters*, i, 239)—is overshadowed, at once pressed down and withdrawn, at the outset of the poem? Keats endeavors to empty the air of Milton's majesty and to render him voiceless, yet when his own voice surfaces *as* voice it is a “feeble tongue” (i.49). Throughout *Hyperion* it is Keats's identity that is bewildered, and the desperate cry of Saturn/Milton,

... “But cannot I create?
Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe,
To overbear and crumble this to naught?
Where is another chaos? Where?” ...

(i.141-45)

is an index of Keats's suppressed anguish over his inability to destroy Milton's epic universe or to discover a fresh space within it for himself.¹⁷ The fallen divinities of *Hyperion* lament their own ghostliness as the shadows of a former splendor.

Keats's unconscious “preposterous” trope,¹⁸ a fascinating instance of the perverse ingenuity of dissociated thinking, is clearest in the Milton-inspired debate of Book ii, where the impotence and anxiety of the moderns are projected onto the ancients. The influx of the Olympians' surpassing beauty has frozen the Titans into fantastic shapes of woe. Saturn and Enceladus, vacillators between rage and pathetic grief, and Clymene, the inarticulate victim of esthetic experience, are three exemplars of how not to be a poet in one's own time. The fourth is the apparently unwounded Oceanus. His advice that the Titans “stoop to truth” (ii.178-80) directs us to the (relatively) impoverished Pope of *An Essay on Man*, though Oceanus' position is closer to that of Hazlitt, another advocate of disinterestedness, who renounced his art for criticism when he saw he could not hope to rival a Titian or a Rembrandt. Oceanus purports to have borne his own renunciation with equanimity, but Enceladus is present to afford quite a different perspective, reminding Oceanus of his “scalding in the seas” (ii. 320).

One Titan, “blazing Hyperion,” is as yet undisplaced, still a practicing artist of sorts. Yet he too is victimized by temporal progress, an ancient undergoing the affliction of the moderns, suffering as well from a peculiarly Romantic disease of consciousness. Now that the spirit of the new age has encroached upon his pleasure palace he is in a mist, alienated from his surroundings and himself, not so much fallen as “falling continually ten thousand fathoms deep and being blown up again without wings and with all the horror of a bare shoulderd Creature.” The foregoing, from the grand-march-of-intellect letter, describes the heat and fever of a life of “high Sensations” without knowledge, presumably Keats's own condition before he hit upon his doctrine of progress, the “great whole” toward which “every department of knowledge ... [is] calculated” (*Letters*, i, 277).

It is doubtful whether such knowledge would be of much use to Hyperion, since he is doomed to participate in a universe whose purposes are antagonistic to his own desires. Satan, his closest Miltonic counterpart, is similarly thwarted. But Hyperion is too innocent to understand that the horror he perceives is a hell within and too distraught to muster Satan's astonishing defenses, the will to declare himself unchanged and to take possession of his interior abyss. Like Satan, he curses; yet when he struggles for a heavier threat it sticks in his throat, whereupon he is subjected to his greatest torment:

... from the mirror'd level where he stood
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
At this, through all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd
From over-strained might. ...

(i.257-63)

While not reducible to the pain of emergent self-consciousness, Hyperion's agony is clearly allied to it: the passage not only recalls Satan's serpentine incarnation but looks forward to the seizure of mortal knowledge Keats undergoes in *The Fall of Hyperion* (i.121-34). Hyperion, however, cannot learn from his experience. He seeks to allay his anguish by some objective action, attempting to assert himself by hastening the advance of the dawn:

... full six dewy hours
Before the dawn in season due should blush,
He breath'd fierce breath against the sleepy portals,

Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne
And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not:—No, though a primeval God:
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.

And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,
Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;

(i.264-66, 290-93, 299-301)

His “radiance faint” (i.304), Hyperion has lost the power to create. Like Milton, he has presided over his final dawn.

Milton, of course, did dawn in “Lycidas,” the opening of which Keats is quarreling with in the above passage. Milton's elegant pseudoapology for a premature harvesting of his art is not at issue here; Keats reads Milton more literally and profoundly than that. “Lycidas” begins with a crime against Nature. The violation of Nature's “seasons due” is a gesture prompted by Nature's violation of the higher principle of human life. If he does not quite make Nature afraid, Milton brings it to the bar, summoning and dismissing nature spirits like a magus in his efforts to account for the untimeliness of death, or any human loss. Although at the conclusion he returns to Nature with affection, he can do so only because it has been redeemed by the transcendent “might of him that walk'd the waves.” Such transcendence, for Keats, is original imaginative sin. He would say, along with Wordsworth, “No more shall grief of mine the season wrong” (“Intimations Ode”). Portraying Hyperion as compelled to submit to natural process, he indicates what Milton's actual experience must have been, as opposed to his poetic representation of it, even as he suggests that Milton's initial trespass against process, like that attempted by Hyperion, is a blindly reflexive reaction to his subjective indeterminacy. Both Hyperion and Milton, in other words, are lacking in “Negative Capability,” the ability to remain in uncertainties, doubts, and mysteries without nervously reaching after premature solutions.

The most uncanny feature of *Hyperion* is that whenever Keats aims his aggression outward it is also directed against himself. The poem reveals Keatsian negative capability for the defensive maneuver it often is: the will not to will can belie a mere inability or a failure of nerve. It is extravagant, but hardly an exaggeration, to identify Hyperion's impotent “over-strained might” and hysterical assault upon temporality with Keats's, not only in Books i and ii but in the fragmentary third book as well. Here we encounter another failure to dawn

and another premature attempt to lift the burden of the mystery.

Keats's project in Book iii is clarified by reading in context the grand-march-of-intellect letter's most famous section and subtlest version of the progress theme. Milton, like the obsolete Hyperion, is trapped at a point just beyond the threshold leading from the "Chamber of Maiden-Thought." Wordsworth has transcended this stage of spiritual adolescence, exploring the mysterious dark passages that lie ahead. Keats adds that, "if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them" (*Letters*, i, 281). And perhaps, in *Hyperion*, go beyond Wordsworth? Is it not golden Apollo's mission to advance or guide Keats beyond the dark passages to a final enlightened chamber, call it maturity or godhood? The hero of *Hyperion*, Keats says, is to be "a foreseeing God [who] will shape his actions like one" (*Letters*, i, 207).

Yet at the outset of Book iii Apollo is a pathos-filled quester, and Keats is both a stumbling and a retrogressive poet. Though seeking an image of his own spiritual form—like Apollo, looking for himself, his own proper voice—he is working as closely with (and against) Milton as ever, tracing a developmental progress remarkably similar to Adam's in Book viii of *Paradise Lost*.¹⁹ Whereas Hyperion is baffled by his loss of innocent consciousness, Apollo and Adam are frustrated by innocence itself, suffering a non-immediate, reflective sorrow occasioned by their unsatisfied appetite for knowledge. Neither nature nor their own unassisted power can disperse this inner darkness, and both are roused by a timely visitation. God is Adam's guide, preparing him through discourse and a series of dream events for a recognition of who he is and what is to become of him. The guide in *Hyperion* is Mnemosyne, mother of the muses, under whose tutelage Apollo has been developing from his infancy. He too has been granted beneficent, prefigurative dreams, and once, awakening from a dream of his guide, had found a golden lyre by his side. Now beholding her substantially before him for the first time, he finds her name mysteriously upon his tongue, even as Adam, gifted with divine onomathesia, names the beasts of the field by "sudden apprehension." Hindered from self-realization by his "aching ignorance," Apollo confronts Mnemosyne with the same great questions Adam poses to his second heavenly guide and guardian, the angel Raphael: Are there not other regions than this isle? What are the stars? Where is power?

But if Keats's spiritual topography resembles Milton's, Apollo learns a lesson very different from Adam's. Raphael tells Adam that he may in time "turn all to spirit" (v.497), but such an advance upward along the hierarchy of being is possible only if he recognizes the contingency of all created forms, maintains his due station, and renounces too avid a quest for knowledge or power. Apollo, however, need not stand and wait; he "ascends wing'd" after a radically condensed period of development. Gazing into Mnemosyne's face, he is at once flooded by knowledge and deified:

"Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
Creations and destroyings, all at once
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
And deify me, as if some blithe wine
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
And so become immortal. ..."

(iii.113-20)

Compare Adam and Eve's reaction to the forbidden fruit:

As with new Wine intoxicated both
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breeding wings
Wherewith to scorn the Earth.

(ix.1008-11)

Their dizzying upward fall, an ironic initiation into the divine mysteries of good and ill, disrupts that generous continuity of natural and supernatural powers that had guided their previous advancement up the ladder of being, exiling them to the “subjected Plain” of our natural condition, where they must begin another, far more precarious progress toward the recovery of paradise within their own souls. Yet, as the chosen one in Keats's account of the survival of the fittest, Apollo suffers no loss of power coincident with his sudden access of knowledge. Unlike Adam, he neither knows a sympathetic relationship to external nature, spurning the green turf as hateful to his feet, nor cares about the “happier Eden” of love, having found a lyre rather than a helpmate by his side after his dream. Married to immortal verse and initiated by his muse into the mysteries that are to be the subject of his poems, Apollo becomes a god.

Having drastically narrowed the creative circumference of *Paradise Lost* in Books i and ii of *Hyperion*, Keats again turns against Milton in Book iii, turning as well against his earlier revisionary stance. Where Milton is expansive, Keats is contractive; where Milton is patient and humanizing, Keats is eager for flight, as much away from Milton as toward apotheosis. Falling away from Milton, he nevertheless keeps falling back into, or holding on to, Milton. The potentially Adamic Apollo is on his way to becoming simply a new old-style god. But although ascendant, he cannot dawn, and at the end of the poem Keats is swept up with him to a sublime height that is also a hallucinatory abyss:

Soon wild commotions shook him, and made
flush
All the immortal fairness of his limbs;
Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
Or liker still to one who should take leave
Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd:
His very hair, his golden tresses famed
Kept undulation round his eager neck.
During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length
Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his limbs
Celestial

(iii.124-36)

Engulfed by knowledge, Apollo anguishes. What is this knowledge (of “Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions, / Majesties, sovran voices, agonies, / Creations and destroyings”) if not the Miltonic legacy, mediated by Mnemosyne, or Memory, a representative of the old Titanic order who has forsaken her peers for prophecies of Apollo? Apollo's giant agony is Keats's epic venture.

Halted at the threshold, Keats cannot assert his independent presence, at least not in *Hyperion*. As *Hyperion*'s displacer, Apollo seems to have nowhere to ascend to except the Titan's pleasure palace, an emblem of the Miltonic epic universe. From the “mirror'd level” of its pavement proceeds *Hyperion*'s “gradual agony,” Keats's “over-strained” reflection of *Paradise Lost*. Apollo, however, experiences a fortunate fall, into Keats in *The Fall of Hyperion*. Here Keats stands alone in the vast ruin that is Moneta's sanctuary, the “eternal domed Monument” of literary tradition. Striving to mount the immortal stairs leading to the muse's shrine, he relives his authorship of *Hyperion*:

Prodigious seem'd the toil; the leaves were yet
Burning—when suddenly a palsied chill
Struck from the paved level up my limbs,
And was ascending quick to put cold grasp

Upon those streams that pulse beside the
throat:
I shriek'd, and the sharp anguish of my shriek
Stung my own ears—I strove hard to escape
The numbness; strove to gain the lowest step.
Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace: the cold
Grew stifling, suffocating, at the heart;
And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not.
One minute before death, my iced foot touch'd
The lowest stair; and as it touch'd, life seem'd
To pour in at the toes:

(i.121-34)

The chill rising from the pavement threatens Keats with voicelessness and a numbing of his hands. He explains his abandonment of the two *Hyperions*—really his failure to graft the original mythological fragment onto the *Fall's* completed autobiographical induction—as follows:

There were too many Miltonic inversions in it—Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful or rather artist's humour. . . . It may be interesting to you to pick out some lines from *Hyperion* and put a mark the false beauty proceeding from art, and one p to the true voice of feeling. Upon my soul 'twas imagination I cannot make the distinction—Every now & then there is a Miltonic intonation—But I cannot make the division properly.

(*Letters*, ii, 167)

The shrieks of Apollo in *Hyperion* and of Keats in the *Fall* are a protest of the poet's voice, his word, against this bewilderment of mine and thine, the devastation of *poetic* death.

Hyperion is Keats's dying into life. Its very failure forcibly impresses upon him the full burden of the mysteries of self and vocation and leads him back, in his perplexity, to the energy and freedom of his own mind. In the great odes and in *The Fall of Hyperion* Keats recasts Milton's story of our fall into mortal consciousness in his own idiom, supplying as well whatever consolations such sadly limited consciousness can win. The specter of Miltonic influence is not exorcised, but it becomes less awesome and generally appears at Keats's bidding. Perhaps it is simply that the specter of Milton becomes more benign when Keats begins to be menaced by the specter of Wordsworth, the genius of “dark passages.” However, his more knowing and successful wrestling with Wordsworthian influence can be attributed to his experience with Milton in *Hyperion*—the threshold he could not cross until he was compelled, by the poem itself, to acknowledge the precariously liminal condition of the modern writer.

Notes

1. All quotations of Keats's poetry and prose, except the letters, are from *The Complete Works of John Keats*, 5 vols., ed. Harry Buxton Forman (Glasgow: Gowans and Gray, 1900), hereafter cited as *CW*. For a view of Milton similar to Keats's, see Hazlitt's *Lectures on the English Poets*, in *The Collected Works of William Hazlitt*, 34 vols., ed. P. P. Howe, v (London: Dent, 1930), 51, 57. Walter Jackson Bate discusses the impact of these lectures on Keats's conception of the poetical character in *John Keats* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 259-60.
2. *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*, 2 vols., ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), ii, 212. All quotations from the letters are from this edition, hereafter *Letters*, and are henceforth cited in parentheses by volume and page number.
3. Stanza 5 recalls Milton's regenerative “false surmise” of a sympathetic Nature decking Lycidas' “Laureate Hearse” with vernal flowers, or rather the figures of pastoral artifice. Within the

nightingale's bower, the space of fictional blindness and insight, Keats extends and intensifies the Miltonic interposition of ease, anticipating an "easeful Death" that is a splendid yet ironic rite of passage. Introjecting the sublime, for Keats, means introjecting death; the fictional vehicle is a laureate hearse. For Milton, however, fiction is not only a self-deceiving strategy but an insightful, if premature, guess at heaven; Milton projects the blindness of fiction as death (the pastoral as lost or mourned object) and reserves the sublime for the postfictional, postdeathly moment, introjecting the insight of fiction as immortality.

4. Cf. the invocation to Bk. iii of *Paradise Lost*, in which Milton and the nightingale are identified by synecdoche.
5. Keats embraces the "abstracted" stance of the sonnet's octave in a letter written to Tom during his Northern tour (i, 299-301); the counterpart of the sestet's stance is his condemnation of Miltonic "artfulness" after his abandonment of the *Hyperion* project (see esp. ii, 167, 212).
6. See Alvin B. Kernan, "Aggression and Satire: Art Considered as a Form of Biological Adaptation," in *Literary Theory and Structure: Essays in Honor of William K. Wimsatt*, ed. Frank Brady, John Palmer, and Martin Price (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), p. 126.
7. On the progress theme, see Reginald Harvey Griffith, "The Progress Pieces of the Eighteenth Century," *Texas Review*, 5 (1920), 218-33; Edward B. Hungerford, *Shores of Darkness* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1941), pp. 137-62; René Wellek, *The Rise of English Literary History* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1941); Rexmond C. Cochrane, "Bishop Berkeley and the Progress of Arts and Learning: Notes on a Literary Convention," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 17 (1954), 229-49; Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Blake and the Progress of Poesy," in *Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays, 1958-1970* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 193-205; and Paul Sherwin, *Precious Bane: Collins and the Miltonic Legacy* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1977), pp. 84-93.
8. Usually depicted as Egyptian *colossi*, the Titans are also given Druidic associations (i.137; ii.35), lending credence to Hungerford's contention that, had the poem been completed, Saturn would have been solaced by a prophecy of the restoration of his reign in England. However, in terms of the grand-march-of-intellect theme, the primitive Druids are analogous to the pre-Hellenic Asiatic peoples. The Asiatic coloring of the Titans is in keeping with the geographical orientation of the progress myth, the Druidic coloring with its temporal orientation. On the eighteenth-century view of Milton as "Druid," see J. M. S. Tompkins, "'In Yonder Grave a Druid Lies,'" *Review of English Studies*, 22 (1946), 1-16.
9. Progress speculations can revolve on a south-north as well as an east-west axis. See Keats's denunciation of Milton's language as a "northern dialect accommodating itself to greek and latin inversions and intonations" (*Letters*, ii, 212).
10. "Notes on Milton's *Paradise Lost*," *CW*, iii, 26.
11. "Ludwig Binswanger and the Sublimation of the Self," in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 45.
12. "Milton's Counterplot," in *Beyond Formalism*, pp. 114-15.
13. See *Letters*, ii, 360; and his praise of "the Magnitude of Contrast" in *Paradise Lost*, in *CW*, iii, 19.
14. See Hartman, "Spectral Symbolism and Authorial Self in Keats's *Hyperion*," in *The Fate of Reading and Other Essays* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 61.
15. Cf. Blake's *Milton*, where a reimagined Milton willingly descends out of the canon to redeem his descendant.
16. The quotation, from "To Homer," refers to Keats but redounds upon Homer/Milton.
17. Louis Renza, an antagonistic critical brother, has helped clarify my understanding of the Saturn-Keats relationship, and much else.
18. My hitherto unacknowledged master, Harold Bloom, is the master of preposterous (in the sense of temporal inversion) reading/misreading. See esp. *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 139-55; *A Map of Misreading* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 101-03, 125-43; and *Poetry and Repression* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 83-111.

19. See Hartman's two brief yet splendid discussions of the Apollo-Adam connection: "Adam on the Grass with Balsamum," in *Beyond Formalism*, pp. 135-37; and "Toward Literary History," in the same collection, pp. 369-72.

Criticism: Anya Taylor (essay date 1979)

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[In the following essay, Taylor looks at depictions of divine speech in *Hyperion*. The critic also focuses on the use of silence and figurative language in Keats's reworking of mythology within the Romantic period.]

Ever since Keats set down his *Hyperion* to take up the burden of his brother's death, readers have joined him in finding the epic too abstract, in finding it a detour in Keats's artistic development, or in finding it too discontinuous in style, with the antique, chiselled frigidity of books one and two falling into the regressive bathos of book three.¹ When the poet himself leads the way in dismissing his poem, it may seem quixotic to try to argue for its successful coherence. Nevertheless, I would like to suggest that *Hyperion* consciously and consistently works through a difficult problem for narrative literature in general, one that becomes acute in the Romantic era: the problem of rendering the language of gods as they die, and of discovering to replace it a personal, human, imaginative language, which is all that remains of the divine. This problem gives unity to the poem, even as it points to the impossibility of bestirring the gods to speak to us again.

The silence in *Hyperion* is almost a weight in the first two books. The sculpted figures are frozen in postures as visible as a frieze; the naiad, Thea, Saturn himself, these early forms from archaic worship, hold fingers to lips, kneel with bowed heads, and bend their elbows on their knees; they hold their positions against a lush background that is imperceptibly shifting behind them. Into this silence the speech of the Titans breaks painfully, if at all, as if choked by stone. Keats emphasizes their difficulties with speech in order to show that Titans are fading into the silent natural world whence they arose (by a euhemerism learned perhaps from Wordsworth's *Excursion*, Book 4²) and are thus subject like men to an inevitable process of growth. Divinities rise up and subside into nature's ebb and flow; their powers of speech, by which they had distinguished themselves from natural forces, are correspondingly temporary.

The epic opens in silence—the silence of the immobile Saturn, "Quiet as a stone, / Still as the silence round about his lair."³ The silence is muffled by the huge forests layered above Saturn like clouds; the air is un stirring, the stream "voiceless," the leaf unmoved, the naiad's lips silenced by her cold finger. Into the silence of the first forty-five lines, like an eternity of marble gesture, the goddess's words venture. She is fearful of breaking the silence of a world where other things are voiceless and every lip is sealed. In slow motion Thea leans toward Saturn,

Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
In solemn tenour and deep organ tone.

and to the level of his ear

(I, 46-48)

Before we can hear the words that she is about to utter, the worried poet interposes his own sense of the provisional quality of the words in which he will render what he imagines she might have said:

Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in these like accents; O how frail
To that large utterance of the early Gods!

(I, 49-51)

The poet apologizes for his pitiful rendition of a language more primary and huge even than Jove's; in a world "portion'd to a giant nerve," these fragile lines on a page, these meters, syllables, and vowels in the air, are insufficient. When the goddess finally speaks, she herself begins and ends her utterance with apology: why am I bothering you, she asks in effect in lines 52 and 70, and suggests that she should not have spoken at all. What she does say, ringed with hesitations, passes over the silence like a solitary gust over a mighty woods: "So came these words and went ..." (I, 79). If the language of a goddess is transitory and the goddess is conscious of its inadequacy, what can we expect of human language that aims to reproduce it? The poet will describe sorrow, all the while conscious of the fact that this sorrow is "too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe" (I, 160).

The fallen Titan, unable to believe in the finality of his loss, also struggles toward speech:

A little time, and then again he snatch'd
Utterance thus.—'But cannot I create?
'Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
'Another world, another universe,
'To overbear and crumble this to naught?
'Where is another chaos? Where?'—That word
Found way unto Olympus.

(I, 140-46)

His snatching is desperate and rapacious, the utterance seems to exist apart from him, and he must retrieve it as it flies away from him. In his snatching, the questions become shredded, and anxious about the agonies of creativity which the fallen god must now suffer: is there nowhere else to begin? Out of what material can a new world be invented? Must his words henceforth be ineffective? He gives commands, but hears no response but the silence following his own voice: "I will give command: / Thea! Thea! Thea! Where is Saturn?" (I, 133-34). Even Hyperion, retaining remnants of being, does not speak with ease: "He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat / Held struggle with his throat but came not forth." Hyperion, however, has been granted a separate level of palpability by his father Coelus, who calls him an evident God, capable of acting, whereas Coelus is only a voice:

'Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
'As thou canst move about, an evident God;
'And canst oppose to each malignant hour
'Ethereal presence:—I am but a voice;
'My life is but the life of winds and tides,
'No more than winds and tides can I avail:—
'But thou canst.'

(I, 337-43)

In Book II the Titans positioned in darkness also have difficulty bringing their words up, as if even their own bodies have ceased to obey them:

There is a roaring in the break-grown pines
When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise
Among immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to load
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines:
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,

No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom
Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
Thus grew it up.

(II, 116-29)

Like the naiad 'mid her reeds, the god raises his finger to his lips, for building within his mouth is a weight of sound that he deliberately will unload. But this weight is of thought that is “utterless,” by which Keats may mean either that it is so original that it has never been uttered before, or that it cannot be uttered and will not be uttered here, or that it cannot be uttered except by analogy, as with the sounds of thunder or music. When the speech finally rises up, as if of its own accord, following its own laws, it pronounces the god's ignorance of the reasons for this catastrophe and of the riddles of nature's universal scroll (II, 148, 150). It is not an enabling speech, but a disabling one. It is organized around parallel denials, each beginning with “Not” (129, 132, 140, 147). “No, no-where,” (II, 150), Saturn cries, calling for help, “What can I then?”, “What can I?” (II, 158, 160). says the voice, doubting its own existence, getting fainter and fainter.

In answering his call for help, the voices of Oceanus, Clymene, and Enceladus are described as voices, not as the statements of certain beings, and they rumble up as emanating sounds. Oceanus responds “in murmurs, which his first-endeavoring tongue / Caught infant-like from the far-foamed seas” (II, 171-72). His famous speech urging the acceptance of process is an uprising of the tides of his being; he speaks in waves of growth, as the outpouring of natural force. His speech is itself a metaphor for the ocean. Clymene, whose voice is “the simplest voice” and all of whose knowledge is “that joy is gone” (II, 253), describes the elaborate process by which she goes about deflecting her voice through “a mouthed shell” (II, 270). The mouthed shell makes melody for her, as her song through the shell rouses the melody of an enchanted island; by this complex route she is able to hear the dull shell's echo and the distant song that both drowns her and keeps her alive. Simile after simile tries to capture the liquidity of this airy music. She tells how

'[I] sat me down, and took a mouthed shell
'And murmur'd into it, and made melody—
'O melody no more! for while I sang,
'And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
'The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
'Just opposite, an island of the sea,
'There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
'That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
'I threw my shell away upon the sand,
'And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
'With that new blissful golden melody.
'A living death was in each gush of sounds,
'Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
'That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
'Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:
'And then another, then another strain,
'Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
'With music wing'd instead of silent plumes
'To hover round my head, and make me sick
'Of joy and grief at once.'

(II, 270-89)

She seems to be speaking not only of her own melody but of the poet's creation of the melody she describes, a creation that proceeds “one after one, yet all at once / Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string” in

the lines of the poem. Clymene's voice arises in this complicated process of deflection through the windings of the shell; the sound of her speaking in the assembly, at the present time of the poem, is also made self-aware, as her "too indulged tongue" (yet another mention of the organs of speech) is "thus venturing to be heard" (II, 298-99); again the voice and its cause operate on their own, without a living character impelling the voice with will and intention.

Clymene's advocacy of yielding, which is an aesthetic response to enchanting melody rather than a reasoned belief, is not so much disputed by Enceladus as overwhelmed by it. Her melody is a brook (II, 300) meeting an ocean, which "Swallow[s] it in wrath" (II, 304) when the two kinds of sound collide in the breath of the poem. The furious speech of Enceladus emphasizes that the basis of these divine words is the human syllables of the poem that is now being written and now being read:

The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus.

(II, 306-308)

Against Clymene's "baby-words" (II, 314), he rouses the Titans to "Speak! roar! shout! yell!" He shouts ponderous syllables and sees that his words have worked:

`What, have I rous'd

`Your spleens with so few simple words as these?
`O joy! for now I see ye are not lost
`O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes
`Wide-glaring for revenge!'

(II, 320-24)

In naming their "wide-glaring ... revenge," he creates it. He shouts the name of Hyperion, but after the waves of language have subsided, the poem is again bathed in "a pale and silver silence" (II, 356). In this silence Hyperion's radiance slowly illumines the postures of defeat:

There he stay'd to view

The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself.

(II, 368-70)

Hyperion, in the silence, summons from the "hollow throats" of the Titans "the name of 'Saturn!'" Oblivion, chasms, sighs, and voiceless depths swallow up these words. The shouting of names in the darkness has been to no avail. Speech, difficult to produce to begin with, has no effect once it is uttered, and rising up from hollow throats is itself hollow. Thus for a poem which is 58logue,⁴ the struggle which precedes each utterance and the emptiness which follows it indicate that Keats is conscious of the difficulty of making the gods speak even after he has positioned them, bathed them in shadow, and surrounded them with silence.

Why should it be so difficult for these beings to speak at this moment? Keats has chosen the moment when the Titans move from being forever immortal to being forever mortal. It is a terrible moment of transition from one absolute state to another, from what Stuart Sperry calls timelessness to time, or myth to history.⁵ While it is hard enough to speak of eternity (as James Joyce's Jesuit priest in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* demonstrates with his allegory of the bird bringing grains to the mountain), it is even harder to do so when it has just slipped out of one's ken. Between worlds, in a muffling absence, the Titans try to assess what is lost. They do so by a kind of negative theology whereby they can only speak of the now unknown by

what it is not, as the realization comes ever more intensely upon them that immortality is beyond reach forever. In trying to speak of such absence they resort to negations: Saturn is positioned in “no's”: “no stir of air,” “not so much life,” “the dead of leaf fell,” the stream is “deadened,” “the fallen divinity [is] spreading a shade.” Saturn's “old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead, unseptred.” “No force could wake him.” Thea, in the words that she wonders why she speaks, indicates that Saturn is already unknown; he is the deus absconditus, though it is his world that has absconded from him:

'For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
'Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;
'And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
'Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air
'Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
'Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,
'Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
'And thy sharp lightning in unpracticed hands
'Scorches and burns our once serene domain.'

(I, 55-63)

Order is gone, and Saturn is “smothered up,” “buried from all godlike exercise” and from “all those acts which Deity supreme / Doth ease its heart of love in” (I, 111-12). Having lost his “strong identity” (I, 114), he sees a world of shadows and emptiness, “lorn of light,” a “barren void.” He wonders if his shadow is moving elsewhere:

'Search, Thea, search! and tell me, if thou seest
'A certain shape or shadow, making way
'With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
'A heaven he lost erewhile.'

(I, 121-24)

Even Hyperion's “lucent empire” is “deserted void ... death and darkness” (I, 240, 242). The sun becomes black, secret hieroglyphs lose meaning (I, 277-83), and for all his glory Hyperion is starting to vanish from the center outward: “Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade / In midst of his own brightness” (II, 372-73). The Titans lie “Dungeon'd in opaque element” (II, 23); they are already scattered like Druid stones, remnants of past worship to be misunderstood by future times, their signs mere savage scratches.

To emphasize the condition of being between definable states, Keats describes the sensations pressing from one sense to another, from sound to light to weight, in similes and metaphors that squeeze a third unknown quality between their disparate terms. Things move from one form to another, or register in one sense and then inscrutably glide into being registered in another; transition, though incomprehensible in thought, is wincingly captured in the language of sense. How tight the passage is from one mode to another is demonstrated in Thea's image:

'O aching time! O moments big as years!
'All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,
'And press it so upon our weary griefs
'That unbelief has not a space to breathe.'

(I, 64-67)

The Titans cannot recall how they used to be except as a kinesthetic pressure, nor can they imagine what they will be, as creatures who die. Their fall has happened, but their language has not caught up to the event. Consequently, Keats's poem, daring to try to describe a metamorphic condition without name, a sliding, a

transforming, is at a loss for words, groping in the twilight.

Given the task of describing mythical lives that are no longer believed in, lives that existed inasmuch as they had power, but are now realmless, the Titans cannot reconstruct their ordered universe. Having no way of speaking about their realmlessness except in terms of realms, they ask Lear's questions, applied here to a lost supernatural rather than to an earthly world:⁶ Without power who are we? Without a field of action, have we any identity? Without actions in which to ease our hearts, are we any more than poor, bare, inarticulate animals?

The problem of recreating the speech of gods who are in the act of losing their power thus pervades the first two books of *Hyperion*. Moreover, aside from the difficulty of describing intermediary states between being and non-being, there are other reasons for Keats's consciousness of difficulties with speech: not only have the Titans become indecipherable ruins abandoned in overgrown groves, but also the epic form itself presents problems not troubling in romance narrative.

For Keats must dramatically project his voice through others, within an encircling epic voice, something he had not tried before. In the development of Keats's work to this point there have been two levels of mythological figures: on the first stand the mythological figures in *Endymion*—Peone, the hero himself, and Glaukos—half-borrowed and half-invented, who occasionally demonstrate unusual abilities such as living underwater, but who for the most part are described as human beings with human powers in a remote sylvan setting. On the second level are distant non-human figures such as the Moon in *Endymion* or Apollo in the early odes to him and in "Sleep and Poetry." The Moon, given its traditionally recurring life, comes to represent the revitalizing powers of imagination reflected from reality; in its phases it is the external glittering form that the otherwise internal imagination takes to body forth its recrudescence. Like the Moon, Apollo, though he has in the early odes a separate superhuman identity, appears in direct relation to Keats the poet, for the purpose of inspiring him to song, and to indicate by his presence that the poet is inspired. Apollo's own singing is subsidiary to the singing he induces in the poet, who reflects Apollo's solar glory when coming to his own imaginative fullness. In other words, these earlier mythological figures are elaborations of natural forces or mysterious human beings living close to nature, or are embodiments of the poet's own creative powers.

With *Hyperion*, however, Keats, bracing himself for the epic labour, begins the task of creating superhuman beings who are not merely additions to or reflections of himself. They must exist with the wholeness of Milton's Satan, as well as being capable of an Ovidian fluidity as they participate in nature's metamorphoses. Such wholeness or autonomy demands that the figures should seem to exist apart from the words that describe them, and should seem to have will and desire behind the screen of the poet's own surrounding language (as Satan existed so forcefully that later commentators insisted that Milton had misunderstood him). Keats struggles to release these fictions from the block of his own lines to let them be believed.

In paying so much attention to the way the voices speak, Keats seems conscious that his epic medium imprisons them (as Michelangelo's huge slaves struggle to escape from stone), and that the words of the Titans cannot be sufficiently differentiated from the words he has written about them or for them to make their Titanic speech autonomous. The distinction, mentioned above, between the palpable reality ascribed by Coelus to Hyperion and Coelus's own sense of being by contrast only a voice, indicates that Keats is working with just this layering of speech. In thus attempting to escape from the gradations of speech from human to superhuman, levelled in the same lines, he approaches the awareness of modern structuralist critics that reality is a layering of words rendering other words. Tsvetan Todorov, for instance, writes that "the supernatural is born of language, it is both its consequence and its proof: not only do the devil and vampires exist only in words, but language alone enables us to conceive what is always absent: the supernatural." The fantastic universe for Todorov "has no reality outside language; the description and what is described are not of a different nature."⁷ In suggesting that the worlds being created in words are not only secondary but tertiary,

Todorov comes close to enunciating Keats's difficulty in this particular poem, the difficulty of presenting credible fictions about supernatural beings who are in the act of returning to the natural forces that they originally were, of giving speech to figures who exist as figures of speech.

In “Sleep and Poetry” (162-205), Keats had already challenged his contemporaries to prove their greatness by turning to large mythical themes—“prepare her steeds, / Paw up against the light” (165-66)—and now that he is taking up his own gauntlet, he must feel its weight. He had anticipated in “Sleep and Poetry” wanting to depict “the meaning of Jove's large eye-brow” (170), had imagined in advance the heavenly choir lifting “its mighty self of convoluting sound / Huge as a planet” (175-76), and had promised to erase neoclassical rules and return to the fallen angel of strength (241). Here he is then with this fallen angel, trying to approximate in his poet's words the “convoluting sound, / Huge as a planet.” Perhaps as a result of such an anguished imprisonment in the medium, Keats bursts out from the layering of fictions speaking fictions of books one and two, into the private voice of book three, guided by the familiar Apollo.

Moreover, to add to the complexity of his rendering of divine language in the mesh of his own language, Keats has chosen to vitalize these mythical beings at a moment in time when they have lost their vitality, even their identity, except as images for the mind. This moment is at once the moment in and of the poem and the moment of the late eighteenth century.⁸ The divine powers have slipped away “to hide themselves in forms of beast and bird” (II, 72). As they lie scattered around, they are already returning to metaphors and emblems, fixed in significance: Asia leans on a tusk; Enceladus remembers his animal forms as ox, now “tiger-passion'd” (II, 67-68). Fusing and merging, “no shape [is] distinguishable” (II, 79). Their names “can no longer be told” (II, 81). Oceanus reverts to metaphor, as Dante's sinners into the retributions symbolic of their lives. The metamorphosis has occurred in a moment—“Just at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings” (II, 1)—a moment the reverse of that eventful one that encompasses Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, when Prometheus's mind changes and simultaneously the earth revives and Jupiter falls, and like the moment in Blake's *Milton* when in the pulse of an artery renovation is achieved. This transformation is as irrevocable as it is quick; so sudden and uncaused, the fall seems to have been made necessary by a magic potion, not by an evitable sequence of events: “for Fate / Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head, / A disanointing poison” (II, 96-98). In these moments big as years, Keats finds the Titans fallen, idle because lacking a field of activity to ease their large hearts in, and unable to describe even to themselves the glory that was lost and the selves that they were. Who were they? What are they now? They see their faces only by reflection on others (e.g., I, 96-102; II, 101-115; II, 320-24). They hear their voices as echoes or responses. Hyperion illuminates with a flash the hopelessness of their change:

'O dreams of day and night!

'O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
'O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
'O lank-ear'd phantoms of black-weeded pools!
'Why do I know ye?'

(I, 227-31)

As much as Hyperion may have wished to rally them, his flash shows their absence to themselves. It reveals their relapsing, by a reverse euhemerism, into the dreams, forms, effigies, spectres, phantoms, rocks, and streams from which they metaphorically grew. Unable to speak, barely gasping and groaning, they cannot recover their losses, and they revert to the Chaos that Ovid in three lines had lifted them from. Keats gives us divinities in absentia; they are not beings, but non-beings—shapes of shadows, wisps of darkness.⁹ Keats struggles to give them voice at the moment when they are subsiding back into the natural scene in the diminished forms of sound, shadow, and light, into “rocks that seem'd / Ever as if just rising from a sleep / Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns” (II, 10-12). Keats catches the mythological process at its ebb: where primitives had imagined gods from natural things (or so the eighteenth century mythologists had reconstructed their imaginings¹⁰), the Romantics now dissolve them back again. Keats glimpses the

demythologizing as it happens. He records the mirror image, the reversal, of Ovid's compositions in these sorrowful decompositions.

Because Keats catches the Titans in his lines as they go, they have more than ever been reduced to having a life merely in language, constructed line by line, and then decomposed line by line while their imagined stage dims. Keats hears their long withdrawing roar, and tries to preserve it in a layer behind his own words, and yet is aware that the words of this roar are identical with the words that describe its disappearing. As, by some accounts, the supernatural first came into existence when figures of speech were elaborated into stories, emerging from the extended terms of metaphor, so the supernatural dies by being absorbed back into language, into being forms of speech or ways of speaking. Keats names the Titans, places them in the midst of other names; and thereby gives them existence, however fleeting. Keats struggles in the epic not only to face the epic labour which looms over every poet in Milton's shadow,¹¹ but he also struggles to describe a world of mythological figures who have, at the moment he watches, lost their realm, forgotten what it was like to have sway, and lost the power of speaking about it. They are mute, silent, doomed to wander along the riverbanks unnoticed except by poets who might reinvent them once again in the elaborations of metaphor.

At the beginning of book three, Keats throws off the fiction of presenting us with the words of beings who never were on land or sea. He leaves the Titans to their struggle between speaking and silence, "in alternate uproar and sad peace": "O leave them to their woes." He seems to mock both himself and these beings he has labored to present:

O leave them to their woes;

For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:
A solitary sorrow best befits
Thy lips, and antheing a lonely grief.
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find
Many a fallen Old Divinity
Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.

(III, 3-9)

He is more comfortable with private sorrows, and the old divinities can no longer force their meaningfulness onto the world. Keats turns in relief to his old theme of Apollo, so that he can worry now about the syllables rising in a poet's throat, instead of also worrying about them rising in the hollow throats of beings whose throats as well as whose words he must invent, and whose giant tongues must be conveyed in his description of them if they are to be conveyed at all. The young Apollo speaks to the visiting goddess of Memory,

While his white melodious throat

Throbb'd with the syllables.—'Mnemosyne!
Thy name is on my tongue.'

(III, 81-83)

Once again in this poem, coming as a leitmotif, is the concentration on the mechanism of speech, on meaning as a weight felt pressuring tongue or throat, implying that for words to be real or sound real they must be experienced as a palpable physical sense. Here, instead of describing the gods being gods, indescribable in their hugeness, their utterances unutterable, Keats will speak in the voice of the new god, casting off the Titans' silent shapes. From his "aching ignorance" (III, 107) on his Delian island, he will take the Titans' place. "Knowledge enormous makes a God of me" (III, 113). What he knows is the knowledge of reality, not of myth (though this reality also exists primarily for the time of the poem in the words of the poem), a reality of sensible, sensuous, tangible abundance—clouds, fleeces, goblets, olives, palms, rosiness, and goldenness (III, 15-28)—like the reality of the bedroom in "The Eve of St. Agnes," a knowledge of succulent things, intensely experienced at their centers, as the boy who presses his face against the sweet shop window

would have wished.¹² When the thwarted, Keatsian Apollo is made to ask (III, 103), “‘Where is Power?’”, he wants to get through words to the stuff on the other side of the screen, to the viscous centers of things, to the felt life, to the physical thickness and oozing density, that assaults and nourishes sense and nerve, and that is beyond language.¹³ In books one and two he had been blocked in his reach toward this power at the core by the opacity, abstraction, and misting away of his shadowy figures. Keats himself had written of these two books as his “abstractions” (letter 108 to John Hamilton Reynolds, 22 September 1818) in the sense of being taken away from, drawn off, separated, or forced apart from any particular or material object. When Keats plunges into book three, he may display a certain feebleness in his opening invocations and in the almost “grotesque” scene when Apollo is hypnotized out of muteness by Mnemosyne, but it is with a burst of joy that Keats careens through this luxuriance; it is not a regression, or a “detour,” but an arrival at the real after watching the shadows die.

Keats has been criticized for the disjunction in style between books two and three, but it is possible that in saying “leave them to their woes,” he was acknowledging that the gods have simply dwindled away and cannot be resurrected by any artifice of gorgeously weighted vowels. The gods have been absorbed into the poetry of earth, shadowy, haunting reminiscences of past powers, the demonic hidden in nature, that may be summoned by an attentive poet.¹⁴ They cannot speak (it is futile to try to make them), but the poet can speak for himself.

The transition from book two to book three is thus a transition from drama to lyric, from a rendering of myth as it dies to the deployment of myth as psychology, from speaking as gods to becoming personally deified, from sensation being lost to sensation being immediately re-experienced, from the disappearance of god to the birth of self. When Apollo feels knowledge widening the interstices of his brain he exults:

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`Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,  
'Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,  
'Creations and destroyings, all at once  
'Pour into the wide hollows of my brain  
'And deify me'
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(III, 114-18)

In books one and two these grey legends, sovran voices, agonies, creations and destroyings were caught fading into myth, thence into the poetry of earth; in book three, they fill the hollows of the poet's brain until he includes previous divinity.

If we take account in some way of the epic's momentousness, we may balk at dismissing the epic as a failure. While it is possible that Keats felt he was combining too much—*King Lear* and *Paradise Lost* with Wordsworth, his *Endymion*, and Spenser, tragedy with the luxuriant growth of a poet's consciousness, loss with gain—he may also have deliberately used this incompatibility to describe the modern moment. For Keats moves from recreating a vanished mythology as it vanishes to showing us that the only mythology now possible to modern man is personal—where the myths potentially existing in figurative language project the allegories of the mind's stages. This change from book two to book three is so decisive that it might be called a revolution; language dies in the trammels of old myth and shrieks to birth shuddering in the new. Keats's labors to find a way of speaking about the material of a lost supernatural world foretell the labors of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is asking with Wallace Stevens, “What is Divinity if it can come / Only in silent shadows and in dreams?” and answering in book three as Stevens, too, will answer: “Divinity must live within [the] self.” This is the sole necessary angel when the gods have disappeared.

Notes

1. For such criticisms, see Keats's letter 108 to John Hamilton Reynolds, 22 September 1818, *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Hyder E. Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), 1:370; Morris Dickstein, *Keats and His Poetry* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 186; Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 400 ff. John Middleton Murry argues that Keats "was trying to achieve, at the cost of immense inward suffering, an attitude of detachment from 'the miseries of the world.' He was trying to control his pain, subdue his heart, and to write an 'epic.'" But Milton encourages remoteness: he "does not ... touch our depths." *Keats* (New York: Noonday Press, 1955), pp. 263 and 268.
2. Stuart M. Sperry, *Keats the Poet* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 167 ff., argues that *The Excursion* not only influenced the ideas of *Hyperion*, but that, more specifically, Saturn is modelled on the inflexible and disillusioned Solitary of *The Excursion*, Books II and III.
3. All references to *Hyperion* and later to "Sleep and Poetry" are from *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, 2nd edn., ed. H. W. Garrod (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1958).
4. According to Bate's calculations, p. 391.
5. Sperry, p. 184. Walter Evert in *Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of Keats* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 239 ff., finds this absolute distinction irreconcilable between books two and three. He asks how, if the Titans have fallen irrevocably out of eternity, can Apollo make himself eternal from within? In other words, if Apollo can do it, why can the Titans not?
6. For a discussion of the importance of *King Lear* for *Hyperion*, see Bate, pp. 391-400. Geoffrey Hartman points to *Hyperion* as a poem of painful "à-dieu" when he writes "the living and troubled development of the *Hyperion* sequence will allow us to see gods become ghosts despite themselves" in "Spectral Symbolism and Authorial Self in Keats's 'Hyperion,'" *The Fate of Reading* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 59.
7. Tsvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Cleveland, Ohio: Case Western Reserve Press, 1973), pp. 82 and 92.
8. See, for example, J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1961), ch. 1.
9. They are perhaps the "nothings" in Keats's classification of levels of reality into three categories: real, semi-real; and nothings. See *The Letters*, 1:242.
10. The eighteenth-century reexamination of mythology has been amply described in different ways by Frank E. Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1963); by Albert J. Kuhn, "English Deism and Romantic Syncretism," *PMLA* [*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*] 71 (1956), 1094-1116; and by E. S. Shaffer, "*Kubla Khan*" and "*The Fall of Jerusalem*": *The Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature 1770-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975.)
11. See Walter Jackson Bate, *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961) and Harold Bloom's sequence beginning with *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973).
12. William Butler Yeats, "Ego Dominus Tuus," Ille's fifth speech, *The Collected Poems* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), p. 159.
13. See Christopher Ricks, *Keats and Embarrassment* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976) for a rich and delicate appreciation of Keats's sensuousness.
14. For the demonic as an embodiment of natural force and inner feeling see Charles I. Patterson, Jr., *The Daemonic in the Poetry of Keats* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1970).

Criticism: Warren U. Ober and W. K. Thomas (essay date 1980)

SOURCE: Ober, Warren U. and W. K. Thomas. "Keats and the Solitary Pan." *Keats-Shelley Journal* 29 (1980): 96-119.

[In the following essay, Ober and Thomas examine the implications of Keats's use of Pan in *The Fall of Hyperion*. They asserting that the character operates figuratively as the Romantic Imagination.]

One of the most fascinating cruxes in Keats's poetry occurs in lines 410-411 of Canto i of *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, as the utterly defeated Saturn in his dejection sends "Strange musings to the solitary Pan."¹ These lines near the close of the first canto appear in a passage in which the narrator, Keats's persona, having ascended the steps to the altar in the temple of Saturn, is being accorded a vision of the deposed Titan by the goddess Moneta, priestess at the shrine. There, beside Moneta "Like a stunt bramble by a solemn pine" (line 293), he is privileged to overhear the dialogue between Saturn and Thea, wife of the as-yet-underposed Hyperion. As Moneta and the narrator watch and listen, Saturn rouses himself to speak:

Of Saturn fill'd the mossy gloom around,
Even to the hollows of time-eaten oaks,
And to the windings in the foxes' holes,
With sad low tones, while thus he spake, and sent
Strange musings to the solitary Pan.

"Moan, brethren, moan; for we are swallow'd up
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
And peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
And all those acts which deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in. ..."

(i.406-417)

Saturn speaks these lines in the presence of Thea. Also present, like members of an audience and not part of the scene, are Moneta and the narrator. Thea, Moneta, and the narrator—these three and no more—are the hearers, if one excepts "the Naiad mid her reeds" referred to in line 317. Mention of "the solitary Pan" at this point, therefore, raises certain questions, questions that are never answered in the fragment: Where is Pan? Who (or what) is Pan? Why send musings to Pan?

That most editors and commentators pass by these perplexing questions in silence is, of course, understandable, since this is the only mention of Pan in the unfinished poem. It may be, however, that "Strange musings to the solitary Pan," like the "Ancestral voices prophesying war" in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," contains more than meets the eye. Close study of the phrase from "Kubla Khan" has demonstrated its crucial significance to the poem's theme. Humphry House, for instance, says of the prophecy in "Kubla Khan" that it "is essential to the full unity of the conception: the Paradise contains knowledge of the threat of its own possible destruction."² And Richard Harter Fogle points out, regarding "the ominous prophecy of war," that "The poem as narrative can go no further than this, for the destruction is implied of Kubla's elaborate and artificial escape."³ Perhaps "the solitary Pan," like "Ancestral voices prophesying war," will reward close study; perhaps, indeed, "Strange musings to the solitary Pan," considered in the context of the poetry and thought of Keats, can be shown to have an importance in *The Fall of Hyperion* far beyond its one seemingly trivial occurrence. It will be our purpose here to try to demonstrate that it does.

I

Except for the brief extracts in Keats's letter to Woodhouse of 21, 22 September 1819, no holograph manuscript of *The Fall of Hyperion* is known to exist. Begun as a revision of the first *Hyperion* about July 1819 and in effect abandoned on 21 September of the same year, the fragment was first published in 1857 by Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton. A transcript of *The Fall of Hyperion* by Richard Woodhouse, evidently copied from a (now lost) manuscript in Keats's hand, is now preserved at Harvard in a book of

Woodhouse transcripts conventionally known as W². A second and much later transcript copied from Woodhouse's transcript by two of his clerks is also now in the Harvard collection. This transcript by Woodhouse's clerks was the source of Milnes's 1857 text, but Jack Stillinger in *The Texts of Keats's Poems* makes it quite clear that Woodhouse's transcript in W² "is the proper basis for a standard text."⁴

In view of the fact that Moneta and the narrator stand as observers and auditors of the tableau involving Saturn and Thea (and, conceivably, the Naiad), it might have been tempting to speculate that Keats actually wrote the word "Pair" instead of "Pan," indicating that Saturn sent his strange musings to them. His word "Pair" would then have been misread by the original transcriber, and hence by the later transcribers and editors following him, as "Pan." A review of samples of Keats's handwriting, however, demonstrates that he apparently wrote the terminal "ir" and the terminal "n" in such clearly distinct ways as to make it all but impossible for a copyist to mistake the "ir" combination for an "n."⁵ Hence there is no convincing reason to disagree with Keats's editors, who have not doubted the authenticity of the word "Pan."⁶

In the whole of Keats's poetry there is only one fully developed portrayal of Pan, and that is the "[Hymn to Pan]" in Book i of *Endymion* (lines 232-306). In comparison with the "[Hymn]," Keats's other treatments are scarcely more than hints, but all of them are noteworthy for one thing: they all explicitly relate Pan, in some way, to poetry, the poet, or the poetic process. In "I Stood Tiptoe" Keats refers to the story of Pan's loss of Syrinx as one of several examples of the poet's being inspired by nature to create myth. In "Sleep and Poetry" the boyish poet lingers over the lush Arcadian "realm ... / Of Flora, and old Pan," where he imagines himself, as a poet, playing with "nymphs in shady places." These, however, he will have to leave behind and pass to "a nobler life, / Where [he] may find the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts" (lines 101-125). In his Dedicatory Sonnet to Leigh Hunt in the *Poems* of 1817, Keats admits that in his day "under pleasant trees / Pan is no longer sought," just as no longer do crowds of nymphs bring offerings to "The shrine of Flora in her early May." But in Hunt himself Keats finds a surrogate for both Flora and Pan, and, so inspired, submits to him his poetic offerings. In Keats's sonnet "To Homer," the poet, he says, was blind, but "There is a triple sight in blindness keen," and the poet's triple sight, the power of poetic imagination, has been vouchsafed by the trinity of heaven, sea, and earth: Jove "uncurtain'd heaven," Neptune "made ... a spumy tent," and Pan, characteristically, "made sing ... his forest-hive."⁷

By far the most significant treatment of Pan in Keats's poetry, however, appears in the "[Hymn to Pan]" in *Endymion* (i.232ff.). In "Sleep and Poetry," as we have seen, Pan (along with Flora) is mentioned as the presider over the pastoral realm where the poet sojourns while gathering strength for the journey to his ultimate destination, "the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts." In the "[Hymn to Pan]" Keats presents, in the evolving and developing conceptions of Pan and his associations with poetry, a kind of analogy to the development and maturation of the poet pointed to in "Sleep and Poetry." In stanza i of the hymn Pan is seen, once again, as the emblem of a lush Arcadia, a world peopled by hamadryads and nymphs, fauns and satyrs. Even here Pan is associated with song, for he hearkens to "The dreary melody of bedded reeds" (i.239). In stanza ii there is a development and deepening of the conception of Pan: he becomes the god of nature-as-process, a world in which the buds of spring contain within themselves the promise of the ripeness of autumn. Again Pan is associated with song, a more developed song this time, for to him "turtles / Passion their voices cooingly" (i.247-248) and the "chuckling linnet" dedicates "its five young unborn, / To sing" for him (i.256-257). There is a further qualification and amplification in stanza iii: the association with song is left implied, as about the ears of Pan ring "all the echoes" (i.277) of, presumably, the vocal outpourings made by the Naiads in their play (a play inspired by Pan), and emphasis is placed on the beneficent qualities of Pan presented as the satyr king. He is the power in whose service agents of nature ("every faun and satyr," i.263) act; he moves them to serve as the savior of "Bewildered shepherds" (i.269) and "poor lambkins" (i.267); furthermore he initiates exuberant participation in life and then delightedly looks on as observer of unpent nature. In stanza iv Pan is seen as the god of domesticated nature, patron of the sheep-shearer, the huntsman, and the farmer. Here, too, however, there are associations with song, a song now elevated to mystery, for Pan is the

Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,
That come a swooning over hollow grounds,
And wither drearily on barren moors.

(i.285-287)

More significantly still, Pan is addressed as the “Dread opener of the mysterious doors / Leading to universal knowledge” (i.288-289), a phrasing which points to the concluding stanza. This stanza, the fifth, ends fittingly with a request that Pan accept his petitioners’ “humble paeon” (i.305)—having begun with a “dreary melody,” we have now reached the highest form of poetry, praise to the deity. The concept of that deity has likewise been elevated to the highest: he is the spirit within universal nature, “the leaven, / ... spreading in this dull and clodded earth” (I.296-297), “A firmament reflected in a sea; / An element filling the space between” (i.300-301). At the same time, being addressed as “the unimaginable lodge / For solitary thinkings” (i.293-294) that finally elude human conceptualization, Pan emerges, not unexpectedly, as linked firmly to the essence of poetry, as what Douglas Bush calls “the symbol of the romantic imagination, of supra-mortal knowledge.”⁸

The phrase “solitary thinkings” (i.294) of the hymn provides a particularly helpful gloss on the phrase “solitary Pan” in *The Fall of Hyperion*. The phrase in the later poem appears to be a classic example of oxymoron, inasmuch as “solitary,” meaning “standing alone, without parallel,” is juxtaposed with “Pan,” which was thought in Keats’s day to mean “all, the whole, the universe.” Upon reflection, of course, the seeming contradiction is resolved, for the whole, the universe, is alone and unparalleled simply because, quite literally, it is *all*—there is no more. At the same time we should like to emphasize the meaning of “solitary” as “without parallel.” Because in *The Fall of Hyperion* the word appears in a very scanty context, it might seem to mean no more than “standing alone or by itself.” But it is clear that in the “[Hymn to Pan]” the phrase “solitary thinkings” has to mean something more than “single thoughts”: “thinkings,” of course, emphasizes the process—as is appropriate for Pan, the god of nature-as-process—whereas “thoughts” would have stressed the end product; similarly, “solitary,” as applied to thinkings that rise to an “unimaginable lodge” after having “dodge[d] / Conception to the very bourne of heaven” (i.293-295), evidently invites the meaning “not ... paralleled in any way” given in the *OED* [*Oxford English Dictionary*] (definition 1.c.). Its use with this meaning in the hymn strengthens the chances that, when applied to Pan in *The Fall of Hyperion*, “solitary” there, too, means “without parallel.” Actually the quotation cited in the *OED* as illustration for this meaning also offers a gloss to Keats’s line and suggests a pattern that strengthens the chances even more. The quotation is from *Paradise Lost* and is the passage (vi.139-141) in which the angel Abdiel reminds Satan that God “with solitarie hand ... / Unaided could have finisht thee.” The hand of God in *Paradise Lost*, the thinkings in the “[Hymn to Pan],” and Pan himself in *The Fall of Hyperion* are, each of them, solitary, without parallel of any kind. The surpassing greatness of the deity of the Pan in the hymn, who is addressed as the “unimaginable lodge / For solitary thinkings,” is beyond question. It would be only fitting if the “solitary Pan” of *The Fall of Hyperion* were the same unparalleled deity.

This conception of the great god Pan is one that would have evolved quite naturally as Keats’s imagination acted upon the various models of Pan available to him through his reading. Claude Lee Finney, in his analysis of the “[Hymn to Pan],” has included an exhaustive list of Keats’s likely sources for the figure of Pan, among them Sandys’s translation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*; Chapman’s translation of the *Homeric Hymn to Pan*; William Browne’s *Britannia’s Pastorals*; Ben Jonson’s *Pan’s Anniversary*; John Fletcher’s *Faithful Shepherdess*; Spenser’s *Shepherdess Calender*; Baldwin’s [William Godwin’s] *Pantheon*; Lemprière’s *Classical Dictionary*; Spence’s *Polymetis*; Booth’s *The Historical Library of Diodorus the Sicilian*; and Tooke’s *Pantheon*.⁹ Most of these sources present Pan as the representative of an Arcadian world of nymphs and satyrs or as the emblem of universal nature, both its physical manifestation and the principle within it.

Lemprière and William Godwin (writing as Edward Baldwin), taken together, will illustrate. “Pan,” says Lemprière, “was the god of shepherds, of huntsmen, and of all the inhabitants of the country. . . . This god was one of the eight great gods of the Egyptians, who ranked before the other 12 gods, whom the Romans called *Consentes*. . . . He was the emblem of fecundity, and they looked upon him as the principle of all things.”¹⁰ Godwin corroborates, saying that Pan’s name is derived from the Greek word meaning “all things,” and concluding that “he is therefore often mysteriously considered as the great principle of vegetable and animal life.” Pan’s “mixed and discordant appearance,” Godwin continues, “is explained to have been adopted in his statues, the better to represent that universal nature of which he is the symbol: his upper parts are harmonious and majestic as the heavens; his horns express the beams of the sun, or the figure of the new moon: his rubicund face is the image of the orb of day: the leopard’s skin he wears”—Lemprière refers instead to the star on his breast—“is emblematical of the starry heavens: and the shaggy appearance of his lower members is expressive of the fertility of the earth, which is usually covered with shrubs, corn and grass.”¹¹

In addition to Finney’s list there are certain other likely sources that deserve mention. One important interpretation of Pan that Keats must have known was that in which Pan is identified with Christ, an interpretation utilized by Milton in “On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity” (“the mighty *Pan* / . . . kindly come to live with them below” [lines 89-90]) and by Spenser in *The Shepheardes Calender* for July (“the great God *Pan*, / vpon mount Oliuet” [lines 49-50]).¹² Francis Bacon in his essay “Pan; or Nature” (written in Latin) adds an important aspect to Pan. He stresses that Pan’s love for Echo and the paucity of his amours in general signify that the world of nature is “content with itself.” Further, Bacon adds, “That the world has no issue, is another allusion to the sufficiency and perfection of it in itself. Generation goes on among the parts of the world, but how can the whole generate, when no body exists out of itself?”¹³ Bacon’s Pan is both unparalleled and alone; he is truly solitary. Lesser gods, as part of the world, generate, but Pan, being the whole world, does not: by definition he is greater than they and by implication he preceded and will survive them; before Saturn was Pan, and after Apollo will Pan be.

Like Bacon’s *Essays*, Nathaniel Bailey’s *New Universal Etymological English Dictionary* was among Keats’s books at the time of his death,¹⁴ and the entry for Pan provides a fascinating clue to the conception of Pan probably held by the general public of cultivated English readers of Keats’s day—and by Keats himself. Bailey speaks of a Pan worshiped, under the name of Mendes, by the Egyptians, who placed him “among the gods, who were before the xii,” presumably the *Consentes Di*, the twelve gods of Rome. Bailey cites Plutarch’s story about the Egyptian Thamus, who, obeying a mysterious voice “bidding him when he came to the *Palodes*, to make it known that the great god *Pan* was dead,” hears “a mighty noise of many together, who all seemed to groan and lament, with terrible and hideous shriekings.” The explanation is that “this accident” “happened at the time when our Saviour suffered on the Cross, who was the true god *Pan* and shepherd of our souls; and that upon this divulging his death and passion, the devils, who used to speak in oracles, began to desist from that office.” Bailey then quotes “Orpheus” to the effect “that *Pan* signifies universal nature, proceeding from the divine mind and providence, of which the heaven, earth, sea and the eternal fire, are so many members.” Bailey points out that “It is pretended, that the Heathens have taken many circumstances of the life of *Moses* and applied them to the god *Pan*”: like Moses he had horns, and like Moses “he was the god of shepherds, of hunters, of the country people.” And, finally and perhaps most importantly for *The Fall of Hyperion*, “Pan taught *Apollo* the art of divination and playing upon the flute,” just as “Moses gave to his brother *Aaron* the oracle of *Urim* and *Thummim*, and appointed the *Levites* to play upon instruments in the tabernacle of the Lord.” Bailey’s little article is a compendium of information and speculation about Pan.

In all of these various passages, then, Keats had available to him versions of Pan, the god of shepherds, hunters, and country folk and the emblem of universal nature, especially nature-as-process—a Pan existing “before the [Olympian] xii,” a Pan emblematic of “the sufficiency and perfection of [the world] in itself,” a Pan who taught Apollo (and hence poets in general), a Pan who is seen as a “heathen” version of the prophet Moses, and a Pan who is identified with the Christ. Truly an unparalleled, solitary Pan.

In the light of the Pan that emerges in Keats's reading and in his earlier poetry, then, how are we to interpret “the solitary Pan” of *The Fall of Hyperion*? Those of Keats's editors who speak at all of “the solitary Pan” typically confess their puzzlement as to its meaning and significance. Miriam Allott in her edition of Keats's poems, for example, comments as follows: “The precise meaning is obscure, but the phrase suggests the loneliness and desolation of Nature after the passing of the Golden Age.”¹⁵ John Barnard follows Allott. He says, “presumably Pan is solitary because the Golden Age, which had flourished under Saturn, is no more.”¹⁶ And M. R. Ridley says, “for some reason [Saturn] addresses [his speech] not to Thea, who is there at his feet, but to the solitary Pan, whom he surprisingly addresses in the plural as *brethren*.”¹⁷ Ian Jack, with refreshing candor, observes: “I cannot be the only reader who has wondered why Pan should suddenly appear on the scene: he does so (I think) because Pan is so often to be found in the background of landscape-paintings. It may be Pan in person, as it were, or a ‘term’ of Pan—a bust on a pillar of the sort that we see in Poussin's ‘The Realm of Flora’ and in many other paintings.”¹⁸ No one—least of all Allott, Barnard, Ridley, and Jack—would be likely to maintain that any of these explanations is entirely adequate, though Jack's is the most attractive, because the most plausible, of them. The term of Pan does often appear in objects of art that Keats most likely was familiar with.¹⁹ But it seems obvious that the image should not be degraded into decoration, furniture, or trimming if there is available a satisfactory alternative reading in which (in Jack's words) “Pan in person, as it were,” is present. We believe that there is available such a reading, one that, by reflecting the aspects of Pan found in Keats's poetry and in his sources, will help to explain in what way *The Fall of Hyperion* was to serve as a revision to the earlier *Hyperion*, and that will then also help to indicate how Keats could have completed the major theme of the later poem, the development of the mind of a poet.

II

The first *Hyperion*, says Kenneth Muir in his important article “The Meaning of *Hyperion*,” “is, on one level, a poem on Progress.”²⁰ Muir, with other readers of the poem, is struck by Oceanus' great speech:

As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
 Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;
 And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
 In form and shape compact and beautiful,
 In will, in action free, companionship,
 And thousand other signs of purer life;
 So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
 A power more strong in beauty, born of us
 And fated to excel us, as we pass
 In glory that old Darkness: nor are we
 Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule
 Of shapeless Chaos.

(ii.206-217)

This passage, together with the speech of Clymene, Muir cites as evidence “that the law of progress envisaged by Keats was a development towards a greater perfection of beauty, in accordance with the eternal law—‘That first in beauty should be first in might. ...’”²¹ But what of those who are superseded and who must as a result feel sorrow? Oceanus' “stoical submission to nature's law was not enough,” for Keats came to feel that sorrow is—and must be shown to be—creative. At the beginning of Book iii Apollo is deified when he, like Jesus, “takes upon himself the sorrows of mankind.” Apollo's deification is symbolic of the emergence of the true poet from the chrysalis of the dreamer through voluntary suffering, as well as being symbolic of the birth of a soul in “the vale of Soul-making”—or, as Muir adapts Keats's own memorable phrase to the situation in Book iii of *Hyperion*, “the vale of god-making.”²² What seems to have happened is that, at some point between the writing of Oceanus' speech and the abandoning of the poem, Keats came to realize that the view of process as progress upwards was inadequate.

I ached to see what things the hollow brain
Behind enwombed: what high tragedy
In the dark secret chambers of her skull
Was acting, that could give so dread a stress
To her cold lips, and fill with such a light
Her planetary eyes; and touch her voice
With such a sorrow.

(i.256-262; 275-282)

There is further evidence in the second *Hyperion* that Keats has come to view process as often meaning decay. Saturn himself in his speech to Pan bemoans his state in a fallen world:

There is no death in all the universe,
No smell of death—there shall be death—Moan, moan,
Moan, Cybele, moan, for thy pernicious babes
Have chang'd a God into a shaking palsy.

(i.423-426)

Moreover, in the lines whose inclusion in the poem is disputed, the narrator calls upon Apollo, even, as “faded” and “far flown” (i.204). And, finally, the very word “Fall” in the title of the fragment makes its obvious point. Hence it is tempting to conclude that in *The Fall of Hyperion* the theme of process-as-mutability has even completely supplanted that of process-as-progress.

Yet in April 1819, at about the time he abandoned the first *Hyperion* at the point where Apollo is deified in “the vale of god-making,” Keats had been struggling with some success, in the journal-letter to George and Georgiana Keats, to frame a conception of human life as both process and progress. In this long, familiar, and important passage on “the vale of Soul-making,” Keats notes that man, whether savage or civilized, seems to be finally “subject to the same mischances as the beasts of the forest, destined to hardships and disquietude of some kind or other,” and hence is never going to find perfect happiness in this world:

The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is ‘a vale of tears’ from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven—What a little circumscribe[d] straightened notion! Call the world if you Please “The vale of Soul-making” Then you will find out the use of the world. ... There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions—but they are not Souls (the) till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself. I[n]telligences are atoms of perception—they know and they see and they are pure, in short they are God—how then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them—so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each ones individual existence? How, but by the medium of a world like this? This point I sincerely wish to consider because I think it a grander system of salvation than the chryst(e)ain religion—or rather it is a system of Spirit-creation.²⁴

This spirit—or “*Soul or Intelligence destined to possess the sense of Identity*”—is created after the “*World or Elemental space*,” the “*Intelligence*,” and the “*human heart*” act “the one upon the other for a series of years.”²⁵ Keats then, comparing the world to a school, asks, “Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul?”²⁶ This is a sketch of a system of salvation, Keats suggests, “which does not affront our reason and humanity” and which “may have been the Parent of all the more palpable and personal Schemes of Redemption, among the Zoroastrians the Christians and the Hindoos. For as one part of the human species must have their carved Jupiter; so another part must have the palpable and named Mediator and saviour, their Christ their Oromanes and their Vishnu.”²⁷ Thus, in this letter to the George Keatses, composed, as it were, between the two *Hyperions*, process is seen as something more than

mere mutability. Keats offers a concept of process that has at least two aspects: process, for him, is characterized by a schooling of an intelligence in a world of pain and troubles so as to make that intelligence a soul; and this concept of process, if held by the ancients, would have served as the parent of the major religions—and can, in fact, even now be regarded as enveloping all those religions.

We shall return to the significance for Pan of this concept of process as elaborated in the letter on “the vale of Soul-making,” but more immediately significant for our present purposes is the ode “To Autumn.” This splendid poem stands as convincing evidence that Keats did not completely relinquish the view of process-as-progress, or at least the view of process that may be called optimistic. As Stuart Sperry says in comparing “To Autumn” with *The Fall of Hyperion*,

The two works, to be certain, share one supreme concern: their common involvement with process. However as treatments of that theme they differ immeasurably. *Hyperion* fails through the inability to evolve a framework for transcending process, for reconciling man to the knowledge of sorrow and loss. “To Autumn” succeeds through its acceptance of an order innate in our experience—the natural rhythm of the seasons.²⁸

The peculiar nature of that acceptance merits examining. Much of the poem is a superb celebration of that part of the natural cycle that is marked by fruition, culmination, and completion. In the first stanza all fruit is filled “with ripeness to the core,” the gourd is swelled, the hazel shells plumped with a sweet kernel. In the second stanza there is peaceful indolence, as Autumn is found “on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep, / Drows'd with the fume of poppies” (lines 16-17). But, at the same time, there is shot through this celebration of fruition a repeated recognition of the imminence of winter, the imminence of death. Perhaps to see the “mists” of the opening line—“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness”—as an early touch of foreboding would be excessive, but certainly line 10, which says that the bees “think warm days will never cease,” implies that we human beings know better, alas. In the second stanza there are likewise recognitions, as Autumn's “hook / Spares,” for a while, “the next swath and all its twined flowers,” and as Autumn watches the “oozings” from the “cyder-press,” oozings which are the “last.” In the third stanza the imminence of death emerges more strongly. “Where are the songs of Spring?” the stanza begins. Lest anyone think that the poet refers to the coming spring, he repeats, sorrowfully, “Ay, where are they?” This is the theme of *ubi sunt*, made inescapable by the admonition in the next line, “Think not of them.” Thoughts of the past spring, dead and gone, are too painful, for they remind one of the death at hand. The “small gnats mourn” “in a wailful choir,” as well they might, and the poem ends with the swallows gathering—gathering, as we know, to depart. Some of the lines in the third stanza continue the simple celebration of Autumn: the “full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn,” “hedge-crickets sing,” and the “red-breast whistles” with “treble soft.” But joined with these lines and held, as it were, in suspension with them, are the lines recognizing the imminence of winter and of death. In two lines, in fact, Keats goes beyond suspension; he manages to blend recognition of death with celebration of life. The harvest has been reaped and what is left are “stubble-plains,” but these are touched “with rosy hue,” transforming grimness into beauty. And, although the day, like the year, is “dying,” still, thanks to the “barred clouds” which “bloom” the day, that day is “soft-dying.” The knowledge of death, of sorrow and loss, is indeed accepted by being incorporated in the natural rhythm of the seasons, but that acceptance has been clear-eyed and balanced; it has found consolation, not in the hope of a new spring for all creatures, but in the sense of cyclic completion, of fruition and ripeness; and it has been full of conscious and deliberate effort.

The deity presiding over that cyclic completion also merits close examination. W. J. Bate has pointed to certain similarities between “To Autumn” and the “[Hymn to Pan],” which he has illustrated from striking parallels in imagery and diction and from the figure of Pan who, like personified Autumn, sits “through whole solemn hours” while presiding over nature-as-process.²⁹ Autumn does in fact function as if presiding over a portion of Pan's process. Where Pan attends “the birth, life, death / Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness,” Autumn is concerned with “mellow fruitfulness” and “soft-dying.” The “ripen'd fruitage” of Pan's fig trees and the “completions” of his “fresh budding year” become the substance of the ode, as Autumn fills “all fruit

with ripeness to the core.” Some of the objects mentioned in the hymn reappear in the ode, moved on, appropriately, to their autumnal stage: the “hazels” mentioned in the hymn have, in the ode, their shells plumped; the “golden honeycombs” of Pan’s “yellow girted bees” are now “o’erbrimm’d”; and the “poor lambkins” saved by Pan’s intervention from the “eagle’s maw” now, “fullgrown,” “loud bleat from hilly bourn.” As Pan “through whole solemn hours” sits and presides, and observes the “fantastic leaping” of his Naiads, so Autumn “by a cyder-press, with patient look,” watches activity appropriately slowed down, “the last oozings hours by hours.” Even as Pan is closely associated with various kinds of song (as described earlier), so is Autumn. While Pan has the “dreary melody of bedded reeds” and the “undescribed sounds” that “wither drearily on barren moors,” Autumn has the “wailful choir” of small gnats mourning. To Pan “turtles / Passion their voices cooingly”; to Autumn the “full-grown lambs loud bleat.” To Pan the “chuckling linnet” gives its unborn to sing; to Autumn the “red-breast whistles” with “treble soft.” For Pan the echoes of playful Naiads ring; for Autumn “hedge-crickets sing” and “swallows twitter.” To Pan his petitioners present their “paean”; to Autumn the poet presents his ode. All in all, it is rather difficult to escape the conclusion that the presiding deity of “To Autumn” is Pan, Pan in his autumnal phase, or, at the very least, is remarkably like that emblem of nature-as-process.

It is of course in their attitude towards natural process that *The Fall of Hyperion* and “To Autumn” contrast significantly. The incomplete poem, in its fragmentary state, does not transcend the sorrow of process-as-mutability, while the ode triumphs by placing process in the natural rhythm of the seasons and thereby finding consolation in the sense of completion. The question is, if Keats had proceeded with *The Fall of Hyperion*, would he have sought, in the completed poem, to envelop decline and decay in a larger, balanced view of process similar to that expressed in the ode “To Autumn” or the letter on “the vale of Soul-making”? If he in fact planned to do so, then Pan was available to him as a central figure: Pan, god of nature-as-process; eternal, universal, and all-inclusive Pan; a god outlasting and finally incorporating all other gods.

The three questions raised at the beginning of this study can now be answered, however tentatively: Who is Pan? Where is Pan? Why send musings to Pan? The *who* has been answered, and from that answer follows the reply to *where*: Pan is everywhere; immanent and transcendent; before the Titans and after the Olympians, much like the Heaven and Earth of Hesiod’s theogony. Saturn has only to speak for Pan to hear. *Why* does Saturn send strange musings to him? Presumably because as representative of the first group of gods to die (indeed “strange”), he is reporting to the greater god who will survive and who will then be able to inform the later group (or groups) of deities of what their fate will be. Presumably, as well, Pan, especially in the light of his description (or the description of his surrogate) in the ode “To Autumn,” will be able to present to the various gods a view of process such that their decline will be balanced by the rise of others, as one season leads to the next, and such that sorrow may be balanced by rejoicing.

The other gods are not the only ones to whom Pan could communicate this balanced view of process, but before we move to that consideration, there are two further points that should be noted. Ridley’s puzzlement, cited earlier, about Saturn’s using the plural “brethren” when he sends his musings to the solitary Pan, can be resolved. When Addison, in *Spectator* no. 7, used the phrase “my Musings” (in the plural), he did so to refer to what he had been doing when “Reflecting with my self.”³⁰ It would appear, then, that Saturn is speaking to himself and phrasing his musings *as if* he were addressing his fellow Titans, his “brethren.” He is evidently too crushed at the moment to go to them; he simply speaks as if he were in front of them, and what he says, what he thinks, will be heard by the unparalleled, solitary Pan, who is present everywhere, as well as transcendent.

The other point has to do with an incentive Keats may well have had to make use of what was available to him in the figure Pan. That god appeared, in prominence with two others, in Wordsworth’s *Excursion*, which Keats described as one of the “three things superior in the modern world.”³¹ It has long been recognized that the passage in Book iv of *The Excursion* explaining the origin of mythology exerted a great and continuing influence on Keats. Indeed there is no reason to question B. R. Haydon’s comment, written in his own copy of

The Excursion opposite the lines (iv.851-871) about the “beardless Youth, who touched a golden lute, / And filled the illumined groves with ravishment” and those about “the nightly hunter” who lifted “a bright eye / Up towards the crescent moon” and “Called on the lovely wanderer ... / ... to share his joyous sport.” “Poor Keats,” Haydon wrote, “used always to prefer this passage to all others.”³² These lines of Wordsworth's on the origins of the myths of Apollo and Cynthia, deities of sun and moon, are followed shortly by those on the origin of “Pan himself, / The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring God!” (iv.879-887).³³ In *Endymion* and *Hyperion* Keats took up and developed at length the myths of Cynthia and Apollo. As we have noted, he also treated in various places the god of universal nature, “Pan himself.” In comparison with the broad and sweeping canvases on which he painted Apollo and Cynthia, however, Keats's portrayals of Pan—except perhaps in the “[Hymn to Pan]”—are hardly more than roughed-in sketches. When the opportunity arose, therefore, of making use of Pan, especially in the full panoply of his powers, in *The Fall of Hyperion*, Keats may well have been moved to plan a role for Pan in that poem that would have provided for him a lengthy narrative development comparable to those of Cynthia and Apollo in *Endymion* and *Hyperion*.

III

Whatever further role Pan would have had in *The Fall of Hyperion*, it would presumably have had to do with the development of the mind of the narrator as a poet. The character we have been calling the narrator is also a poet and receives instruction from Moneta. In Keats's sources Pan is depicted as having had experience in instructing poets, having taught the god of poetry himself, the great Apollo; and, as we have seen, whenever Keats presented Pan in his own poetry, he associated him with some form or other of poetry.

In two of his earlier poems Keats went further and associated Pan with the development of the poet's mind, and especially with the granting of vision to the poet. In “Sleep and Poetry,” as we have seen, Keats projects for himself a poetic career that will take him, first, to the pastoral realm “Of Flora and old Pan” and thence to “a nobler life, / Where I may find the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts” (lines 123-125). In the “[Hymn to Pan],” again as we have seen, there is an evolving and progressive portrayal of the god that parallels the development of the poet: Pan, first viewed as pastoral deity, becomes god of process and patron of domesticated nature and finally is conceived of as “the unimaginable lodge / For solitary thinkings”—a symbol of the romantic imagination.

In two of his letters Keats elaborated on this concept of the developing of the mind, especially the poet's mind, by stages. In May 1818 Keats wrote as follows to John Hamilton Reynolds:

Well—I compare human life to a large Mansion of Many Apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me—The first we step into we call the infant or thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think—We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second Chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle—within us—we no sooner get into the second Chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight: However among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one

heart

of sharpening one's vision into the (head); and nature of Man—of convincing ones nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression—whereby This Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages—We see not the

ballance of good and evil. We are in a Mist—*We* are now in that state—We feel the “burden of the Mystery,” To this point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive when he wrote ‘Tintern Abbey’ ...³⁴

Presumably Keats is referring to the development Wordsworth wrote of in his poem, likewise expressed in stages: “glad animal movements,” “appetite” and passion for nature, and response to “the still, sad music of humanity” and the “sense sublime / Of something far more deeply interfused.”³⁵ Keats continues:

and it seems to me that his Genius is explorative of those dark Passages. Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them. he is a Genius and superior [to] us, in so far as he can, more than we, make discoveries, and shed a light in them.³⁶

Keats's other letter, containing the passage on “the vale of Soul-making” quoted above, is also concerned with process and stages, as an intelligence is schooled in a world of pains and troubles so as to make it a soul.

In view of Keats's habitual attachment to the view of mental and poetic development as proceeding through stages, it comes as a shock to read in the first *Hyperion* of Apollo becoming both a poet and a god at one stroke, as all the necessary visions of human life

all at once

Pour into the wide hollows of my [Apollo's] brain,
And deify me. ...

(iii.116-118)³⁷

It is perhaps significant that it is at this very point that the first *Hyperion* was permanently abandoned, in the same month (April 1819) that Keats wrote the letter on “the vale of Soul-making.”

In the second *Hyperion* the familiar recurring image and pattern are restored. The poem and the development of the poet's mind begin with pastoral in the garden, proceed through epic in the temple and high tragedy in the vale, and break off as the narrator/poet stands “in clear light ... / Reliev'd from the dusk vale” (ii.49-50). In *The Fall of Hyperion* there are reminiscences of “Sleep and Poetry,” but the parallel with the passages from the two famous letters we have quoted is particularly striking. Under the tutelage of Moneta, the narrator/poet is thoroughly schooled in a world of pains and troubles—while being placed “Deep in the shady sadness of a vale” (i.294), a vale characterized by despair-arousing “burthens” (i.397-398). He is very much in a dark passage, unable to see the balance of good and evil and very much feeling the “burden of the Mystery.” By the time the poem breaks off, however, he is “Reliev'd from the dusk vale” and stands “in clear light” (ii.49-50). Evidently this happy state of illumination would have been elaborated for us, had Keats continued, just as he had elaborated on the dusk vale. The question arises, who would have been the narrator/poet's guide in this stage of his development?

Within the fragment of the poem we have, Moneta is the narrator/poet's admonisher and guide—his only guide—as he explores the dark passages of the mansion of life. It seems certain, however, that Moneta is finally incapable of easing the “burden of the Mystery,” incapable of enabling the narrator/poet to see the balance of good and evil and to possess the sense of identity that distinguishes the poet as sage, humanist, and physician to all men (i.189-190). Like Swift's Struldbruggs, Moneta is tragically caught in a web of process-as-mutability from which she will never escape: in her is working

a constant change, which happy death
Can put no end to; deathwards progressing
To no death was that visage. ...

(i.259-261)

Insofar as Moneta, as indicated by her other name, Mnemosyne, represents memory, which is decaying sense impression, this description is especially apt and serves to remind us that no memory of what has been (not even a race's memory or an immortal memory) is a sufficient guide for a poet. Evidently what he needs as well is a vision of what can be. Moneta cannot even see the present clearly, for even though she promises the narrator/poet that she will permit him to view, "Free from all pain" (i.248), the tragic scenes that she herself has witnessed, his pain upon seeing the fallen Saturn attended by Thea becomes almost unbearable:

Oftentimes I pray'd

Intense, that death would take me from the vale
And all its burthens.

(i.396-398)

It is appropriate that, immediately after the error of Moneta/Mnemosyne is made clear, Keats introduces the solitary Pan. In him Keats had available a figure through whom the development of the poet's mind (and its vehicle, *The Fall of Hyperion*) could be completed, especially if Pan were to be phenomenally localized enough to serve as tutor, as Moneta had been. As patron of pastoral nature and as presider over nature-as-process, Pan incorporated what the narrator/poet had learned in the garden, the temple, and the vale—everything Moneta/Mnemosyne had taught him. As the teacher of Apollo and the patron of poets, as the "Dread opener of the mysterious doors / Leading to universal knowledge" (*Endymion*, i.288-289), and as

the unimaginable lodge

[Of] solitary thinkings; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain,

(*Endymion*, i.293-296)

Pan embodied the Imagination (especially the Romantic Imagination), which alone could provide a vision of what can be, could perceive and picture the ideal. As a god of whom Moses and Christ had been seen as types, Pan represented the "grander system of salvation than the chryst(e)ain religion," the "system" itself "of Spirit-creation," and as such he, and perhaps he alone, could lift the "burden of the Mystery." As the god who is universal nature (existing before Saturn was and after Apollo—and Christ—shall be), the god who is the emblem of the sufficiency and perfection of the world in itself, and the god who is transcendent as well as immanent, Pan, the solitary, unparalleled Pan, could have elaborated on the "clear light" into which Keats's narrator/poet had emerged, could have presented a view of the whole of life (one phase of which is glimpsed in the ode "To Autumn") in such a way that the sorrow of Saturn and the optimism of Oceanus could have been balanced, and so could have brought *The Fall of Hyperion* to a triumphant conclusion.

Notes

1. All quotations from Keats's poetry, except where otherwise noted, are from *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).
2. *Coleridge: The Clark Lectures 1951-52* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953), pp. 120-121.
3. "The Romantic Unity of 'Kubla Khan,'" *College English*, 22 (1960), 115.
4. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 28-29, 34, 46-50, 259-263. Stillinger discusses also the transcript of "The Fall of Hyperion" (i.1-326) by Charlotte Reynolds that is now in the Bristol Central Library. It also apparently derives from the Woodhouse transcript in W². Stillinger's discussion of the various texts and partial texts of the poem is remarkably lucid and succinct.

5. See, for instance, the facsimiles in *The Odes of Keats and Their Earliest Known Manuscripts*, intro. Robert Gittings (London: Heinemann, 1970). Some examples are as follows: “air,” from “Ode to a Nightingale,” p. 41; “fair,” “fan,” “ran,” and “syrian,” from “Ode to Psyche,” p. 51.
6. There has been some confusion, however, regarding another word in the same line, since R. M. Milnes in his text of the poem (“Another Version of Keats's ‘Hyperion,’” privately issued pamphlet, 1857[?], p. 19) substituted “moanings” for “musings,” so that his version of the line reads as follows: “Strange moanings to the solitary Pan.” Possibly the occurrence of “moan” twice in the succeeding line contributed to his slip. In any event, it seems clear that “moanings” is a misreading introduced by Milnes and that we may confidently conclude, along with most of Keats's editors, that Keats's Saturn did in fact send “Strange musings to the solitary Pan.” The relevant lines, as given in Milnes's pamphlet, are as follows:

With sad, low tones, while thus he spoke, and sent
Strange moanings to the solitary Pan.
“Moan, brethren, moan, for we are swallow'd up. ...”

- The pamphlet is identical with Milnes's “Another Version of Keats's ‘Hyperion,’” *Miscellanies of the Philobiblon Society*, 3 (1856-57). See Stillinger, *The Texts of Keats's Poems*, pp. 259-260. Stillinger notes that the undated pamphlet was “privately issued by Milnes” at “about the same time” as the Philobiblon Society version was published. Keats House, Hampstead, holds a copy of the pamphlet. It is unfortunate that Paul D. Sheats has allowed the misreading “moanings” to stand in his “revised” Cambridge Edition of *The Poetical Works of Keats* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), p. 237.
7. For the interpretation of “triple sight” as the power of poetic imagination, see Clarence Dewitt Thorpe, *The Mind of John Keats* (1926; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), p. 114.
 8. See *John Keats: Selected Poems and Letters*, ed. Douglas Bush (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), p. 317.
 9. Claude Lee Finney, *The Evolution of Keats's Poetry*, 2 vols. (1936; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), i, 260-267.
 10. J. Lemprière, *A Classical Dictionary*, 6th ed. (London: Cadell and Davies, 1806).
 11. Edward Baldwin [pseud. of William Godwin], *The Pantheon*, 4th ed., (London: Godwin, 1814), pp. 82-83.
 12. Frank Allen Patterson, gen. ed., *The Works of John Milton*, 18 vols. and index (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-40), i, pt. 1, p. 5; J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt, eds., *Spenser: Poetical Works* (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 445. In addition Keats may well have seen Scott's identification of Pan as Christ in the following line from Dryden's “The Hind and the Panther”: “Not so the blessed Pan his flock increased. ...” Walter Scott, ed., *The Works of John Dryden*, 18 vols. (London: William Miller, 1808), x, 128.
 13. *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath, 14 vols. (1857-74; rpt. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag Gunther Holzboog, 1961-63), vi, 713-714. A volume of Bacon's *Essays* was among the books in Keats's library at the time of his death. There is no indication of its contents. See Hyder E. Rollins, ed., *The Keats Circle*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), i, 255.
 14. 7th ed. (London: Cavell, 1776). See Rollins, *Keats Circle*, i, 257.
 15. *The Poems of John Keats* (London: Longman, 1970), pp. 680-681.
 16. *John Keats: The Complete Poems* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 682.
 17. *Keats' Craftsmanship* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933), p. 278.
 18. *Keats and the Mirror of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), p. 229.
 19. Another example is Poussin's *Bacchanalian Revel before a Term of Pan*. Even more striking is an etching from Piranesi's *Grotesques*. What may possibly be a term of Pan occupies a solitary position at the center of a scene containing the ruins of an imposing edifice, shattered statuary, palm trees, and several human figures in various attitudes of dejection.

20. "The Meaning of 'Hyperion,'" *John Keats: A Reassessment*, ed. Kenneth Muir (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1958), p. 105.
21. Muir, p. 105.
22. Muir, pp. 107-108.
23. Stuart M. Sperry, *Keats the Poet* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 194.
24. Hyder E. Rollins, ed., *The Letters of John Keats*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), ii, 101-102.
25. Rollins, ed., *Letters*, ii, 102.
26. Rollins, ed., *Letters*, ii, 102.
27. Rollins, ed., *Letters*, ii, 103.
28. Sperry, *Keats the Poet*, p. 336.
29. W. J. Bate, *John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 179-180. See "[Hymn to Pan]," *Endymion*, i.232-306.
30. Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, and others, *The Spectator*, ed. Gregory Smith, Everyman's Library, rev. ed., 4 vols. (London and New York: Dent and Dutton, 1945), i, 23.
31. Rollins, ed., *Letters*, i, 204-205.
32. Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1957, 1965), ii, 314-315.
33. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, eds., *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 5 vols. (Vols. i-iii, 2d ed.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940-54), v, 135-137.
34. Rollins, ed., *Letters*, i, 280-281.
35. De Selincourt and Darbishire, eds., *Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, ii, 259-263. See lines 58-111.
36. Rollins, ed., *Letters*, i, 281.
37. Cf. Bush's comment in his edition, *Keats: Selected Poems and Letters*, p. 338.

Criticism: Alan J. Bewell (essay date 1986)

SOURCE: Bewell, Alan J. "The Political Implication of Keats's Classicist Aesthetics." *Studies in Romanticism* 25, no. 2 (summer 1986): 220-29.

[In the following essay, Bewell suggests that *Hyperion* reflects Keats's uncertainty of his own political voice, and should instead be read as a poem concerned with the aesthetics of sculptural form.]

"If I weren't a conqueror, I would wish to be a sculptor"

—Napoleon

Few would disagree that Keats's *Hyperion*, with its depiction of the overthrow of Saturn by the Olympian gods, of one form of power and sovereignty being displaced by another, has something to do with politics, especially with the French Revolution and its impact upon English political life. Nor would many question the assertion that the poem is concerned, above all, with aesthetic change, the life and death of sculptural forms. Indeed, one of the unique aspects of Keats's representation of the Titans is that they never fully escape being seen as sculptures. They occupy a threshold space somewhere between life and statuary, as *both* gods and surviving sculptural artifacts of an ancient culture; we see them with a kind of double-vision and are continually made aware, throughout the poem, of the movement of the Titans between these states—as statues become gods, and gods slowly turn to stone. The relationship between politics and aesthetics in the poem, however, has not been adequately understood. Because Keats's ostensive subject is sculpture, rather than people, the poem should not be read as a simple allegory of the French Revolution. Instead, the politics of the poem are mediated by its aesthetic concerns: from our recognition of these gods as sculptural forms and from the manner in which Keats represents the historical life and vicissitudes of sculpture.¹

Though the striking influence of Keats's reading of *Paradise Lost* over the winter of 1817-1818 on the style and concerns of *Hyperion* has long been recognized, it should be equally noted that the poem subordinates this epic pattern to the formal and ideological demands of the "progress poem," one of the most important, and most encyclopedic, of eighteenth-century genres. Eighteenth-century writers often focussed on the origin and development of a single institution—of civil government, language, property, religion, law, wealth, or poetry—but each was guided by the great visionary theme of the age: to describe a general progress at work in all spheres of human life, whether political, artistic, scientific, moral, or religious. Marilyn Butler, in *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries*, has argued that this view of history is essentially a liberal one, and concludes that *Hyperion* aimed "to represent historical change as the liberal habitually sees it: continuous, inevitable, and on the most universal level grand, for it is Progress—the survival of the fittest, the best, the most beautiful and the quintessentially human."² There is a good deal of evidence to support this claim. Both Apollo's claim that "Knowledge enormous makes a God of me" and Oceanus' argument that "'tis the eternal law / That first in beauty should be first in might" suggest that Keats's original plan for *Hyperion* was to depict the history of art as a general progress and triumph of beauty (iii: 113; ii: 228-29).³ "So on our heels a fresh perfection treads," declares Oceanus;

"A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us, as we pass
In glory that old Darkness."

(ii: 212-15)

In a letter written to Benjamin Haydon, early in 1818, Keats explicitly links *Hyperion* to the liberal ideology of progress and to its political exemplar—Napoleon Bonaparte. "The nature of *Hyperion*," he writes, "will lead me to treat it in a more naked and grecian Manner—and the march of passion and endeavour will be undeviating—and one great contrast between them [*Hyperion* and *Endymion*] will be—that the Hero of the written tale [*Endymion*] being mortal is led on, like Buonaparte, by circumstance; whereas the Apollo in *Hyperion* being a fore-seeing God will shape his actions like one."⁴ In Keats's plan for the poem, the actions of Apollo would be modeled upon those of Napoleon, Apollo achieving in the sphere of poetry and the arts what Napoleon had attempted, yet failed, to achieve, in society: the progressive dismantling of aristocratic and religious institutions of power. Oceanus' assertion of a new kind of power, that "first in beauty should be first in might," rewrites political revolution in non-violent, aesthetic terms. Apollo's actions, though patterned upon those of Napoleon, will go far beyond those of Napoleon, making him but an epigone of progress. Where Napoleon was "led by circumstance," Apollo will be a "fore-seeing God" who shapes "his actions like one": the "march of passion and endeavour will be undeviating."

Though Keats's letter to Haydon leaves little doubt that *Hyperion* was originally intended to celebrate history and progress, there is reason to question the assertion that this is an adequate description of the politics of the poem Keats actually wrote. In fact, rather than giving us a simple statement of Keats's political views, the letter is more a mirror of the politics of its addressee, Benjamin Haydon, who was well known for his idolatry of Napoleon and his love of the grand, epic and historical style. Keats, elsewhere, though in the context of *Hyperion*, draws attention to the fact that "not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature," because "the identity of every one" presses so much upon him that he finds it difficult to know when he is "speaking from myself" or "from some character in whose soul I now live."⁵ Though it is hardly unusual that two friends might share the same political viewpoint, we should nevertheless be wary of reading Keats's letters without reference to their addressees, as if they were direct expressions of a set of clearly formulated and firmly held political ideas. A political standpoint may be a matter of feeling, but to articulate a political position one needs words, and often one of the political functions of speech is to place ourselves in a political situation which may not actually be our own. I would suggest that in his letter to Haydon we find less an expression of Keats's political viewpoint than an instance of his attempt to adopt a political language, Haydon's large-canvas liberalism. Since Keats's description of the conflict

between the shaping powers of his heroes and “circumstance” is also very much a description of his own powers as a writer, might we not extend this insight to our reading of *Hyperion* to suggest that in the poem Keats attempted to take up the ideology of progress in the same manner as he adopted Milton's style? The depiction in *Hyperion* of Apollo's coming into power, then, would have been coincident both with Keats's emergence from epigone to epic poet—shaping rather than being shaped by circumstance—and with his assumption of a political voice.

Keats's effort to adopt a language of progress is apparent in a well-known letter, written about four months after the one to Haydon. In explaining to J. H. Reynolds the difference between Milton's and Wordsworth's poetry, Keats argues that though Milton was as capable of philosophical thought as Wordsworth, “he did not think into the human heart.” This difference is not attributable to Wordsworth's genius, he observes, but, instead, proves that mankind is subject to “a general and gregarious advance of intellect . . . a grand march of intellect—, It proves that a mighty providence subdues the mightiest Minds to the service of the time being, whether it be in human Knowledge or Religion.” Removed from its epistolary context, this assertion would seem evidence of Keats's ardent liberalism. But almost immediately Keats qualifies this interpretation, by indicating that the true reason for his setting this theory down in writing, for his “scribbling,” is not to articulate longstanding beliefs, for he had “read these things before,” and yet “never had even a thus dim perception of them.” Instead writing is a means of learning to talk in a certain way, of familiarizing himself with these ideas and committing them to memory. Keats looked at liberalism as a language and a “lesson” to be learned: “I like to say my lesson to one who will endure my tediousness for my own sake.”⁶ To become an epic poet, one not only needed a subject and style; one also needed an acceptable political language, one that Keats, in the months immediately preceding the composition of *Hyperion* was hard at work learning.

The problem one faces, then, in approaching the question of the politics of the poem is not simply one of finding instances where Keats employs the language of liberalism, but also one of examining whether Keats felt comfortable with his adopted tongue and did not find his political feelings and situation to be at odds with the politics of his epic intention. I would suggest that though *Hyperion* may originally have been intended as the poem in which Keats would show that he had learned his lesson well, it is certainly equally true that the poem Keats actually wrote—like Shelley's *Triumph of Life*—is skeptical and critical not only of the idea of progress, but also of the genre from which it initially derived.

A surprising aspect of Keats criticism is that though scholars have explored in detail the reasons for Keats's conflation of the giants and the Titans, they have generally ignored a more interesting question: why, given that sculptural form occupies such an important place in the poem, are the Titans depicted as Egyptian, rather than Greek sculptures? Keats had recently seen the dark, powerful forms of Egyptian sculpture and architecture in the British Museum and would also have been aware of the contemporary interest in Egyptian art. He would also have known of current speculation that early Greek art had developed from Egyptian sculpture. Haydon, recounting in 1811 his visits to the Elgin marbles, when they were still housed in a dark shed in Park Street, makes this association when he writes that he “was peculiarly impressed with the feeling of being among the ruins of two mighty People[s]—Egyptians and Grecians.”⁷ More importantly, however, in both Enlightenment and romantic aesthetics, Egyptian art was the foil against which Classical beauty was measured. It epitomized the art of the Orient: a sublime, half-human art, which was intimately connected, in the minds of nineteenth-century travellers, with despotic power and priestly mystery. The *Quarterly Review*, which Keats was reading at the time, typifies the association made between Egyptian art and a certain form of political power: “The condition of those, by whose labour the mighty masses of the pyramids were reared, mountains cut down or excavated, and colossal statues formed, was probably not better than that of the modern Nubians—such works could only have been accomplished by men who fed on food as cheap as the lentils and sour milk of the Arabs—the slaves of some despot, himself the slave of a crafty and tyrannical priesthood.”⁸ In a poem that aimed to show the progress of art from the sublime to the beautiful, from a despotic and sacerdotal art to an enlightened art emancipated “from the great superstition,”⁹ in a poem recounting how the man-centered art and politics of Classical Greece emerged from its displacement of its

crude, half-human origins, Egyptian art was the obvious choice for an art deserving supersession. It is significant, however, that Keats, by introducing Egyptian art into the poem, radically transformed the meaning of the war of the Titans and the Classical Gods: the war was restructured along an east-west axis, less as a theogeny within a single culture than as an international event, a confrontation between the gods of Europe and those of the Orient. As Ronald Paulson has argued, the movement of the poem from the sublime to the beautiful depicts the progress of the French Revolution, from the Terror that displaced the aristocracy to a subsequent peace.¹⁰ The inclusion of Egypt makes this progress of “creations and destroyings” a world-wide event.

Since Keats planned the progress of Apollo to be an aesthetic rewriting of the progress of Napoleon, the fact that Napoleon did, indeed, invade Egypt, in 1798, that there actually was a violent encounter between the East and the West, is of major importance to our understanding of the central issues of *Hyperion*. A distinctive feature of Napoleon's Expedition of 1798 was that it was not represented strictly as a military invasion, but was more generally perceived as a major cultural and scientific event: the beginning of a process whereby modern thought would unlock the mysteries of the Orient. In addition to his army, Napoleon assembled a Scientific Brigade, composed of members of France's Commission of Sciences and Arts, whose task it was, in addition to providing technical and strategic advice, to advance the cause of science in Egypt and to study and publish a full account of Egyptian history and culture. These studies were published between 1809 and 1828 in E. F. Jomard's twenty-volume *Description of Egypt*, a work that is generally viewed as the beginning of modern Orientalism. As Haydon observes: “The French expedition to Egypt has been proved a great delight to the learned, by the exposition of several cities, which no single Traveller could explore before. The consequence to us Painters is a complete series of the costumes, features, & manners of the inhabitants, copied from their temples, still perfect & uninjured. They are worth the sacrifice they have made.”¹¹ Despite the irony of Haydon's mention of sacrifice, it is clear that he viewed the Expedition as an important event for artists. The Expedition placed art and politics under the banner of progress. It aimed at freeing a nation long held in bondage to the despotic government of the Ottomans, at providing Egypt with the science and government that would allow it to enter the modern world, and, at recovering, through science, the meaning of an art fallen into decay and a language lost in time. Though it is questionable whether Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign benefited Egyptian culture, it certainly deified Napoleon. Through this expedition, Napoleon became identified with the aims and achievements of the French Revolution (he was, in fact, made First Consul immediately upon his return to France). In Victor Hugo's “Lui,” the east-west progress of the sun, of history and of Napoleon, are found to be same:

By the Nile, I find him once again.

Egypt shines with the fires of his dawn;
His imperial star rises in the Orient.

Victor, enthusiast, bursting with achievements,
Prodigious, he astonished the land of prodigies. (12)

(40-44)

It is likely that when Keats describes Apollo's deification, “Knowledge enormous makes a god of me,” he was less concerned with Greek mythology than with the manner in which aesthetic and historical knowledge and power came together in the figure of Napoleon and the promise of revolutionary France. The Expedition of 1798 not only embodied an idea of historical and political progress, but also made the aesthetic claim that the destructive aspects of progress could be offset through scientific expertise, the meaning of superseded cultures could be restored. By so doing, it made aesthetic appreciation, the degree to which one can recover the life of the past, a political issue. In a letter written during the composition of *Hyperion*, Keats hopes that, like Apollo, he too can revive the meaning of the Orient: “We with our bodily eyes see but the fashion and Manners of one country for one age,” he writes, “—and then we die—Now to me manners and customs long since passed whether among the Babylonians or the Bactrians are as real, or even more real than those among which I now

live—My thoughts have turned lately this way.”¹³ Yet what is surprising about the first two books of *Hyperion* is that rather than celebrating the “knowledge enormous” of Apollo, Keats is preoccupied with the losses, rather than the gains, arising from progress and with the immense difficulties involved in bringing statuary to life. The failure of the French Revolution and of Napoleon can be read, then, in the hermeneutical difficulties of aesthetic appreciation.

One of the more important insights of *Hyperion* is that the Titans are products of the human mind; their life and power depend upon their being represented in stone. Through displacement, the Titans gain this insight into the source of their power: they come to recognize that because their divinity and power derived from their aesthetic form, from their being sculpture, “the first-born of all shap'd and palpable Gods” (ii: 153), their divinity and power were also subject to the historical vicissitudes of sculpture, the losses of meaning that attend political and cultural change. Saturn is initially represented as a piece of statuary, buried, “quiet as a stone,” deep within the earth, and the reader, having made a downward movement to recover him, is immediately confronted with the problem of how to awaken this ancient, superseded god from his stony sleep, how to give meaning to a “still,” “deadened” piece of sculpted stone: “It seem'd no force could wake [Saturn] from his place” (i: 22). More than seventy lines and a moon's slow movement through its “seasons four upon the night” are required before Saturn is moved from self-absorption to lift up his “faded eyes,” only to find that he is now but the sign of his former self—a sculpture—that points toward a “godlike exercise” (i: 107) of power and a time that no longer exists. With “palsied tongue,” he attempts to explain this change:

“I am gone

Away from my own bosom: I have left
 My strong identity, my real self,
 Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
 Here on this spot of earth. ...
 Search, Thea, search! and tell me, if thou seest
 A certain shape or shadow, making way
 With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
 A heaven he lost erewhile: it must—it must
 Be a ripe progress—Saturn must be King.”

(i: 112-25)

The sign of Saturn, like the identity of Lear, which the passage echoes, has been progressively darkened, for now he can only shadow forth what he once signified. Through a series of questions Lear attempts to understand the relationship between power and its representation: “Does any here know me? This is not Lear: / Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eye? ... Who is it that can tell me who I am?” To these questions the Fool answers, “Lear's shadow” (1.4.234-39), thus indicating that Lear has been transformed into a type or icon of his past power. Similarly, Saturn no longer sees himself as a god, but as a spectral darkness making its way to regain a lost throne.

If *Hyperion* is a poem that celebrates progress, the description of the face of Thea, like “that of a Memphian sphinx, / Pedestal'd haply in a palace court, / When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore” (i: 31-33) is even more problematic. Rather than valorizing the beauty that succeeds sublimity, Keats values the “sorrow” of Egyptian sculpture, a sorrow that derives from its ability to incorporate within itself a premonition of its eclipse and loss of meaning:

How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
 There was a listening fear in her regard,
 As if calamity had but begun;
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
 Was with its stored thunder labouring up.

(i: 35-41)

Thea's prophetic sorrow looks beyond "the vanward clouds of evil days" to a time when Egypt will be invaded and destroyed by the artillery of advancing troops, "a sullen rear ... with its stored thunder labouring up."

Rather than depicting history as a progress towards increasing light and knowledge, a new sun rising in the west, Keats depicts it as a continuous process of displacement, of one sun supplanting and darkening another. Though a sign *as sign* can achieve a certain kind of permanence, its meaning is less resistant to change and loss. The Titans, as signs standing on the threshold of nonmeaning, are caught in a "deathwards [progress] to no death."¹⁴ This process, in which the gods of an earlier time progressively lose their meaning to become unspeaking signs, is epitomized by the fall of Hyperion, the sun-god of the Orient. Initially, Keats, aware that hieroglyphs were often carved onto the interior walls of Egyptian monuments, describes how Hyperion's "winged minions," that had stood "within each aisle and deep recess" of his palace "in close clusters" (i: 196-97) slowly pass from "dreams," "monstrous forms," "effigies," "spectres," and "Phantoms" (i: 227-30), into hieroglyphs decorating the remnants of a palatial ruin:

Hieroglyphics old

Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries:
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart; their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled.-

(i: 277-83)

Since the Rosetta Stone, though discovered by Napoleon's Expedition in 1799, was not deciphered until approximately two years after the composition of *Hyperion*, Keats's reference to hieroglyphs is to a dead language, whose meaning has been totally lost in time. Immediately thereafter, in a passage modelled upon Milton's description of Satan's incarnation in the serpent, Hyperion feels an agony gradually creep "from the feet unto the crown / Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular / Making slow way" (i: 260-62) and, for the first time, we see him as statuary—as Laocoön. In our final view of him, he has become the Statue of Memnon, a sculpture that sings in the light of another sun:

a vast shade,
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East:
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp
He utter'd, while his hands contemplative
He press'd together, and in silence stood.

(ii: 372-78)

Twilight and dawn converge upon Hyperion, stationed on a granite peak, ushering in the day of his supersession, singing in a voice that will be stifled or silenced by history.

Hyperion's loss of voice was supposed to have ushered in the voice of Apollo and of Keats. Strikingly, that new voice is absent from the text, except for the hasty draft of Book iii, which itself ends in Apollo's "shriek." If Keats began *Hyperion* with the intention of adopting not only an Enlightenment genre, but also a political ideology, his discomfort with this language, with the notion of progress, can be seen throughout the poem, and is repeatedly addressed in the later poetry, as Keats attempts to deal with his sense that he is, perhaps, as much

an outsider in politics as he was in poetry, that finding a language of politics might be as difficult as finding one for poetry. The promise of Apollo, like the promise of Napoleon, was never fulfilled. In the *Fall of Hyperion*, Apollo is “faded” and “far flown”; in *Lamia* he has become Apollonius, the sage whose wisdom can only destroy. In these poems, Keats writes less about making history than about being its victim; history takes on the character, less of a “progress,” than of a ritual sacrifice. Yet this turn toward ritual and loss is not a reflection of conservatism. Nor would it be correct to say that it is an escape from politics. Instead, Keats's inability to speak in an assured political voice and his discomfort with the political languages that were available to him as a poet constitute, in themselves, a political viewpoint. Keats was not a spokesman for the working class, but there is in his poetry an identification, perhaps to some extent personal in origin, with the suffering and silence of political outsiders, with those who lack power and a public, political voice—the victims of history. The politics of Keats's later poetry has little to do with high liberalism or conservatism, but instead represents an identification with those anonymous groups whose political voice cannot yet be heard in either poetry or English politics: with towns “emptied of . . . folk,” streets “evermore silent,” and souls that cannot “tell / Why thou art desolate.”¹⁵

Notes

1. For influential approaches to the question of the relationship between aesthetics and politics in Keats's poetry, see Geoffrey Hartman, “Poem and Ideology: A Study of Keats's ‘To Autumn,’” *The Fate of Reading, and Other Essays* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1975) 124-46; Jerome McGann, “Keats and the Historical Method in Literary Criticism,” *Modern Language Notes* 94 (1979) 988-1032; and Ronald Paulson, *Representations of Revolution (1789-1820)* (New Haven: Yale U P, 1983) 283-85.
2. Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries*. (New York: Oxford U P, 1982) 153.
3. All notes in parentheses are to *Hyperion*, in *John Keats: Complete Poems*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1982).
4. Letter #53 to Benjamin R. Haydon, 23 January 1818, *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1958) 1: 207.
5. Letter #118 to Richard Woodhouse, 27 October 1818, *Letters* 1: 387-88.
6. Letter #80 to J. H. Reynolds, 3 May 1818, *Letters* 1: 281-82.
7. *The Diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, ed. Willard Bissell Pope (Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1960) i: 195.
8. *Quarterly Review* 16 (October 1816): 21.
9. Letter #80 to J. H. Reynolds, 3 May 1818, *Letters* 1: 281.
10. *Representations of Revolution* 283-85.
11. *Diary* 1: 375.
12. *Victor Hugo: Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Jean Massin, 18 vols. (Paris: Le Club Français du livre, 1967) iii: 601.
13. Letter #137 to The George Keatses, 31 December 1818, *Letters* 2: 18.
14. *The Fall of Hyperion* lines 260-61.
15. “Ode on a Grecian Urn” 37-40.

Criticism: Carol L. Bernstein (essay date 1990)

SOURCE: Bernstein, Carol L. “Subjectivity as Critique and the Critique of Subjectivity in Keats's *Hyperion*.” In *After the Future: Postmodern Times and Places*, edited by Gary Shapiro, pp. 41-52. Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990.

[In the following essay, Bernstein considers the impact of subjectivity in *Hyperion*, drawing from theoretical debates about modernism and postmodernism.]

One of the problems of postmodernist literary criticism has been that of aligning it with other cultural objects of modernity and of postmodernity itself. Like Twemlow in Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, who faces the bottomless abyss of deciding whether he is Veneering's oldest or his newest friend, criticism faces the abyssal decision of where to situate its primary—or its ultimate—affiliations. It would seem to be a contradiction in terms for poststructuralist criticism to defend only the new, although a defense of the old would put its very qualities at risk.

We have seen the results of complicity between criticism and its object before: a poem may be read as a failed epic or as evidence of a struggle for authorial identity, depending on one's critical approach. Add to this the labyrinthine relations of the modern and the postmodern, and the decision regarding affiliation, no matter how critical, does seem to be an impossible one to make. One way out, however, appears in Andreas Huyssen's suggestion that poststructuralism's critical stance, its "retrospective reading" of modernity, locates poststructuralism liminally in the territories of both the modern and the postmodern.¹

In a similar vein, Lyotard argues that a work of art "can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state,"² for modernism comes into being in the conceptualizations that succeed it. Yet the question of "what follows" abhors linearity; a more fitting image might be Coleridge's new moon, which holds the old moon in its arms.³ Let us look at that part of the modernist scenario that foregrounds subjectivity or self-reflexivity: whether it be figured as the progress of reason or the inquiry into the human heart, the theme of a coming to consciousness (which unfolds from or is folded into the unconscious) grounds or reappears in an array of modernist projects or texts.

Poststructuralist theory, as we know, tends to undermine the primacy of subjectivity. Yet ironically, the postmodern questioning of the subject, especially insofar as it is understood to be unitary and conscious, assumes a certain self-consciousness in the act of questioning itself. In effect, self or self-consciousness is separated from its cultural origin, but only in order to return to it by way of a critical gaze, by way of speculation or specularity. It seems as if postmodernism is engaged in a salvage operation at the same time that it is prepared to jettison the very premises of modernism; the "death" of the subject gets played out by way of repression and displacement, for subjectivity reappears in order to constitute a mode of critique. Thus a postmodern stance would want to have it both ways, placing thoughtful man "under erasure" at the same time that its critique incorporates fragments of subjectivity: those fragments are now both part of the mind's machinery and the relics upon which that machinery focuses. Bricoleurs, it seems, would have a field day.

One way of construing this structure appears in Foucault's conception of the double, which "presents itself to reflection as the blurred projection of what man is in his truth, but that also plays the role of a preliminary ground upon which man must collect himself and recall himself in order to attain his truth."⁴ For Foucault, what man thinks about himself, what he knows about himself, and what he conceives of as his origin are played out against the background of the Other, of what is alien to or historically independent of mankind. It would be a contradiction in terms to speak of the alien or the Other except in relation to man: the separation depends upon a specular or perspectival relation, here repressed as a function or culture. Just as thought is definable only in relation to the unthought—a move that suspends all certainties about being—so speech is dependent upon prior conceptions of language:

[When man] attempts to define his essence as a speaking subject, prior to any effectively constituted language, all he ever finds is the previously unfolded possibility of language, and not the stumbling sound, the first word upon the basis of which all languages and even language itself became possible. It is always against a background of the already begun that man is able to reflect on what may serve for him as origin.

[*The Order of Things*, p. 330]

The double in its various manifestations then represents both man and his truth, “projected” or “thrown forward,” in which man is nevertheless inseparable from his alien origins; “blurred” yet distinct from his grounds, almost from himself. (“Grounding,” we may observe, is the metaphor that allows the progress of reason or the inquiry into the human heart to appear as a figure. Yet inasmuch as suspicion of the ground is a salient feature of poststructuralist criticism, to call the ground into question would also make indeterminate the status of the figure.) Preliminary ground and projection, origin and end, then form a structure comprised of two dependent parts. Reflection upon oneself, or self-reflection, is inevitably implicated with the not-self. “Man” is himself diacritical, prone to the self-division of the double but also to an imaginary reconstitution in the mirror of theoretical reflection. Such a scenario is replicated in the cultural narrative of modernism, in which the status of man and his subjectivity is so central.

In this dyadic relation, the modern generates the postmodern, but the modern is nevertheless inconceivable without the prior knowledge and critical understanding of the postmodern. The latter thus appears as a critical double moment in the continuing narrative of modernism. Both Huysen and Foucault, then, project figurative structures for cultural history, which are at once linear and folded, continuous and ruptured. Although they are somewhat abstract, these figures are necessarily diacritical, products of the very structures they cast on to their subjects. The rhetoric of doubling and projection, of otherness and specularly, of finiteness and indeterminacy, of progression and rupture, and of an innocent afterlife or a more sinister belatedness, inhabits contemporary theorizing about modernity and postmodernity. But while the debate tends to favor an either/or form, a both/and form seems more promising. If the link is repressed, if it is represented only in the bar between the terms, that bar may signal that the death of the subject generates an afterlife, a return of the repressed.

I

Ironically, another analogous situation appears in Keats's *Hyperion*, in which the fall of the Titans and the succession of the Olympian gods is limned. While the poem transposes a Miltonic transposition of biblical myth, it also represents the birth of the modern poet in the figure of Apollo. But the violent emergence of the poet figure in the fragmentary third book challenges one myth of the second book, in which world history appears to be represented, in Oceanus's speech, as a succession of gradual and progressive events. While one might be justifiably wary of granting pride of place to Oceanus, many readers have been prone to do just that, and to associate his grand narrative of progress with the Enlightenment. This has been identified as one of Keats's projects: Oceanus then prophesies the modernity that is to be incarnated in Apollo. Yet Apollo's “modernity” comes as no easy birth: rather it is represented as an agonized dying into life, which breaks off abruptly. The effective collapse of the Enlightenment perspective with the gesture toward the unrepresentable, toward a sublime cancellation or supersession of history, might then be identified with postmodernity. Oceanus's reading of divine succession as a continuing process in which the more beautiful must be the more powerful, appears in a more violent register in Apollo, who incorporates almost literally the “Knowledge enormous” of the past, but whose brain is filled with “Creations and destroyings” that belie the conception of gentle progress. I do not mean to shift the historical frames of modernity and postmodernity, but rather to suggest that the poem “reads” those cultural moments by offering an allegory of their relation. Both are revolutionary, but each moment marks a turn upon the other's revolutionary premise.

In construing the agonistic meeting ground, *Hyperion* represents a symbiotic or reversible structure in which each perspective casts light upon the other. Thrown into the abyss of temporality and mortality, the Titans attempt nevertheless to control the future by narrative projection. To the bellicose Saturn, Oceanus proffers a narrative of progress that will convert the “pain of truth” into a “balm.”⁵ In counterpoint, the emergence of Apollo, whose brain is filled with texts of past events, or with “knowledge enormous” of the events themselves, signifies an attempt to control the past. Both instances, of projection on the one hand and of introjection on the other, involve repetition, but repetition in translation, as it were. There is an implicit conversion of feeling tone. Although both are gestures of narrative reaching out, the Titans look back upon a

catastrophic recent past while the Olympian moves forward by facing the past, propelled, like Klee's angel in Benjamin's account, into the future by his retrospective stance.⁶

Hyperion's “reading” of modernity and postmodernity, then, casts them into the form of a doublet in which each plays the role of ground for the other. Three of the major problematic areas of the doublet are represented in the poem: the death of the subject and its textual reconstitution; the grand march of history with its recasting into a form of narrative representation; the critique of representation as a power play in which “A power more strong in beauty, born of us / And fated to excel us, as we pass in glory that old darkness” (II, 213-15) turns and re-turns. Oceanus identifies repetition grounded in excess, where “glory” surpasses darkness and beauty then “excels” glory, although its account masks conflict in the transfer of power: “doth the dull soil / Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed” (II, 217-18). The poem figures the uncanny in local ways, but it also figures uncannily the advent of modernism-postmodernism as both structure and problematic.

To view the poem in this light, in a figurative reading of its own figural role, would be to appropriate and revise Huysen's remark that poststructuralism is a discourse of and about modernism. Now Romanticism plays an analogous role for the poet of Enlightenment, who sees himself as the modern poet compelled to create a new and appropriate discourse for poetic mythology. Huysen goes on to say that French poststructuralist theory “provides us ... with an *archeology of modernity*, a theory of modernism at the stage of its exhaustion” (*After the Great Divide*, p. 209). One might say the same of Keats, insofar as the gesture of Romantic modernism places the Enlightenment idea of progress in the ambiguous light of Apollo's agonies, of a succession without distinct beginning or end, *arche* or *telos*. (The Egyptian imagery, incidentally, not only runs counter to the Enlightenment Hellenism in a political sense,⁷ but it evokes that very archeological setting which, with its indecipherable hieroglyphics and indeterminate Memnonic sounds, mystifies reading and memory—or Mnemosyne.)

Apollo, moreover, is not just passively filled with “knowledge enormous”: his agony reads that history of the past by evoking the strife-filled elision that marks Oceanus's account as well as that of Keats, whose account of a benign Coelus represses the strife of Giants and Titans. Not only do Keats's Apollo and Hyperion anticipate Nietzsche's reading of an Apollinian in tension with its dark underside,⁸ but they offer a reading of the ambiguities of historical mythologizing.

II

My point here is not to dislocate our sense of cultural periods—although Keats's poem raises radical questions about the length of the period needed to identify them—but to suggest that reading on the cultural scale can be a two-way process. One mediating conception is that of translation, in which the centered self or narrative or text is decentered, and in which the translation bears—to borrow Benjamin's image—a tangential relation to the original. There is in fact a double transformation: “For just as the tenor and the significance of the great works of literature undergo a complete transformation over the centuries, the mother tongue of the translator is transformed as well.”⁹

Translation, as Benjamin suggests, is situated in some pivotal space where it gathers up the “afterlife” of the old original language as well as the “suffering” of the new. The oxymoronic construction, linking the afterlife of the old with the suffering of the new, allows *Hyperion* to prefigure the modernity-postmodernity doublet. (We may note here too that “afterlife” is only a step away from the *Nachtraglichkeit* or belatedness that infects the very term “poststructuralism.”) The selfhood of language, or the language of the self, cannot be unitary. The more promising side of this double play is the implication that text and subject are enfolded in one another, and that the domain of subjectivity is not less but more extensive than a determinate modernism might have allowed

Hyperion thus stages a scene of translation, of the Miltonic into the modern; of Titans into Olympians; of the “mother tongue” into the language of Keats—the Other tongue; of a mourning malady (the Titans’ “mourning words,” the “aspen malady” of Saturn’s “palsied tongue”) into a morning melody (the “melodious throat” of Apollo, the sun god).¹⁰ But within this narrative of divine displacement and linguistic change there is also resistance, for translation, Benjamin remarks, focuses upon a “life” that can be known only by indirection, by some form of figuration. Yet Benjamin is enigmatic: Does the life reside in the textual relationships themselves? It would seem so, for the birth of Apollo in book 3 is prefigured by the myth of progress and the virtually inarticulate cries of Clymene in book 2. The subject, the product of a combined articulation and disarticulation, is already written, and Apollo’s awareness of those “Creations and destroyings” is his vocal repetition of that earlier writing. Inasmuch as undoing is part of the process—and a violent one at that—translation cannot be a linear move. Apollo’s cry—“Knowledge enormous makes a god of me” (III, 113)—proclaims his subjectivity at the same time that it makes it other than himself, some ground, which we may call Foucaultian, upon which his self or “truth” may be articulated. One may also suspect that sublimation is at work here, with its conspiratorial ally, repression. If Apollo is the modern poet, he is born into modernity at the same time that he is borne past it by dying into life. Earlier, Saturn, the fallen Titan, laments his self-division: “I am gone / Away from my own bosom; I have left / My strong identity, my real self. . . .” (I, 112-14).

The space of *Hyperion* is liminal: while the Olympian Apollo has no identity other than earlier texts (which is not quite the same as having no identity at all), the Titans are separated from their strong identities. Saturn has left his “somewhere between the throne and where I sit / Here on this spot of earth” (I, 115-16). Although Saturn speaks as if identity or selfhood were locatable in a distinct place, “throne” and “spot” are metaphors for plenitude and deprivation. By this logic, however, Saturn’s loss of identity ought to restore him to the place he has lost, if Apollo is indeed part of the new race who have no identities at all.

The birth of Apollo does recuperate the loss of the Titans, but not by substitution. It is not merely a case of the beautiful being replaced by the more beautiful, nor even one in which the loss of identity is heralded and then confirmed. Rather, transition is a rough business, inhabited by creations and destroyings that may be retrieved later as knowledge, but that preclude direct communication. One logic would link creation with the beautiful, and destroyings with the more beautiful: surely this hints at a suppression of the sublime, or a sublime repression. If we project these divine disturbances onto the modernity-poststructuralism doublet with which we started, then the one cannot be the simple continuation of the other in some figurative afterlife. (Afterlife itself has a double meaning: it is not just survival, but life after a violent rupture.) The knowledge that confers divinity is restorative, but it comes obliquely.

It would seem, then, as if the role of poststructuralism vis-à-vis modernity is recuperative only upon the understanding that repetition can never be the same. Even “rewriting” seems to be too tame a category. Thus Huyssen writes that the “postmoderns . . . counter the modernist litany of the death of the subject by working toward new theories and practices of speaking, writing, and acting subjects. The question of how codes, texts, images, and other cultural artifacts constitute subjectivity is increasingly being raised as an always already historical question” (*After the Great Divide*, p. 213). His brain filled with texts, Apollo seems to represent the recuperated postmodern subject. Yet those very textual fragments mark the death of the poem, the fragmenting of the text, which ends at that point with Apollo’s agonized cry.

We seem to have gone from the work to a text that is relentlessly indeterminate, neither singular nor plural. What is most determinate is that Apollo undergoes a vertiginous expansion of consciousness: this is what deifies him. Elevation is coupled with an excess that casts a curious backward glance upon Oceanus’s idealizing speech in book 2. Surely Apollo is not acting out the measured progress that Oceanus prophesies. No more is his sublime—but not sublimated—elevation identical with Saturn’s descent into pathos or subjectivity: the one dies into life as the other falls into mortality. The cultural model, like that of any doubling, conjoins sameness with difference.

III

Let us return to postmodernist criticism's Twemlovian dilemma concerning its relation to earlier literature. In its simplest forms, it offers new ways of reading old texts: those old texts appear as more or less neutral moments in the poststructuralist project. In those instances, the texts are neither transformed nor recuperated: rather, they attest to the power of new interpretive strategies. That puts them into a passive situation where their period contexts are more or less irrelevant. Archeology, which on the contrary might privilege those period contexts, is equally irrelevant, for it entails no transformative procedures but rather tips the balance the other way. One of the premises of poststructuralist theory, however, is that such an imbalance must be ruled out in the name of intertextuality: the literary text assumes a posture of equality in the face of theory. Huyssen's conception presents an additional dilemma, moreover, for it is difficult to locate the point at which poststructuralism separates itself from modernity in the saga of the subject. Nevertheless, Keats's poem offers a viable critical frame at these points:

First, the myth of the war in heaven, of the overthrow of the old regime of gods by the new regime, claims to be a totalizing myth not only because it accounts for progress or enlightenment, but precisely because it claims to align biblical with classical myths. Whatever the local version, all myths are in fact versions of the one true myth. But the "grand narrative" of myth is not always identical with that of history. The relation between myth and history is likely to be one of difference, especially since myth's "progress" is frequently figured as diminution. The fallen Thea speaks to Saturn "In solemn tenour and deep organ tone / Some mourning words," which, translated into "our feeble tongue" are "frail" compared with "that large utterance of the early Gods!" (I, 48-49, 50-51). Hers is the language of belatedness, a form of diminishment, in which frailty appears as woman who is ironically separated from the mother tongue.

Second, Apollo's dying into life in the third book of *Hyperion* presents a point of rupture that is also a moment of sublimity. Apollo, who overwhelms his predecessors, is engulfed by the very textual traces of the Titans that should empower him. This is what overturns the myth of progress, and what argues that history itself proceeds by radical breaks. Not reason, not the "more beautiful," but the sublime marks the succession of history. But the sublime itself involves a communion with the unthinkable, the unconditioned, the unrepresentable: thus the project of the future is always to seek out what is impossible or what was always unthought before. Here we may return to an analogue in Foucault's doubles. If the narrative rhetoric of book 2 represents the thought, it is shadowed and eventually eclipsed by the unthought of book 3.

Third, the fall of Hyperion signifies a fall into temporality, thus providing the conditions for the grand narrative in which myth itself is subject to historical movement. The third book, however, interrupts that temporality and reverses the movement. In effect, it thematizes the birth of the postmodern, which appears in that oxymoronic phrase as "Creations and destroyings." The postmodern is then subject to the same evasions and ruptures as any construction of mythic narrative. However covertly, myth here is ideologically weighted, as if, subject to history, it undergoes diminution.

Fourth, by way of a conclusion we may return to the beginning of *Hyperion* where Saturn, newly fallen, mourns his absence from himself. The remarkable closure of the sound patterns figures a verbal narcissism, which is repeated in the image of "fallen divinity" shading and deadening the stream by which he sits. This is indeed an oxymoronic still life or *nature morte*. His footsteps marked in the "margin-sand," his right hand "nerveless" on the sodden ground, this mourning Saturn is the very figure of *dissecta membra*—an image made all the more powerful if we remember that this is not just a fragmentary reminiscence of Milton rewritten in Keats, but one of Wordsworth as well, for surely Saturn sitting stonelike near his lair recalls the familiar image of the leech-gatherer as both stone and seabeast.¹¹ If this pairing questions authorial resolution and independence, it also makes of the self a poetic archive of sorts.

Further, Saturn's listening to the Earth, his ancient mother, evokes uncannily the passage in *The Prelude*, which Keats could not have seen, where the young Wordsworth listens to the ghostly language of the ancient earth.¹² Poetic nurture, made “ghostly” or external, grounds the subject outside himself.¹³ Here is a fantasy of dismemberment, of some prearticulate time in which language reveals its own independence of the speaker. Here too the fall into humanity, onto “margin-sand,” moves dangerously close to what Foucault characterizes as “the erasure of man, like a face drawn in sand on the edge of the sea” (*The Order of Things*, p. 387). Keats's poem situates fallen divinity in some marginal area where mortality lies adjacent to what Foucault calls “sandy stretches of non-thought” (*ibid.*, 323).

Yet such a reading, even though it reveals the indissoluble links between the modern and the postmodern subjects, the latter indeed appearing like some return of the repressed, might seem to be too neatly allegorical. All those figures, from the various doubles to the Titanic figure on the sandy ground, tell us as much about the way in which we are prone to construe cultural relations as about those relations themselves. We should remember, however, not only the importance of the fragment in both Keats's poems and poststructuralist texts, but also the importance of the Egyptian images in *Hyperion*, images that bespeak a romantic poetics of the lost and the incomprehensible or indecipherable.¹⁴ These images, like Saturn lying nerveless or “sans sense,”¹⁵ evoke the problematic of translation, which unseats such a straightforward reading and suggests that an understanding of the contemporary moment requires a third term to invoke the figurative, the mediated, or the deferred. Theorists of translation remind us of its violent, nonlinear nature, whether in the myth of the tower of Babel or the image of amphora.¹⁶

While translation seems to double the available text, the very process is divisive. The images of voice and tongue dispersed throughout *Hyperion*, moreover, are concerned not only with the material but with adequation, with the subject's *mode* of subjectivity, with utterance as a sublime act: with translation. The very materiality of voice, the tongue of fallenness, of postdivinity, is, belatedly, unable to evoke the newly sublime. The inadequation that inheres in the sublime moment is at its most ironic here. Nevertheless, if the sublime encounter often acts as a check to self-reflection, it may foster an inner awareness of feeling. Not only is sorrow, bafflement, or terror aroused in Saturn, Apollo, or Hyperion, but an awareness of oneself experiencing those powerful emotions. While they may halt narrative, they do so in the name of a consciousness of self far more powerful than what is available to self-reflection. In this respect, the sublime interfaces with the fragment or aphorism: both bespeak intensity as well as loss.

In this scheme, Keats's modern poet, like his newly emergent Apollo, cannot simply follow the course of the sun, for he is too much in the place of the son. Even in his fallen state, golden-haired Hyperion appears as a “shape majestic, a vast shade / In midst of his own brightness” (II, 372-73). If Hyperion appears like some Nietzschean sunspot, Apollo reverses the image, appearing masklike as some “luminous” [spot] to cure eyes damaged by gruesome night.¹⁷ Even as a curative figure, however, Apollo cannot be independent. His immortality emerges as the afterlife of old texts, as the creation of divine and poetic catastrophe. For it is a revolutionary sublime that halts the progress of the allegorical, deferring—if deference is possible at such a time—to a detour into translation. Yet if Apollo is subject to old texts or Titanic narratives, never was the consciousness of subjectivity more intense. We might remember that, if we assume that postmodernism and modernism are in collusion to ensure the death of the subject: for subjectivity may be at its most intense at its most catastrophic moment.

Notes

1. See Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986). Huyssen's “Mapping the Postmodern” foregrounds some of the complexities that must be encountered in identifying the domain of modernism or postmodernism. Thus the very use of the quasi-historical “postmodernism” seems problematic when history and narrative themselves are called into question. In this essay, I try

to limit the term “poststructuralism” to critical discourse, and to treat modernism and postmodernism as abstract cultural moments.

2. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 79.
3. See S. T. Coleridge, “Dejection: An Ode,” stanza 1.
4. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 327.
5. John Keats, *Hyperion, A Fragment. The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Miriam Allott (New York: Norton, 1970), 2:202, 243. All quotations are from this edition.
6. See Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), pp. 257-58.
7. For an account of the political import of Keats's Egyptian images, see Alan J. Bewell, “The Political Implications of Keats's Classicist Aesthetics,” *Studies in Romanticism*, 25 (Summer 1986): 220-29.
8. See Tilottama Rajan, *Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 167-70. Rajan, however, locates the recognition in Keats's later poem, *The Fall of Hyperion*.
9. “The Task of the Translator,” in *Illuminations*, p. 73.
10. *Hyperion*, I, 49-51, 92-94; III, 81.
11. See William Wordsworth, “Resolution and Independence,” stanza 9.
12. See *The Prelude*, II, 302-11.
13. See Geoffrey H. Hartman, “Spectral Symbolism and Authorial Self in Keats's *Hyperion*,” in *The Fate of Reading* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 57-73.
14. See, e.g., *Hyperion*, I, 31-33, 275-80; II, 372-77.
15. See Cynthia Chase's commentary on Derrida's use of *sans* in “Paragon, Parergon: Baudelaire Translates Rousseau,” in *Difference in Translation*, ed. Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 74.
16. See Jacques Derrida, “Des Tours de Babel,” trans. Joseph F. Graham, in *Difference in Translation*, pp. 165-207, and Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator.”
17. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (New York: Random House, 1967), sec. 9, p. 67.

Criticism: Marlon B. Ross (essay date 1990)

SOURCE: Ross, Marlon B. “Beyond the Fragmented Word: Keats at the Limits of Patrilineal Language.” In *Out of Bounds: Male Writers and Gender(ed) Criticism*, edited by Laura Claridge and Elizabeth Langland, pp. 110-31. Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990.

[In the following essay, Ross examines the presence of patriarchal language in *Endymion* and *Hyperion*. Ross asserts Keats recognized his continued imitation of patrilineal discourse in *Hyperion* and, in an attempt to subvert this tendency, shifted to an obtuse private language.]

In her study *The Romantic Fragment Poem* (1986) Marjorie Levinson asserts the intentionality of fragmentation in the poetry of the romantics. Asking why Keats's *Hyperion* “break[s] off before its appointed end,” she appeals to what I call an evolutionary parable, a story of progression that asserts the capacity to gain, if not increasingly greater control over experience itself, at least greater control over a language that orders and expresses experience. Fragmentation becomes, for Levinson, a sign of Keats's successful maturation, his mastery over his past and his precursors as well as over himself.¹ *The Fall* “surpasses” *Hyperion* even as it depends on the previous poem to mark the mastery of its progression, and, Levinson says, it “demonstrates on every level Keats's autonomy. We see at once by this work that Keats has escaped the influence of his great precursors and that he has surpassed himself—surpassed ‘Hyperion’!”² Paradoxically, Keats's “autonomy” is achieved through “dependent” forms, his own developmental narrative mastered

through undeveloped fragments; his discourse supposedly succeeds by fracturing itself.

I wonder, however, whether this evolutionary parable—both the one that Keats writes and the one that Levinson rewrites and celebrates—is not fractured in a more fundamental sense. As Levinson herself recognizes, *Hyperion* serves to assert Keats's gaining of adulthood through language that is “causal, univocal, linear.” I would go further than this and suggest that the poem desires to assert not just Keats's coming into *manhood* but also his coming into discursive power—and that, in fact, the latter is considered a sign of the former. The poem aims to prove the poet's capacity to perform forcefully the discursive rituals of his culture, rituals which define poetic maturity in terms of patrilineal performance. That is, Keats recognizes that to make himself into, to be accepted as, a great poet he must seek to renew and re-form all previous poetic discourse by engendering a lasting line of descendants who will be bound to use language according to his re-formation of it. The “great” poet's capacity to re-form his linguistic tradition is, however, an illusory kind of reform, in that his renewal of language merely affects the forms in which discourse is uttered without effecting a change in the structure of discourse itself. Re-formed discourse does not inevitably give us new ways of structuring discourse, does not give us new rituals that can change the ways in which we interact verbally, in which we inhabit our culture through the use of language. Instead, reformed discourse gives us new ways of carrying out already established verbal interactions, new costumes for old customs. We can see, then, that re-form prevents real reform by deluding the poet into thinking that his grand performance in establishing a lasting line of followers who will mimic his discourse is a kind of progression, when actually it is nothing more than a validation of his culture's power over him and over language use. Ironically, then, if Keats manages to re-form the specific discursive rituals of his precursors, seeming to circumvent the discipline of his poetic fathers, his success will only bind him more tightly to the greater rituals of his unreformed culture. In fact, because it is patriarchal culture that has defined discursive power as the capacity to re-form the fathers' discourse, by seeking to avoid the discipline of the fathers Keats subjects himself to the discipline, subjects himself to the rituals of his fathers' culture. Culture's rule over discursive rituals assures its power over poetic discourse.

By the same logic, however, in order for patriarchal culture to be sustained, its rituals must be practiced, not necessarily in all modes of discourse but in those modes that predominate or in enough modes to maintain its predominance. Patriarchal culture cannot fully abrogate the intrinsic malleability of language, since it is this malleability that enables discourse to occur in the first place. Because discursive rituals are based on the malleability of language, a poet cannot re-form language without also dallying with genuine discursive reform. If a poet attempting to re-form tradition is automatically a potential reformer of cultural discourse, how does culture discourage reform while encouraging re-form? As we shall see, Keats, desiring a life beyond the prisonhouse of cultural discourse, most certainly experiments with the nonpatrilineal potential of language, as he hesitates to perform the rituals demanded within patriarchal culture. When he tries to explore nonpatrilineal uses of language, however, he is immediately perceived, and perceives himself, as impotent. To hesitate patrilineal performance is to refuse patriarchal power; to refuse patriarchal power means to give up power as it is practiced within culture; to have no power within culture makes it all the more difficult to have power over culture, to have power to change culture. How can one reject the signs of power and still be empowered? How can one reject the strictures of patrilineal discourse without also being disciplined by that discourse? How can one progress as a poetic soul without performing the rituals that determine progression? How can a poet take (progress) his culture beyond discourse as it is practiced toward revolutionary discourse if the only notion of progress is the one predetermined by the old culture, if the notion of “progress” is itself the premise on which the rituals of the old cultural discourse is based? This is the quadruple bind that Keats finds himself in, and that fractures each poem in which he aspires to reform discourse by giving words new forms of power, by giving them a wholeness beyond the limits of culture as it is learned, known, perpetrated, and perpetuated through language.

“The phenomenology of the fragment is the phenomenology of human awareness,” Thomas McFarland says in *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin*.³ Levinson and McFarland both see the romantic fragment as an *intentional* form of human achievement—the former as mastery over time itself by “chronicling” a

progression in awareness, however futile, and the latter as mastery over the “forms of fragmentation,” over both the consciousness of fragmentation and the poetic expression of that consciousness. Edward Bostetter, on the other hand, takes romantic fragmentation as a thoroughly unintentional loss of control over the very poetic intentions that promise control. The “abandonment” of *Hyperion*, Bostetter suggests, “at the point of revelation was a sign of doubt and imaginative failure” on Keats's part.⁴ Wholeness of poetic form becomes the sacrificial victim of a vision that fragments itself unintentionally, a vision internally fragmented by its own inherent limits. In order to understand Keats's self-fragmenting vision, we need to consider how an evolutionary parable functions within the culture that Keats desires both to master and to revolutionize, for his writing of that parable is not so much a natural progression toward “adulthood” as it is a culturally determined will to power, which conflicts with the urge toward a revolutionary reordering of discourse. Once we resituate Keats's discourse within the culture that authorizes it, the question of intentionality must resurface. If the poems reveal a fundamental split within Keats's desire, a fracture marked by cultural politics, then how intentional can their fragmentation be? Also, could it be possible that these fragments expose a fissure within the culture itself, a fissure that culture seeks to hide because, while signaling the limits of an individual's power over his own discourse within culture, that fissure also unintentionally exposes the potential limits of culture's power over language, a faultline of potential weakness within the cultural economy?

My interrogation of Keats's tendency toward fragmented discourse is grounded in two major premises. The first is that we can make a valid distinction between the way language operates systemically and the way it operates in historicized discourse. I am not interested in describing the structural foundations of a system here; rather, I want to examine how one specific kind of language usage—romantic poetic discourse—operates as culturally bound exchanges between a poet and the demands of his readers, between a poet and the demands of his own desire, between a poet and the demands of cultural tradition. The second premise is that poetic discourse operates no differently in relation to intention than cultural discourse in general. I tend to question writers like Julia Kristeva who suggest that poetic discourse *by its very nature* tends to suspend or break the normative functions of language in patriarchal culture.⁵ The way a poem, even the most avant-garde poem, communicates (is written and read) depends on the cultural practices available to poet and reader alike. Poetic discourse, like all discourse, is bound by the history of its practices within a particular culture. This does not mean, of course, that poetic discourse cannot rebel against the historicized rituals that inform and re-form it. The question is whether, or to what degree, such discourse, whether poetic or not, can revolutionize culture itself. The question is whether, or to what extent, “revolutionary” language tends to subvert anything other than itself, anything other than its own attempt at cultural communication. This second premise means that poetic discourse has no special privilege in relation to the culture that authorizes it. In fact, the very idea that poetic language *is* privileged is one of the cultural premises that rules poetic performance in the English literary tradition that Keats finds himself enamored of and frustrated by. Merely because we can write and read *as though* poetic language transcends the culture that authorizes it does not mean that such poetic language actually does transcend the rituals that conventionally enable its communication and efficacy within culture. Perhaps Keats is writing, then, not only at the limits of his historical situation, as Levinson might claim, or at the limits of the “human situation,” as McFarland might claim, or at the limits of his own desire, as Bostetter might claim, but also and more importantly at the limits of his particular culture's discursive knowledge, at the outmost periphery of a culture's articulation of itself.

Twice Keats sets out to narrate the fall of *Hyperion*, and both times he stops writing before completing the narration. We know it is not because Keats could not complete a narrative poem. He completes several long ones with no evident difficulty or discomfort. On the other hand, there are other instances of Keats's stopping before finishing. If we do not take these fragments as either universally inevitable (assuming that every poem is a fragmented form) or purely accidental (assuming that all poetic motives and ends must be reduced to the happenstance of self-unmotivating language), then we can claim that there are significant reasons for the incompleteness of these narratives and that their state of fragmentation may have at least a common denominator. If we consider the narrative poems that are completed (if not artistically “finished”), we find that they all come under the general rubric of romance: *Endymion*, *Isabella*, “The Eve of St. Agnes,” *Lamia*.

Except for “The Eve of St. Mark,” which is so much a fragment that it is impossible to define its genre, all of the completed narratives are concerned with the quest for innocent love, albeit a quest perverted or subverted in some way in almost all of the poems. On the other hand, the narrative fragments are all poems that are concerned with the quest for power: *Calidore* and the *Hyperion* poems. This distinction between love and power, though it may at first appear both simplistic and arbitrary, helps us to understand (1) the way in which Keats's own desire is fractured, (2) the way in which his desire conflicts with the demands of his culture, and (3) the way in which patriarchal culture always attempts to heal a fissure that it necessarily inflicts within itself.

In *Endymion*, Keats explores the bower of innocent love; it is a bower that enables him to escape, however temporarily, the doubts and uncertainties that later become definitive of poetic power for him.

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. (6)

This notion of poetic language as an infinite bower of beauty forgets temporarily the schematized performance demanded in patrilineal discourse. Bower poetry is a kind of nonperformance or, as Keats terms it, “negative capability,” which is based on aestheticized identification rather than self-empowering mastery. Frances Ferguson has explained one such kind of “love language” as evidenced in Shelley's intercourse with Mont Blanc. “In *Mont Blanc*,” Ferguson writes, “Shelley falls in love with a ravine, a river, and a mountain not because of the nature of those objects but because of his own, his human, mind, which cannot imagine itself as a genuinely independent, isolated existence.” And as Ferguson points out, “Mont Blanc” is Shelley's attempt to align “epistemology with love.”⁷ I think, however, that the definition of love which Ferguson quotes from Shelley applies even more to Keats's bower poetry than to Shelley's own metaphysically oriented poetic discourse. He defines love as “that powerful attraction towards all that we conceive, or fear, or hope beyond ourselves, when we find within our own thoughts the chasm of an insufficient void and seek to awaken in all things that are a community with what we experience within ourselves.”⁸ As Ferguson suggests, Shelley's “love language” results not so much from the “nature of those objects” that he seeks to commune with as from the nature of his own mind. Keats's bower language, on the other hand, seems more radical to me, exactly because it results from an intense desire to annihilate the identity of self, as he says, for the sake of other natures.⁹ The poet subjects himself willingly to other natures, which then become subjects in themselves rather than merely denatured objects. They become indiscriminately subjects of the poet's nature while remaining subjects within themselves.

Within the bower, poets and readers can revel in the ecstatic experience of otherness redefining the limits of self. The other's inclusion within the self becomes a form of participation itself, rather than invasion and impregnation for the end of establishing a lasting line. It is like “An endless fountain of immortal drink, / Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink” (1.23-24). Generating endless discriminations in an attempt to experience all of experience, encouraging a democracy of identifications in an attempt to include all inclusions, this dream of love is also an articulation of ceaseless excitement without disturbance, peace without banality, mortality without the finality of death:

Nor do we merely feel these essences
 For one short hour; no, even as the trees
 That whisper round a temple become soon
 Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
 The passion poesy, glories infinite,
 Haunt us till they become a cheering light
 Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
 That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
 They always must be with us, or we die.

[1.25-33]

The bower grows within our souls and binds us—not the normative kind of binding, as we shall see, practiced within Keats's culture, but binding for the sake of fertile differentiation. What Keats attempts to write in and into *Endymion* is a kind of *objectless* desire that fulfills itself by yearning for itself, a desire that has no objects because every object is itself a desiring subject, a desire that has no objectives except to increase the pleasure of desire. This bower discourse embraces the infinite “essences” within each thing, binding and referring each to each, endlessly reproducing a love for such endless referential binding. Such a poem does not describe or reflect or moralize on the world; it escapes the world by re-creating its own world in itself, ironically while insistently referring innocently to the world it seeks to evade. The bower is a place so easeful that it can include the diseased world (in fact, according to its rule of infinite inclusions, it must) without its own ease being disrupted, for the bower composes (makes and eases) a discourse whose communicative rituals are defined by a participatory love for aestheticized experience. Since infinite wonder is a type of wholeness, the bower brings wholeness by making beautiful (worthy of wonder) that which appears to be ugly in the world, transforming the pall of death into “some shape of beauty.” The limitless capacity of words (their malleability) helps to create a fountain of delight ever renewing itself. And as these words seem to refer to external things (the world with its attendant gloom), they magically remain true to the logic of their own internal beauty, making sense (communicating) by remaking the external world into the internalized image of ever-changing words.

How would this participatory discourse work as poetry? It would work something like *Endymion*, though, as Keats was aware, this romance falls far short of his ideal. The most important rhetorical attributes of such discourse for our purposes include: (1) the wandering series, (2) profuse but lucid imagery, and (3) tropes of imitative identification. We can see all of these at work in the third verse paragraph of *Endymion*. The design of the paragraph is characteristically simple, for how can every reader be invited in if some are turned away by obscurity? The paragraph is simply an additive series that moves from the “full happiness” of Keats's prospective tracing in the first two lines to the uncertain path, dressed in green, a color that encourages us to “speed / Easily Onward, thorough flowers and weed.” The uncertainty of the path is not an impediment except insofar as it is a pleasing deferral of our “onward” motion, causing us to linger and idle, to wander aimlessly from flower to flower. And our aimless wandering claims for itself the naturalness of erring exactly because it makes erring impossible, because it makes erring a wonderfully pure pleasure rather than a sin. Wandering that precludes all possibility of erring is very dissimilar from Wordsworth's teleological wandering at the beginning of the *Prelude*. Whereas Wordsworth cannot lose his way because his journey is predestined by nature, Keats and his readers must lose both the way and themselves in the way. They must forget themselves as they take pleasure *in* endless wandering, rather than *through* wandering to some predetermined end. *Endymion* reads as though Keats is unsure of his way because he is, like Spenser, unsure of his way. Each new turn of the story, whether predictable or not, is a pleasure, for it is the constant turning that is the aim of the story's aimless movement. The plot is progression without progress, where incident and accident are always pleasurable openings for a new path, where each new path promises a bowery maze.

This prospective paragraph itself, for instance, is a series of the most natural kind. It ambles through the seasons, each season itself being transformed into an infinite maze, each transferring its beauty and joy to the

next. We begin in spring: “Now while the early budders are just new, / And run in mazes of the youngest hue” (1.41-42). We move through and within summer and autumn:

Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer
My little boat, for many quiet hours,
With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.
Many and many a verse I hope to write,
Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,
Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
I must be near the middle of my story.
O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,
See it half finished: but let autumn bold,
With universal tinge of sober gold,
Be all about me when I make an end.

[1.45-58]

It would be a mistake to think that Keats desires a mere year to write this story; he desires a lifetime, and one without terminus, in which each season becomes an age within itself, an infinite bower to be explored. The wandering series would, of course, be familiar to Keats's readers due to poets like Spenser and Thomson. This device, however, can easily be used performatively to reaffirm patrilineal discourse rather than for the ends of bowery love. In other words, it could be used as a way of proving a poet's mastery over so many mazes, as a way of asserting a poet's capacity to amaze others, who become lost in his ways never to enjoy their own, who become imitators of his discourse never to discover their own. If Keats had used the wandering series in *Endymion*, for instance, to demonstrate how easy it is to err from the proper path, rather than how pleasurable it is to forsake the notion of the proper path, he would have been using it to sustain patrilineal discourse. Instead, the tale enjoins us to participate not in order to disown ourselves but rather in order to chart our own wanderings among the poet's serial mazes, not in order to perform correctly a predetermined ritual but rather in order to share mutually in the spontaneous ritualization of remaking discourse as a shared activity. In effect, it becomes the ritual of constantly remaking the rituals of discourse. Keats invites his readers to fall, like Endymion, in love with objects, taking them as subjects, while being led by desire to some arbitrarily happy conclusion, instead of, as in patrilineal narrative, forever claiming the need to lead and shape every object into a predetermined objective.

In addition to the wandering series, Keats uses a more novel trope, imitative identification, a kind of metonymy in which each essence participates in the other by dissolving itself into the other while retaining its own essence. There are many instances of it in this single paragraph. Keats says about Endymion's name: “The very music of the name has gone / Into my being, and each pleasant scene / Is growing fresh before me as the green / Of our own vallies” (1.36-39). The name is turned (in)to music, which composes (again in both senses) Keats's “being.” The name is not simply metaphorically musical; it *is* music. To speak it or hear it remakes the self in the idiom of music. Keats's existence is now constituted by that naming music (EndymionEndymionEndymion), the repetition of redolent sound that transforms itself magically into purely aestheticized melody. The magical music of the name represents, of course, the magical bower of poesy. The name is to music what “the green / Of our own vallies” is to “each pleasant scene” that grows within the poet's mind; the name is the word that grows magically within the poetic imagination. Just as music usurps the name (giving it feature, form, and function), so the fanciful scenes of the poem usurp the actual green valleys. The pleasant scenes “growing fresh” (growing always anew) before him both are and are not the green valleys of the real world before him. As Keats sends his “herald thought into a wilderness,” his mind becomes a wilderness of wonder, where everything is itself and yet everything else at once, where we can always move forward and never move toward an end. This process of indiscriminate naming transfers the attributes of one “essence” to those of another, introjects subjectivity into every object, making it a space to be inhabited and

enjoyed rather than an objective to be gained, and labels everything as though it must partake of everything else even as it retains its own uniqueness. Such a process, as we shall see, is opposed to the act of naming in the discourse authorized by culture. It is also different from the metonymy of Freudian displacement, for it is not a mechanism that enables the unconscious to operate as an engine of repression. Keats's metonymic transferrals are fully conscious, without becoming *self*-conscious, for the pleasure of indiscriminate naming lies in recognizing how boundaries become bridges, how subjectivity can become contagious without also becoming the fatal illness of self-propagation.

"They always must be with us, or we die," Keats says. The profuse lucidity of the diction, the endless meandering around, in, and through serial mazes, the universalization of metonymic relations—all of these hope to forestall the "wintry season, bare and hoary." The only apparent threat to this dream of participatory love within the bower is the barrenness of death. The paradox of this kind of democratic discourse is that it must, if it is true to itself, discriminate among forms of barrenness, that it must indiscriminately include its most apparent threat, death itself. And like life itself, the poem must come to an end, must annihilate itself—a reality that everywhere haunts its feverish profuseness, its infinite multiplication of "many and many a verse." As Richard Macksey points out, *Endymion* ends so awkwardly because "Mortal man is not Apollo; the earth is not heaven."

The situation of the poet, like that of his language, is one of continual "usury" in the erosive and fragmenting as well as the additive sense. The radical—and ineradicable—fact in Keats's mind is the mutual incompatibility of the human and the ideal climates, of "life" and the "legend," of experience and the language that would comprehend it.¹⁰

In addition to this ultimate incompatibility between heaven (the bower) and earth (patriarchal culture), there is a conflict between endlessly discriminating inclusiveness and the reality of exclusions, the reality that excluding is what enables the pursuit of inclusivity. Keats wants the happiest synthesis: both the infinite inclusiveness of never ending and the aesthetic wholeness of formal closure. Obviously, he cannot have both, but he can have an ending, however awkwardly forced, which makes the poem appear to be a whole that contains infinity in itself, that contains infinity in its endless amazing naming of itself.

However awkwardly *Endymion* ends, it does end. Ironically, the ease of the bower diminishes the threat of ending. We can always have the pleasure of beginning again; enter a new bower, write a new poem, or because each bower is loaded with ore, reenter the same bower and retrace its infinite series of mazes yet again. Bower poetry invites the luxury of idle rereading. The alternative is to do what Keats does in his other romances: pervert the dream of love, subvert the bower by bitterly bringing attention either to the potential evil that must always be entertained when innocence reigns inclusively (as in *Lamia*) or to the deadly finality of even the most innocent act of aesthetic concluding (as in the closure of "The Eve of St. Agnes"). Perhaps we could say that the world's disease contaminates the quest for participatory, innocent love in these romances. The dream of love must always be infected by the disease of reality and harbored under the shadow of death.

The biggest problem with the bower is not so much its apparent unreality, however, as its implicit powerlessness to affect reality. The bower is merely a lapse, an escape. "[S]o I will begin / Now while I cannot hear the city's din" (1.39-40), Keats says, entering the bower. The din of the city is the noise of civilization, of culture and its "despondence." Discourse in the city, as opposed to language in the bower, is a tower of Babel, where self-individuating selves clamor and vie for attention and power, where playful discrimination and participation fall into division and strife, where the luxury of idleness is reprimanded as undisciplined laziness and loitering, and where progress (the movement of culture toward some realizable end) is real even though it is perverted toward selfish ends. Although bower poetry uses language in a way that allows us temporarily to forget patrilineal rituals, it does so unfortunately by giving ultimate value and power to the dominant reality that it seeks to escape. As we have seen, in the bower progress is temporarily

annihilated in favor of a kind of progressless progression. It is the timelessness of the dreamspace, the untimely idleness of escape. Can the “work” of revolution be sustained by dreamplay that refuses to progress even beyond itself? Can discourse be revolutionary if it forsakes the right of timely intervention and timed progression toward a shared goal? Could it be that bower discourse ignores that language must work for revolution before it plays within the ideal? Because bower language is the nostalgic discourse of a remembered or imagined Eden, rather than the working discourse that charts a path toward a new Eden, it cannot be revolutionary. It defines poetic language always as a dreamy and harmless cousin of a powerful tyrant. The bower derives its pleasure from its status as an illusive, protective, self-containing, self-restraining space of pure beauty within a larger world of real woe. Such poetic discourse—no matter how seductive—effects (and affects) only itself. Because bower poetry merely holds at bay the patrilineal uses of discourse, it cannot alter the cultural rituals that perpetuate the patrilinearity of discourse. Ironically, by refusing the notion of progress offered by patriarchal culture, bower poetry refuses a notion of progress beyond culture as it is known. In effect, in worshiping the bower, Keats gives up his chance to rename his culture, to revise how his culture names itself.

At first, this may appear to be simply a conflict between the proverbial “man of action” and “man of contemplation.” It is not. The choice is not between writing poetry and leaving poetry behind in order to do something else. Rather, the choice is between writing poetry of one kind or another. Furthermore, it is not merely a conflict between Keats's desire and the world he inhabits, between heaven and earth; it is also a conflict within Keats which splits his desire and turns it against itself. One way of thinking about this is to say that Keats has internalized (as he must) the cultural rituals that enable language to have meanings, that enable poets to write and be read. I would rather, however, conceptualize this conflict within Keats's desire as a battle between dissonant urges, each belonging to his culture as well as to him, but one dominant, the other recessant. It is this conflict between the demand for patrilineal performance of language and the desire for a liberated use of language that frustrates Keats in his *Hyperion* poems and ultimately causes their fragmentation.

To love infinite deferral of identity, rather than to plunge headlong into a self-empowering progression, is to err in the eyes of Keats's culture. The poet's guilt for erring, for loitering, reveals itself in the preface to *Endymion* both as a kind of self-castigation or inward lashing, a desire to claim the loitering as a mere phase that the poet will ultimately purge from his discourse, and as a kind of lashing out, a desire to punish the patriarchs who he knows will judge his loitering as poetic impotence. In this self-castigation and lashing out, Keats not only preempts the loitering of the poem to do penance for his erring; he also succumbs to the guilt that culture infuses within him to assure the victory of patrilineal (self)discipline. “The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy,” Keats says in the preface to *Endymion*, as he appeals to the making of his own evolutionary parable. “[B]ut there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages” (103). In this parable, it is Keats who resides in the unhealthy state of undecidedness and who will proceed, presumably through confusion, to a healthy state of maturity. *Endymion*'s “love language” is temporalized by the poet's desire to father and further his discourse as a powerful language within the cultural hierarchy. This need to create a stage for bower desire signals how patrilineal discourse everywhere haunts *Endymion*. In effect, Keats creates an evolutionary parable in order to stem the tide of his insecurity, in order to drown out the smug security of his critics. The stages of his parable necessarily become status positions within an implicit hierarchy. By placing himself in the second stage, he hopes to preempt the discipline of his critics by disciplining himself, and at the same time he hopes to promote a sense that he is not really idly wandering or being led somewhere he cannot know but that he is shaping his own destiny, as he passes from the innocence of youth through temporary weakness and confusion to the wholesomeness of manly maturity.

The preface to *Endymion*, then, discriminates in a way altogether different from the discriminations within the poem, for the preface names in order to objectify and discipline (both Keats and his potential critics). The difference between the critics and himself becomes a threat to him, a threat and yet a promise. It tells him that he may never claim their conviction in his powers as a poet, and therefore he must either castigate himself or convince himself of their real impotence, or both. The will to power, the desire to overcome his foes and win their allegiance, the desire to become his foes by being accepted by them, overwhelms the dream of love espoused within and by the poem.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

[102]

If the rhetoric of the poem invites all who can read to dwell within the bower of poesy, the preface prefigures the dilemma that Keats feels in making so generous a gesture to all. This passage contains all of the attributes that characterize patrilineal discourse: schematizing compromise; performance, purposiveness, and spectatorship; and, perhaps most important, the establishment of territorial claims for the sake of engendering a lasting line of powerful discourse within culture. Keats feels compelled to point out his “inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt” while saying that even “a year’s castigation” would not improve the poem he has written (102). By attempting to “conciliate” these men, however, Keats also necessarily conciliates his own desire. He invests the “zealous eye” within himself, an eye that is always beforehand vested within the self, for it is this eye that teaches us how to look, how to keep a zealous eye on the honor of tradition and its properties, how to grow up properly in a culture that rules through the rituals of its self-disciplining discourse.

John Gibson Lockhart, the most infamous of Keats’s reviewers, represents the extreme of patrilineal discourse. He names only in order to discipline: to separate the powerless from the powerful, to advance his own claim to cultural power by asserting his authority to name, to punish those who would presume a claim to cultural power without having followed the prescribed rituals of empowerment. Lockhart establishes a bastard line of descent, naming it the “Cockney School,” in order to claim zealously his own power within the legitimate line of descent. Lockhart’s aim is not to get Keats to write better poetry but rather to stop him from writing all poetry: “if Mr Keats should happen, at some interval of reason, to cast his eye upon our pages, he may perhaps be convinced of the existence of his malady.”¹¹ Discrimination is conceptualized always as exclusiveness, error as the failure of having taken the proper route to an appropriate end. “Destined” for the “career of medicine,” Keats errs so far as to determine his own “career” as a poet. Thus Keats, desiring to paint himself as the healthy young poet, is disciplined by Lockhart, who classes him among “uneducated and flimsy striplings” incapable of understanding the “merits” of “*men of power*.”¹² Keats’s preface fails, as it must, to serve its purpose. His self-castigation encourages the patrilineal discourse of others, encourages others who desire power over him to castigate him, to see his poem as a failed performance rather than as an experiment in participatory discourse, to see it as a potential line of descent naming its objects as territorialized objectives rather than as a bower of indiscriminate naming. Just in the way that culture perpetuates its own rituals of hierarchized power through the patrilinearity of its discourse, so Keats unwittingly sets in motion a spiral of contestation in which each writer attempts to outperform his adversaries.

When Keats moves from the *Endymion* to the *Hyperion* myth, he attempts to progress from a dream of love to the will to power. It is not by coincidence that the *Hyperion* fragments attempt to narrate how the ruling gods must fall in order to make way for new ones, how the fathers must give way to the sons. Anxious to assert his own claim to manhood, Keats, against the current of his own desire, attempts to teach himself how to perform

the rituals of patrilineal poetry. As Keats writes to Haydon:

[T]he nature of *Hyperion* will lead me to treat it in a more marked and grecian Manner—and the march of passion and endeavour will be undeviating—and one great contrast between them will be—that the Hero of the written tale being mortal is led on, like Buonaparte, by circumstance; whereas the Apollo in *Hyperion* being a foreseeing God will shape his actions like one.¹³

Bringing his bower poem into the world of realpolitik, he makes an analogy between his earlier hero and Napoleon, an ironic analogy considering Napoleon's real power in the world but appropriate considering Napoleon's inevitable “fall” and Keats's impending realization of Apollo's own limits. Unlike Endymion, Apollo “will shape his actions,” will lay claim to his legitimate reign by fathering his discourse in his own image.

This apparent acceptance of patrilineal rituals translates into the following stylistic practices in the poem: (1) high, hard, disciplined diction; (2) an unrelenting pace toward momentous climax and closure, almost to the extent that the poem becomes pure “action”; (3) constant images of measure, whether of increase or diminishment, rising or falling, violent invasion or projection. Stripping his language to a “manly” terseness, Keats steps willingly into the barrenness that he has attempted to keep at bay in *Endymion*. His lean and hardened language serves to gauge his renewed engagement with the world of power and its demands. His description of the doomed god Hyperion serves well to represent the newly acquired discipline and momentum of his language:

He enter'd, but enter'd full of wrath;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
Until he reach'd the great main cupola;
There standing fierce beneath, he stamp'd his foot,
And from the basements deep to the high towers
Jarr'd his own golden region; and before
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd,
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
To this result:

[1.213-27]

Narrating the determined progress of “aching time” and “moments big as years” (1.64), the language is as driven as the gods, desperate to act, irritated by delay, threatened by the possibility of erring. Because what is at stake is the rule of the world itself—a “ripe progress” (1.125) “[t]oo huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe” (1.160)—we can afford neither to linger nor to make uncalculated moves in the wrong direction. The grandness and hardness of the style, as opposed to the delicate and intricate detail of *Endymion's* bower, are supposed to signify not only a matured manly vision but also a toughened stance in relation to the reality he once sought merely to escape. Like Hyperion himself, Keats is now willing to stand his ground and claim his rightful place in the world.

Unlike the serial wandering of *Endymion*, this poem moves in phrases catapulted by the sheer force of active, almost manic verbs. It is Hyperion who shapes and drives the action, but he too is driven by it. Activity is being forced upon him (the flaming robes that give a roar and scare away the hours, the voice that leaps out)

as the crisis is being forced to its moment. Hyperion, Keats's alter ego, embodies the poet's own split desire, driving toward a disciplined manhood in order to be allied with power but also driven by the very rituals of the discourse he would control. The irony of this passage is that Hyperion inhabits and represents the bower that must be left behind once the crisis is forced, once he must fight to gain or retain power. In such passages, it is as if Keats is literally disciplining his "former" self, purging the bower that he cannot totally surrender. Hyperion's movement "From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault" is a fierce parody of *Endymion's* objectless wandering, turning that wandering into the frenzied determination of a god shaping his own future, even though that future be his doom. The "bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light" that we explore idly in the previous poem now become the direct object of Hyperion's wrath. The "golden region" that is "jarr'd" represents the false security of the bower, which must be transformed into a space of active contestation. "Am I to leave this haven of my rest, / This cradle of my glory, this soft clime, / This calm luxuriance of blissful light," Hyperion asks.

This is the question that each god must ask, even though the answer is clear and unavoidable. The kind of imitative identification celebrated in *Endymion* is replaced here with "transitive" predication. Activity is always bound by discrete motives and objects, enacted by discrete subjects toward determinate objects and established ends. In fact, imitative identification becomes the very threat that the father god Saturn names as the condition of his fall:

-I am gone

Away from my own bosom: I have left
My strong identity, my real self,
Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
Here on this spot of earth.

[1.112-16]

Saturn's loss of his "strong identity, [his] real self," represents his fall from power because it figures the incapacity to name, at will, the objects of his power. Feverishly, with the hyperactivity of one who knows that he is soon to be merely an object in someone else's discourse, Saturn commands Thea to search out and identify his only remaining hope, Hyperion. But his capacity to name objects and objectives at will is lost.

A little time, and then again he snatch'd
Utterance thus.—"But cannot I create?
Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe,
To overbear and crumble this to nought?
Where is another Chaos? Where?"

[1.140-45]

Accustomed to a world where his own patrilineal discourse is unthreatened, Saturn finds himself snatching utterance, fashioning words that refuse to father forth a world of objects to his calling. Instead of the raw material of chaos, he has only the form of his own outmoded discourse to mold, and soon that too will be snatched by mightier gods projecting their own claims to father their own world from the power of their words.

Like Hyperion, his double/foil Apollo must be forced from the bower and into the world of manly strife. As opposed to the participatory discourse of the bower, the patrilineal discourse of power demands that even the most similarly identified "essences" be divided and compete against each other. Thus Hyperion and Apollo, each the spitting image of the other, must refuse metonymic transference. Ironically, as the narrative moves relentlessly from old to new, from Hyperion to Apollo, in an attempt to reach its climax and claim its god-making objective, the progress falters dramatically. What Keats realizes is that the discourse of the new

gods mimics that of the old, that power mimics itself and forces would-be gods to name objects with the same tireless rituals practiced by the dethroned patriarchs. How can Apollo empower a new order without falling in one of three directions: (1) merely mimicking the old order by replicating its rituals with different words; (2) becoming an unintentional parody of the old order by mimicking its powerful discourse but without its actual power in the world; (3) rejecting the old order and its discourse entirely but in doing so falling into an ineffectual private realm of fanatically obscure language?

The conflict between the bower and the will to power resurfaces as a conflict between the new gods and the old, between the culture that is already fathered and the one that the new god desires to father. Though this conflict expresses itself as inadequacy on Keats's part to express the "dire" moment of climax, the climactic shift from one kind of power to another kind, it is as much a failure of discourse itself:

Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazed were those Titans utterly.
O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes;
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire:
A solitary sorrow best befits
Thy lips, and antheing a lonely grief.
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find
Many a fallen old Divinity
Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.

[3.1-9]

This conventional appeal to the Muse is more than merely conventional here. It represents the "impotence" of one individual's speech to father forth a new language/knowledge freed from the established rituals of patrilineal discourse. How can he create a new world when his discourse itself is fashioned by the old, when even his attempt to "father" is a ritual determined by the discourse he seeks to disclaim? Keats singly as an "individual" poet can only will a discourse bewildering to his readers, whose discourse is already determined by the knowledge Keats would transform, unless he becomes more than merely an "individual" poet, unless he becomes "great." But literary greatness itself is a concept constructed and determined by patrilineal rituals.

In the fragmented final book of *Hyperion*, Keats intuitively realizes that his poem has become a parody (unself-consciously?) of patrilineal discourse. Anxious to make his new words powerful, he imitates the old discourse all too well, subverting his own attempt to move beyond that discourse. Therefore, the final book, brought to grief and despair by this realization, falls into a private language that obscures itself and thus weakens its power to establish a new public discourse for culture's use. Rather than moving relentlessly to a newly ordered discourse, the poem instead transits toward a private realm of grief, a realm in which even the Muse herself is too "weak to sing such" tumultuous desire. And thus Keats, the would-be great poet, his Muse, who represents his potential for greatness, and his readers all are stranded within an elegiac dreamspace, in which "A solitary sorrow best befits [our] lips, and antheing a lonely grief," a dreamspace as ineffectual as *Endymion's* bower but lacking *Endymion's* innocently optimistic playfulness.

Paradoxically, this fragmented book must elegize the birth of a new god, who is doomed to be a deadly replica of the old. The Muse will find, Keats says, numberless fallen divinities "Wandering in vain about bewildered shores," and yet the "tumults dire" of a world enmeshed in "alternate uproar and sad peace" continue unabated. This fragmented book, then, is both an elegy for the innocent bower that is "stamped" on fiercely by Hyperion, the ruling patriarch, and an elegy for the dream of a new order that forever dies into an unarticulated, ineffectual private language. Thus Keats's other alter ego, Apollo, is also split. He does not desire to leave the bower for a world of strife, and yet he desires to "father" a new language beyond patrilineal discourse. His doom is foreshadowed, however, in his likeness to the old gods of power, a likeness that he desires to repress as a sign of his potential for renewal. Apollo must "die into life" (3.130) because his very

birth is an aborted death. Just as Saturn cries out for “another universe” (a “covert,” Thea calls it [1.152]), just as Hyperion mourns “to leave this haven of [his] rest,” so Apollo mourns with the foresight of a god:

Throughout all the isle

There was no covert, no retired cave
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves,
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.

[3.38-43]

The “golden bow,” the promise of his new rule, becomes the bearer of his tears. “Where is power?” Apollo asks, but before the answer can be articulated in words that we can understand, the poem breaks off. We as readers become like Apollo himself, waiting the revelation of Mnemosyne: “While I here idle listen on the shores / In fearless yet in aching ignorance” (3.106-7). The wish-fulfilling dream of a new order cannot realize itself without a language to name its being:

Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
Creations and destroyings, all at once
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
And deify me.

[3.113-18]

The poem breaks off because the knowledge that would enable us to deify ourselves lies always on the other side of the only discourse we know how to use. If Mnemosyne were to speak, could we understand her tongue? If Keats were to write the words, would our old-fashioned rituals of communication serve to hold the newly fashioned knowledge, or would we have to become, like Apollo, widely hollowed out? The narrative aborts itself because it has nowhere else to go. It has reached the limits of discourse as we have “fathered” it, and as it reaches for that new knowledge just beyond the old, it trails off into muteness. “Mute thou remainest—mute! yet I can read / A wondrous lesson in thy silent face,” Apollo says wistfully to Mnemosyne as he “raves” in his “aching ignorance” (3.111-12).

There is noticeable “regression” (or nostalgia) in Keats's language in the unfinished third book of the first *Hyperion*. His discourse returns to the dream of the bower, a space in which the manly strife for power is disrupted by the private desire for peace:

Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,
And let the clouds of even and of morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,
On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn
Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd.

[3.15-22]

We could easily be in *Endymion*'s easeful world of love again, but we are not. Sensing his own regression to the bower and no doubt feeling distress at its return, not desiring to linger between the momentous climax that has refused to come and the bower that invites his lingering, Keats “abandons” the poem. Before, to wander

was a joy forever. Now, he fears “Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.”

Leaving the first *Hyperion* to mute itself, Keats proceeds to the second *Hyperion*. Rather than resting in muteness, he attempts again to rescue poetry, believing that it can create a discourse that is powerful without merely rehearsing the patrilineal rituals of power. But instead of retreating into the sharable (communicable) peacefulness of the innocent bower or the sharable experience of elegiac disappointment as at the end of the previous fragment, in *The Fall*, appropriately named, Keats falls, from the very first word, into the obtuseness of private language. *The Fall of Hyperion* is subtitled “A Dream” as much because it is a retreat into the private self as because it promises a visionary view of the new discourse. “Fanatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave / A paradise for a sect,” he says in the first line. The poet, like the religious fanatic, is blessed with unarticulated knowledge, but whereas the fanatic only has to share his “dream” with a sect of faithful believers, only has to communicate his paradise to those for whom the vision is already communicated, the poet is cursed with attempting to communicate his vision of paradise to culture as a whole, to the worldly masses who must be “hollowed out.” Whereas the fanatic can afford to forgo the use of language, since his divine dream cannot be embodied in language in any case and since those who will believe do not need language to convince them, the poet must use language, however unsuitable, because his goal is to embody the dream and because it is only language that can acculturate the dream, making it powerful within culture. Desiring to trace the “shadows of melodious utterance” (1.6), Keats wants to hold firmly to his belief in poetry's power to fashion communicable words for a new world:

For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,
With the fine spell of words alone can save
Imagination from the sable charm
And dumb enchantment.

[1.8-11]

“Whether the dream now purposed to rehearse / Be poet's or fanatic's” (1.16) is yet unknown, for the dream remains unarticulated. Perhaps Keats finds himself, like the fanatic, weaving a “paradise for a sect,” writing an obscure, private code for the already saved. Perhaps he finds that he is unable to do what Moneta claims she will:

“Mortal, that thou may'st understand aright,
I humanize my sayings to thine ear,
Making comparisons of earthly things;
Or thou might'st better listen to the wind,
Whose language is to thee a barren noise,
Though it blows legend-laden through the trees.”

[2.1-6]

Once again the word is fragmented, for in whatever way Keats attempts to humanize his sayings, his visionary language becomes a “barren noise,” laden with the “earthly things” he seeks to transform, trapped at the limits of a discourse he desires to transcend.

By its very nature, genuine discourse cannot be private, although language as a system can be. Once it becomes a private language, it is no longer discourse, which is always communicable beyond the world of self. By the same token, language that is obscured by the dreamy privacy of its desire cannot be revolutionary, for it “falls” always into disuse and abuse, rebelling against itself, leaving intact the ordinary uses of language. Although *The Fall* is not an escape into the bower, it is virtually as powerless to effect discursive change. And so we find Keats fragmented by a double bind. In order to revolutionize discourse, he must make it communicate beyond the obscurity of a private dream, but in order to communicate it, he must either resort to the very rituals of discourse that he seeks to countermand or retreat into a bower discourse of happy escape,

where language, although it is shared, is powerless to progress beyond its own discursive idleness and marginality and thus is incapable of effecting discursive reform. As the second *Hyperion* earnestly seeks to avoid the fall into private grief and then the regression to the bower that fragment the first *Hyperion*, and as it seeks to substitute a visionary or liberating use of language for mimicry of patrilineal discourse, it turns against discourse as it is known and thus unwillingly obscures, disempowers, fragments, and mutes itself. Realizing the dream requires us to avoid both fantasy and fanaticism, requires us to leap across the fractured word into a world that we have yet to articulate, though we, with Keats, have imagined it—waiting—just beyond the limits of our words.

Notes

1. Marjorie Levinson, *The Romantic Fragment Poem: A Critique of Form* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986); see esp. 181.
2. *Ibid.*, 181.
3. Thomas McFarland, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Modalities of Fragmentation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 3.
4. Edward E. Bostetter, *The Romantic Ventriloquists* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975), 8.
5. See, for instance, Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Walker (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 50-57, 61, 79.
6. John Keats, *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 1.1-13. Subsequent references are from this edition and are cited in the text.
7. Frances Ferguson, “Shelley's *Mont Blanc*: What the Mountain Said,” in *Romanticism and Language*, ed. Arden Reed (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 207.
8. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Shelley's Prose; or, The Trumpet of a Prophecy*, ed. David Lee Clark (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954), 170.
9. *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 1:387.
10. Richard Macksey, “‘To Autumn’ and the Music of Mortality: ‘Pure Rhetoric of a Language without Words,’” in Reed, *Romanticism and Language*, 278.
11. John Gibson Lockhart, “Cockney School of Poetry,” rpt. in *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers*, prt. C, ed. Donald H. Reiman (New York: Garland, 1972), 90.
12. *Ibid.*, 91.
13. *Letters*, 1:297.

Criticism: Jonathan Bate (essay date 1992)

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[In the following essay, Bate discusses the influence of Milton's *Paradise Lost* on *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*. Bate focuses on Keats's repeated attempts to compose a more politically progressive, less Miltonic *Hyperion*.]

One of the most powerful chapters in Walter Jackson Bate's magisterial biography of John Keats is the thirteenth, ‘The Burden of the Mystery: The Emergence of a Modern Poet’.¹ It is there that we are presented with an image of the young Keats grappling with the problem of the inherited literary tradition. Out of Wordsworth's pregnant phrase, as quoted by Keats, ‘The Burden of the Mystery’, grew Jackson Bate's conception of ‘The Burden of the Past’. *John Keats* was published in 1963; the following year Harold Bloom wrote his essay, ‘Keats and the Embarrassments of Poetic Tradition’, one of the first airings of his theory of influence.² In the early 1970s both Bate and Bloom, having tested their theories on Keats, developed them in

more general terms in short but groundbreaking books, *The Burden of the Past* and *The Anxiety of Influence*.³ Jackson Bate's study is centrally concerned with the decline of the major poetic genres, while Bloom advances a more personal, explicitly Oedipal, model of literary history, but in each case Milton plays a key role.

The prime symptom of 'the burden of the past' is the inability of English poets to write epic after *Paradise Lost*, that summation and transumption of all previous epic. I use the term 'transumption' in John Hollander's sense, with regard to Milton's capacity simultaneously to summon up and to subsume his predecessors: 'he ... transcend[s] the prior allusions, even as he has alluded to them. It is like a summing up of the range of texts for him, tempting us to play with the notion of transumption as if the Latin word were a portmanteau of transcending and summing up'.⁴ Dryden and Pope only managed mock-epic or the translation of Classical epic. The ground of English Romanticism is strewn with the fragments of failed undertakings in epic—one thinks of Blake's incompleteness of *The Four Zoas*, Coleridge's inability to write *The Fall of Jerusalem*, and pre-eminently Wordsworth's non-publication and restless revision of his epic of the individual mind, the age's boldest attempt to overgo Milton's cosmic theme. *Endymion* is Keats's experiment in romance; from there he moved on to his endeavour in epic. *Hyperion* has a more traditional epic theme and structure than any other project by a major Romantic poet: an opening *in medias res*, a Titanic battle in heaven, the fall of a divinity, the rise of a new god. The original version has a manifestly Miltonic shape, in that its first two books dwell on fallen gods while the third begins in the realm of light. But then it breaks off. Did Keats first revise and then abandon *Hyperion* because of Milton's overbearing influence?

For Bloom, Milton is the great inhibitor, the strangler of later poetic imaginations: 'The motto to English poetry since Milton was stated by Keats: "Life to him would be Death to me"' (*Anxiety*, p. 32). Keats wrote this apropos of giving up his project to write on the subject of *Hyperion*;⁵ *Hyperion* has thus become a crucial test-case for interpretations of the Romantic attempt to deal with—in Bloom's special sense, to 'revise'—Milton.⁶ It will, however, be my argument in this essay that criticism's emphasis on Milton's inhibiting effect has led to an oversimplification, not least in that the model of a development from the more Miltonic poem (*Hyperion*) to the less Miltonic one (*The Fall of Hyperion*) ignores the complex sequence of composition from *Hyperion* (1818) to *The Fall of Hyperion* (1819) to the published *Hyperion* (1820). The problem of Milton is only one of a number of problems, most important of which is that of tragedy: Keats's revisions are bound up not only with questions of poetic diction but also with the articulation of a tragic vision in place of a vision of progress for which the most appropriate medium was epic narrative. Furthermore, that movement from epic progress-poem to meditative tragedy has significant political ramifications.

To begin, however, with Milton. Important evidence concerning Keats's reading of *Paradise Lost* may be gleaned from the underlinings and annotations in his copy of the poem, which is now held at Keats House in Hampstead.⁷ Milton's centrality to the diction of the first *Hyperion* is apparent even from the famous line with which the poem begins, 'Deep in the shady sadness of a vale'. This locution evokes not only a location—what Keats in his Miltonic marginalia called a 'stationing'⁸—but also a mood, derived primarily from the word 'vale', with its simultaneous suggestion of enclosure and a veil of mourning ('sadness' activates the pun). It was Milton who showed Keats how to use this word 'vale' with resonance. In a situation analogous to that with which *Hyperion* begins—we are among the fallen, the giant forms who have been defeated in the war in heaven—Satan rouses his followers:

or have ye chosen this place

After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?

(*PL*, I, 318-21, final line underscored by Keats)

Beside these lines Keats wrote in his copy of *Paradise Lost*:

There is a cool pleasure in the very sound of vale. The English word is of the happiest chance. Milton has put vales in heaven and hell with the very utter affection and yearning of a great Poet. It is a sort of delphic Abstraction—a beautiful—thing made more beautiful by being reflected and put in a Mist. The next mention of Vale is one of the most pathetic in the whole range of Poetry.

Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent Valley & c.

[*PL*, II, 546-7]

How much of the charm is in the Valley!—

(Wittreich, p. 554)

While the opening of *Hyperion* is indebted to *Paradise Lost* in its poetic diction, Keats's annotations reveal that his reading of Milton's vales was revisionary. Contrary to Harold Bloom's kind of revisionism, however, what the force of Keats's rewriting indicates is dependence on a memory, not a forgetting, on a recollection of the precise words and context of the precursor text. For Milton, the point about Satan's question is that the vales of hell are not like those of heaven; the recollection of heaven's vales is used by the devil to provoke his cohorts out of slumber and back into action. Immediately before Satan speaks he is seen walking with 'uneasy steps / Over the burning marl, not like those steps / On heaven's azure' (*PL*, I, 295-7). Milton's 'not like' exposes Satan's subsequent 'as in' for what it is—a characteristic rhetorical imposture. Keats, however, implies that the sound of 'vale' cools hell down and that the vales of both heaven and hell are the product not of Milton the moralist, but of Milton the poet, the maker of beautiful images. Keats has much to say about vales, nothing to say about 'virtue', a word which from Milton's point of view is not ironic coming from Satan's mouth. So too with the next mention of vale: as Keats quotes it, in company with 'mild', 'Retreated' and 'silent', it does indeed have a 'charm'; but Keats's '& c.' conceals the context:

Others more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds and hapless fall
By doom of battle; and complain that fate
Free virtue should enthral to force or chance.

(*PL*, II, 546-51)

This is less than charming: in the infernal epic that they are composing here, the fallen angels are proudly praising their own prowess and are constructing a distorted version of their fall in which they stand for 'Free virtue' and God for 'force or chance'. In each 'vale' passage, then, the fallen angels falsely appropriate 'virtue'. While Milton means the reader to notice this, Keats veils the ethical reading in a mist and concentrates on the pathos and poetic beauty. In annotating Book II, he underlined the whole of the sentence in question with the exception of 'and complain that fate / Free virtue should enthral to force or chance'; furthermore, he wrote in the margin of how 'the delicacies of passion' in the fallen angels are 'of the most softening and dissolving nature' (Wittreich, p. 557). This is in keeping with the wholesale revision of the first two books of *Paradise Lost* in the first two books of *Hyperion* whereby the reader's sympathy is enlisted for the pathetic fallen gods while the admonitory Miltonic voice is silenced.

Keats made his *Paradise Lost* annotations in 1818, the year of the first *Hyperion*. Before considering the revisionary process in detail, it is worth recollecting the chronology of composition. The poem was begun in autumn 1818 and the first attempt abandoned in April 1819. Soon after Tom's death in December 1818, we

find Keats writing 'Just now I took out my poem to go on with it—but ... I could not get on'; in March 1819, he is 'in a sort of *qui bono temper*, not exactly on the road to an epic poem'; and the following month his friend Richard Woodhouse notes, 'K. lent me the fragment ... abt 900 lines in all ... He said he was dissatisfied ... and should not complete it.'⁹ A few months later, in July 1819, he began a reconstruction, but on 21 September 1819 he wrote to J. H. Reynolds, 'I have given up *Hyperion*' (i.e. the second version, *The Fall of Hyperion*). It is here that he blames Milton. The previous month he had twice written of the wonders of *Paradise Lost*,¹⁰ but now he suggests that he is stultified by it:

I have given up *Hyperion*—there were too many Miltonic inversions in it—Miltonic verse cannot be written but in artful or rather artist's humour. I wish to give myself up to other sensations. English ought to be kept up. It may be interesting to you to pick out some lines from *Hyperion* and put a mark X to the false beauty proceeding from art, and one // to the true voice of feeling. Upon my soul 'twas imagination I cannot make the distinction—Every now and then there is a Miltonic intonation—But I cannot make the division properly. The fact is I must take a walk[.]

(*Letters*, 2, p. 167)

'I have given up' sounds decisive, yet Keats asks Reynolds to go through the first version looking for Miltonisms, presumably with the intention of cutting or altering in the second version such lines as his friend marked with a cross. The need to clear his head with a walk shows that revision is a struggle. On the same day he wrote in his journal-letter to the George Keatses, 'I have but lately stood on my guard against Milton. Life to him would be death to me. Miltonic verse cannot be written but i[n] the vein of art—I wish to devote myself to another sensation' (*Letters*, 2, p. 212). 'The vein of art' suggests that Keats has come to the conclusion that writing Miltonically is not only a struggle but also a questionable departure from life, from immediate sensation. Keats always loved a pun and it is not implausible to hear the several senses of 'vain' in 'vein'.

Whether or not Keats undertook any further work on *The Fall* after 21 September 1819 is unclear. According to Charles Brown, he was remodelling 'contemporaneously with the writing of *The Jealousies*, which he may have been working on later that autumn.¹¹ What is certain is that in the following year the first version was prepared for publication. It appeared under the title *Hyperion. A Fragment in Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St Agnes, and Other Poems* (published July 1820). In a number of places the published text restored readings of Keats's original holograph manuscript that had been altered in Woodhouse's transcript, which became the printer's copy. Since it is highly probable that Keats made these corrections himself, it is also likely that he was responsible for a number of new readings introduced in the 1820 text.¹² The second unfinished version was not published until 1857, long after Keats's death. His friends preferred the first version, which is probably one reason why he chose it for the 1820 volume. The latter carried a publisher's advertisement:

If any apology be thought necessary for the appearance of the unfinished poem of *Hyperion*, the publishers beg to state that they alone are responsible, as it was printed at their particular request, and contrary to the wishes of the author. The poem was intended to have been of equal length with *Endymion* but the reception of that work discouraged the author proceeding.

But in a presentation copy Keats crossed this out, saying that it was inserted without his knowledge when he was ill, and that it was 'a lie' to say that he failed to finish the first *Hyperion* because of the poor critical reception accorded to *Endymion*. Clearly, then, there were other reasons for this first discontinuation.

The Miltonic influence is usually taken to be the major one.¹³ The epic tone and structure of the first version is manifest in its division into *books*; the revised title, *The Fall of Hyperion. A Dream*, and the new opening section in which the poet has his vision, denote a shift to a structure that bears more resemblance to romance

or 'dream-poem'. Internalization and subjectification separate *The Fall* off from Milton. Furthermore, it has 'cantos' instead of books: Keats had been reading in the Italian classics, especially Dante and Ariosto, over the summer of 1819 and this is the likeliest source of the change in form. Revision to cantos—which Keats had in fact been contemplating even when writing the first *Hyperion*¹⁴—also suggests a reversion to Spenser, Keats's earliest master, and in particular to the 'Mutabilitie Cantos', which were such a rich source for the maturing poet who in 1819 was becoming less of an Endymion yearning for transcendence and more of an Oceanus recognizing the necessity of transience.¹⁵

The revised structure was also bound up with the state of contemporary English poetry, where 'visions' and 'dreams' seemed to be having more success than epics. Most significantly, there was 'Kubla Khan: or, A Vision in a Dream. A Fragment'. The new substance of *The Fall*, the poet's meeting with Moneta, revises the climax of the first *Hyperion*, Apollo's assumption of godhead through his reading of Mnemosyne's face. It was with regard to this passage that Keats told his friend Woodhouse: 'It seemed to come by chance or magic—to be as it were something given to him' (*Keats Circle*, 1, p. 129). He is following Coleridge's famous prefatory note to 'Kubla Khan': 'Yet from the still surviving recollections in his mind, the Author has frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him.'¹⁶ Both 'Kubla Khan' and *The Fall of Hyperion* are poems centrally concerned with the activity of imagination; each exemplifies what it means by poetry through metaphors of inspiration. The poem is said to be given, not made; instead of being apostrophized or summoned in epic fashion, the Muse is conjured from within by means of 'a vision in a dream'.

There are, then, numerous indications that whereas in *Hyperion* Keats is manifestly imitating Milton, in *The Fall* he is absorbing other models. Yet he nowhere talks about the oppressive Miltonic influence as the reason for his first abandonment. The chronology is as follows: Keats gives up the first version, starts the second, then re-reads *Paradise Lost* and is struck by its beauties, and finally gives up the second version because of its persistent Miltonics. If Keats did give up the first version because he was unhappy with its poetic diction, the problem perhaps was not so much the Miltonics as a certain return to Endymionese, to luxuriant imagery at the expense of narrative focus, in the third book. In fact, it seems to me that Keats did not know why *Hyperion* was going wrong the first time. His reasons for stopping work on it were more extrinsic—his health, the difficulty of sustaining a long poem, and, more positively, the discovery of the form that suited him best, the ode. But soon after he took the poem up again in summer 1819, he re-read Milton and then realized how excessively Miltonic it was. In late August he wrote to Reynolds to the effect that 'the *Paradise Lost* becomes a greater wonder—The more I know what my diligence may in time probably effect; the more does my heart distend with Pride and Obstinacy' (*Letters*, 2, p. 146). The pride here—which evinces a characteristic Romantic identification with Milton's Satan, whose 'heart / Distends with pride' (*PL* I, 571-2)—stems from the hope of creating a poem that is a true successor to *Paradise Lost*; the obstinacy, from refusal to give up on it. But within a month Keats does give up precisely because of the feeling that he is writing as a successor to Milton and is accordingly trapped in a style incompatible with the naturalness and fluidity of diction he had perfected in the odes. All this, however, takes place in the second half of 1819: critics have attached too much weight to the letters of 21 September, assuming that what Keats perceived as the problem then must have been the problem back in April. It is not surprising that Bloom values this late correspondence so highly, given the identification with Satan and the dramatic cry that 'Life to him would be death to me', but the processes of composition and revision are never as simple or as single-minded as an *ex post facto* explanation in a letter might make them appear to be. In comparing the two *Hyperions* and testing the hypothesis about Miltonic influence, one needs to consider both the broad revisions (changes in structure, cuts, additions) and the particular ones (verbal alterations in lines that are taken over from the first version). Local changes provide the most tangible form of evidence; they also offer fascinating instances of the poetic craftsman at work.

In the published text of 1820, *Hyperion*'s minions stand amazed and full of fear 'like anxious men / Who on wide plains gather in panting troops, / When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers' (*H* I, 198-200), but in *The Fall* they are 'like anxious men / Who on a wide plain gather in sad troops' (*FH* II, 42-3). 'Sad' is a

wonderful choice, almost Shakespearean in its tragic foreboding (one recalls Cleopatra's gathering of her 'sad captains'). What is interesting about this 'revision' is that it is actually a return to Keats's original text, for the holograph manuscript of *Hyperion* shows that 'panting' was Keats's third attempt, the second being 'sad eyed' and the first 'sad' (in the second and third versions the 'a' before 'plain' is cut to make room for the extra syllable later in the line). Keats famously remarked that 'things which [I] do half at Random are afterwards confirmed by my judgment in a dozen features of Propriety' (*Letters*, 1, p. 142): in exercising his judgment as he revised *Hyperion* into *The Fall*, Keats discovered that his half random first thought was his best.

At several points Keats actually improved the text of *Hyperion* as a result of working on *The Fall*. Saturn's shady vale gave him trouble in the original manuscript. The second sentence of the poem originally read

No stir of air was there,

Not so much Life as what an eagle's wing
Would spread upon a field of green-ear'd corn
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.

Unhappy (and rightly so) with 'as what', Keats erased 'what an eagle's' and replaced it with 'a young vultur[e]s'. Still unhappy—the ornithological uncertainty is symptomatic—he cancelled the whole two lines and replaced them with the following, written vertically in the right hand margin: 'Not so much life as on a summer's day / Robs not at all the dandelion's fleece.' The next time Keats worked on his manuscript, it was to use it as a source for *The Fall*. And it was at this point that the image came good:

No stir of life

Was in this shrouded vale, not so much air
As in the zoning of a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell there did it rest[.]

(*FH I*, 310-14)

The *Hyperion* manuscript and the Woodhouse transcripts of it retained the dandelion version, but when the 1820 volume was in proof Keats altered the lines in accordance with the revision for *The Fall*, to produce the published text:

No stir of air was there,

Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.

(*HI*, 7-10)

Two things are striking about this revision. First, there is Keats's capacity to recognize when an image does *not* need changing—from first version to last, the final line of the sentence remains perfect in its stasis. And secondly, the fact that his concern with local poetic texture is not confined to 'Miltonic' passages, for none of the several versions here is perceptibly embroiled with the language of *Paradise Lost*.

Again, in his original manuscript Keats struggled in an attempt to convey the sickly sweet smell of incense. 'A nausea', he begins. 'A nauseous feel', he then tries, but 'feel' is heavily crossed out, perhaps because it smacked of Leigh Huntism. 'Poison' then replaces 'nauseous' and 'feel' has to be reinstated: the line thus becomes 'A poison feel of brass and metal sick' (manuscript draft of *HI*, 189). But when the manuscript is adapted for *The Fall*, Keats again rejects 'feel', so that in the new poem the line becomes 'Savour of poisonous brass and metals sick' (*FH II*, 33). The next year, the published text of *Hyperion* follows this, though with 'metal' back in the singular to avoid the clashing 's'.

In these cases, there is an equivalence between *The Fall* and the published text of *Hyperion*. Sometimes, however, the two manuscript versions share details that the published text lacks. Thea addresses Saturn in the published *Hyperion*: ‘to the level of his ear / Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake’ (*HI*, 46-7). In *The Fall of Hyperion* this reads: ‘to the level of his *hollow* ear / Leaning, with parted lips, some words she spake’ (*FH I*, 348-9, my italics). Thanks to the epithet ‘hollow’, the reader may visualize the ear more vividly, while also gaining a fuller sense of loss and emptiness. Saturn has been dispossessed of his kingdom and his body has correspondingly been emptied out. His unsceptred hand is listless and his realmless eyes are closed; so too his kingly ear, which his subjects must often have tried to bend and whisper in for favour, is now hollow. This turns out to be another of Keats’s fine first thoughts afterwards confirmed by his judgment: the holograph manuscript of *Hyperion* shares ‘hollow’ with *The Fall*. The word has been sacrificed in the published text because of a more technical concern about ‘propriety’: the problem with ‘hollow’ is that it makes the line hypermetric by a full foot. For this reason it was cut, almost certainly by Woodhouse.¹⁷ Here, then, revision belongs not to the poet but to his ‘editor’—Woodhouse has undertaken in a modest way the kind of tidying up that Keats’s publisher, John Taylor, performed so extensively and damagingly upon the works of John Clare. ‘Revision’ occurs in the process of transforming the text from script to print. The manuscript belongs to the poet and is not subject to the strictures of critics, but Woodhouse recognizes that the reviewers who had savaged *Endymion* would have been quite capable of pouncing on a hypermetric line in *Hyperion* and condemning it as an inept Cockneyism. He revises accordingly.

These four examples show that the revision of *Hyperion* is complex and various. It involves two versions of the original poem with *The Fall* standing between them; it involves Woodhouse as well as Keats. And it does not always involve the question of Miltonic language. Even where there is a ‘Miltonic inversion’, the process is not always the straightforward one of ‘de-Miltonizing and de-latinizing’¹⁸ that critical orthodoxy takes it to be. Here are the two versions of some lines towards the end of Thea’s address to Saturn:

Saturn, sleep on:—Me thoughtless, why should I
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?

and

Saturn, sleep on:—O thoughtless, why did I
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?

If we are to believe that Keats is going through his poem de-Miltonizing it, we would expect ‘Me thoughtless’ to be the original version—for that is a highly Miltonic locution—and ‘O thoughtless’ to be the revised one. But in fact it is the other way round: ‘Me thoughtless’ is from *The Fall* (*FH I*, 368-9; *HI*, 68-9). Keats has introduced a Miltonism, contaminated the innocuous ‘O thoughtless’ of *Hyperion*.

This is not a unique instance. A wholly new line, ‘Ponderous upon my senses a whole moon’ (*FH I*, 392), has a Miltonic word order, yet it occurs a few lines after what is obviously a cut aimed at de-Miltonization, the removal of the circumlocutory description of oak trees as ‘Those green-rob’d senators of mighty woods’ (*HI*, 73). It is also shortly after the substitution of ‘bending’ (*FH I*, 386) for the Miltonic, latinate ‘couchant’ (*HI*, 87). There is a similar pattern of de-Miltonizing cheek by jowl with re-Miltonizing in Keats’s treatment of the lines that became the opening of canto two of *The Fall*. ‘Mortal omens drear’ (*HI*, 169), with its Miltonic postponed adjective, becomes the uninverted ‘dire prodigies’ (*FH II*, 18), and the idiosyncratic Miltonic verbal form of ‘Came slope upon the threshold of the west’ (*HI*, 204) is simplified to ‘Is sloping to the threshold of the west’ (*FH II*, 48). Yet in the same sequence the plain English of ‘And so, when harbour’d in the sleepy west’ (*HI*, 190) is polysyllabized into ‘Wherefore when harbour’d in the sleepy west’ (*FH II*, 34).¹⁹ And if Keats had been attempting extensive de-Miltonization he would surely have removed the whole of the epic simile concerning Hyperion’s minions and the anxious men gathering on the plain, rather than merely changed ‘panting’ back to ‘sad’.

This apparent confusion of strategies suggests that the pattern of revision was less coherent than Keats made out in his letters of September 1819. At the local level of vocabulary he is simply following his instincts, proving his imagery upon his pulses. Sometimes those instincts lead him to de-Miltonize, while on other occasions his mind continues to move in a Miltonic way. Only when he rationalizes afterwards does he single out the issue of Miltonic diction.

Nor can the new introductory section be described as single-mindedly anti-Miltonic. One moment Keats writes new and highly Miltonic lines:

a feast of summer fruits,

Which, nearer seen, seem'd refuse of a meal
By angel tasted, or our mother Eve[.]

(*FH I*, 29-31)

This makes the garden in which the poet finds himself specifically Edenic; he is a belated Miltonist picking up the refuse left after the meal in book five of *Paradise Lost*. Just six lines later, however, Keats introduces in a distinctly un-Miltonic way a mythological figure who had become associated with Milton. Romantic figurations of Proserpina, especially Keats's, almost invariably allude to Milton's fair field of Enna where Proserpine gathered flowers,²⁰ but here in *The Fall* Keats writes of a banquet for 'Proserpine return'd to her own fields, / Where the white heifers low' (*FH I*, 37-8). Those white heifers are unlike anything in Milton—they come from the Elgin marbles and the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', while Proserpine's return to 'her own fields' anticipates the homecoming of 'To Autumn'.

Some of the finest touches in the second *Hyperion* are the products of the distinctively post-Odes Keats. Shortly after the heifer image, the idiom of the Grecian urn recurs in conjunction with 'Nightingale'-like intoxication and slumber:

Among the fragrant husks and berries crush'd,
Upon the grass I struggled hard against
The domineering potion; but in vain:
The cloudy swoon came on, and down I sunk
Like a Silenus on an antique vase.

(*FH I*, 52-6)

In the very thorough footnotes of Miriam Allott's edition of the poems, the phrasing of this passage is said to recall some lines in Henry Cary's translation of Dante: 'When I, who had so much of Adam with me, / Sank down upon the grass, o'ercome with sleep'²¹ This echo is bound up with a major complexity in Keats's revisionary procedure. It is undoubtedly true that, although there are certain marks of the *Inferno* in the first *Hyperion*, both the structure and the vocabulary of *The Fall* are a great deal more Dantesque. In particular, the earthly paradise cantos at the end of the *Purgatorio* are a vital source for what is new in the second poem.²² It is attractive to suppose that Milton gives way to Dante as a model. Dante might be seen as a less oppressive influence: since he did not write in the same language as the ephebe, he does not strangle him. To become the English Dante is a nice solution to the problem of the impossibility of being a second Milton.

But in a sense the English Dante already existed, and Keats was close to him: he knew both Henry Cary and his translation (it had been one of the few books he had taken on the Scottish walking tour immediately after which he began the first *Hyperion*). And Cary's translation, far from being in Dantesque terza rima, was in Miltonic blank verse, replete with inversions and latinate vocabulary. Cary started Miltonizing Dante as soon as he started translating him, as may be seen from the very beginning of his *Hell*:

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
che la diritta via era smarrita.
Ah quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte
che nel pensier rinnova la paura!

(*Inferno* I, 1-6)

is rendered

In the midway of this our mortal life,
I found me in a gloomy wood, astray
Gone from the path direct: and e'en to tell,
It were no easy task, how savage wild
That forest, how robust and rough its growth,
Which to remember only, my dismay
Renews[.]

(*Hell* I, 1-7)

'Gloomy' will do for 'oscura', but the long vowel sounds are gloomily Miltonic; 'astray' hangs and 'Renews' is run on in the manner of *Paradise Lost's* blank verse; 'diritta via' is inverted to 'path direct'; 'task' is not so much licensed by 'cosa' as generated by Milton's 'sad task' in the invocation to book nine (*PL IX*, 13). Because of Cary, Milton and Dante were not really alternative models for Keats. He tried reading Dante in the original before revising *Hyperion*, as if to distance himself from the Miltonic Cary, but in reading a poem in a language not well known to him he could not get away from the idiom of the translation that he knew.

There is a further reason why the hypothesis of Dante replacing Milton will not do, and this brings us to the broader aspect of Keats's revision. The first *Hyperion* breaks off with Apollo about to become a god. His achievement of godhead depends on his initiation into suffering. He looks into the face of Mnemosyne and seems to achieve knowledge:

Mute thou remainest—mute! yet I can read
A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
Creations and destroyings, all at once
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
And deify me[.]

(*H III*, 111-18)

The germ of the second *Hyperion* resides in these lines. In the revised poem Keats develops this idea of Mnemosyne teaching how it is necessary to embrace suffering; he applies it, however, to the poet instead of the emergent god. Mnemosyne, now called Moneta, says that the poet, the first-person narrator, cannot achieve vision until for him 'the miseries of the world / Are misery' and he 'will not let them rest' (*FH I*, 148-9). In famous lines, she distinguishes between the poet and the dreamer—they are 'Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes' (*FH I*, 200); the true poet's vision is agonizingly tragic, not dreamily romantic. Moneta's lesson is that of the sonnet 'On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again': the book of romance must be closed and that of tragedy burned through instead. It is also the lesson of Keats's letter to Reynolds about the mind as a mansion of many apartments—the poet must pass through the light intoxicating chamber into the dark passages beyond (*Letters*, 1, p. 281). Significantly, it was while he was working on *The Fall* that Keats wrote his tragedy *Otho the Great*—not by any stretch of imagination his greatest work, but one that reveals

the direction in which he was developing. A letter to Bailey of 14 August 1819 juxtaposes the two works: 'I [hav]e a[l]so been writing parts of my *Hyperion* [i.e. *Fall*] and [c]ompleted 4 Acts of a Tragedy' (*Letters*, 2, p. 139). In *The Fall*'s dialogue between narrator and Moneta, Keats dramatizes the concerns he had previously explored monologically in the letters; it is here if it is anywhere that he takes his 'first Step towards the chief Attempt in the Drama' (*Letters*, 1, p. 218). The move towards tragedy is central to the revision of both the content and the form of *Hyperion*.

In the revised version the fall of the Titans becomes not the substance of the poem but a narrative which Moneta tells the poet in order to initiate him into tragedy. Keats is specific about this in lines, influenced by those of Apollo, that occur shortly before the vision begins and we hear the familiar 'Deep in the shady sadness of a vale, / Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn':

So at the view of sad Moneta's brow,
I ached to see what things the hollow brain
Behind enwombed: what high tragedy
In the dark secret chambers of her skull
Was acting, that could give so dread a stress
To her cold lips, and fill with such a light
Her planetary eyes; and touch her voice
With such a sorrow.

(*FH I*, 275-82)

Apollo in *Hyperion* finds knowledge of dire events pouring 'into the wide hollows' of his brain. The dream structure of *The Fall* means that the whole poem takes place in the wide hollows of the poet's brain; now, in a further layer of vision, the poet looks into the hollows of Moneta's brain and sees a drama enacted there. Moneta, a figuration of Memory, carries within the dark secret chambers of her skull the dark memory of the primal tragedy, that of Fall. The Fall is the same event as in the first version of the poem but its function is changing: it now serves as an admonition. The revision of the name Mnemosyne (memory) into *Moneta* signals the darkening. Paradoxically, however, the darkened vision also provides comfort: Moneta's eyes beam 'like the mild moon, / Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not / What eyes are upward cast' (*FH I*, 269-71). Christopher Ricks says finely of this, 'The blank splendour of the moon is a type of the blank (not empty) splendour of art ... The consolation which Keats here imagines, he at the same time provides; he comforts those he sees not, and this is of the essence of art.'²³ For Keats, as is made clear by both the *Lear* sonnet and Moneta's claim that only those poets to whom the miseries of the world are misery can pour out a balm upon the world, this capacity to give comfort is the preserve of tragedy.

It is in this idea of Fall as tragedy that Keats departs radically from both Milton and Dante. Milton originally intended to write the story of the Fall of man as a tragedy called *Adam Unparadised*, but he changed his mind and incorporated it into a larger pattern which embraced redemption and made the Fall Fortunate, *felix culpa*. So too with the structure of Dante's epic: the *Inferno* contains many tragedies within it, but it is followed by the experience of *Purgatorio* and ultimately the redemption of *Paradiso*—it is a divine *comedy*. There are strong purgatorial elements in *The Fall of Hyperion*, as in the *Lear* sonnet, but there is no sense of an emergence into a New Jerusalem.

The first *Hyperion*, like *Paradisic Lost* and the *Divine Comedy*, has a progressive pattern, a sense of acceptance, summed up in Oceanus' magnificent lines on the movement towards 'ripeness' and his belief that the older gods 'fall by course of Nature's law' (*H II*, 181), that

on our heels a fresh perfection treads
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us, as we pass
In glory that old Darkness ...

(*H* II, 212-15)

All this must go if the Fall of the Titans is to be rewritten as a tragedy rather than a necessary, if pathos-filled, process in the progress of history. The new gods like Apollo must be excluded, as must Oceanus' speech and other consolations. As part of the revision into tragedy, Keats inserts into the story of Saturn lines like the following, in which the poet makes himself into a tragic artist, taking on the burden of suffering, even assuming the aura of a tragic character who longs for death:

Without stay or prop

But by my own weak mortality, I bore
The load of this eternal quietude,
The unchanging gloom ...

Oftentimes I pray'd

Intense, that death would take me from the vale
And all its burthens. Gasping with despair
Of change, hour after hour I curs'd myself[.]

(*FH* I, 388-91, 396-9)

Contrast this 'Despair / Of change' with Oceanus' language of progress. The tone of Saturn's own speech is transformed from questioning ('search, Thea, search!'—*H* I, 116, 121) to lamentation ('Moan, brethren, moan'—*FH* I, 412, 427). *Hyperion* does not use the word 'moan' in Saturn's speech; *The Fall* uses it thirteen times, transforming what Saturn says into something like a Greek tragic lament, a 'dolorous accent from a tragic harp' (*FH* I, 444). In *Hyperion* Saturn is one of Milton's bold fallen angels plotting recovery; in *The Fall* he is enfeebled, lost, tragic (his plan to form and rule a new world, reminiscent of Satan's proposal to make mischief on earth, has been cut). In *Hyperion*, passion makes Saturn stand at the end of the speech—he has roused himself, if no other. In *The Fall* he remains seated, forlorn (*H* I, 135; *FH* I, 446).

The obvious pattern for a tragedy on the fall of the Titans was Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, but, as Shelley was demonstrating at this time, that play always implies a *Prometheus Unbound*—a release, a happy ending, an overall comic structure. While the obvious pattern for writing tragedy in English was Shakespeare, the lameness of *Otho the Great* had shown Keats that Shakespearean drama was inimitable. Tragedy, as much as Milton, could be an impasse. It was, furthermore, an impasse that was not merely formal.

Keats interpreted *Paradise Lost* as a politically progressive, republican poem. One of his marginal notes reads:

How noble and collected an indignation against Kings ... His [Milton's] very wishing should have the power to pull that feeble animal Charles from his bloody throne. 'The evil days' had come to him—he hit the new System of things a mighty mental blow—the exertion must have had or is yet to have some sequences—

(Wittreich, p. 556)

Here Keats hints at an analogy between Milton during the Restoration and himself in post-1815 Europe, confronted with the Bourbon Restoration in France, the Holy Alliance of monarchs, and what Hazlitt scathingly called 'Legitimacy' all around. Like Shelley, Keats hoped that Milton could exert a positive political influence. The Miltonic first *Hyperion* is a progressive poem; it concerns a revolution, and Oceanus' lines make clear that the new regime is superior to the old.²⁴ Leigh Hunt spoke of the poem's 'transcendental cosmopolitics',²⁵ and contemporary readers would have recognized the 'progress poem' as a liberal genre, concerned with the development of enlightened political institutions. Apollo is a progressive figure, associated by Keats with 'the march of passion and endeavour' (*Letters*, 1, p. 207)—a kind of superior Napoleon. Like

Hazlitt, Keats viewed Napoleon as the sword-arm of revolutionary values, but when it came to *The Fall*, his artistic interest was focused on those defeated by revolution; his sympathies were with the fallen gods, the old regime. In *Hyperion* Saturn is 'quiet as a stone' (HI, 4), whereas in *The Fall* he is a stone, a sculptured representation rather than a realized character: *The Fall* looks to the past not the future, to the statues of the old gods, not the progress of the new ones; it is about the recovery of memory, not the birth of a bright new regime.

Keats's poetry and his politics are at odds here. At precisely the time he gave up the second *Hyperion*, the third week of September 1819, he wrote his most sustained and progressive political letters: 'All civil[iz]ed countries become gradually more enlighten'd and there should be a continual change for the better ...' (*Letters*, 2, p. 193). Keats gives examples of how the tyranny of monarchy has been overthrown; he posits a model of historical development: 'Three great changes have been in progress—First for the better, next for the worse, and a third time for the better once more.' It is a pattern of revolution, reaction, and new struggle—a pattern which is being acted out in 'The present struggle in England of the people' (*ibid.*). Keats was writing the month after the Peterloo massacre; indeed on 13 September he witnessed the throng, which he estimated at thirty thousand people, that had taken to the streets to greet the radical orator Henry Hunt as he entered London. Within three days he resolved to abandon *The Fall of Hyperion*. His tragic vision and his progressive politics proved incompatible; he had learnt the lesson of Hazlitt's essay on *Coriolanus*, with its claim that poetry is an aristocratic, not a levelling, principle: tragedy sympathizes with the fallen rulers. Perhaps with this lesson in mind, and out of a desire to resist it, he chose to publish the more progressive work, *Hyperion* rather than *The Fall*, in 1820.

Keats's concern with the possibility that salvation will be political should not, however, be overemphasized. At his most characteristic he enables us to live with loss, not to glimpse some future salvation. Keats did not trumpet prophecies in the manner of Shelley. He believed, with Moneta, that it was not the business of poets to 'Labour for mortal good' (FH I, 159) in the same manner as political activists like Henry Hunt. Perhaps because of his personal and familial circumstances, he always engaged most deeply with the mystery of suffering. His remarks about giving up on the *Hyperion* project because of its Miltonic diction are a screen for the deeper sense in which he wanted to detach himself from Milton, namely his agnostic need to get away from a structure of *felix culpa* stemming from belief in some ultimate spiritual redemption. Keats said in his letter on life as a mansion of many apartments that Wordsworth had gone further than Milton in seeing into the pain of the human heart. The problem with Milton was his imposition of a divine pattern upon human suffering, his faith in a Christian solution to the mystery of life. Keats rejected this irritable reaching after a conclusion. No longer striving for the moon with Endymion, he had become a profoundly uneschatological poet. In the second *Hyperion* he reached a similar state to that of Wordsworth in the darker passages of 'Tintern Abbey' and *The Excursion*. As King Lear takes upon himself 'the mystery of things' and as Wordsworth feels 'the burthen of the mystery', so Keats, when he looks into the face of Moneta, takes on 'the depth / Of things' (FH I, 304-5). This revision of 'the life of things' takes the Wordsworthian in the tragic direction that Keats imagined as his own, away from the 'cheerful faith' which Wordsworth had inherited from Milton and the lightening of the burden in which 'Tintern Abbey' invests its hopes. The state which Lear and the personae of Wordsworth and Keats enter is the one which Keats called negative capability, the willingness to live with uncertainties and doubts. From this state follows a refusal to come to conclusions. 'The only means of strengthening one's intellect is to make up one[']s mind about nothing', Keats wrote during that same momentous week in September 1819 (*Letters*, 2, p. 213). He could not therefore conclude *The Fall*; it had to remain a fragment like the poem it was revising. In its lack of closure *Hyperion* had found its true form.

Notes

1. *John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 316-38.

2. Published in *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle*, ed. F. W. Hilles and H. Bloom (New York, 1965), repr. with the date 1964 in Bloom's *The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in Romantic Tradition* (Chicago, 1971).
3. Bate, *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970); Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York, 1973). In the case of Bloom, the key intermediary text was his study of Yeats, published in 1970.
4. Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1981), p. 120.
5. Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, 24 September 1819, in *The Letters of John Keats 1814-1821*, ed. Hyder E. Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), Vol. 2, p. 212. Subsequent quotations from Keats's letters are followed in my text by volume and page reference to this edition.
6. For Bloom's reading of *The Fall of Hyperion* as a 'revision' of Milton and Wordsworth, see Chapter 5 of his *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* (New Haven, 1976).
7. The annotations are reproduced in *The Romantics on Milton: Formal Essays and Critical Asides*, ed. J. A. Wittreich Jr (Cleveland, Ohio, 1970), cited hereafter as Wittreich.
8. 'Milton in every instance pursues his imagination to the utmost—he is "sagacious of his Quarry" [*PL* X, 281], he sees Beauty on the wing, pounces upon it and gorges it to the producing his essential verse ... in no instance is this sort of perseverance more exemplified than in what may be called his *stationing or statu[a]ry*. He is not content with simple description, he must station'—annotation to *Paradise Lost* VI, 422-3, Wittreich, p. 559. The description of Saturn and Thea early in *Hyperion* is a fine piece of Miltonic statuary: 'these two were postured motionless, / Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern' (I, 85-6).
9. *Letters*, 2, pp. 14-15, 42; Woodhouse, note in his copy of *Endymion*, cited in *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Miriam Allott (London, 1970), p. 394.
10. 'Shakespeare and the paradise Lost every day become greater wonders to me' (to Bailey, 14 August 1819, *Letters*, 2, p. 139); 'the Paradise Lost becomes a greater wonder' (to Reynolds, 24 August 1819, *Letters*, 2, p. 146).
11. See *The Keats Circle*, ed. H. E. Rollins, 2 vols. (2nd ed., Cambridge, Mass., 1965), Vol. 2, p. 72. According to Stillinger, Brown's reference cannot be dated more precisely than 'toward the end of 1819' (*Poems of John Keats*, p. 676).
12. Here I paraphrase Jack Stillinger, in his edition of *The Poems of John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), p. 640. All my quotations (save those from the holograph manuscript) are taken from this edition. The poet's holograph manuscript of the first *Hyperion* is extant and now held by the British Library. There is a fine facsimile edited by Ernest de Selincourt: *Hyperion: A Facsimile of Keats's Autograph Manuscript with a Transliteration of the MS of The Fall of Hyperion. A Dream* (Oxford, 1905). Keats's holograph of *The Fall* is not extant; there are two complete transcripts, one by Woodhouse and one by two of his clerks, and a transcript of the first 326 lines only by Charlotte Reynolds.
13. See John D. Rosenberg, 'Keats and Milton: The Paradox of Rejection', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 6 (1957), pp. 87-95; Stuart M. Sperry Jr, 'Keats, Milton and *The Fall of Hyperion*', *PMLA* [*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*] 77 (1962), pp. 77-84; Paul Sherwin, 'Dying into Life: Keats's Struggle with Milton in *Hyperion*', *PMLA*, 93 (1978), pp. 383-95; Nancy Moore Goslee, *Uriel's Eye: Miltonic Stationing and Statuary in Blake, Keats, and Shelley* (Alabama, 1985). Verbal details are charted in M. R. Ridley, *Keats' Craftsmanship* (Oxford, 1933, repr. London, 1964), and the notes to Miriam Allott's edition.
14. It is not often noted that the holograph manuscript of *Hyperion* runs 'Book 1st', 'Canto 2nd', 'Canto 3'. 'Book II' and 'Book III' in the 1820 printed text derive from the transcript by Woodhouse, which was in turn transcribed by two of his clerks and then used as the printer's copy.
15. For the influence of the 'Mutabilitie Cantos' on *The Fall* and the 1819 odes, see Helen Vendler, *The Odes of John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), pp. 205-8, 242-3.

16. *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. H. Coleridge, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1912), Vol. 1, pp. 296-7. Marjorie Levinson notes the connection between the two passages in *The Romantic Fragment Poem* (Chapel Hill, 1986), p. 169.
17. See Stillinger's textual notes, *The Poems of John Keats*, p. 640.
18. Sidney Colvin's phrase, *John Keats* (London, 1917), p. 447.
19. Woodhouse noticed this emendation: in the transcript that was used as printer's copy in 1820, he underscored 'And so' and wrote 'Wherefore' on the opposite verso (Stillinger, *The Poems of John Keats*, p. 641).
20. *PL IV*, 268-72, praised by Keats as one of two extraordinary Miltonic beauties 'unexampled elsewhere' (Wittreich, p. 559).
21. *Purgatory IX*, 9-10, in Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. Cary (1814, repr. London, 1908).
22. See John Livingston Lowes, 'Hyperion and the Purgatorio', *TLS [Times Literary Supplement]* (11 January 1936), p. 35; John Saly, 'Keats's Answer to Dante: *The Fall of Hyperion*', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 14 (1965), pp. 65-78; and Ralph Pite, 'Dante's Influence on Coleridge and Keats: "The Circle of our Vision"' (unpubl. Cambridge Ph.D. diss., 1989). For Keats's markings in his copy of Cary's 1814 Dante, see Robert Gittings, *The Mask of Keats* (London, 1956).
23. *Keats and Embarrassment* (Oxford, 1974), p. 191.
24. For the politics of the first *Hyperion*, see Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries* (Oxford, 1981), p. 151, and Alan J. Bewell, 'The Political Implication of Keats's Classicist Aesthetics', *Studies in Romanticism*, 25 (1986), pp. 220-9.
25. Hunt's *Autobiography*, in *Keats: The Critical Heritage*, ed. G. M. Matthews (London, 1971), p. 255.

Criticism: Carl Plasa (essay date 1995)

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[In the following essay, Plasa discusses the relationship between *Hyperion*, *The Fall of Hyperion*, and *Milton's Paradise Lost*. Plasa considers Keats's work as a re-envisioning of poetics that attempts to repress the Miltonic past.]

a poet's stance, his Word, his imaginative identity, his whole being, *must* be unique to him, and remain unique, or he will perish, as a poet.

Harold Bloom

language, for the individual consciousness, lies in the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention.

Mikhail Bakhtin

I have but lately stood on my guard against Milton. Life to him would be death to me.

Keats¹

In a well-known letter to Richard Woodhouse of 27 October 1818 Keats sets forth an idealized vision of his own poethood that has become canonical. The "poetical Character" with which Keats explicitly associates himself "is not itself—it has no self—it is every thing and nothing" (*Letters*, i, 386-87). Adopting such a

stance, the negatively capable or self-effacing poet secures his difference from the “wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone.” Yet the opposition between the “camelion Poet” and those practitioners of the “egotistical sublime” (who in the end include Milton even more than Wordsworth) is at the same time a projection of conflicts or tensions pervading Keats's own writing. One manifestation of the *alter ego* belonging to the Keatsian poet who purports to “ha[ve] no Identity” (*Letters*, i, 387) occurs in a later letter to John Hamilton Reynolds of 24 August 1819:

I am convinced more and more day by day that fine writing is next to fine doing the top thing in the world; the *Paradise Lost* becomes a greater wonder—The more I know what my diligence may in time probably effect; the more does my heart distend with Pride and Obstinancy ... My own being which I know to be becomes of more consequence to me than the crowds of Shadows in the Shape of Man and women that inhabit a kingdom. The Soul is a world of itself and has enough to do in its own home—Those whom I know already and who have grown as it were a part of myself I could not do without: but for the rest of Mankind they are as much a dream to me as Miltons Hierarchies.

(*Letters*, ii, 146)

For Keats to represent the thought of surpassing Milton in these terms is ironic because the terms are themselves Miltonically derived. Keats's swelling heart echoes Satan's, as the latter revives to the sight of his fallen comrades after their regrouping: “And now his heart / Distends with pride, and hardening in his strength / Glories.”² Yet it is more than just the language of Keats's letter that is Miltonic here. The identification with Satan indicates that Keats's poetic ambitions entail not only a wish simply to outdo Milton but also, more fundamentally, the desire to gain autonomy from him, since Satan's archetypal claim is that he is “self-begot, self-raised / By [his] own quickening power” (*PL* v, 860-61). As readers of *Paradise Lost* since Blake have recognized, Satan in turn embodies *Milton's* drive toward imaginative self-origination: the poet of *Paradise Lost* steps outside of time—literary and historical alike—pursuing “Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme” (*PL* i, 16). To (con)figure or conduct his relations with earlier poets—whether Milton or Wordsworth—according to a Satanic/Miltonic model is thus for Keats to be caught in a paradoxical dilemma. The quest for a poetic stance in which the “Soul is a world of itself” is necessarily compromised and undercut because such a stance has already been arrogated to himself by another, the poet of *Paradise Lost*. Keats's post-Miltonic station dissolves the search for an “egotistical sublime” of one's own into the spectacular bathos of repetition and *unoriginality*. The terse recognition of September 1819, cited as this essay's third epigraph, usefully figures the ironic reversal of self-creation into self-destruction.

The problematic nature of poetic autonomy after Milton causes it to become a source of ambivalence, desired and rejected at once. The signs of such ambivalence are inscribed with particular complexity in Keats's *Hyperion*, largely composed—and abandoned—during the period between which the letters to Woodhouse and Reynolds were themselves written.³ In this poem Keats strives to develop a strategy for negotiating the conflicts resulting from the post-Miltonic assumption of an autonomous poethood. This is evidenced most obviously in *Hyperion's* status as a revisionary text, a rewriting of *Paradise Lost*.⁴ Keats appropriates the Miltonic dramas of “impious war in heaven and battle proud” (*PL* i, 43) and indirectly recasts them, through his poem's myth of theogonic succession, into a prospective allegory of his own imaginative genesis-through-transcendence of the earlier poet. The language of the Miltonic other is emphatically subjectivized, even as it is solely *through* that language that the Keatsian self becomes its own theme. Such a balanced interplay of self-reflection and self-effacement symptomatizes and resolves the internal conflicts which are part of Keats's post-Miltonic burden.

As a way of circumventing the problematic of autonomy, the revisionary operations of *Hyperion* align Keats's text less with the Satan of *Paradise Lost* i or v, than with the figure as he appears elsewhere in Milton's poem:

Like a black mist low creeping, he held on
His midnight search, where soonest he might find
The serpent: him fast sleeping soon he found
In labyrinth of many a round self rolled,
His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles:
Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
Nor nocent yet, but on the grassy herb
Fearless unfeared he slept: in at his mouth
The devil entered, and his brutal sense,
In heart or head, possessing soon inspired
With act intelligential; but his sleep
Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn.

(*PL* ix, 180-91)

There are three points of comparison between Satan's actions here and *Hyperion's* revisionary poetics. First, just as Satan's strategy depends upon resemblances between himself and the serpent, with its "head ... well stored with subtle wiles," so it is the mutual concern of Milton's text and Keats's with issues of usurpation which opens up the former to reinscription. Secondly, Satan's actions involve a certain self-diminishment (they are a "foul descent!" he tells us, *PL* ix, 163). This is paralleled in turn in the loss or ascesis of imaginative autonomy necessarily imposed upon Keats by the demands of his poem/project. Finally, what Satan is doing, at this juncture, constitutes an insinuation of self into other whose consequence is the endowment of that other, the serpent, with a language turned, crucially, toward the insinuator's purposes, the prosecution of his "dark intent." For it is primarily Satan's linguistic power which leads Eve on toward her Fall: "He ended, and his words replete with guile / Into her heart too easy entrance won" (*PL* ix, 162, 733-34). Such a pattern is rehearsed by *Hyperion*, as Keats enters into Milton's poem and infuses it with another meaning, repossessing or reinspiring the earlier text as a medium through which to pose the questions of his own poetic incumbency.⁵

The operations of poetic revision in *Hyperion* can be formulated as much in Bakhtinian as Miltonic terms, suggesting parallels, as they do, with Bakhtin's notion of "dialogism." For Bakhtin, language is not

a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated—overpopulated—with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process.⁶

Despite being preoccupied with prior meanings, "the intentions of others," language is open equally to displacement and reinscription. In the context of *Hyperion's* relation to *Paradise Lost* "ever newer ways to mean"⁷ are produced through the Keatsian appropriation/adaptation of his interlocutor's "word" to self-serving and revisionary ends.

Keats's central problem in *Hyperion* arises from the contradiction between its very status as a revisionary text and the nature of the drama within the poem that it revises. It is under the strain of the split or disjunction between *Hyperion's* performative and constative levels—"doing" and "writing" to use the terms of the letter to Reynolds—that Keats's text finally fragments. Revision bespeaks and enacts continuity, a Keats working against but also with—or within—Milton. Yet the narrative reworked in *Hyperion*, in the displaced classical form of the struggle between Titans and Olympians, is predicated upon the *disruption* of continuity—the Falls of Satan, Adam and Eve and the former's yearning for autonomy. Conflict between *Hyperion's* revisionary and narrative dimensions reaches crisis in its third book, traditionally accorded only a marginal role in the poem by Keats's critical readers.⁸ Here Keats gets enmeshed in his own agonistic fiction. In spite of himself, he comes to effect a *repression* of the past which is not only as radical as that sought by Apollo, the poem's hero, but also directly opposed, moreover, to the dialogical gravitations of *Hyperion's* first two books.⁹

(i, 1-14)

Despite Saturn's mortalizing Fall, Keats's text repeatedly stresses his god's *distance* from the signs that ordinarily denote a subjugation to the temporal. He is "Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn, / Far from the fiery moon, and eve's one star," as from the "life" of a "summer's day." Saturn's location is an enigmatic and equivocal one—in and out of time at once. The implication is of a poet strangely at odds with his own project. It is as if Keats were proleptically engaged, at the constative level, in a resistance to, or disavowal of the impulses toward discontinuity and rupture to which he himself yields in book three.

Such impulses are integral to any bid for autonomy, poetic or otherwise. As such, they can be seen to meet additional resistance and disavowal at the beginning of *Hyperion* since it is precisely the possibility of autonomy which, by means of allusion, that beginning negates:

Upon the sodden ground

His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unscptred; and his realmless eyes were closed,
While his bowed head seemed listening to the earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

(i, 17-21)

These lines recall the passage already cited from *Paradise Lost* v, in which Satan represents himself in terms of a radical self-origination, denying his status as the "work of secondary hands." Yet it is through such hands—those of the revisionary poet—that the Sublime of self-origination is here reworked and unravelled. Satan's "quickenning power" becomes an arrested impotence in *Hyperion*; the "right hand" whose "puissance" rejects God's "golden sceptre" (*PL* v, 886), is refashioned as Saturn's, passively "Unscptred." In a final intertextual transaction, Satan's self-promotion as the "birth mature" of a "native heaven" is reversed in the figuration of Saturn "listening to the earth, / His ancient mother, for some comfort yet." Satan's Fall thus extends beyond the perimeters of Milton's heaven, halted only by his re-emergence in the parodically diminished shape of Saturn. Neither Milton nor his text eludes this process. Insofar as Satan's flagrant repression of origins constitutes a figuring forth of Milton's own imaginative desires, the subversion of the one is also that of the other, the Milton who is most truly, if covertly, Satan's "equal."

Keats's defensiveness toward the elements of strife and conflict presupposed by his poem's narrative design ("sad feud . . . and rebellion / Of son against his sire" [i, 321-22]) is centrally embodied in the threshold-figure of Hyperion himself who, significantly, gives the poem its title, retains "His sovereignty, and rule, and majesty" (i, 165) and remains (even at ii, 344) "still . . . undisgraced." As if in subtle anticipatory dispute with Woodhouse's forecast that "The poem, if completed, would have treated of the dethronement of Hyperion, the former God of the Sun, by Apollo,"¹² the earlier figure is in fact represented by the text as *self*-displacing: "standing fierce beneath he stamped his foot, / And from the basements deep to the high towers / *Jarred his own golden region*" (i, 222-24; emphasis added). Analogously, at ii, 372-73 Hyperion is "a vast shade / In midst of his own brightness."

Woodhouse goes on to speculate that for Keats to have continued with the poem would have involved him in the representation of "other events, of which we have but very dark hints in the mythological poets of Greece and Rome," adding that, "In fact the incidents would have been pure creations of the Poet's brain."¹³ As such, he suggests precisely why *Hyperion* cannot *but* be a fragment: to step beyond its broken frame draws Keats into the very mode of purely subjective imagining against which his poem sets itself in the first place. The revisionary insinuations of *Hyperion's* form—sustaining relations with the past—constitute a defence against some such plunge into the voids of an autonomous creativity. Such a defence is evident, within the text, in the poem's recurrent disruptions of the modalities of agonism, conflict, discontinuity—"gods thrown down" (i, 127)—which it inherits from Milton. Given, however, the eventual convulsion of Keats's text in and by the

very agonism which provides its allegorical structure, such disruptions can ultimately only amount, however, to little more than a series of misdirected prophylaxes.

The self-curtailement upon which Keats's revisionary insinuations are predicated in turn brings about a loss within the earlier text. Keats's detour through the language of the other results in a diminished return to the self, while simultaneously causing that language to be set adrift from its own originating ground.

The shift, in other words, is from influence to revision, self-dispossession *by* the past to Bakhtinian repossession and rearticulation *of* it in the present. As suggested already, this process does not provide an exhaustive model for the interplay between Keats's text and Milton's. It is, nonetheless, one which *Hyperion* both allegorizes within itself and also carries out in relation to another Miltonic text, "Lycidas." The allegorical inscription occurs at i, 269-83:

The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
Each day from east to west the heaven through,
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds;
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
Glowed through, and wrought upon the muffling dark
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
Up to the zenith-hieroglyphics old
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
Then living on the earth with labouring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries—
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart, their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled.

Though the stars in this passage are "Not ... veiled quite," the influence which traditionally flows from them manifests itself not as an influx of power, but as *writing*, lightnings "*wrought upon* the muffling dark" (emphasis added).¹⁴ The textualizing of influence—"hieroglyphics old"—subsequently exorcises it, "their import gone, / Their wisdom long since fled," producing a language no longer bound to the moment of its genesis but open to endless reinscription.¹⁵

As is the case with *Hyperion's* opening tableau, the concern of Keats's reinscription of "Lycidas" (in passages immediately before and after the lines cited above) is with the waning of the notion of a discontinuous beginning. This is figured in *Hyperion's* struggle to arouse the dawn prior to its naturally appointed hour. The process commences at i, 263:

To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
Before the dawn in season due should blush,
He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy portals.

(i, 263-66)

It is finally relinquished at i, 295:

Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne
And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not. No, though a primeval God,
The sacred seasons might not be disturbed.
Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stayed in their birth, even as here 'tis told.

(i, 290-95)

If the flight toward the “eastern gates” is concurrent with a shift in *Hyperion's* revisionary milieu, from *Paradise Lost* to “Lycidas,” this is not surprising because “Lycidas” is paradigmatic in Milton of precisely that preemptive gesture of poetic self-origination which is in Keats no longer extant:

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear,
Compels me to disturb your season due:
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime.

(lines 1-8)

Milton meets one discontinuity with another, disrupting the correspondence between the rhythms of nature and imagination in an act of poetic self-institution which is as violent as the death, “ere his prime,” of Edward King, the poem's elegiac object, mythologized as Lycidas. Yet the débâcle of Hyperion's failed self-dawning is Keats's resource. The “change” sought at a narrative level is effected in revisionary terms, as Keats's poem operates retrospectively upon Milton's to produce a counter-violation to the one enacted in and by the latter. “Lycidas” becomes the ground of its own displacement, its language set against itself in the refigurative shift from earliness to timeliness.

In this way Milton's text might be said to survive itself, passing into the revisionary afterlife provided for it by Keats's. Such a survival is an ironic one, however, as *Hyperion* transforms the earlier text into a setting for the demise of the very model of poetic self-begetting which that text had brought to life:

And the bright Titan, frenzied with new woes,
Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretched himself in grief and radiance faint.

(i, 299-304)

What precipitates Hyperion's grief is the dying-out of the Miltonic swain within himself. The aspiration toward autonomy—the “sudden blaze” of “Lycidas,” line 74—is virtually dispersed in the late and levelling recognition (figured in Keats's Titan, deathly and supine and sliding from “bright” to “faint”) that such autonomy is no longer accessible to the poet who writes in its wake. For Keats to revive the poetics whose death Hyperion lives would merely entail his own dying into the life of another, losing autonomy in finding it. *Hyperion* itself seeks to circumvent this dilemma by incorporating rather than refusing the past. Just as Hyperion is forced to accommodate his “spirit” to the “new woes” of a temporalized existence, so Keats's text subjects the letter of Milton's text (whether “Lycidas” or *Paradise Lost*) to a process that makes it a medium through which the relation between the two poets may be articulated. The irony is that in *Hyperion's* third book Keats reanimates the impulses whose death he had both tolled and “told” in the narrative of Hyperion's failure to precipitate the dawn. This shift indeed implicates him in the precocities of Miltonic self-assertion dramatized in “Lycidas.” In book i, however, such a warping of revisionary intent is registered only as a certain division toward the prospect of poetic earliness: if Hyperion fails to hasten the “operations of the dawn” it is not through any reluctance on the part of the sun, his “dazzling globe” (i, 288), whose “wings, / Ever exalted at the God's approach” are “Eager to sail their orb” (i, 284-85, 297).

II

One aspect of the signs of disaster that beset Hyperion is their lack of precedent:

Unseen before by gods or wondering men,
Darkened the place, and neighing steeds were heard,
Not heard before by gods or wondering men.

(i, 182-85)

To complement their premonitory status, these signs have no recognizable past. Yet their radical newness is strikingly offset by the verbal and syntactic repetitions which characterize the representation of them. The questioning of signification by form is symptomatic of *Hyperion's* attempted marring of the elements of its own agonistic design (in this instance, discontinuity) noted earlier. Such a marring is accompanied by a *masking* of that same design. The most sustained occurrence of this is Oceanus's speech (ii, 173-243), with its characteristically organicist representation of historical and, by implication, poetic relations alike. But just as *Hyperion's* agonistic structures are unsettled in the course of their unfolding, so the assertion of continuity in this speech is equally self-destabilizing: the language by which Keats's poem seeks to obscure those structures at the same time undermines the labor of occultation.

The voice of Keats's "God of the Sea" is not a "bellows unto ire" (ii, 167, 176), as such opposing the stance of the militant Enceladus, "hurling mountains in that second war" (ii, 70). Instead it counsels a yielding to the historical processes which have resulted in the Titans' displacement by the Olympians: "as thou wast not the first of powers, / So art thou not the last; it cannot be. / Thou art not the beginning nor the end" (ii, 188-90). In compensation for the Titans' predicament Oceanus goes on to offer a knowledge whose "balm" (ii, 243) consists in the ability to apprehend the pattern of permanent change which informs the passage of history: "to bear all naked truths, / And to envisage circumstance, all calm, / That is the top of sovereignty" (ii, 203-5). To thus "envisage circumstance" is to recognize, and so master, the arbitrariness of its peripetias, one of which the Titans suffer. In these terms Oceanus parallels Keats's observations, on "disinterestedness of Mind," made in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, February-May 1819:

Circumstances are like Clouds continually gathering and bursting—While we are laughing the seed of some trouble is put into the wide arable land of events—while we are laughing it sprouts ... and suddenly bears a poison fruit which we must pluck—Even so we have leisure to reason on the misfortunes of our friends; our own touch us too nearly for words.

(*Letters*, ii, 79)

Yet in *Hyperion* mastery gained at one level is lost at another, that of language. On the one hand Oceanus claims that history is simply self-elaborating, as devoid of agency as nature itself: "We fall by course of Nature's law, not force / Of thunder, or of Jove" (ii, 181-82). Correlatively, the orientation of past to present which leaves the Titans "O'erwhelm'd, and spurned, and battered" (ii, 156) is transfigured into an acquiescent and organicist continuity:

Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
And feedeth still, more comely than itself?
Can it deny the chiefdom of green groves?

(ii, 217-20)

Say, doth the dul

Against this, however, the “eternal law / That first in beauty should be first in might” (ii, 228-29) periodically reconstitutes itself—despite Oceanus and Keats alike—in terms of Achillean dispossession, “on our heels a fresh perfection treads, / A power more strong in beauty,” and genealogical strife, “another race may drive / Our conquerors to mourn as we do now” (ii, 212-13, 230-31). The figurative tensions—between a naturalistic emphasis on sustenance and growth and a language of usurpation and hierarchy—indicate a “Quarrel” within the representation of historical change itself. The opposition between Oceanus and Enceladus merely dramatizes the linguistic conflicts by which the former is unmastered.

Such conflicts accord in turn with the tensions informing Keats's poethood. The figuration of historical relations in terms of continuity is congruent with the Keatsian desire to incorporate and transfigure the language of the Miltonic past in the present of his own later writing. Yet the disruption of this figuration correlates to and enacts that counter-imperative which Keats seems unable to expel from himself—to assert the self *against* the past in a transcendent gesture of disarticulation and autonomy. The friction between these antithetical stances is perhaps most concisely inscribed in the clashing idioms of Saturn's questionings: “Who had power / To make me desolate? Whence came the strength? / How was it *nurtured* to such *bursting forth*?” (i, 102-4, emphasis added).

The rhetorical dispute which *Hyperion* carries on within itself reveals an important parallel between Saturn and Oceanus. Despite its having “seemed strangled in [his] nervous grasp” Saturn is unable to control his “fate” (i, 105), just as Oceanus's language strays beyond the realm of his influence over it. That language partakes of the randomness of Keats's cloudlike “Circumstances”: the drive to gather in its meanings beneath the shelter of a determinate purpose is frustrated by the recurrent outburst (or cloudburst) of unsummoned effects. The parallel between the play of language and that of circumstance is predictable because it is indeed suggested by the figurative correspondences which Keats's texts—poetic and epistolary—establish with one another. As indicated by its reformulation in the letter to George and Georgiana Keats, to “envisage circumstance, all calm” entails a mastery gained precisely through acknowledgement of the unmasterable. As the “top of sovereignty,” this is only one step on from poetic accomplishments, as in the letter to Reynolds cited at the beginning of this essay, in which “fine writing” is considered to be “next to fine doing the top thing in the world.” Or again in a related letter to Benjamin Bailey written slightly earlier:

I am convinced more and more every day that (excepting the human friend Philosopher) a fine writer is the most genuine Being in the world—Shakspeare and the paradise Lost every day become greater wonders to me.

(*Letters*, ii, 139)

The link which Keats's language sets up between different modes of mastery (circumstantial and textual) helps to illuminate the nature of “fine writing.” Achieved through “diligence,” it is to be esteemed precisely to the extent that it is *finite*, exempt from the reversals of intent which cloud Oceanus's speech. Perhaps this is why a “fine writer” is such a “genuine Being”—always meaning what he says, saying what he means? Yet such a poetic model is unsettled in the moment of its formulation. We can only wonder at the anomalous collocation of Shakespeare and Milton as examples of the “fine writer” since Shakespeare's is for Keats the counter-practice of a “fine excess” (*Letters*, i, 238), an affluence of signifying potential which debunks and deauthenticates the “Being” that writes.¹⁶

Oceanus's predominantly organicist representation of temporal relations constitutes, on Keats's part, a defensive masking of his own attraction toward a poethood, sublimely lost, like Milton's Satan, to its own eternal moment—“We know no time when we were not as now.” Guardedness toward such possibilities is necessitated by the recognition that to enter into the quest for self-origination is implicitly to prepare the ground for the arrival at an *unoriginal* destination. The self-ironization in which that quest begins, goes on, and ends could scarcely be more acute.

In Oceanus's speech, the recognition of such ironies is inscribed in the form of an allusive compounding of origins and death occurring during his account of the genealogy of the Titans:

The ripe hour came

And with it light, and light, engendering
Upon its own producer, forthwith touched
The whole enormous matter into life.
Upon that very hour, our parentage,
The heavens and the earth, were manifest.

(ii, 194-99)

The convoluted spectacle of “light, engendering / Upon its own producer,” recalls Sin's description of her coupling with Satan (from whose head she springs) in the second book of *Paradise Lost*: “and such joy thou took'st / With me in secret, that my womb conceived / A growing burden” (*PL* ii, 765-67). Sin is relieved of her “burden” shortly afterward: “but he my inbred enemy / Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart / Made to destroy: I fled, and cried out Death” (*PL* ii, 785-87). The mode in which “The whole enormous matter” is “forthwith touched / ... into life” in Keats, through light's “engendering / Upon its own producer” (“chaos and parental darkness” [ii, 191]) is homologous to the genesis of Death in *Paradise Lost*: *Hyperion*'s narrative level is ironized by its revisionary relations.

Narrative and revisionary levels are similarly counterpointed in another birth scene, that of Apollo as poet, recorded in *Hyperion*'s third book. The textual split is once again a function of the Keatsian ambivalence toward poetic self-origination:

‘Yes,’ said the supreme shape,
‘Thou hast dreamed of me; and awaking up
Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
Whose strings touched by thy fingers all the vast
Unwearied ear of the whole universe
Listened in pain and pleasure at the birth
Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange
That thou shouldst weep, so gifted?’

(iii, 61-68)

Apollo's tears are explicable (together with the combination of pain and pleasure universally aroused by his golden touch) if we recognize that Keats's language links this moment of poetic birth with a central scene of transgression in Milton:

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate:
Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat
Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe,
That all was lost.

(*PL* ix, 780-84)

Eve's transgression (itself a repetition of Satanic overreaching) is enacted in turn by Adam's:

Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and nature gave a second groan,
Sky loured and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original; while Adam took no thought,

Eating his fill.

(*PL* ix, 1000-1005)

Through its allusive engagement with these scenes *Hyperion* inscribes transgression within the moment of Apollo's self-institution as poet: Miltonic "sin / Original" becomes the sin of self-origination.¹⁷ Yet even as Keats's text obliquely signals the constitutively doomed nature of a post-Miltonic quest for origins—it will always issue in poetic death—it is precisely to such a quest that Keats surrenders in *Hyperion's* third book. Here revision becomes repression and Keats's relation to Milton reconfigures itself according to the very logic his poem had sought initially to evade.

III

he has often not been aware of the beauty of some thought or expression until after he has composed and written it down—It has then struck him with astonishment—and seemed rather the production of another person than his own.¹⁸

This is Woodhouse's recollection of one of Keats's observations on the alienation of self from text arising in the wake of composition. The phrase Keats cites (from *Hyperion*) in order to illustrate his sense of self-dissociation is "white melodious throat" (iii, 81) and seems, as Miriam Allott notes, "an odd choice ... for [Keats's] purpose."¹⁹ It is odder still when we consider that the phrase appears immediately prior to a moment in *Hyperion* in which language precisely assumes an astonishing otherness to the one who speaks it, in this case Apollo, addressing Mnemosyne, goddess of memory: "'Mnemosyne! / Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how'" (iii, 82-83). The structure of this encounter—the hysterical eruption of a word in the absence or lapsing of consciousness ("I know not how")—suggests that it is a re-encounter, a return of the repressed. Yet even as the repressed returns it is being, as it were, sent back. Apollo names his other yet Keats's language works to stress the nonsemantic aspects of the naming: Apollo's throat "*Throbb'd* with the syllables" (iii, 82; emphasis added) and they are physically "on" the tongue. It is as if Keats's text were redoubling Apollo's defences by divesting his re-cognition of its content, leaving us only with the *structure* of its return.

From this perspective we can see that Keats's reported concern with the difficulty of attributing one's poetry to oneself is in turn more urgently attributable to anxieties with regard to the possibility of attribution *per se*. If "another person" frequently seems to have produced Keats's poetry, the effect is all the more disturbing because, in the moment to which Keats's comment is metonymically linked, the other is located within the self. The displacement of affect from one textual memory (Apollo's exclamation) to another (the description of his throat) continues the labor of repression that characterizes the scene which it indirectly discloses.

The significance of this is twofold. First, Keats's evasive allusion to a scene which dramatizes the inscription of otherness within the self is symbolic of a desire to erase the memory of *Hyperion's* third book *as such*. This is so because in this book, once again, Keats's writing undergoes a curious transformation. This is based on the repression of Milton, whose presence prior to this point had been self-consciously acknowledged, and which, despite its having been subsequently repressed, regathers itself to such an extent that Keats is forced finally to abandon his poem altogether. Such an abandonment is concomitantly prompted by the problem Milton brings with him or connotes—that involving the constraints upon and contradictions within the post-Miltonic quest for an autonomous poethood.

Keats's desired repression of that part of *Hyperion* in which the repressed threatens its return is significant, secondly, because it is reinforced by his critics. In the poem's third book, it is typically argued, Keats fails to sustain the "more naked and grecian Manner"—the Miltonic promise—of books i and ii as his language reverts to the "sentimental cast" of *Endymion* (*Letters*, i, 207). While the stylistic regression is undeniable, the presupposition of an attendant movement from Miltonic to unMiltonic writing functions once again to obscure

the repression of the earlier poet. It is not that the interplay with Milton simply dissolves in book iii, but rather that it comes to operate according to a different logic to that which had previously informed it.

At the beginning of the third book it might seem, indeed, that Keats's goal is consciously to assert an independence from Milton and *Paradise Lost*, the inauguration of his own poetic voice:

Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazèd were those Titans utterly.
Oh, leave them, Muse! Oh, leave them to their woes;
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire;
A solitary sorrow best befits
Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.

(iii, 1-6)

To read these lines in such a way is, however, to miss the sense in which narrative content is qualified by revisionary action: even as Keats offers a gesture of farewell toward *Paradise Lost*, in the synecdochic reference to “tumults dire,” he does so by means of a repetition of the invocational structures of Milton's text. Paradoxically or ironically using the idiom of the earlier poet as a means of figuring a departure beyond him, this particular passage could be said to form an intratextual allegory of *Hyperion* as a whole. Appropriating and transfiguring *Paradise Lost* into a medium through which to allegorize his movement “beyond” Milton, Keats in fact suggests that such a movement is more properly achieved by remaining “within” the earlier poet. In *Hyperion* the desire of the revisionary Keats is not so much to escape Milton *per se* as to avoid the performance of the relation between them according to Miltonic criteria—conflict, agonism, strife. To do so would be for Keats indeed to suffer a regression—away from *himself*. Yet this is precisely what happens, through the attempted repression of Milton, in *Hyperion's* third book.

The shift in Keats's orientation toward Milton can be discerned by considering another early moment in the third book, together with the texts to which it alludes: “The nightingale had ceased, and a few stars / Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush / Began calm-throated” (iii, 36-38). Nightingale and thrush, here, are figures of poetic voice. The former reincarnates Milton's “wakeful bird” that “Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid / Tunes her nocturnal note” (*PL* iii, 38, 39-40). The latter takes us back to an earlier point in Keats, where it emerges as speaker of the sonnet interpolated toward the end of a letter to Reynolds of 19 February 1818:

I was led into these thoughts, my dear Reynolds, by the beauty of the morning operating on a sense of Idleness—I have not read any Books—the Morning said I was right—I had no Idea but of the Morning and the Thrush said I was right—seeming to say—

'O thou whose face hath felt the Winter's wind;
Whose eye has seen the Snow clouds hung in Mist
And the black-elm tops 'mong the freezing Stars
To thee the Spring will be a harvest-time—
O thou whose only book has been the light
Of supreme darkness which thou feddest on
Night after night, when Phoebus was away
To thee the Spring shall be a tripple morn—
O fret not after knowledge—I have none
And yet my song comes native with the warmth
O fret not after knowledge—I have none
And yet the Evening listens—He who saddens
At thought of Idleness cannot be idle,
And he's awake who thinks himself asleep.'

(*Letters*, i, 232-33)

Producing its song in the absence of knowledge, the thrush would appear to implement and so validate the policy of a “diligent Indolence” (*Letters*, i, 231) or quasi-Wordsworthian “wise passiveness,” which it is the concern of the letter’s earlier sections to elaborate.

From a Bloomian perspective, the nonknowledge upon which poetry is predicated takes the form, more specifically, of a certain denial or repression of (inter)textual origins—necessary to the sustainment of the fiction of one’s own originality. Here such a denial is figured in Keats’s assertion that he has “not read any Books.” Claims to textual innocence are heavily belied, however, by the passage from Milton (already touched upon above) to which the sonnet alludes:

Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer’s rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud in stead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of nature’s works to me expunged and razed,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.

(*PL* iii, 37-50)

Autonomy of poethood is retrospectively transmuted, through the famous caesura—“thoughts, that voluntary move / Harmonious numbers”—into a desire to ground the self, through poetry, in intersubjectivity and exchange. The effect of the grammatical slippage is to suggest that, even for Milton, the attractions of autonomy constitute equally a threat requiring dissipation. Conversely, the obscurity of the location of Milton’s “wakeful bird” implies that the “nocturnal note” is dependent upon withdrawal “from the cheerful ways of men.” But where the nightingale “Sings darkling” Milton *sees*, not so much elegizing lost continuities with nature (“Thus with the year / Seasons return, but not to me returns / Day”) as reproducing them through the visionariness of ultimately self-nourishing thoughts in which, indeed, the human face appears divine. Yet if Milton’s lost presences reappear transfigured, what necessarily fails to get through to him is the repressed disingenuousness of the grief for “nature’s works,” together with the delight in his own autonomy. Even so, these inscriptions are legible at the level of language: literal blindness comes to constitute a figuring of repression, on the one hand, erasing “knowledge” and excluding “wisdom,” while also allegorizing Milton’s nonrecognition of the very figurative ways of his own text, from which he is “Cut off” and “quite shut out” alike.

This brief excursus provides the context through which to read *Hyperion* iii, 36-38 in greater detail. The abrupt cessation of the nightingale’s song would seem to provide another sign of Keats’s liberation from the lures of the Miltonic autonomy with which, in *Paradise Lost*, the nightingale is identified. However, the nightingale’s silence is filled by a song whose “calm-throated”/unfretting singer himself functions as a Keatsian double or stand-in for the kind of autonomous poethood which the text appears at first to have left behind. The figurative exchange/usurpation of voices at this point in *Hyperion*—Keats’s for Milton’s—allegorizes the poem’s desired movement from revision to repression of the past, dialogue to discontinuity.

This allegorization, in which the text restates, or restages, its own action within itself, is developed in Apollo's encounter with Mnemosyne:

With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read
Perplexed.

(iii, 46-49)

Apollo's memory-figure is in turn, as we have seen, a figure for a memory—Keats's, of the problematic Milton—which is fundamentally repressed in nature. That Mnemosyne indeed fulfills this role can be underlined by recalling that the appearance of Apollo's interlocutor is decidedly uncanny, both anxiously puzzling (Apollo is “Perplexed”) and strangely familiar. The *unheimlich* is *heimlich* also:

'How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea?
Or hath that antique mien and robèd from
Moved in these vales invisible till now?
Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er
The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
In cool mid-forest; surely I have traced
The rustle of those ample skirts about
These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
Lift up their heads, as still the whisper passed.
Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
And their eternal calm, and all that face,
Or I have dreamed.'

(iii, 50-61)

Coming from afar, “over the unfooted sea,” Mnemosyne has never been away, moving “in these vales invisible till now.” What articulates itself through these tensions is, first, a Keats struggling to maintain the repression of Milton and, secondly, the narrative allegory of the poets' revisionary relation. Apollo's *déjà vu* answers to Keats's *déjà lu*, the suspicion that Milton's text, robed in the form of Keats's, is itself moving invisibly beneath the latter's veils.

Milton is thus simultaneously absent/present within the Keatsian encounter between Apollo and Mnemosyne, revealed that is by the very processes which seek to obscure him. It is consequently appropriate that the Miltonic scene specifically revised at this juncture by *Hyperion* should itself be marked by a play of presence-within-absence. At one level, the Apollo/Mnemosyne relation allegorizes Keats's mediated re-encounter with Milton (and the allegory *is* the mediation) while, at another level, it recollects Eve's beguilement by Satan, “enclosed / In serpent” (*PL* ix, 494-95). This interplay needs to be sketched before returning to *Hyperion*'s figuration, within itself, of Keats's relation to Milton.

We can begin to draw together Keats's Mnemosyne and Milton's Satan by noting that both initiate the search for their respective objects, Apollo and Eve, on the basis of a universal rumor. Mnemosyne commences her quest at ii, 29, “straying in the world.” Having crossed the “unfooted sea” she goes on to address Apollo directly, representing herself as:

Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
Of loveliness new born.'

'an and

(iii, 76-79)

Keats's text dissolves the ground beneath the representation of its ostensibly unpaved sea. While Mnemosyne lacks Satan's self-dramatization, her path retraces his, the undertaking:

with lonely steps to tread

The unfounded deep, and through the void immense
To search with wandering quest a place foretold
Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created vast and round, a place of bliss
In the purlieus of heaven.

(*PL* ii, 828-33)

The concurrence of signs, Keats's with Milton's, is manifest in other respects. In her "antique mien and robèd form" Mnemosyne refignures Satan lost in the "surging maze" of his serpentine disguise, itself fluctuating between absence and presence, "now hid, now seen" (*PL* ix, 499, 436). Satanic self-concealment combines with indirection of approach, "With tract oblique / At first, as one who sought access, but feared / To interrupt, sidelong he works his way" (*PL* ix, 510-12). Such circuitousness is part of a larger pattern of retarded action, Milton's "guileful tempter" (*PL* ix, 567) having already gained and lost access to paradise in book iv. In this book, Satan's first sighting of Adam and Eve is announced by Milton at lines 285-88:

Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
Of living creatures new to sight and strange:
Two of far nobler shape erect and tall

and is brought into focus again (at iv, 395-408) by strategies of indirection and disguise. But in what would doubtless be for Satan a painfully inescapable irony, his articulation of the vision of Adam and Eve (*PL* iv, 358-92) is made secondary to and suspended by Milton's articulation of *his own* vision (*PL* iv, 288-355).

Satan's marginally belated status returns us to the parallel with Keats's Mnemosyne, addressing Apollo, to whom she has been similarly present almost from the first:

To one who in this lonely isle hath been
The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
From the young day when first thy infant hand
Plucked witless the weak flowers.'

(iii, 70-74)

Unwittingly crossing his own flowers of language with Milton's, Keats breeds a curious hybrid. In response to the allegorical transformation we have been charting (Satan into Mnemosyne) Apollo becomes a male Eve, culling the blooms she nurtures:

Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while,
Her self, though fairest unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.

(*PL* ix, 430-33)

The precision with which the Apollo/Mnemosyne relation constitutes a revision of that between Milton's Eve and Satan can be underscored by noting that Apollo, having "left his mother fair / And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower," and standing "Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale" (iii, 31-32, 35), is in as vulnerable a position as the ostensibly embowered Eve, his *other* twin: "Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood, / Half spied, so thick the roses bushing round / About her glowed" (*PL* ix, 425-27) and "from *her* best prop so far" (emphasis added).

At this point, the other allegory at play within the Apollo/Mnemosyne relation can be reintroduced—that concerning *Hyperion's* inscription within itself of Keats's repressed encounter with Milton. It might seem, in this context, that there is a difference between narrative and revisionary relations. Apollo appears to name his interlocutor while Keats cannot. Indeed in the former's exclamation, "'Mnemosyne! / Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how,'" Keats utters a malapropism which chokes back the name of Milton. As suggested earlier, however, Keats's text works to undo the moment of Apollonian recognition by accenting the materiality rather than the content of the name.

The difference between Apollo and Keats, recognition and repression, can be shown to dissolve in other respects. Mnemosyne's presence, with its "antique mien and robèd form," its "vestments sweeping o'er / The fallen leaves" and "ample skirts," is as densely mediated for Apollo as is Milton's for Keats. Nor are the veils lifted when they seem to be. Apollo "identifies" Mnemosyne by scanning her face, yet that face is itself a mediation, a text, a something woven: "he with eager guess began to read / Perplexed," "'Yet I can read / A wondrous lesson in thy silent face'" (iii, 111-12). Apollo retrieves his memory only for it to continue to escape him. *Hyperion's* recognition scene is precisely that—a scene—as Keats unconsciously sweeps his own textual leaves more firmly over Milton's in order to obscure the path he is retracing.

It is with regard to Mnemosyne's textual face that Apollonian cognition and Keatsian repression become finally fused. As suggested at iii, 114-16, the "purport" graven into that face is sharply Miltonic: "Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions, / Majesties, sovran voices, agonies, / Creations and destroyings," thus returning Keats to the vision of "tumults dire" from which he had initially fainted to depart. But how rigorous a reader *is* Apollo? He seems barely to engage with the Miltonic text which Mnemosyne brings to mind, not scrutinizing but glossing its perplexities with guesswork, just as the "Knowledge enormous" which he claims to have put on (iii, 113) is derived from an interpretative act so rapid as thoroughly to blur rather than elucidate its object. Conversely, Keats's reading of Milton is far more genuinely baffled by the linkage between self-origination and poetic death, the necessary resolution of self-creations into self-destroyings. Apollo's assertion of a knowledge of his past text is undermined, exposing the evasiveness of his reading-strategies—creations *and* destroyings, rather than creations *as* destroyings. Nonetheless, we ourselves can read in such evasiveness the sign of that repression of previous insights by which Keats's writing, in *Hyperion's* third book, is regulated. Such insights emerge, once again, at the level of language. In the moment of his self-definition, that language simultaneously and accordingly refigures Apollo as a space flooded by a violently Miltonic otherness: "'Creations and destroyings, all at once / Pour into the *wide hollows* of my brain, / And deify me'" (iii, 116-18; emphasis added). Keats's god could hardly be more weakly self-possessed, his "Knowledge enormous" merely a trope for an equally monumental Keatsian failure of insight, at this point, into the ironies that unmake the post-Miltonic quest for an autonomous poethood.

In the poem's final stages, Apollo's labor is to bring himself into a new mode of being:

Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
All the immortal fairness of his limbs—
Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
Or liker still to one who should take leave
Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
Die into life.

(iii, 124-30)

From one simile to the next (“Most like ... / Or liker still”) Keats approaches, without quite reaching, a recognition of the figure with whom his quester is, intertextually, in co-motion. Apollo's liminal struggle resembles nothing so much as the Miltonic confrontation between Satan and Death (another who resists his poet's definitions, *PL*, ii, 666-70) at the gates of hell:

Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,
That darest, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated front athwart my way
To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,
That be assured, without leave asked of thee:
Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with spirits of heaven.

(*PL* ii, 681-87)

Unlike Milton's Satan, who *does* take leave of death (journeying on to chaos, thence to earth and paradise), Keats's Apollo remains thwarted. This difference is precisely a function of the correspondences between the two figures. For Apollo to give birth to himself, “Die into life” and secure autonomy, is for Keats to become caught in the figuration of the poetic death-in-life which for him defines the condition of a post-Miltonic autonomy. This irony, as we have seen, is articulated by Keats's language: the closer Apollo moves toward an autonomous genesis, the more he comes to recollect another, the self-fathering Satan. At the end of *Hyperion* Keats contends against his own worst impulse, figured in the Apollonian drive toward self-dawning, and finally extinguished in the poem's mid-sky fragmentation: “Apollo shrieked—and lo! from all his limbs / Celestial ...” (iii, 135-36).

We can return by way of conclusion to a passage cited at the beginning of this essay, *Paradise Lost* ix, 180-91, in which Satan orally enters and possesses the serpent. Keats annotates these lines as follows:

Whose spirit does not ache at the smothering and confinement—the unwilling stillness—the ‘waiting close’? Whose head is not dizzy at the possibly [sic] speculations of satan in the serpent prison—no passage of poetry ever can give a greater pain of suffocation.²⁰

The peculiarity of such a response is that it seems markedly to skew the effects of the lines that prompt it. Keats's reading of Milton is both displaced and proleptic, much more pertinent to a passage in the *next* book of *Paradise Lost*. Here, following the Fall of Adam and Eve, Satan's manipulation of the serpent is meticulously revenged and reversed by God:

supplanted down he fell
A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,
Reluctant, but in vain, a greater power
Now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned,
According to his doom.

(*PL* x, 513-17)

Satan becomes precisely the prisoner of the form he had previously appropriated to his own design. When Satanic self-insinuation results in such a débâcle, the perils of a revisionary project that resembles it become clear and the hideous miscarriage with which *Hyperion* ends is made to seem inevitable. Manipulation of the textual other turns into entrapment within it, as Keats's poem irreversibly crosses the gap between Bakhtinian and Bloomian modes, self-insinuation and self-origination, revision and repression.

1. The epigraphs are taken, respectively, from Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 71; *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by Mikhail Bakhtin*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 293; and *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*, ed. Hyder E. Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), ii, 212. Keats's letters are hereafter cited parenthetically as *Letters*.
2. *Paradise Lost*, i. 571-73, *The Poems of John Milton*, ed. John Carey and Alastair Fowler (London: Longmans, 1968), p. 495. All citations of Milton's works are from this edition. Subsequent citations of *Paradise Lost* appear parenthetically in the text as *PL*, by book and line number.
3. On the dating of *Hyperion's* composition (Autumn 1818-April 1819) see *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Miriam Allott (London: Longman, 1970), p. 394. All citations of *Hyperion*, hereafter parenthetically in the text, by line number, are from this edition.
4. Perhaps still the most provocative—if unswervingly Bloomian—reading of *Hyperion* from this perspective remains Paul Sherwin, “Dying into Life: Keats's Struggle with Milton in *Hyperion*,” *PMLA* [*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*], 93 (1978), 383-95. See also Brian Wilkie, *Romantic Poets and Epic Tradition* (Madison and Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), pp. 145-87; Harold Bloom, *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 112-42; Marjorie Levinson, *Keats's Life of Allegory: The Origins of a Style* (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1988), pp. 190-211; and Jonathan Bate, “Keats's Two *Hyperions* and the Problem of Milton,” in *Romantic Revisions*, ed. Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 321-38.
5. In these terms, *Hyperion* itself sheds an interestingly revisionary light on the Keatsian self-figuration of the identity-less poet who is “continually in for—and filling some other Body” in the letter to Woodhouse (*Letters*, i, 387). The “Body” in question is a poetic one—*Paradise Lost*—the central element, indeed, in the Miltonic *corpus*. Far from entailing passive loss and effacement, self-insinuation as it occurs at an intertextual level comes thus to seem more like an absorption of the materials of the past into the project of a later writing.
6. *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 294.
7. *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 346.
8. The marginalizing of *Hyperion's* third book is typically linked to the sense in which it constitutes a stylistic regression toward *Endymion*. As Paul Sherwin writes: “In the first two books, where he respects, however guardedly, his continuity with Milton, Keats writes self-consciously, yet powerfully, against the grain. But in Book iii, where he needs to assert himself, the voice we hear, full of inner haltings, is that of *Endymion*, indicating that he has not progressed at all” (“Dying into Life,” 386). While *Hyperion's* third book clearly *does* return to the idioms of *Endymion*, it needs nonetheless to be read in terms of an engagement with Milton and the Miltonic which is as pervasive as it is in the first two books. The difference is that in book three the nature of the engagement is pivotally transformed from being self-conscious to unconscious/repressed.
9. Such a movement could be said in turn to go against the ideal orientation of Keats's poetry, as defined by Levinson, as a whole: “Keats's relation to the Tradition,” Levinson writes, “is better conceived as dialogic (Bakhtin) than dialectic (Bloom). The poetry does not clear a space for itself by a phallic agon; it opens itself to the Tradition, defining itself as a theater wherein such contests may be eternally and inconclusively staged” (p. 15).
10. Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, p. 64.
11. Cited in *The Romantics on Milton: Formal Essays and Critical Asides*, ed. Joseph Wittreich, Jr. (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1970), p. 558.
12. Cited in Allott, p. 441.
13. Allott, p. 441.

14. In its literal meaning “influence” is an astrological term for the “supposed flowing from the stars of an ethereal fluid acting upon the character and destiny of men” (*OED [Oxford English Dictionary]*). It is, in Geoffrey H. Hartman's phrase, “a word which points to the stars.” Hartman goes on, appropriately, to note—in the context of the Book of Genesis—precisely the conversion of the stars from powers to signs figured in the passage from *Hyperion*. See Geoffrey H. Hartman, *The Fate of Reading and Other Essays* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 114.
15. A useful gloss on these lines is provided by Alan J. Bewell, “The Political Implications of Keats's Classicist Aesthetics,” *Studies in Romanticism*, 25 (Summer 1986), 220-29: “Though a sign *as sign* can achieve a certain kind of permanence,” Bewell writes, “its meaning is less resistant to change or loss. ... Since the Rosetta Stone, though discovered ... in 1799, was not deciphered until approximately two years after the composition of *Hyperion*, Keats's reference to hieroglyphs is to a dead language, whose meaning has been totally lost in time” (228).
16. As suggested for example in a letter to Reynolds of 22 November 1817: “One of the three Books I have with me is Shakespear's Poems: I neer found so many beauties in the sonnets—they seem to be full of *fine things said unintentionally*—in the intensity of working out conceits” (*Letters*, i, 188; emphasis added).
17. *Hyperion*'s allusive linkage of originality with transgression occurs also in Keats's letters, during the postmortem conducted over *The Fall of Hyperion*, whose final abandonment Keats announces in a letter to Reynolds of 21 September 1819 (*Letters* ii, 167). Considering his recent difficulties Keats goes on in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats of the same month to combine reflections upon the linguistic eccentricities of *Paradise Lost* with a desire to contain their spread. Though “so fine in itself” Milton's text “should be kept as it is unique—a curiosity, a beautiful and grand Curiosity” because it is a “curruption of our Language” (*Letters* ii, 212). The strategy of containment would appear, however, to have failed: in the misspelling of “corruption” Keats provides his own, equally curious, version of the pernicious—perhaps even Satanic—textual practices he associates with the earlier poet.
18. Cited in Allott, p. 438.
19. Allott, p. 438.
20. Cited in *The Romantics on Milton*, ed. Joseph Wittreich, p. 560.

Criticism: Joel Faflak (essay date 1998)

SOURCE: Faflak, Joel. “Romantic Psychoanalysis: Keats, Identity, and (*The Fall of*) *Hyperion*.” In *Lessons of Romanticism: A Critical Companion*, edited by Thomas Pfau and Robert F. Gleckner, pp. 304-27. Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1998.

[In the following essay, Faflak asserts that the *Hyperion* poems indicate how Romanticism invents, as opposed to prefigures, psychoanalysis. Faflak concentrates on the poems' construction of abject identity through an analysis that develops from Lacanian and Kristevan theoretical positions.]

Whereas in *Paradise Lost*, God is introduced by Milton to sanction his authority as a writer of epic verse, Book 3 of Keats's *Hyperion* begins by discarding the apparatus of epic, for by Keats's time the hermeneutics of epic discourse had been unsettled by a poetic language subject to temporality rather than transcendence. In his notes to *Paradise Lost*, Keats states that Milton “must station” the poem within the religious and historical contexts that shape it as a cultural artifact (*Complete Poems* 525), what Keats elsewhere calls the Reformation's “resting places and seeming sure points of Reasoning” (*Letters* 96). The discourse of *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*, however, confounds the generic and critical expectations we mobilize to indicate its cultural or historical specificity. Reading these poems as either attenuated or climactic episodes within a larger canonical or authorial narrative, an earlier criticism treats the fragments as privileged artifacts or elides them into twin supplements of the same project, the failure of one antithetically justifying the success of the other.¹

Marjorie Levinson sees in this organic need to “finish off” the poems a brave attempt to defend against the rather mundane fact that Keats died.² She locates the texts, as prostheses, together within a postorganicist “system of revision” (174) that does not make their destabilized ontology answerable to a metaphysics of presence.³ Like Levinson, several readers address the poems' tentative identities through the economy of a loss of (textual) omnipotence that either explicitly or implicitly falls under the rubric of psychoanalysis.⁴ This essay will pursue a somewhat different approach by arguing that the *Hyperions*, through their staging of identity, mark one of the sites where Romanticism *invents*, rather than merely anticipates, psychoanalysis.

Using Keats as a paradigm to psychoanalyze the culture from which he emerges, Levinson's approach also constitutes what Jerome McGann calls a “socio-historical” (63) critique of (literary) texts. Historical analysis can reveal the “networks of social relations” (18) texts produce and are produced by in what Keats calls the “service of the time being” (*Letters* 96).⁵ As Tilottama Rajan writes, however, the New Historicist turn toward a socially and politically engaged Keats “historicizes [him] but without crediting Keats himself with any understanding of the poet's relationship to ‘history’” (“Keats” 1). This “new Keats,” that is, is no less a fiction than earlier aestheticized versions of him, because “Keats” exists for us at the irrecoverable primal scene of our cultural unconscious. Freud describes the primal scene as originating either from a real event as it was repressed by the unconscious, or from a fantasy that reconstructs the scene from other forms of unconscious cathected desire. Between these two possibilities, Freud can “venture upon no decision” (“Case” 238), and he suggests that while past events may be temporally continuous with our later reconstitution of them, it is more likely that their displacement through the unconscious radically destabilizes how we reconstruct their historical significance. The past is contiguous with the present only through a transference that is at the same time unavoidable and unknowable. As an attempt to revisit the primal scene(s) of history, therefore, the work of historical analysis always rests upon shaky epistemic moorings.

Transference operates according to the logic of Freud's death instinct, manifested in analysis by the patient's compulsion to repeat rather than remember the effects of the primal scene of (sexual) trauma. “By postulating the death drive,” writes Ned Lukacher, “Freud attempts to account for the absolute resistance to recollection that he meets in the transference” (87). Paraphrasing Dominick La Capra's critique of New Historicism, Levinson nonetheless argues that transference needs to inform the work of historical analysis, because of its often unconscious tendency to misrepresent temporality in terms of the “‘standard binary oppositions between the universal and the particular, permanence and change, continuity and continuity’” (Introd. 13). The return to the past, Levinson notes, takes us “back to the future,” and transference can provide a model for how we got/get “there.” According to La Capra, the temporality of repetition and change in psychoanalysis is both “stabilizing” and “disconcerting” (34), and we misunderstand it if we apply to it an Aristotelian logic of diachronic temporality versus synchronic atemporality. Transference operates instead according to a “‘complex repetitive temporality.’” “By that phrase,” continues Levinson, “La Capra invokes Freud's notion of the way in which the *originality* of an event—its status *as* an event in a psychic narrative (that is, as traumatic) and as *originary*, in the sense of engendering and, thus, explanatory—is constituted retrospectively both through its ‘real life’ repetition and, in a third phase, by the displaced repetition precipitated through the analysis” (Introd. 13).

The idea of the death drive and the transference it mobilizes also implies a radical epistemic shift in the ontology of the subject. Lukacher uses the primal scene, not in its narrower sense of an episode of sexual trauma, but as a “trope for reading and understanding” the trauma of being human/human Being. The impasse between recollection and construction entails behind the “persona of human subjectivity” (87) a transference in which the reader/analysand repeats the forgetting of his past Being, just as for Heidegger the “history of metaphysics masks the history of Being” (83). The origin of the subject's Being in the primal scene, like the origin of the history of Being in metaphysics, is lost at its primordial forgetfulness, has never existed, and so cannot be sought in the forgetfulness of the past but only in the future through the scene's “projective repetition ... as it is elaborated through the transference” (42). Paraphrasing Althusser, Lukacher argues, “[T]here is no subject to the primal scene; it is the primal scene itself which is a subject insofar as it does not

have a subject" (13-14; emphasis in original). As the process by which history conceals the subject from himself rather than a specific historical episode or trauma, then, the primal scene is the "source" of a traumatic inability to remember, its subject lost in the temporal difference between remembering and forgetting.

The idea of the primal scene forgotten through the historical process of transference can be revisited on the "origin" of psychoanalysis in Romanticism that the present study will attempt to read in the *Hyperions*. Romanticism and psychoanalysis are primal scenes against which we define (the loss of) our identities, and both are engaged in a forgetting of their own pasts. The *Hyperions'* mode of textual production (dis)places the subject within a cultural moment that is (un)settled by that moment's historical relativity. The texts stage this (dis)placement, and their future readers have been inscribed upon its shifting horizon. The texts exist as part of a transference mobilized by the historical contingencies that produced them, a transference that persists in the complex repetitive temporality of our own (textual) engagements with them. Staging this (dis)position of the subject, the *Hyperions* posit an identity that is (de)mystified by its (lack of) transcendence over its past and (de)constructed at its threshold with the future. The poems resist historicization, then, in the way that Romanticism resists historicization. That Romanticism is defensively concerned about how it would be historicized by its future readers is symptomatic of how it already anticipates the limitations of any historicist analyses of it. Keats's "grand march of intellect" (*Letters* 96), although self-consciously situated at the beginning of the nineteenth century, projects the meaningfulness of its cultural moment toward a future time. In a similar manner Shelley (dis)places specific readings of a "great Poem" within a larger cultural or literary genealogy that is "infinite" and argues that the "peculiar relations" brought to bear upon "high poetry" by each age neither exhaust nor expose the "inmost naked beauty" of a poem's "meaning" (500).

The prospective urgency of these statements, however, carries with it the retrospective anxiety about origins that erases the present in the moment of its constitution. Like our own attempts to recover "Romanticism," the *Hyperion* poems constitute the attempt, like that of the analytic session, to substitute a construct in place of the origin they desire, a construct that is always the work of the future.⁶ And so Romanticism takes us back to the future of psychoanalysis. Keats's metaphors of the individual life as a "Large Mansion of many Apartments" (*Letters* 95) or as a "vale of Soul-making" (249) anticipate Freud's developmental paradigm of psychic evolution, and the dynamics of psychoanalysis supplement the *Hyperions* because they are traumatically repeated in a displaced and problematic form. Psychoanalysis, however, also takes us back to the future of Romanticism. One must caution, that is, against either allegorizing Romanticism in terms of psychoanalysis or invoking the disciplinary authority of psychoanalytic theory to make sense of literature. Reading back from psychoanalysis to how it is *invented* rather than merely anticipated in Romanticism, one can acknowledge instead the disruptions that manifest the unconscious or "unthought" *between* them of which they are "not aware" (Felman 6). The incipient or tentative nature of self-awareness in the discourse of Romanticism points to what always remains "unthought" within subjectivity, its blindness to its own insights. Substituting Victorian edifice for Romantic fragment, the post-Romantic Arnold, for instance, read this blindness as "premature" and "incomplete" rather than as the sign of a displaced or missed awareness symptomatic of all discourses or of the ideologies they generate. The incipient nature of Freud's discoveries was likewise resisted and misread by post-Freudians, even though Freudian analysis itself signified a reaction against a normative Victorian ideology that produced it. We must ourselves resist becoming "New Victorians." The psycho-aesthetic economy of Romanticism unsettles, at the same time that it is expressed by, the ideological and theoretical constraints of the discourse(s) it generates; and Romanticism is not only the nascent form of psychoanalysis but is also its unconscious, as in the argument (although a disapproving one) by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy that Romanticism has become the "unconscious ... in most of the central motifs of our modernity" (15).

Genealogy, as Foucault defines it, "opposes itself to the search for 'origins'" ("Nietzsche" 77) and addresses instead the "dissociation of the self, its recognition and displacement as an empty synthesis" (81). Reading genealogically between Romanticism and psychoanalysis, then, entails the question of the ontological undecidability of a subject caught between recollection and construction and thus leads us to the primal scene

and transference, both as figures of critical understanding and as aesthetic tropes that Romanticism explores. To account for the transference between the repetition of *Hyperion* within *The Fall of Hyperion*, one can ask three questions: How does the displacement of the first text's ostensibly monologic narrative about the gods by the second text's dialogic dream structure alter either text's identity? What type of narrative strategy does this displacement generate? How is this strategy implicated in our reading between the texts? To answer these questions I shall first establish a theoretical (particularly Lacanian and Kristevan) lexicon for the *Hyperions*, but shall also read this lexicon back to them as a way of framing their psychoaesthetic economy of the subject and of examining how Keats's texts and analytic theory both supplement and unsettle one another. I shall then explore how narrative negotiates between analysis and literature within the texts and add some brief final comments about what this negotiation teaches us about Romanticism.

....

The *Hyperions* inscribe a revisionary site, like the analytic session, wherein *Hyperion* reads its past, and *The Fall of Hyperion* in turn reads the past of *Hyperion* as a site of trauma. In Freudian analysis the patient “repeats,” “remembers,” and “works through,” in the presence of the analyst, archaic attachments to the objects repressed in her unconscious.⁷ The patient resists remembering (that is, understanding) trauma by acting out or repeating it, by transferring its negativity onto the analyst. The analyst helps the patient to work through this transference consciously (and thereby to dissolve it) by remembering through its present effects those of the past, thereby (re)claiming an identity left fragmented by trauma. As we have seen, however, the repetitive structure of the transference disrupts the work of analysis, so that the work of the present confounds the recuperation of the past. This negativity is more fully explored by Lacan, for whom transference is mobilized by the unconscious, which remains “resistant to signification.” Transference is a “missed encounter with the Real” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 129) or what is *always beyond* signification. Moreover, the analyst's countertransference with the patient—the negativity of what the analyst unconsciously projects onto the patient—complicates and cannot be separated from the phenomenon of transference, which Lacan accounts for as an elision of desire that is always the desire of the other.

(Counter)transference, then, produces a dialogue between two subjects placed, to borrow Kristeva's phrase, “in-process/on trial” (*Revolution* 26) through a narrative process that both produces and destabilizes their identities. Peter Brooks argues that this is typical of “most narratives, which speak of their transference condition—of their anxiety concerning their transmissibility, of their need to be heard, of their desire to become the story of the listener as much as of the teller” (*Psychoanalysis* 50). Hence transference characterizes the condition of all texts; the transference “is textual because it presents the past in symbolic form, in signs, thus as something that is ‘really’ absent but textually present” (53-54). Within the text of this displaced narrative schema, then, what the text speaks back to its author and to its reader de-centers both identities so that they become, through the conflicting effects of (counter)transference, interchangeable. The text is the resistant site of the unconscious as the “discourse of the other” (Lacan, *Ecrits* 55) inscribed in the transference between analytical subjects, of which the author (or analyst as a subject *presumed* to know) assumes only a provisional and imaginary role in relation to the reader (or analysand), and vice versa. The work of analytical self-enlightenment, then, brings us to what Shelley calls the “dark abyss of—how little we know” (478) as much as it attains to self-knowledge, so that our “whole life is thus an education of error” (477).

Reading the narrative of transference back to the *Hyperions* enables one to address how *Hyperion* resists remembering the Titans' traumatic fall, which the text repeats through the mediation of *Paradise Lost*, revisioned as the Greek theogony. By transferring analytic responsibility onto Milton, Keats displaces trauma within the apparatus of epic, the analytic usefulness of which he does not question until Book 3, where the text fragments. Readers often locate the text's dissatisfaction with epic in its generic or narrative stasis. Figured as monoliths in ruin, the Titans “encumber the text itself ... and immobilize the undeviating march of narrative” (Aske 92). Or, moving from epic in the first text to dream vision in the second marks the shift from

a narrative of sculptural classical blindness to one of picturesque Romantic insight, *The Fall's* “scenic education” organizing “the education of the narrator” (Goslee 98). One view sees epic obstructing the temporality of narrative, while the other sees it offering the wrong narrative vehicle to express the temporality of self-discovery. Between the idea of *Hyperion* as an “epitaph to its own fragmentation” (Aske 94) or a “static and stony” (Goslee 96) frustration of narrative, however, I wish to read the Titans, not as static personalities but as subjects destabilized by trauma, their identities made fluid by the psychoanalytic search for self as it develops to discover its own scene of analysis. Revisiting the trauma of *Hyperion*, *The Fall* makes explicit and reconfigures the analytic scene embedded in *Hyperion*, first by entering into an analysis of it with Moneta, and second by entering into an analysis of *The Fall* itself with its future readers.

In *Hyperion* various subjects, now differentiated from themselves as fragmented, de-centered, and dependent others, search for their once integrated and autonomous cultural identities, now part of an unconscious past they can no longer read. Saturn expresses this loss of omnipotence in his opening speech to Thea: “I have left / My strong identity, my real self, / Somewhere between the throne and where I sit / Here on this spot of earth” (1.112-15), and his self-alienation is dramatized in the poem through a series of similar analytic encounters. However, the structure of these encounters, both individually as dialogues that gesture toward interpersonal communication and collectively as what Bakhtin calls “heteroglossia” or “a multiplicity of social voices” (263), is, like the trauma it fails to remember, repressed by the text's attempt to project through epic a monologic social vision.⁸ Judith Little argues that the Titanic discourse of meditative self-examination marks *Hyperion* as a “poem of contemplation, not of action,” a text “working itself into a statement of evolutionary development” (140) between the Titans and the Olympians. Yet dialogue in both poems is dramatic in that it stages the subject as part of the “discourse of the other” through which the subject reads her own (de)centered identity, and is social in that it interpolates this identity through a multiplicity of discursive “others,” the personal always already inscribed by the social or cultural, yet simultaneously resisting its ideological containment. *The Fall of Hyperion*, then, where the poet encounters the archaic object of his relationship with *Hyperion* internalized within the text as the imago of an abandoned identity, foregrounds dialogism as part of a larger analytic process.

The larger psychoanalytic allegory of reading inscribed between the texts evokes an ambivalent textual subject who both analyzes and is analyzed by the discourse that inscribes her. Furthermore, her identity is (de)constructed through both imaginary and symbolic modes of psychic production. Reconceptualizing Freud's Oedipal schema, both Lacan and Kristeva theorize an imaginary phase, associated with “mother,” preceding the subject's inscription by the phallic authority of the “father,” which grants symbolic competency within the social order of language. However, both ascribe to this “Symbolic” differing degrees of structural stability.⁹ In Lacan's “Imaginary,” the subject assumes an imago of herself as a totalized and autonomous (rather than fragmentary and dependent) entity. This mirror stage “situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible” (*Ecrits* 2) and which mobilizes subjectivity before language “projects the formation of the individual into history” (4). By threatening to seduce the subject within the narcissistic illusion of her identity, however, the Imaginary also resists the contingencies of history that determine the subject as split within the Symbolic by the otherness of the unconscious.

Lacanian ambivalence toward the Imaginary positing of the subject is recast in Kristeva as the “very precondition” (*Revolution* 50) that both precipitates and disrupts subjectivity. She redefines the Imaginary as the “semiotic” or “fundamental stage—or region—in the process of the subject ... hidden by the arrival of [Symbolic] signification” (*Revolution* 40). Registering things like the effects of the (mother's) body, “‘psychical’ marks” (25), and affect, the semiotic is the “nonexpressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated” (25), and it functions with the Symbolic as “inseparable modalities” within a larger “signifying process that constitutes language” (24). Kristeva thus also defines the semiotic aesthetically as a “practice that facilitates the ultimate reorganization of psychic space, in the time before an ideally postulated maturity” (“Adolescent” 10). Functioning both as a psycho-aesthetic

mode and genre, this “adolescent imaginary” allows the subject “to construct a discourse that is not ‘empty,’ but that he lives as authentic” (11). Its writing inscribes a provisional, *intentionally* illusionary, and “open psychic structure” (8) within the always already disillusioned register of the Lacanian Symbolic.

Like the (de)constructive force of (counter)transference, and through the Imaginary and Symbolic modalities that register its effects, the adolescent imaginary suggests how the subject of the *Hyperions* is both generated and displaced. This open narrative apparatus, which I shall explore more fully in the next section, resists and unsettles the closed and repressive structure of epic. The cultural (psycho)analysis of symbolic poetic tradition that the *Hyperions* undertake, that is, is resisted by the counter-analysis of the personal apparatus of subjectivity, expressed through the open narrative structure of a cultural case history within which the reader is interpellated as both a personal and cultural subject. Within this case history, the Olympians signify something other than evolutionary development. As I stated earlier, *Hyperion* finds the Titans unable to remember their defeat by the Olympians. Repeated variously in Saturn, Hyperion, and Apollo as mirror images of an analysand striving to “find reason why [he] should be [presently] thus” (1.131, 149), the effects of this resistance are transferred onto various analytical figures: Thea (1.23-71; 2.89-100), Coelus (1.306-48), Oceanus (2.163-246), Clymene (2.247-303), Enceladus (2.107-10; 2.303-55), and Mnemosyne (3.46-79). Their various “discourses of the other” reflect back to this composite analysand imagoes of both his Imaginary and Symbolic identities. Addressing Thea, Oceanus, Clymene, and Enceladus, for instance, Saturn transfers what he is unable to confront within himself by searching his “own sad breast” (2.128) to “find no reason why [they] should be thus” (131; italics mine). The text appears to work through the multiplicity of this analytic process in Book 3 when Apollo, reading a “wondrous lesson” (112) in the analytical authority of Mnemosyne's face, feels within himself a godlike “Knowledge enormous” (113). Fixing a “steadfast” (122) and “level glance” (120) on her features, he experiences “wild commotions” (124), “Most like the struggle at the gate of death” (126), at which point he “Die[s] into life” (120), as if to work through the trauma of his lost divinity in a way that Saturn and Hyperion could not. “During [this pain] Mnemosyne upheld / Her arms as one who prophesied” (133-34), as if silently to confirm the dissolution of her countertransference with Apollo, as well as his transference with her. Where “Knowledge enormous” suggests that Apollo has himself become a subject presumed to know, however, “commotions” suggests confusion, covered over by the trope of apocalypse that pretends to remove any need for mediation. The withdrawal of the (counter)transference precludes an otherness that (as *The Fall* will suggest) is the necessary condition of the subject's entry into Symbolic “life.”

The fragmentation of Book 3 indicates at the boundaries of the text the climax of the (counter)transference between Keats and Milton. Keats's struggle with epic can be read as an attempt to transfer analytical authority onto Milton as the paternal figure who guarantees Keats's Symbolic epic competency. The fragmentation of the poem, as well as its subsequent rewriting as *The Fall*, however, also suggests an attempt to account for the countertransference of Milton, whose silent influence as a reader of Keats's efforts has now become for Keats, through the disciplinary effects of poetic tradition, “death.” “Miltonic verse,” Keats writes, “cannot be written but it [in] the vein of art” (*Letters* 325-26), which is to say, *through* art as an Imaginary mediation that resists the Symbolic knowledge that “we are mortal” (*Letters* 33). The beginning of Book 3 thus signals an analytical shift by discarding the epic as a form of authoritarian (psycho)analysis (an authority implicitly resisted from the poem's beginning by its failure to invoke its muse) and by recasting the various dialogic confrontations of the first two books in terms of the encounter between Apollo and Mnemosyne. Mnemosyne implores Apollo to “Show [his] heart's secret” (76), but communication between them is disrupted by the unconscious that Apollo cannot name: “Mnemosyne! / Thy name is on my tongue I know not how” (82-83). The effects of this “discourse of the other” in Mnemosyne are displaced by negatively speaking to Apollo the identity that she does not possess as the displacement of his own. Yet although the Lacanian complexity of this encounter manifests itself as the analytic scene embedded in the first two books, it does not altogether jettison their significance. Instead, Saturn, Hyperion, and Apollo can be read together as versions of what Kristeva calls the abject—the “in-between, the ambiguous, the composite”—along a paradigmatic narrative axis that arranges them according to a teleology of desire rather than history. Within this teleology Saturn is the abject or

discarded rem(a)inder of Apollo that “disturbs [the] identity, system, order” (*Powers* 4) of his emergent domain, signified in *Hyperion* as a type of transitional figure “in-between” Saturn and Apollo. Apollo himself remains part of the transference that the fragmentation of the text can neither dissolve nor contain. Similarly, the figures who precede Mnemosyne are also rem(a)inders of a prior analytical identity always already destabilized by its countertransference with Saturn/*Hyperion* as King (1.52; 2.184), god (2.110), and father (2.252). Apollo emerges from this transference as the “golden theme” (3.28) or son but does not ultimately elude its grasp, for in this master/slave dialogue the “satisfaction of human desire is possible only when mediated by the desire and the labour of the other” (Lacan, *Ecrits* 26).¹⁰

In *The Fall* the displaced teleology of *Hyperion* becomes a transferential structure of repetition, part of the later text's allegory of reading for Keats's earlier encounter with Milton. *The Fall* recasts this “discourse of the other” as part of the complex dream narrative of the (counter)transference between the narrator and Moneta, but also through the transferential effects of its Imaginary future reader. In doing so *The Fall* neither merely reverses the analyst/analysand relationship between Milton/Keats nor reinscribes this relationship in terms of Keats/the reader. The crucial figure of *The Fall* is Keats's projection of a time when his “warm scribe my hand” will be in “the grave” (1.18) as a corpse-like synecdoche for poetry. Andrew Bennett reads this figure symptomatically through Keats's “anxiety of the audience” (12), so that the “posthumous life of writing” (8) becomes inextricably bound up with the “posthumous life of reading”: “*Hyperion* figures death as a pre-condition for inspiration ... a mortal creativity ... [whereas *The Fall*] is crucially concerned to figure reading as an activity irreducibly bound up with death” (151). Because the death of the author is (pre)figured in the death of the reader, Keats invites the reader to dream the death of the text (and his own death by reading it) so that Keats can “short-circuit or prefigure this disastrous but inescapable logic of remains, and the inevitable event of the death of the reader” (12-13). Because his reader-response eschatology is inscribed in the text's (future) effects, Bennett repeats what he sees as Keats's own repression of the psychic determinism of the death drive.¹¹ But Bennett's reading also suggests that the “dream” of the text and the “reality” of the reader are both mutually (de)constructed by the effects of the “other” as part of an imaginary structure that is mobilized by Thanatos as a psychic mechanism, rather than overcome by it. By reconfiguring the analytic scene embedded within *Hyperion* as part of its allegory for future readers, *The Fall* reads analysis as a site of both negativity and potentiality, rather than life or death, through a radical (de)construction both of and by the otherness of the text's writerly and readerly identities.

The *Hyperions* incite in the reader internal psychic responses symptomatically parallel to those of alienation and dissociation evoked both in and by the poem. Like Keats's Saturn and like Keats himself attempting to internalize Milton's universe, she can familiarize herself with her world's foreignness, but she cannot possess analytical autonomy within this world because the effects of the textual other displace her identity into a transitional site between self and other resembling the unsettled subject who emerges from analysis. In Kristevan analysis (and in the type of analysis that *Hyperion* enters in the figure of Apollo), this displacement works by abjection, both an unavoidable and necessary precondition of selfhood, which operates within a less than Symbolic affective and psychic register. Abjection is “the first authentic feeling of a subject in the process of constituting itself as such” (*Powers* 47): “One must keep open the wound where he or she who enters into the analytic adventure is located. ... [It is] a heterogeneous, corporeal, and verbal ordeal of fundamental incompleteness” (27). I have already noted that where Lacan's Symbolic does not permit identity, Kristeva's semiotic registers the mobilization of the subject through a type of Imaginary writing before she inhabits her Symbolic identity. This Imaginary also inscribes the future reader on the horizon of its heterogeneous textual landscape. One could argue, then, that *Hyperion* functions in a Lacanian manner to alienate through its Symbolic effects the subject's Imaginary autonomy. *The Fall*, however, is Kristevan, inscribing the simultaneous generation and destabilization of future identities out of the semiotic of an archaic subjectivity to which it perpetually returns. Put another way, as fragments the texts are abjected somewhere between the Symbolic structure, however heterogeneous, that only an external critical narrative can assign to them and the semiotic motility that this structure fails, or is unable, to register. Let us turn, then, to the narrative deployment of this abject identity.

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Kenneth Muir maintains that “aside from its too Miltonic style,” the “narrative power” of the first *Hyperion* is only “intermittently displayed” (110). Yet why should readers desire ascribe continuity to the text's discontinuous structure? The first “Hyperion” begins as the monologic exegesis of the fall of the gods but repeats several fallings within the Greek pantheon, “Amazed” (2) as they are in Book 3 in a narcissistic purgatory of “alternate uproar and sad peace” (1).¹² As we have already seen, Keats shatters the unsettled reflection of the Titans' narcissism in this book in order to expose its underlying ambivalence, figured in the invocation, where the thrice-repeated petition to the Muse to “leave” (3) the Titans effectively exceeds the text's narrative and epic expectations. Moreover, she is unnamed and her gender (clearly feminine in her Miltonic form and in Book 2 [83]) shifts as the narrator calls upon the “Father of all verse” (13) (apparently Apollo) to “Flush everything that hath a vermeil hue” (14), a color that is elsewhere used to suggest the gilded, yet now-Imaginary, condition of the Titans' fallen world, at the same time that it inflects the hopefulness of Hyperion's ascension. The desire for the Symbolic father's voice precludes the colored ambivalence of these other descriptions, as though a phallic authority will now negotiate the passage from the world of epic into the Symbolic world of *The Fall of Hyperion*. If he is the *paternal* (as opposed to the filial) “golden theme” of Book 3, however, Apollo has just “left his fair mother / And his twin-sister sleeping in their [Imaginary, pre-Oedipal] bower” (31-32) to encounter the feminine presence of the “awful Goddess” (46) Mnemosyne. Moreover, the poem appears to leave its Symbolic epic apparatus for an even more severe scene that anticipates the purgatorial dreamworld of *The Fall*. But whether the maternal facilitation of that poem's “mother-tongue” is a (by then archaic) precondition to the poet's Lacanian Symbolic voice or is registered within it as a Kristevan semiotic potentiality appears to remain embedded within the indeterminate identity of the second text, which is only said “to rehearse” (16) its entry into the Symbolic.

Apposite to the manifest attempt of *Hyperion* to recall the trauma of the Titans' defeat is the text's latent desire toward this archaic state of “infancy” initially figured in Saturn's stance of “bowed head ... listening to the earth, / His ancient mother, for some comfort yet” (1.20-21). (Coelus will later also implore Hyperion to return “To the earth!” [1.345]). Infancy signifies an autonomy prior to the Olympic succession, just as Thea is a “goddess of the infant world” (26). Her “mourning words” (49), then, translate the text's “feeble tongue / ... like accents ... frail / To that large utterance of the early gods” (49-51). The ambivalence of mourning/morning and of the adjectival/verbal “like,” however, metonymically displaces the intentional structure of the text's grieving discourse. Thea's speech also signals her ability to mourn a productivity absent from the inertia of Saturn's melancholia, a latent potentiality figured again in Oceanus's speech as “murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue / Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands” (2.171-72).¹³ Clymene (whose identity “none regarded” [2.248]), in an attempt to transmute Saturn's grief, recounts how she “took a mouthed shell / And murmured into it, and made melody” (270-71), just as in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* Asia breathes into the “many-folded” (3.3.80) and “curved shell which Proteus old / Made [her] nuptial boon” (3.3.65-66), “Loosening its mighty music” (81) of a “voice to be accomplished” (67). The effects of Clymene's “dull shell's echo” (2.274) “did both drown and keep alive [her] ears” (277). In “each gush of sounds” (281) from that “new blissful golden melody” (280) was “A living death” (281) that eventually signifies itself to her as “The morning-bright Apollo” (294) (as opposed to Thea's “mourning-dulled” description of Saturn in Book 1). Like Hyperion as he pejoratively names “the rebel Jove” (1.249) an “infant thunderer,” Enceladus calls Clymene's speech “baby-words” [2.314], a phrase that exposes the semiotic potency of a new identity that Enceladus represses by misrecognizing its power latent within Clymene's manifestly “timid” discourse.¹⁴ Spoken as the mother of muses to her poet-son, Mnemosyne's brief genealogy of Apollo's “young day” (3.73) recounts the genesis of his subjectivity heralded in Clymene's speech. Moreover, it also recuperates Saturn's and Hyperion's fall into ambivalence by foregrounding this now-archaic origin as having mobilized a creative potentiality still operative within the economy of Apollo's emergent, if destabilized, subjectivity.

As the figure through which the later poem analyzes this economy, the narrator/poet of *The Fall* is, like “every man whose soul is not a clod” (13), “nurtured in his mother-tongue” (15). Fittingly, he participates in this analysis in the presence of Moneta, emerging in the present text as a Kristevan female analyst who assumes the work of the various analysts in the previous text.¹⁵ Unable to find “the syllable of a fit majesty / To make rejoinder to Moneta’s mourn” (235-36), the narrator, according to her suggestion, translates “‘electral changing misery’” (251) into a discourse that is “‘Free from all pain’” (252-53). Beyond the Symbolic discourse that both regulates and suppresses her uncontainable (maternal) grief, however, the narrator must still confront “the terror of her robes, / And chiefly of the veils” (255-56) that conceal the semiotic affective register of her face’s “immortal sickness” (263), which is, like Clymene’s “living death,” “deathwards progressing / To no death” (264-65). It is here that the “affect of the other,” figured in Moneta’s eyes (270-76), inscribes the narrator’s emergent subjectivity as it is both generated and destabilized and acts as a figure of reading embedded within the text’s larger allegory of reading, which defers the naming of the text’s identity as the narrative of a “poet” or “fanatic” to the “other discourse” of a future reader. Because Moneta cannot mirror the narrator’s presence to him (her eyes see him “not”), her impenetrability suggests a Lacanian otherness that does not allow him an identity within the Symbolic. Yet her “visionless” (272) and “blank splendour” (274), which likewise “comforts those she sees not” (275), irradiates *for the narrator* a “benignant” (270) influence. On one level Moneta’s “immortal sickness” is the sickness of the Lacanian Imaginary, disallowing death as the experience of an otherness that necessarily determines Symbolic “identity,” but thereby also suggesting the repetitive condition of desire within the Lacanian Symbolic. But the narrator witnesses in *her* otherness a sense of both the negativity and potentiality of *his* own subjectivity, the primal scene of which he then goes on to analyze at 1.294 as the textual imago of his epic voice in the first “Hyperion.” Moneta’s interpretation of the narrator’s dream allows him to “see as a God sees” (1.304), but this ability is only provisional, for his “lofty theme” (306) is only a “half-unravelling web” (308), both partially constructed and partially undone. Her hermeneutic authority is similarly displaced when the narrator interprets his surrounding landscape to figure her, like Saturn and Thea, as part of the paralyzed statuary (382-88) of fallen gods similar to those represented in the first poem.

This textual overdetermination shifts readerly desire back toward a retrospective analysis of *Hyperion*’s dialogic transposition between the gods as shifting metaphorical selves within the recursion of the text’s various scenes of reading. In this manner *Hyperion* can again be read intertextually with Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*, in which Panthea, who visits the bound Prometheus in Act 1, in Act 2 returns to Asia, who attempts to read the psychic negotiations taking place within Prometheus by looking into Panthea’s face, now a site of potential recognition and communication between Asia and Prometheus: “Lift up thine eyes, / And let me read thy dream” (2.1.55-56). Eventually Asia reads Prometheus’s “written soul” through a “wordless converse” (2.2.110), to which the text alludes but never articulates. These intratextual sites suggest a hermeneutic schema between author and reader, and serve, as Tilottama Rajan argues, as a “model” for a dialogue that presents “reading as a psychological and not just a semiological process” (*Supplement* 308). Shelley’s poem conceives the potentiality of social apocalypse as a psychological trauma remembered and worked through (again, in potential, if not actual form) as the reading of “dreams” and “written souls.” The attempts to recoup displaced desire within an analysis of history in Keats’s poem occurs somewhat differently through scenes of reading that center on a questioning subject who requires the dialogic supplementation of the other’s face and, more important, of the affect expressed by that face, to validate the destabilized schema of his own identity. Because the communicative potential of these scenes is projected rather than fulfilled, they both produce and dismantle the dialogue of identification that they inscribe, suggesting a transference that is a “missed encounter with the Real.” In Book 1 of *Hyperion*, Saturn “feels” the presence of Thea before he sees her “face,” which he then asks her to lift (as Asia does Panthea) so that he might “see [their collective] doom in it” (1.97): “Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape / Is Saturn’s” (98-99). In Book 2, Thea eventually supplements this gesture by observing “direst strife” (92) after “sidelong [fixing] her eye on Saturn’s face” (91), her acknowledgment of which, however, she does not articulate in the text, her obtuse gaze again suggesting a less than direct communication with the other whose desire she only *appears* to understand. Later, Oceanus asks if the rest of the pantheon have seen their conqueror’s face, which forced him to “bid sad

farewell / To all [his] empire” (238). The ambivalent nature of his question as both interrogative and rhetorical is, however, left undecided. In Book 3 Apollo reads as “Perplexed” (49) the “purport” (47) of the “looks” of the as-yet-unnamed “awful Goddess,” a doubt left unanswered by the text’s fragmentation. Finally, as I have already shown, *The Fall* goes on to examine how the narrator’s identity is (de)constructed negatively by Moneta’s otherness.

Dialogue within the texts, however, is not altogether predicated by negativity. By semiotizing affect, the text potentially empowers the questioning subject’s own identity through “the affect of the other,” thereby suggesting a reciprocated dialogue between them that is different from the failed potential of “the fallen Gods” (2.379) who hide their faces “from the light” (381) cast by Hyperion’s radiant “brightness” (373). Certainly the seeds of Hyperion’s fallenness are sown in the fact that he seems to be, like the subject of Lacanian analysis, disturbingly contentless.¹⁶ This “empty” content, however, is disseminated elsewhere in the poem’s textual landscape as various sites of semiotized potentiality. Hyperion’s daily round is described as “hieroglyphics old” (1.277) that “sages and keen-eyed astrologers / ... with labouring thought / Won from the gaze of many centuries” (277-79). Although they are now the fragmented ruins of “remnants huge” (281), “Their wisdom long since fled” (283), they are nonetheless refigured within the text as sites where the enigma of history might still be deciphered. Moreover, the passage recasts history phenomenologically as a cultural subject from whose seemingly blank “gaze” was “[w]on” the text of “hieroglyphics old.” Within the context of the poem’s semiotic topology of face and affect, this process suggests a type of cultural psychoanalysis negotiated as the analytic encounter between individual subjects and intermingles the cultural and the personal as part of the same analytic process, although not clearly indicating to what extent they are similar or different. These vestiges are reinscribed in *The Fall* as “imageries from a sombre loom” (1.76), which, though laying “All in a mingled heap confused” (77), suggest a potentially recuperable semantic past. Their Symbolic history, that is, has been jettisoned into the genotext of both a cultural and a personal past that now exists within the phenotext of the Symbolic order of the poem as both semiotic and semiotized traces, the residue of its previous interpellation within the Symbolic that has not altogether been lost.

Asking the Muse to abandon the text marks the narrator’s desire to abject its constructed identity. Shortly after this point Apollo “Die[s] into life” to become the mortal self latent within the preceding figures of the other gods. Keats abandons the text, however, leaving the reader to ask what potentiality this cathartic shift might release. *The Fall of Hyperion* then asks for the reader’s interpretation and, in doing so, manifests the dialogical element generally latent within the first *Hyperion*. As the poem’s narrative structure both articulates and is articulated by the reader’s working through the text, the relationships between shifting textual subjects generate a transference that registers the textual unconscious as a “structure of repetition” (Culler 376) and that evokes in the reader cognitive as well as performative responses: the former attempts to establish behind the text’s signifiers a concealed truth, whereas the latter forgoes this effort and sees the signifiers as the production of a certain type of meaning elicited within the reader, a “transformational field” by which the poet “gives up any notion of an absolute truth and creates a form sensitive to the historicity of the text as the site of individual and cultural exchange” (Rajan, *Supplement* 212, 214). Roles and identities change in the *Hyperions* according to the logic of a metanarrative apparatus radically different from that of epic. Books 1 and 2 of *Hyperion*, for instance, alternate between their narratives “in the self-same beat” (2.1), as if to dramatize the dialogical halves of a divided self. In a somewhat different manner, the figures of Thea, Mnemosyne, and Moneta function intertextually as facets of a temporalized hermeneutic composite (like that of Saturn/Hyperion/Apollo) that resist the monologic authority of Oceanus. Thematically, the gods are described as monolithic and sculptural entities (hence Keats’s attempt to convey an epic, if implicitly tragic, grandeur); yet as figures within a text, they function as fluid metaphors of an indeterminate self. The former constitutes identities as an array of bounded egos within a fixed Symbolic tableau, while the latter suggests an unconscious textual or semiotic force that drives the (counter)transference, destabilizing identities and foregrounding the differences both within and between those identities.

One instance of textual repetition in *The Fall of Hyperion* elicits this complex production of meaning and points to a textual unconscious because it appears to exist, like Freud's parapraxes, outside the poet's deliberate control:

The tall shade veiled in drooping white
Then spake, so much more earnest, that the breath
Moved the thin linen folds that drooping hung
About a golden censer from the hand
Pendant.

(2.194-97)

Then the tall shade, in drooping lines veiled,
Spake out, so much more earnest, that her breath
Stirred the thin folds of gauze that drooping hung
About a golden censer from her hand
Pendant;

(2.216-20)

These passages are merely descriptive and they function to link the speeches of Apollo and Moneta; they thus appear to mark the relatively stable boundaries of textual identities. Yet they could also be oversights that Keats might have emended had he completed the text, a temporal contingency that reminds us of the fact that both our readings and our identities as readers are ambivalently determined by this contingency, elicited at a more conscious level as Keats displaces the text's significance to a time after his death. Our reading of these passages, foregrounding both identity and difference, becomes, then, our encounter with the textual unconscious as a missed encounter with the Real of Keats's death.

Perhaps the most telling way in which the structures of cultural and personal identities transect and destabilize one another rests in the disruptive interpellation of *Hyperion* into the open narrative structure of *The Fall of Hyperion*. The first poem is now, like Coleridge's contributions to the *Lyrical Ballads*, "an interpolation of heterogeneous matter" (Coleridge 2.8). Yet where in Coleridge's "Christabel" the poem's trauma never emerges as part of an analytical scene, the traumatic presence of *Hyperion* emerges within *The Fall* as part of a transference with the earlier text that the poet and, by his own insistence, the reader attempt to work through. As I have already suggested, *The Fall* resembles Keats's revisitation of the primal scene of his writing of the first poem as a site of trauma. The discarded epic of *Hyperion*'s self-examining schema of conflicted and alienated subjects is refigured in *The Fall of Hyperion* as the displacement and condensation of a series of palimpsestically layered dreams. The first dream encounters the original poem as the trace memory of its Miltonic predecessor, what "seemed refuse of a meal / By angel tasted, or our Mother Eve" (31-32). Whatever "pure kinds" (34) these "remnants" (33) and "empty shells" represent, however, the narrator "could not know" (34)—an epistemological rupture that suggests that the textual origin inscribed by the primal scene of writing in *Hyperion* is irrecoverable. The shift to a second dream, induced by the "full draught" (46) of a "cool vessel of transparent juice" (42), then becomes "parent of [the narrator's] theme" (46); yet is this the patrimony of the first *Hyperion*, the "refuse" of its "meal," or the poetic adult that that now-Imaginary text will become in *The Fall of Hyperion*? Or does it allude to an even further regression to Milton's text? As the consecutive stagings of *The Fall* dig archaeologically back through their own textual past, they recover the text of the original *Hyperion* at 1.294, although it is now significantly less Miltonic and thus dissociated from the genesis of its epic conception, another origin that that poem tried but failed to construct in place of the one it desired to reclaim. Like Saturn as the abject of Apollo, it has become an abject presence within the second poem.

Here the text returns to the first poem's representation of Saturn prone on his "ancient mother"—a return to a level of subjectivity even more archaic than that represented by either Mnemosyne's "ancient power" (3.75) or Moneta's "Holy Power" (1.136). At the end of Canto 1 the narrator pauses to "glean [his] memory / Of

[Moneta's] high praise—perhaps no further dare” (472-73), as if to anticipate his inability to recount through his dream the archaic source from which in the Symbolic he has been metonymically displaced. Yet the deferral of *The Fall* to an ever receding origin (which is the unremembered trauma generating the first text's transference with Milton, hypothetically duplicated through the endless effects of future readings) traces a repetitive rather than sheerly regressive narrative pattern of analysis. Andrew Bennett borrows Gerald Prince's trope of the “disnarrated” (147) to describe what the text has the potential to say in a “negative or hypothetical mode” (147) but suppresses in the name of its present telling. I would account for the “disnarrated” in terms of the counter-transference of the analytic others whose discourse is spoken through the discursive effects of the analysand with whom they are engaged in the analytic scene of the text(s), the most radical of these analytic figures being the analyst/reader of *The Fall* as a subject presumed to know. Framed as a text whose unfolding dream structure can only be read back to it by its future readers, *The Fall* asks to be read as the allegory of an ongoing and interminable analytic process that inscribes the reader within the fluid, transhistorical boundaries of this process.

As a revisitation of the primal scene, *The Fall of Hyperion* elicits, in our reading of it, the narrative of a complex temporal understanding, an anatomy of arrested episodes within a larger temporal determinacy confirming to us that we are, according to Oceanus, “not the beginning nor the end” (1.190). Because desire is never satisfied, “full narrative closure and theoretical totalization” (La Capra 35) are utopian dreams that are only partially realized through the provisional use of narrative structure as a series of metaphoric markers. That is, narrative exposes the temporal destiny of the gods as having to tell their narratives and so reveal the mortal and ideologically destabilized apparatus of their subjectivity. Instead of narrative coherence, then, the *Hyperions* work by a narrative insistence generated by the temporal contingencies of their narrative disruptions, Keats's attenuated revisions, and the reader's status as a destabilized subject “in process/on trial.” This insistence is linked thematically to the texts' efforts to come to terms with themselves, particularly at the beginning of Book 3 of *Hyperion* and in the opening passage of *The Fall of Hyperion*. It is also disclosed in the reader's desire to refigure the transformational field of the texts within the explanatory structure of narrative. Like the psychoanalytic narrative limited by the time-boundedness of history, both cultural and personal, the text (in our reading of it) must also submit, as Peter Brooks argues, to the “timelessness of the unconscious” (*Psychoanalysis* 118) that it contains but can never subdue. Brooks argues that the transference between narrative and the unconscious manifests a convoluted and “strange logic” and betrays the “suspicion and conjecture” of “a structure of undecidability which can offer only a framework of narrative possibilities rather than a clearly specifiable plot” (“Fictions” 77). This shift is suggested in the modulation from the structural apparatus of epic to the deconstructive afflatus of dream vision. The reader, like Saturn, Hyperion, or the poet/fanatic, must chart a path through the identities of “others” divided from her within the text of her own reading. These are the abjected forms of the poet's desire, disseminated by a textual unconscious that will not allow the reader to reclaim them as a wholly integrated ego. These others read back to the reader a selfhood like that of Saturn, who searches in his heart but cannot read *alone* any “reason why [he] should be thus.”

The *Hyperions* negotiate Romanticism through a type of Lacanian mirror stage by tracing a complex narrative, from the Romantic subject's Imaginary (albeit conflicted) sense of her own omnipotence in *Hyperion*, to *The Fall of Hyperion*, a text symptomatic of Romanticism's emerging awareness of its own contingency within the Symbolic order of history. This contingency places the first *Hyperion*, specifically Oceanus's genealogy of the gods, among other nineteenth-century projects like those of Hegel, Marx, or Darwin that attempt to trace metanarratives of the process of history. Where these works use psychoanalytic mechanisms (such as the master/slave dialectic in Hegel and Marx or the developmental figure of progressive evolution in Darwin) as a means of empowerment to reinforce their own internal authority, *The Fall of Hyperion* deconstructs these mechanisms in order to reinscribe them as structures of desire by tracing a self-deconstructing genealogy that subdues the projected telos of the *Hyperions'* narrative to “the service of the time being.” In this sense, *The Fall* ushers Romanticism through a type of inverse mirror stage that abandons Symbolic poetic tradition in the way that *Adonais* abandons it: as a postanalytic survivor swimming

beyond, rather than drowning within, the “trembling throng” (489) of this Symbolic authority. The Symbolic order of the later poem thus remains unsettled from within by its transference with the Imaginary traces of an earlier text it cannot supersede. In this sense, the *Hyperions* negotiate our own destabilized, abject positions by both tying us to and projecting us outside of the “service of the time being.” Our readings of the *Hyperions* and of Romanticism—our repeated narrative engagements with the otherness of Romanticism's texts—are initiated in part by things like Keats's aborted revisions of both poems, which inscribe the truncated, liminal territory of an abject universe lacking “seeming sure points of Reasoning” (*Letters* 96). Because we have once again been situated precariously upon its horizon by psychoanalysis, it is a world that certain Romantic texts can teach us, or, depending upon whose couch one is lying, *not* teach us, how to inhabit.

Notes

1. Wasserman makes the representative statement for organic unity by refusing to deal with the poems: “[T]he two pieces on Hyperion are fragments; they lack a total structure, cannot be organic wholes, and therefore cannot be explicated, in the full sense of that word” (10). See also Muir and Bostetter 8-9.
2. See *The Romantic Fragment Poem* 167-73 for Levinson's deft handling of the history of criticism about the poems.
3. See *Keats's Life of Allegory* 191-226, in which Levinson rewrites her earlier account of the *Hyperions*’ “textual genetics ... to explain the peculiar success and failure of the poems in terms of Keats's general literary project” (192). See also Balachandra Rajan 211-49 and Tilottama Rajan, *Dark Interpreter* 143-203.
4. These latter readings address in the texts a transitional period that suggests the psychoanalytic narrative of a loss of omnipotence, experienced developmentally as the movement in infancy from some primal narcissistic facilitation, defined by the illusion of omnipotence, toward some later stage within which this illusion is shattered. See Levinson, *The Romantic Fragment Poem* 107-87, de Man, Parker, Schapiro, and Bloom 112-42.
5. The critical character of Keats as a Romantic writer has, thanks largely to the influence of a new historicism in Romantic studies (of which McGann's work is exemplary), changed dramatically over the last twenty years. In his introduction to a special Keats bicentenary issue of *European Romantic Review*, Grant Scott argues that the “current historicizing of Keats,” by writers such as Levinson, McGann, Keach, and Hoagwood and, most recently, in Roe's volume, *Keats and History*, is “a reaction against the Harvard Keatsians, who ... affirmed Keats's virility by placing him ‘among the English Poets.’ ... The most recent trend in Keats criticism has sought to return the poet to his original cultural and social milieu” (iv-v).
6. For a similar point, see Levinson, *The Romantic Fragment Poem* 181.
7. See Freud's “Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis II),” “The Dynamics of Transference,” and “Observations on Transference-Love.” See also Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* 19-107 and *Tales of Love* 21-57.
8. For the distinction between epic and novel, see Bakhtin 3-40.
9. While Lacan appears to deconstruct the theoretical hegemony into which Freudian psychoanalysis had settled at the expense of its own radical insights, Kristeva refashions Lacan's structuralist bias from within a poststructuralist perspective. Lacan is influenced by Saussurian and Jacobsonian structural linguistics. For him the Symbolic is heterogeneous and less than stable but is heavily invested in the hegemony of the linguistic signifier and hence is theoretically privileged. In this sense, the Lacanian subject is both identity-less *and* trapped within the Symbolic. Kristeva's Symbolic, however, is not the subject's exclusive domain. As a univocal and monological theoretical category, it allows Kristeva to demonstrate how subjectivity is mobilized outside of Symbolic discourse. She accounts for the textual topography of this heterogeneity in terms of its genotextual and phenotextual registers. The genotext organizes a semiotic “space” or process within language “in which the subject will be *generated*”

(*Revolution* 86) and precedes the arrival of signification in the form of the Symbolic phenotext, which is “restricted to the two poles of univocal information between two full-fledged subjects” (87) and which obeys the structural rules of grammar and logic. This distinction places in relief the difference between Lacan's structuralist bias and its focus on language's status/stasis as “signification” and Kristeva's poststructuralist emphasis on language as part of a “semiosis” or “signifying process,” terms that reflect a Bakhtinian “dialogism” and a feminist imperative that accounts for the mother's body as the site of significative forces that both exceed and transgress the structures of language.

10. Hyperion's exchange with Coelus figures significantly in this master/slave dialogue wherein Hyperion appears as an imago of the son Apollo that Saturn becomes, a transformation negotiated in the transference between Hyperion and Coelus, who has witnessed his “first born [Saturn] tumbled from his throne” (2.323) by his own son. Coelus speaks to Hyperion as part of a missed encounter with his “real” son, and Saturn in turn speaks to his “real” conqueror-son only through the missed encounters with Thea, Oceanus, and Enceladus, all for whom Coelus is likewise an Imaginary father. Yet the ambivalence of this transference is tempered by the potentiality of Coelus's disembodied “voice” (306), which speaks “from the universal space” (307) (like Demogorgon's cave in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*) of a genotext out of which Apollo's Symbolic presence is generated. (I shall examine this textual potentiality more closely in section III.) In a speech that parallels Thea's recognition in Saturn of the ambivalence of a “supreme god / At war with the frailty of grief” (2.92-93), Coelus sees in Hyperion, an “evident god” (1.338), a similarly mortal “grief” (335) and urges him to enter the “van / Of circumstance” (343-44), thereby facilitating the passage from Imaginary identity to Symbolic subjectivity.
11. See Tilottama Rajan's *Supplement of Reading*, which argues for a more productive hermeneutic for reading Romantic texts. Bennett cites his indebtedness to Rajan's study but wages her “completion” of the text by the reader against his “tragic recognition that the supplement of reading, rather than completing the text, might stand in its place, both concealing and exposing its incompleteness” (184n). See also Rajan's review of Bennett's book. Ross Woodman also argues for the productivity of the future reader:

In his revision of “Hyperion” [Keats's] hand holding a pen becomes the conscience of the reader. “Whether the dream now purpos'd to rehearse,” Keats writes, addressing his future readers, “Be poet's or fanatics will be known / When this warm scribe my hand is in the grave.” It will be known, that is, when the reader reaches out to take hold of Keats's “scribe” to make a writing of his or her reading, constructing or deconstructing in the process a revisionary text.

(7)

12. Paul de Man (“Resistance” 16-17), briefly citing the rhetoric of the *Hyperions* as the site of a particular resistance to theory, examines how the etymology of (the) “fall” can be disseminated in several conflicting ways both within and between the poems.
13. Laplanche and Pontalis quote Daniel Lagache's statement that makes sense of the work of mourning in the *Hyperions*: “[I]t has been said that the work of mourning consists in ‘killing death’” (486). Briefly, then, Saturn's inertia, like that of the other fallen gods, results from his melancholia, or an inability of the subject to “sever its attachment to the object that has been abolished,” that is, the imago of his now-archaic divinity. In its more severe form, melancholia results in a type of psychosis. See also Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia.” In a provocative reframing of the work of history in the poems, Tilottama Rajan argues that the work of melancholy in “The Fall” is part of its “cultural responsiveness” (“Keats” 17), its attempt to signify that which escapes the use value of history.
14. Enceladus's statement is especially telling, since he is, according to Lemprière's *Bibliotheca Classica*, which was one of Keats's references for mythological sources, “the most powerful of all the giants who conspired against Jupiter” (cited in *Complete Poems* 705).

15. Leon Waldoff implicitly contextualizes Moneta according to her analytical function: "Identity requires a mirroring Other, and the quest for identity in 'The Fall' takes place in the presence of a feminine figure in whose response to himself the poet seeks to discern, as if in a mirror, an answer to the question of who he is" (197). Ultimately, Waldoff reads the text's subjectivity within a conservative and recuperative economy of psychic functioning resembling ego-psychology, whose faith in the structural integrity of identity Lacan vehemently opposed.
16. Tilottama Rajan, in another context, refers to this identity as the "empty schema [of] the subject in Lacanian psychoanalysis" (*Supplement* 305).

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Criticism: Christoph Bode (essay date 2000)

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[In the following essay, Bode analyzes *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* as part of a consistent, rather than a continuous, expression of Keats's poetics. Bode sees the poems as marking the development of Keats's thoughts on "negative capability."]

According to many critics, John Keats gave up *Hyperion* and later recast it as *The Fall of Hyperion*, first, because he had experienced some fundamental change in his outlook on life, on the course of human history and the place of suffering in the world; and, secondly, because he had come to see that his poetics of “negative capability” was incompatible with his new understanding of the poet as healer and a poetics of empathy which he expounded in his “vale of Soul-making” letter, spring, 1819. In this view, *The Fall of Hyperion* would be the embodiment of “a vastly altered vision of world destiny and its significance” (Sperry 196).¹ I believe that there is no evidence for such a change, that, on the contrary, there is a remarkable continuity of his thinking between the autumns of 1818 and 1819. Indeed, his progress as a poet during this decisive period of his life is based on this very continuity. I believe, in other words, that the poetics of “negative capability” are reformulated in the “vale of Soul-making,” and the changes between *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* were all made for cogent narratological and logical reasons. In other words, Keats recast the material when he realized that in the apotheosis of Apollo in *Hyperion* he had written himself into a narrative corner. While *Hyperion* is a fragment because of a narrative and conceptual problem, *The Fall of Hyperion* is a necessary fragment, its form making a definite statement about language, history, narratability and meaning—a statement that could not possibly have been surpassed by a continuation of the tale. *The Fall of Hyperion* is complete. So much by way of introduction.

Keats begins *Hyperion* in the autumn, 1818, a large part of it written at the deathbed of his brother Tom, but after Books I and II, progress is painfully slow. In April, 1819, Keats hands over his manuscript to Richard Woodhouse as a failed attempt. Then he composes, in quick succession, the great spring odes, “La Belle Dame Sans Merci,” and *Lamia*, as if setting *Hyperion* aside had opened the floodgates. By July, he returns to *Hyperion* and redrafts it radically as *The Fall of Hyperion*, which he gives up on September 21st, a second failure in five months: “I have given up *Hyperion*” (2:167),² he writes to Reynolds—“*Hyperion*” being Keats’s shorthand for *both* attempts: for him, it was the same project. With whatever minor changes he may have introduced, the *1820 Poems* contain only the earlier, aborted version, with a misleading “Advertisement” by the publishers. In his lifetime, this aborted *Hyperion: A Fragment* was Keats’s most critically acclaimed poem. But, for my argument, the *Hyperion* project spans his entire *annus mirabilis*. *Hyperion* starts it all—and *Hyperion*, as his last great poem, marks its end. Therefore, the re-working of this material becomes a record of Keats’s poetic development in that year. Why he gave it up in April, resumed it in July, and gave it up again in September are important questions.

Keats called *Hyperion* a “very abstract poem” (2:132). He uses the myth of the overthrow of the Titans by the new Olympian gods to dramatize his ideas of history, change, and progress. Since the abstract becomes concrete in myth, these ideas can be re-deciphered on various levels of abstraction. The ousting of an *ancien régime* is a political story while the replacing of Hyperion by Apollo, the god of poetry and healing, is a story of cultural change and poetic progress—as well as, on a personal level, the story of the growth of a poet’s mind. And since *Hyperion* is itself an example of what it purports to teach, it is a radically auto-referential epic—and in this lies one of the seeds of its “failure.”

As in *Endymion*, Keats takes some liberties with his mythological material. He has eliminated everything sensational, crudely and simplistically political about this dynastic and generational war. The poem opens after the Titans have lost the first battle and the focus is on the causes and the psychological consequences of this unexpected defeat. Saturn and Thea are immobile “in the shady sadness of a vale,” an objective correlative for their utter dejection and despondency. Like Lear, Saturn’s identity consists exclusively in his rule and power: he must be king—or nothing. Keats shows in him the awful helplessness of “strong men” who have lost power. Rather than a multiplicity of transient selves, Saturn thinks he “has” or “owns” an identity (until he loses it), which is the opposite of Keats’s ideal poet who “has” no identity. As he explained in the same letter announcing *Hyperion* (October 27, 1818), “the poetical character itself, [...] it is not itself—it has no self—it is every thing and nothing—It has no character” (1:386). The lack of an identity is the prerequisite for the poet’s protean ideations, his variegated amoral incarnations (Imogen and Iago), the precondition for artistic freedom and versatility: “A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence; because he has no

identity” (1:387). At the end, Keats even embraces the possibility of subject-less writing: “If then he has no self, and if I am a poet, where is the Wonder that I should say I would write no more? [...] It is a wretched thing to confess; but is a very fact that not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature—how can it, when I have no nature?” (I 387). In this poetics of impersonality, the poet acknowledges the power of subject-less discourses at the interfaces of which the annihilated and self-less poet becomes a catalyst and a receptacle of new intertextual interweavings. If this is Keats's poetic ideal, even before Apollo's appearance, Saturn's speech is full of dramatic irony: the concepts he invokes—“identity, selfhood, egotism, delight in power for its own sake” (Coote 202)—have caused his downfall. When he asks, “But cannot I create? / Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth / Another world?” the silence answers: No, you cannot. Move over, Saturn. Your time is up.

The rest of the first book of *Hyperion* is about Hyperion, the only Titan who is not yet fallen, still in his celestial palace bathed in hues of gold, bronze and red—but darkness looms. To delay his impending doom, he considers letting day break six hours before its time: it cannot be. In this universe, gods do not create laws; they only execute them—and they can be replaced by others who will execute them just as well. They are dispensable and transient in their power: *Hyperion* is, among other things, the drama of temporality as it shatters a divine eternity. Consequently, Book II of *Hyperion* is largely a negotiation of the questions of necessity, law, and temporality—questions which are introduced through the various responses to inevitable change and existential downfall.

Oceanus's long answering speech in Book II offers the historico-philosophical core of *Hyperion*, not only a theory of historical evolutionary change but also an explanation of the blindness of rulers and autocrats. Oceanus advises that wisdom lies in understanding and accepting the inevitable: *insight into necessity* equals true comfort and consolation. But Saturn is barred from this consolation by the occupational disease of sovereigns and egomaniacs: “blind[ness] from sheer supremacy.” They cannot see themselves in an historical perspective, in a relationship to a before and an after. In contrast, true sovereignty consists in knowing one's place as a transient phase in an evolutionary process that strives towards ever greater beauty, purity and freedom.

Oceanus is an Enlightenment god. Through his praise of evolutionary progress and acceptance of historical necessity, Keats lets the twilight of the Titans, the end of the golden age, coincide with the advent of an *historical* consciousness: there are only *lost* paradises, and this sense of loss, the necessity of it, partly constitutes historical consciousness. In positive terms, just as this loss is outweighed by an evolutionary, ameliorative gain, so the past is not wholly lost but dialectically “*aufgehoben*” in its threefold Hegelian sense: it was a necessary stage, indispensable for what comes after (cf. 215-228). But just as it is an “eternal law” that each temporary peak of the evolutionary process of refinement and perfection should rule—“for ‘tis the eternal law / That first in beauty should be first in might” (228/229)—it is foreseeable that one day this will again be supplanted and replaced: “Yea, by that law, another race may drive / Our conquerors to mourn as we do now” (230/231).

This idea of history is a gradual realization of perfection, or, to stress the open-ended nature of this process in Godwinian terms, of perfectibility. Described in a letter to Reynolds, May 3, 1818, even before *Hyperion*, Keats's version has special regard for cultural and literary evolution. Positioning himself in relation to Milton and to Wordsworth, Keats tries to clarify his idea of a “modern” poetry, of what is new about the new poetry, and how the literary achievements of an individual poet stand in the general evolution of society, culture and civilization. Keats finds it hard to judge “whether Milton's apparently less anxiety for Humanity proceeds from his seeing further or no than Wordsworth,” because “we find what he says true as far as we have experienced and we can judge no further but by larger experience” (1:278/279). That is the crux of any “placement” or evaluation in literary history: as historical beings, caught up in one's own growth, one can only evaluate experience from an historically limited and changing point of view. Therefore, determining whether one poet looks further than another requires a kind of differential calculus, taking into account the relativity of

two movements against each other, without anyone having the advantage of a stable, privileged “objective” third point of observation outside human history and the process of individual maturing.

This first basic lesson in historicism lies at the core of Keats's “Mansion of Many Apartments.” In the second or Chamber of Maiden thought, there occurs a

sharpening [of] one's vision into the heart and nature of Man—of convincing ones nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression—whereby This Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages—We see not the balance of good and evil. We are in a Mist—*We* are now in that state—We feel the ‘burden of the Mystery,’ To this point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive when he wrote ‘Tintern Abbey’ and it seems to me that his Genius is explorative of those dark Passages. Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them

(1:280/281).

Three essential points: First, Keats knows about suffering, about “Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression,” before he even begins *Hyperion*. Secondly, an evolutionary model of human history requires an historicist position, deprives one of an a-historical gauge for measuring “advanced-ness,” and makes proximity to an historical phenomenon a decisive aspect of its assessment. One can't help feeling closer to what is, well, closer. As Keats defines the evolutionary direction of poetic progress in terms of a greater, fuller unfolding of subjectivity, Wordsworth can only be “closer” to Keats than Milton, and is therefore more “advanced.” It is a matter of perspective, of how the lines of evolution are defined. In Keats's sketch, Wordsworth is more “modern,” because he has chosen “the Mind of Man” as “[his] haunt and main region of [his] song” (*The Recluse*)—he is the paradigmatic poet of the refinement and differentiation of human consciousness.

Thirdly, Keats does not attribute this “advanced-ness” to Wordsworth as an individual but to general cultural progress: “Here I must think Wordsworth is deeper than Milton—though I think it has depended more upon the general and gregarious advance of intellect, than individual greatness of Mind” (1:281). Every great mind, such as Milton's, he argues, is confined by the limitations of its age, which hindered him, like a Titan, from looking deeper and further: “He did not think into the human heart, as Wordsworth has done—Yet Milton as a Philosopher, had sure as great powers as Wordsworth—What is then to be infer'd? O many things—It proves there is really a grand march of intellect—, It proves that a mighty providence subdues the mightiest Minds to the service of the time being, whether it be in human Knowledge or Religion” (1:282). If the “grand march of intellect” defines the level on which individual poets function, in spite of all its splendour and beauty and grandiosity, even *Paradise Lost* has become, with time, “a curiosity” (2:212). Keats adheres to this optimistic belief in a “grand march of intellect” until the end of his poetic career, explaining it again, sixteen months later, at the time of the official burial of the *Hyperion* project, in his long journal letter to the George Keatses, September 17th and 27th, 1819.

Hyperion ends with the apotheosis of Apollo as he looks into the face of Mnemosyne, goddess of memory and mother of the muses: “Knowledge enormous makes a god of me” (113ff.). This replenishment is painful: in agony, he “die[s] into life.” The pain of an Olympian being deified is even greater than the pain of the dethroned Titans:

During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length
Apollo shriek'd; and lo! from all his limbs
Celestial

(133-136)

Hyperion begins in silence and ends in a shriek (Coote 200). Between the silence and the scream lies language. The apotheosis itself illustrates Keats's poetics: Apollo is the poet without identity who, looking into the face of the personified memory of humankind, absorbs the totality of its experience. He is, moreover, a poet who contains within himself the unalloyed and unrelieved tensions of human existence—"joy and grief at once," as Clymene puts it (289). In ideal fashion, this empty and identity-less Apollo displays that capability, "negative capability," which Keats deemed indispensable in great poets. Only the empty poet can contain the totality of human experience. There is, then, no contradiction between Keats's theory of negative capability and his depiction of Apollo, which critics such as Gittings (36) believed.

There is likewise no contradiction between the triumph of *beauty*, as heralded by Oceanus, and Keats's epistolary poetics which speak of a gain of *consciousness*, because it is exactly this opposition between beauty and truth, specious and in itself totally unhistorical, which is transcended by the concept of negative capability. Since, for Keats, the identity-less poet of negative capability takes in both "joy and grief," both pleasure and pain, and stores them unmixed, his poetry contains the full range of human experiences, even the negative ones. This exploration of the "darker passages" is, as Keats noted of Wordsworth, the *differentia specifica* of an art that is "modern," a necessary farewell to *les beaux arts* in a naive and restricted sense. The apotheosis of Apollo and the replacement of the good-natured and naive Titans who believe in and know only "beauty" in the old sense of the word dramatize the change of paradigm: *die nicht mehr schönen Künste* [the no longer beautiful arts]. Progress in poetry is the increasing capacity to include wider spheres of human experience, to explore them, to process them, to find a language for them.

Since Keats identifies with Apollo, creates Apollo in his own image, why doesn't Apollo speak? Why has the new poet no voice of his own? Why does the text break off at exactly the point when "the new" would have to articulate itself? Why the scream instead? Why is *Hyperion* a fragment? The answers lie in Keats's three mistakes. The first is *sequence*: he is so successful in depicting the misery of the Titans that they are pitiful and engage the reader's sympathy. Therefore, when Apollo enters in Book III, one can hardly switch over to his perspective. This mistake in sequence leads to the second, *perspective*: although authorially mediated, the story is told from the perspective of the Titans, creating sympathy for the past, which is fatal in an epic celebrating progress, requiring a joyful welcome for the rebels. But the third is the ultimate mistake, a logical flaw, which appears when Keats sets out to lend a voice to Apollo and to give him language.

Allow me to elaborate. *Hyperion* displays an acute awareness of the difficulty of translation. At the beginning, the narrative voice claims that what follows is a necessarily weak translation from the language of gods into the language of mortals (47-51), a language that the gods themselves claim is inadequate, a painful groping for words to overcome speechlessness. The fallen gods have no words for what has happened to them. What they say is a periphrasis, or circumscription, of how they feel. *Hyperion* is centrally concerned with translation and periphrasis. In addition, language in *Hyperion* is temporal and historical. There is this *new* experience, for which a *new* language is sorely needed—the old language will not do, since it doesn't know this new experience. But there is, in *Hyperion*, also the opposite example, the image of a language which is superseded and finished, so much so that its signs are totally illegible: the hieroglyphics, an ancient language, undeciphered until 1822, and explaining the association of the Titans with Egypt. Hieroglyphics are a reminder of how language is threatened by temporality. Here language is expected to express something for which there are not yet any words and which can only be expressed approximately. On the other hand, the results of this absurd endeavour are always in danger of falling into the abyss of time, of becoming illegible *chiffres*, extant in form only, but void of any meaning.

Apollo confronts this problem of translation and of the temporal fixation of meaning. Mnemosyne does not answer him in language; she remains silent. She answers in *images*, which Apollo reads in her face. The "knowledge enormous" which makes a god of him is a pre-linguistic, visually stored knowledge that he, as the

new god of poetry, has to bring to language, in poetry. While I agree that this failure of language explains Keats's breaking off the poem, that he was unable to devise a new kind of language for Apollo, I believe the problem was even larger. If Apollo were to embody the new kind of poetry—and *Hyperion* were to be “Apollo's poem” (W. J. Bate 394)—, then, since the change would have occurred before the narration began, the whole epic would have to have been written in this new diction. A poem that narrates its own genesis, that is an example of what it announces, requires a new language. How can one exceed one's performance yet have been on that higher, superior level all the time? The Dutch engraver, Escher, designs such impossible staircases on which human figures are perpetually ascending to a level from which they paradoxically started out in the first place. Although caught up in a paradox of his own temporality, Keats writes an epic on the historicity of poetry. Written from a purportedly a-historical perspective, the poem collapses in self-contradiction or *aporia*.

Within a couple of weeks, while writing the spring odes, Keats discovered, *en passant*, how to redress these three fundamental mistakes, closely related as they were, in one single operation. First, he changed the sequence and began with the apotheosis, then treated the fall of the Titans. Secondly, to control the perspective, he introduced a narrator. Taking the place of Apollo, this narrator ensured, thirdly, that the whole text would be historically situated and that the point of view would be inside the fictional world. And after this radical change in the narrative situation, there would no longer be any danger of the final *aporia* that killed *Hyperion*. *The Fall of Hyperion* is a rescue operation, to salvage the material of *Hyperion* through a radically new, subjectively perspectivized framing, or series of framings: “a very tricky piece of dove-tailing” (Ridley 274). The theme is still historicity, temporality, change, process, evolution—but it becomes subjectively refracted, which is why nothing could be further from the truth than to say the poet was now outside the action (Vitoux 180)—quite the contrary: the action is now inside of him.

In a soberly modern way, the new opening lines address the issue of the permanence of poetry: the most banal, but only necessary and not yet sufficient precondition is writing, letters. Then, after communing with his predecessors (no longer present), the narrator is granted the “dream within a dream” that will give him access to an innermost truth: Only somebody who has acknowledged his belatedness knows his historical place and is therefore admitted to a temple whose columns allow only one direction of movement: westward like the course of the sun. For all the subjectivity of the human mind and the uniqueness of an individual genius, the march of poetry (cf. Thomas Gray, *The Progress of Poesy*, 1754) still follows historical necessity; the individual, embedded in these conditions, run a pre-ordained route.

Climbing of the stairs of the altar with a near-death experience (141-145) has, or so it seems, proved his excellence. He is told that only those who experience the misery of the world as if it were their own have the strength to survive: empathy, compassion is the key. But this apparent distinction becomes a flaw: “thou art here for thou art less than they,” explains the figure of the shadow, less than they who are actively engaged in “labour[ing] for mortal good,” improving the lot of humankind. In contrast to them, the dreamer, with his excess of imagination, “venoms all his days, / Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve” (175/176). That is the drawback of empathy: if it does not translate into action, it spoils every moment of one's life. Now, the dreamer, this self-torturing “poor thing,” is merely “suffer'd in these temples” (180). Like in a nightmare, each supposed elevation turns out to be a debasement, a new humiliation. Even after the dreamer has self-deprecatingly admitted that even amongst real poets, he doesn't feel like one of them (“as vultures feel / They are no birds when eagles are abroad,” 191/192), the voice does not console him, but it confirms his worst suspicion: You are not a poet. It is true: a poet can, after all, influence the world—if only indirectly, like a healer, not like a radical politician or a practical philanthropist. But he is not (*yet*) such a poet.

This dialogue between the dreamer and the majestic shadow, who is later revealed as Moneta, the priestess of this temple of Saturn, is controversial: it is not clear whether Moneta's differentiations between “visionaries,” poets and dreamers make sense. But Moneta does not address the narrator as a poet; in fact, she explicitly denies it. When Moneta says, “the dreamer venoms all his days” (175), the narrator assumes she means the

poets as well. But Moneta sets him aright: that doesn't yet make you a poet. Once more, the difference between necessary and sufficient conditions: empathy is a necessary but not sufficient quality in a poet. There has to be something else—if that is lacking, he remains a dreamer and “vex[es] the world.” This passage is the critical and remorseless self-questioning of a potential poet in doubt of his vocation and his abilities, the dramatization of a phase in his evolution.

The encounter of the dreamer with Moneta is the new version of the encounter between Apollo and Mnemosyne, re-cast from a first-person perspective. In contrast to *Hyperion*, there is no performative contradiction here: the distinction is clear between the narrating “I” and the narrated “I”—the narrator of *The Fall of Hyperion* is the former dreamer. He has changed, because something happened to him, namely that which will be told. Since her fall, Moneta is, like Glaukos in *Endymion*, subject to temporality, but condemned to remember the scenes of the fall—she is immortal. She is the vessel, the receptacle which contains a consciousness of the past as an eternal present, endlessly repeating itself. The dreamer is eager to see the spectacle inside “the hollow brain,” to see “what high tragedy / In the dark secret chambers of her skull / Was acting” (277-279). The wish is granted even before it was uttered: “for thy good will” (242) he is given the privilege to see the past as present, in imposing images, inside a ‘cinema in the head’. As Moneta and the dreamer stand “side by side” (!), her eyes become *projectors*, and he enters a virtual reality, the reality of the fall of the Titans:

No sooner had this conjuration pass'd
My devout lips, than side by side we stood,
(Like a stunt bramble by a solemn pine)
Deep in the shady sadness of a vale,
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star.

(291-296)

Because the last three lines are identical with the first three lines of *Hyperion*, that is the connecting piece. The two texts are dovetailed, docked on to each other. But the objective epic of *Hyperion* has become a thrice framed vision: a vision within a dream within a dream. The epic characters of *Hyperion* are here visualized images of a consciousness in dialogue with itself:

Whereon there grew
A power within me of enormous ken,
To see as a God sees, and take the depth
Of things as nimbly as the outward eye
Can size and shape pervade.

(302-306)

The divine look perceives the deeper meaning of things as easily as human beings perceive any sense data. What was the apotheosis of Apollo in *Hyperion* is here a lesson contained in “historical consciousness” for the benefit of the dreamer, who will turn into a poet once he has understood. The understanding of pain and misery overcomes the self-torture of the present: it must be seen “in perspective.” The sight will still be painful to the empathetic observer—and *The Fall of Hyperion* is about “the pain of consciousness” (Barnard 129, 137) and the burden of awareness. But since the scene is within a consciousness visually communicating with itself and empathetically suffering as part of that scene and scenario (which *we* are related to via language), the text can point a way out of this misery and “unchanging gloom” (391).

And it goes like this: Like *Hyperion*, the text of *The Fall of Hyperion* insists on being a translation. The truth of Moneta/Mnemosyne is not a linguistic truth. She shows him images which he must translate into language if he wants to prove himself a poet. As in *Hyperion*, the main subject here is change and transformation

without an Oceanus to offer explanation. No oratory—only images that can be translated into language, for the reader to re-visualize. Undoubtedly, they are more powerful than Oceanus's speech, and more impressive than the dialogue between Moneta and the narrator. But they remain translations, in need of re-translation. To say that Apollo and the narrator in *The Fall* “read” in the face of Moneta/Mnemosyne is catachresis. *We* read what they *see*. This necessary metaphor constitutes the transformation of dream into poetry. The dream leaves a mind or consciousness in catachrestic translation—and in this form, as poetry, it becomes accessible, communicable, it can be shared. The text is the “necessarily false” transitional stage of communication. Words are mere vehicles, necessary, but not the thing itself—an unavoidably “wrong” notation.

And how should this procedure transcend the place of suffering and misery in the world? In the letter of April, 1819, the “vale of Soul-making,” man is first a biological being, subject to the same stresses and frustrations as all other living beings. Even if an earthly paradise could be created, there would still be the fact of death, and all the troubles and dread now spread over the years of a lifetime would then assault the dying person in his few final days, subjectively concentrated in unbearable weight. “But in truth,” Keats writes, “I do not at all believe in this sort of perfectibility” (1:101). Humans cannot transcend their biological being in a material world. All utopias which attempt this follow a foolish dream. Where there are wants and desires and drives, there will always be frustrations. Other than for those who believe in the “pious frauds of Religion,” the world is not a “vale of tears,” but rather a medium that makes souls out of intelligences: “Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make a soul?” (2:102). Suffering and pain are not a punishment for some sin; they are the means by which human beings, in the fullest sense of the word, are created. In a world of circumstance, pains and troubles serve a positive, evolutionary function: to help the growth of a personality. On an individual scale, pain runs parallel to “the grand march of intellect,” refining human consciousness and sensation. According to Keats, it is not only impossible but also *not desirable* to spare mankind negative experiences; these are necessary for perfection.

And how would a poetry based on “negative capability” containing “joy and grief at once” come to terms with pain? Are “negative capability” and empathy not irreconcilable, because “negative capability” disregards the moral dimension of characters and actions, whereas empathy seems to be an eminently moral act of partisanship? In other words, how can an amoral art possibly have moral effects or consequences? Disinterestedness of mind, Keats explains, is a rare achievement—as unselfishness and empathy, it is a *moral* phenomenon, as *Einfühlung* in the sense of identity-less negative capability, the indispensable precondition for *true poetry*.

But, and this is the crucial point, poetry *does not speak* or spell its assessment of what it presents—“we hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us” (1:224). Poetry relies on the power of its images, on the intensity of its imagery. Art transcends “all disagreeables” (1:192), including pain, by the sheer force of “intensity,” by the power of images. *The Fall of Hyperion* is a series of such powerful images. Speeches such as Oceanus' encourage the erroneous notion that their “explanation” could be adequate. Explanations lead away from “the point”; periphrasis and catachresis are as close as one can get. Dissolving the catachresis of the text, which only prolongs, perpetuates and increases the ineptitude of expression, is always a category mistake, a sure sign of a failure of nerve, of a lack of confidence in the power of one's images. It always fails in its delusion to say something more directly, more accessibly than the difficult, complicated and long-winded diction of poetry. There is no substitute for understanding—neither for the understanding of images, nor for the understanding of suffering.

No post-metaphysical epic can *say* what the deeper meaning of suffering might be—or whether there is any meaning at all. You grasp it—or you don't grasp it. A poetry that presents itself emphatically as the catachrestic overcoming of speechlessness cannot spare its readers the labour of understanding, which always includes the possibility of failure. The place of suffering in the world is not to be found on any map. It is a matter of empathetical understanding, and an understanding of images. Therefore, *The Fall of Hyperion* falls silent, in calm composure and sovereignty. It does not babble, assert, maintain or argue any point. It presents a

fallen world, forever falling, narrating it and giving it permanence in images, carried by the vessels of language, so that these images can be shared. Nothing more. The text refuses all 'consolation by content'. Consolation can be found, if at all, in the fact that something is told, that images are translated into language, communicated and shared. That is the way-out of a sole, solipsistic dream-consciousness—and out of pain: for pain and inner images, by definition private, converge and are transcended in sharing. It saves the suffering from their isolation in solitude, it saves the image from incommunicability. This world will be present in the "hollow brains" of the readers as in the mind of Moneta, *if* the author of the text is a poet, *if* he can find a language for his vision. No collateral explanation by an entirely different kind of discourse could possibly balance failure here. Nothing can ever take the place of understanding.

The Fall of Hyperion is the necessary failure of a "belated narrative" (Aske 74; cf. Bennett 147, Gradman 129); its fragmentary form is emblematic of this necessary failure. As an attempt at a radically post-metaphysical epic, an epic without a metaphysical frame of reference, it is solely founded on the subjectivity of the poet and is enacted exclusively in his mind. Unlike *Hyperion*, it refrains from any epically-objective explanation of its own locus. *The Fall of Hyperion* has only two protagonists: not the "I" and Moneta, but the duality that comprises the whole of the text, the narrated "I" and narrating "I." The difference between the two—and could there be better proof that the subject of *The Fall of Hyperion* is temporality—highlights the "conditions of possibility" (Kant's "Bedingungen der Möglichkeit") of this very poem.

The Fall of Hyperion is basically about why there is this poem—why the dreamer became a poet. Or rather, since there is no such place from which such a claim could be formulated, this radically subjective and subjectively perspectivized text, cannot say anything more about its own locus, about its necessity, than that it exists. But that proves only its contingency. *The Fall of Hyperion* is a virtual poem. Keats realized that under these conditions anything exceeding the contingency of the poem could only be *asserted*—but not demonstrated. Each continuation was unnecessary, even absurd. Proliferating series of imagery that could never outdo, never surpass each other. Instead, Keats connected them. The poem begins with the fall of the Titans, followed by an apotheosis—in the apotheosis, we see, in the mind of the deified, the fall of the Titans, to be followed by an apotheosis—and so on and so forth. How many repetitions does one need before the public and the critics understand? How many revolutions before they realize this will go on and on? "A dog came in the kitchen" or *For to End Yet Again*—Beckett is never far away when Keats is at his best.

The Fall of Hyperion is, as Harold Bloom once remarked, Keats's testament, his last great poem (132). In the same letter in which he gives up the project of *Hyperion*, and sketches the setting of "To Autumn," another "last" poem, Keats writes, in retrospect: "It strikes me to night that I have led a very odd sort of life for the two or three last years—Here & there—No anchor—I am glad of it" (2:167). Without knowing it, he had come to an end. The last months had demanded and taken everything. *Ne plus ultra*.

Notes

1. See also De Man (1962 and 1986), Coote, Gittings, J. Bate, and O'Neill: "[*Hyperion*] is a romantic fragment poem whose fragmentariness articulates its inability to believe full-bloodedly in a liberal, optimistic version of history" (223). An extended version of my argument can be found in Bode (1996).
2. Citations to Keats's letters are from *The Keats Circle*, ed Rollins (1969) and to Keats's poetry, *Complete Poems*, ed Stillinger (1982).

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[In the following essay, Brinks considers the construction of masculinity and homoeroticism as part of a Gothic subtext in *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*.]

With *Hyperion: A Fragment* and *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, John Keats's efforts to write an epic in 1818 and 1819 failed. Yet the irony of this "failure" has not gone unnoticed: not only is it the grounds for the placement of these works at an interpretive center of the Keatsian canon, but poetic failure can also be said to elevate their status to works that define a specifically Romantic ideology. Many recent analyses of *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* focus on the *productive* contradictions between the two poems' formal fragmentation and Keats's allegory of poetic election. Marjorie Levinson, for example, sees in Keats's fragmentation the achievement of an autonomy that is ironically based on the fragment's "dependent" form. John Whale argues that "the appropriating power of the Romantic ideology takes place side by side with claims of its own incapacity"; while for Marlon B. Ross, Keats's fragmented discourse reflects a conflict between a culturally determined will-to-power and a desire to undertake a revolutionary reordering of discourse. As *Romantic* fragments, the two works represent the poet's troubled engagement with a developmental narrative and with claims to mastery.¹

A developmental narrative that also claims to be an election calls attention to its particular sociocultural purpose: the legitimation of an individual by a community. Within real or imagined cultural communities, legitimation bestows a higher—often exclusive—status upon the one who is chosen and successfully initiated.² In both *Hyperion* fragments Keats underscores the element of discursive status, since he draws on the elevated rhetorical modes of Dantean and Miltonic epic, Greek myth, and the tropes of universal history and allegory. This rite of passage is an epic of poetic election, one that confers upon its male participant, the poet-narrator, the ability to speak from a position of discursive dominance. When and if he imagines his passage complete, he assumes a place within an elite masculine cultural tradition, able to transform it through the creative authority of his own subjectivity.³ Yet a number of critics, from Walter Jackson Bate to Harold Bloom to Karen Swann, find Keats's response to inclusion within a community of male poets uncertain; he fluctuates between unadulterated enthusiasm and desire, uncanny dissociation, or refusal, as he ambivalently faces the risks and rewards of homosocial belonging: how to reconcile singularity or separateness with incorporation and sameness.⁴

What critics have not examined thus far is Keats's use of the *Gothic* mode to express and redefine the stakes of his complex ambivalence. In this essay I call attention to the previously overlooked Gothic subtext in *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*. Whether it is Saturn, Apollo, or himself that the narrator witnesses, his returns to scenes where a male body is subjected to pain and domination become a way to explore questions of legitimation and empowerment when such questions can no longer be presupposed by the writing subject.

While recent readings have tended to align the poems' fragmentation with Keats's refusal of mastery, I argue that Keats identifies male masochism and effeminacy as a perverse condition of, rather than an impediment to, the attainment of symbolic power.⁵ Apollo's eroticized submission in *Hyperion* and the poet's self-castigating trials in *The Fall of Hyperion* stage the very experience that they supposedly stand in the way of: legitimation. Not only does bodily dispossession directly measure symbolic possession, but also, through his doubles, Keats recognizes himself in this negative loss of power. The *failure* to inherit or transmit symbolic property, however, which is apparent in the Gothic of Horace Walpole, Charlotte Smith, Ann Radcliffe, Robert Southey, Byron, and others, takes a particular form in Keats: through the Gothic, he represents his own subjective disinheritance.

In the following scene from *Hyperion*, the Titan Hyperion, ignorant of his family's fate, succumbs to a premonition of doom:

For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he—
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. ... (6)

The narrator presents a conventionalized Gothic scenario—the screeching of the owl, the ghostly visitation, superstitious dread. While he seems to reject the Gothic as an inadequate mode of rhetorical accommodation (“*Not* at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech”; emphasis added), he nonetheless cites its features and encourages the reader to imagine a Gothic of enormous magnitude: one, as he says, “portion'd to a giant nerve.”⁷ Hyperion then envisions his family as specters:

O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
O lank-eared Phantoms of black-weeded pools!
Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why
Is my eternal essence thus distraught
To see and to behold these horrors new? ...
Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
This calm luxuriance of blissful light, ...
Of all my lucent empire? It is left
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.

(I, ll. 228-33, 235-37, 239-40)

The Gothic protagonist dwells among ruins, surrounded by the presence of ancestral figures whose fate will bear upon his or her own. Here Hyperion is cast into this role, as his narcissistic home or “cradle” becomes a ruin peopled with the superseded Titans. In a place he can no longer own, he reduces himself to the ghostliness that his family has already assumed (“it is ... nor any *haunt* of mine”; emphasis added). Whether it is these hallucinatory “spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom,” or the alternation between pastoral and sublime landscapes, or the emphasis on affective states of distress, anxiety, melancholia, and hysterical questioning, the reader can easily identify Keats's overt allusions to the Gothic mode.⁸

More important, *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* represent the constitution of the male Romantic poet as a Gothic subject. Against the inherited reading of Gothic subjectivity as flat and lacking in depth, Michelle A. Massé redirects attention to the Gothic subject as one who is known in and through a sadomasochistic dynamic, either as a giver or a receiver of pain.⁹ In the Gothic, moreover, the demand for narrative is made

under duress or compulsion, often under a kind of torture.¹⁰ Central in this representation is the victim's body, for as Chloe Chard writes, “the victims of Gothic fiction are frequently presented, weak, collapsing, or in chains, as emblems of oppression, and attention is focused ... on the body.”¹¹ The major figures (of poetic agency) in *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*—the fallen Titans, Hyperion, Apollo, and the poet-narrator of *The Fall of Hyperion*—repeatedly receive a physical or psychological beating as they attempt to narrate the origin of poetry.

The extensive tableau that opens Book II of *Hyperion* illuminates the fragment's representational arrangement. The Titans find themselves in a Gothicized torture chamber, a place where each vividly rehearses his or her agony:

Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp't and screw'd; ...
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
Or word, or look, or action of despair.
Creüs was one; his ponderous iron mace
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
Iäpetus another; in his grasp,
A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue
Squeez'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length
Dead; and because the creature could not spit
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,
As though in pain; for still upon the flint
He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
And eyes at horrid working. ...

(II, ll. 23-25, 39-52; emphasis added)

Critics have remarked on Keats's Dantean, frieze-like accumulation of “effigies of pain.” This framing device achieves two contrary effects: first, it condenses the pain through crowding, an aestheticizing effect; and second, the containment in objectified figures distances it, an *anaestheticizing* effect. This move allows for the ambivalence of identification and separation, as Keats emphasizes the priority of the viewer's or reader's response.¹² The Titans suffer not for the benefit of each other's gaze or for someone else within the tableau, but for an onlooker situated outside: “Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave / Or word, or look, or action of despair.” The proximate distance of the spectator to an unfolding scene is more self-consciously and reflexively adopted in *The Fall of Hyperion*. There the poet witnesses his rite of passage from the outside (as the scribe of his own dream) and from within it, when he transcribes Moneta's vision.

Besides signaling their structural affinity for the Gothic, the repeated tableaux of pain present an opening onto male authorial subjectivity: the masochistic bodies figure as the narrator's doubles. The poet-spectator-scriptor of the *Hyperion* fragments finds barely concealed versions of himself mirrored in the various characters, and he contests the notion of an inalienable male subjectivity within a self-containing body. Whereas in *Hyperion* Books I and II the Titans' loss of mastery is a masochistic display not overtly eroticized, Apollo's painful submission to the cultural order in Book III brings distinctly (homo)eroticized pleasures into view—and poetic legitimacy. The narrator of *The Fall of Hyperion* organizes his desire around the perverse position of bodily submission to a system that punishes and rewards that submission with election. The two fragments' conjunction of masochism, homoeroticism, and homophobia as the conditions for poetic legitimation articulate Keats's Gothic insight into the literary as both a sexual and a social body.¹³

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For his epic of election Keats's revises Hesiod's *Theogony*, a genealogical epic of the Titan and Olympian conflict whose narrative impulse is driven by generational violence and suppression.¹⁴ Like election, genealogy establishes legitimate succession. In Hesiod three generations of sons claim their right to succession through paternal castration and usurpation, triumphing over oppressive fathers who have refused to recognize or pass on their power to their sons. A violent logic underlies history: sons repeat their fathers' errors, initiating their own downfall, and fail to bequeath peacefully or to guarantee intergenerational succession. Hesiod ends the repetitive pattern of rebellion, wounding, and castration by installing Zeus and the Olympian hierarchy in power. Zeus is a son who violently supplants his father, but his sons will not supplant him. If the fathers have been the target of castration up to this point, now the sons accept symbolic castration, as they permanently concede their power to their eternal-father, Zeus. The oedipal conflict and violence ends, but so does succession. Sons never mature in Hesiod, as mythic history stalls in a timeless stasis whose legitimacy is never called into question.

Like Hesiod, Keats depicts a secure Olympian hegemony. Yet whereas Hesiod represents the three generations at war, the narrative chronology of the *Hyperion* fragments limits itself to the conflict's aftermath. Given the Titans' incapacity to launch a counterattack in *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*, the war is essentially concluded, and the narrator repeatedly calls attention to their suffering and impotence. Being beaten is overexposed, while its necessary correlative—the fact that there must be someone or something administering it, the agents—seems deliberately concealed. Keats presents the heightened spectacle of suffering without making a spectacle of its sadistic counterpart.

Representationally, the narrative visibly and visually represses the Olympian victors. Without being exposed even in their power, they possess the capacity to make others seen in their powerlessness. By neither subjecting Jupiter to another's gaze nor showing him wielding physical force, Keats magnifies his power. In *Hyperion* power is inversely proportional to embodiment. Without a body, face, or voice, Jupiter is elevated to the status of an abstract, necessary principle or truth.¹⁵ (Except for Enceladus, the defeated Titans confer this sublimated status upon him.) The Olympian order is not only depersonalized but also experienced as an objective, if unseen, reality. The political power underlying culture transmutes into symbolic forms whose dispersion attests to the successful working of its ideology. Altering Oceanus's claim that Saturn was made “blind from sheer supremacy” (*Hyperion*, II, l. 185), we could say that Oceanus and Saturn remain blind to the real (and vulnerable) body behind Jupiter's sheer supremacy. They cannot see him, nor can the narrator. Like them, the narrator reinforces a conservative response to the existing hierarchy.¹⁶

In an epic of poetic election, the poet desires recognition from Apollo, the “Father of all verse” (III, l. 13). As Apollo's would-be legitimate son, the poet stands to benefit from a justification or acceptance of the Olympian victory. It could be argued, however, that the narrator records his ambivalence by a sustained, sympathetic focus on the marginalized Titans: those who, like himself, are excluded from the exercise of both embodied and symbolic power. If dominance and submission structure the relationship between victor and vanquished, between the present and the past, then the narrator critically reckons the cost of progress by his calculation of the resulting pain. The Titans' wracked bodies—by eliciting the viewer's sympathy—become the focal point where the reader sees what is wrong with the Olympian hegemony, with history, and with discursive mastery. Further, by empathizing with the beaten, the poet would atone for his own will-to-power, his position as would-be heir, and his desire to achieve mastery—all of which are predicated on the Olympian overthrow.

It is, perversely, the unmoving, passive Titans to whom Keats gives the burden of narrative progression in *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*. They are held responsible for telling a history that will culminate with their illegitimacy and the poet's legitimation. Yet impossible, broken, or impeded speech—a feature of countless Gothic narratives—is foregrounded from *Hyperion*'s beginnings: “Far ... from the healthy breath of morn” (I, l. 2) denies the poet any inspirational possibility, while the Naiad's prohibitory gesture precludes an epic invocation.¹⁷ These inhibitions directed at the poet's speech are an introduction to the *Hyperion* fragments' frozen discursive landscapes; they carry over to the Titans' failure to use language to transform

what exists into an imagination of the possible. The opening speech of Thea to Saturn is only the first example of paralyzed rhetoric. After rehearsing Saturn's loss of power, Thea concludes: "O thoughtless, why did I / Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?" (I, ll. 68-69). By denying any necessity for her speech and then retracting it, Thea retreats as a subject. Language's gratuity, or insignificance, becomes a reflexive mode of violation.¹⁸

This experience at the beginning of *Hyperion* prefigures other forms of incommunicability. Language is troped as sickness (a "palsied tongue" [I, l. 93]) and self-inflicted pain ("I am smother'd up" [I, l. 106]); most radically, it becomes the experience of bodily dispossession, of choking, at the moment when change is imagined:

He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat
Held struggle with his throat but came not forth; ...
So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale
Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold; ...
... through all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd
From over-strained might. ...

(I, ll. 251-52, 255-56, 259-63)

Instead of overcoming segregation through its empathetic potential, the Titans' language intensifies privation: "... the laden heart / Is *persecuted* more, and *fever'd* more, / When it is nighing to the mournful house / *Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise*" (II, ll. 101-4; emphasis added). The consciousness of a shared misery does not enable the Titans to alter it. By rendering suffering as a kind of bad mimesis, empathetic words simply double the negative effects by reproducing them. Pain undoes social relationships, and the Titans' speech regresses into preverbal cries and noises, or into silence—a reflection of its own unfreedom. Saturn's syntactic repetitions become one figure for this destructive mirroring:

Moan, Cybele, moan, for thy pernicious babes
Have chang'd a God into a shaking palsy.
Moan, brethen, moan; for I have no strength left,
Weak as the reed—weak—feeble as my voice—
O, O, the pain, the pain of feebleness.
Moan, moan. ...

(*Fall of Hyperion*, I, ll. 424-30)

Even Hyperion's visual brilliance mirrors the Titans' present torture, instead of the difference of his unfallen potential. Like their words, he betrays their misery "to the most hateful seeing of itself" (*Hyperion*, II, l. 370).

The poet not only chooses a subject—pain—that is difficult to represent, but insofar as he succeeds in its representation, he too will fall into the same trap as the Titans, by replicating that subject. This statuary needs a different reader, if its story is to be told. Yet all the readers in the *Hyperion* fragments fall into modes of identification that, instead of mobilizing a narrative, freeze these readers into attitudes of Titanic fixity. Keatsian fancy, with its ability to "go away," is immobilized. Apollo sits with numb limbs (III, l. 89), while Hyperion winds up "like the bulk / Of Memnon's image at the set of sun" (II, ll. 373-74). Mnemosyne's face is fixed in "eternal calm" (III, l. 60); and in *The Fall of Hyperion* we are presented with the "chambers of [Moneta's] skull" (I, l. 278) and her "broad marble knees" (I, l. 214), as well as the poet's leaden attempts to mount the altar steps or bear the burden of the Titans' pain himself, without going away.

Whether narrative or psychological, the increasing petrification of the protagonists and the viewers forecloses movement as a figure for transition. As long as Keats makes the Titans responsible for the narrative, this Gothic problem persists: how is he to alter these accumulating resemblances into difference?¹⁹ Having inherited the same history, the Titans cannot see any point of transformation. Their recurring trauma points instead to the mounting pressure of an unresolved crisis or conflict, one as immoderately generated as their figures are gigantic. Being unable to challenge the violent rules that underlie their defeat, the Titans' exclusive attention to their pain ultimately seems to prove the inevitability of the Olympian hegemony. If they become their own "illegible manuscript," it is because their pain is never legitimized within a discursive context that would give it meaning. Unable to construct a new language out of illegitimacy, they are reduced to "hieroglyphics old," "their import gone" (I, ll. 277, 282). Similarly, in *The Fall of Hyperion* the narrator's inability to console Moneta halts both his tongue and the narrative:

I had no words to answer; for my tongue,
Useless, could find about its roofed home
No syllable of a fit majesty
To make rejoinder to Moneta's mourn.
There was a silence. ...

(I, ll. 228-32)

As these attempts at sympathy fail, the characters are pushed back into muteness and inertia.

By fixing the Titans in this way, the poet counterposes a stabilizing, collecting gesture to the inaccessible shattering of the ego in pain as well as to its "mutilated subjectivity."²⁰ Pain, the most private of states, goes public in both *Hyperion* fragments as the poet represents, at various points, subjective dissolution in seizure-like states: in *Hyperion* Apollo's "wild commotions" (III, l. 124) and Saturn "[shaking] and [oozing] with sweat" (I, l. 137); and in *The Fall of Hyperion* the poet's struggle against "the cloudy swoon" (I, l. 55) and the "electral changing misery" of Moneta's brain (I, l. 246). Given Keats's emphasis on seeing and responding, one might ask whether it is sympathy that he seeks to elicit with these extreme displays. The display of pain, as David Hume and others make perfectly clear, more frequently unleashes a disturbingly antisympathetic response.²¹ By virtue of the accumulation of these Gothic moments, Keats evokes distaste, even aversion: affective responses that check sympathy. As early as "Sleep and Poetry" (1817) he identifies the Gothic as a mode of power, not one of sympathy: "But strength alone though of the Muses born / Is like a fallen angel: trees uptorn, / Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and sepulchres / Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs, / And thorns of life; forgetting the great end / Of poesy, that it should be a friend" ("Sleep and Poetry," in *Poems*, p. 75; ll. 241-46). In *The Fall of Hyperion* the poet's Miltonic conceit that he cannot find words adequate to mourn Moneta's pain suggests rather his rhetorical inability to traverse the psychic *distance* necessary for a transformative sympathy. It is too close, and, because of this, it is immeasurably alienating.

The Titans Oceanus and Clymene distance themselves from their family's pain when they become mouthpieces for Olympian glorification. They seem to concede that they should be enslaved because they are or remain powerless, so they end up collaborating with the Olympians at the least, and idolizing them at the worst. They underwrite the Olympian claim to superior knowledge and power with the argument of their own visible inferiority. At the point where the subject of violence internalizes his abuse, the danger is that he will no longer be able to designate or identify his perpetrator. If, as Edward Peters writes in his book on torture, it is primarily the victim that torture seeks "to win—or reduce to powerlessness,"²² then the Olympian victory is won by the Titans, who are "self-hid, or prison-bound" (*Fall of Hyperion*, II, l. 10). The Titans' self-negation, in other words, signifies their opposite. Against a reading that would oppose the Titans to the Olympians as the different truths of two historical ages, Keats has them register the dialectical antagonism of disembodied power and embodied powerlessness.

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In the first two books of *Hyperion* the poet stages a fantasy where the Titans' gigantic bodies are restrained and immobilized as a sign of their supersession; in *Hyperion* Book III and in *The Fall of Hyperion* he reduces the dimensions to a more life-size human body whose passivity brings rewards. Paradoxically, the subjection of Apollo and the poet of *The Fall of Hyperion* does not carry the burden of failure but rather constitutes the mark of legitimation. Hesiod may halt the repetitive violence of the genealogical myth (after Zeus), but Keats rejects resolution and inscribes instead a continuing legacy of violence. In Keats's revision the Olympian order installs one of its own—Apollo—as the embodiment of a discursive culture that punishes its heirs. With Book III of *Hyperion*, however, what changes is the nature and the consequences of the painful experience.

When he introduces Apollo, the narrator of *Hyperion* ostensibly redirects the narrative away from the suffering bodies of the Gothic scenes by using the pastoral mode: “O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes; / ... / Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp” (III, ll. 3, 10). If he hopes to depart from that impious woe with a major shift in character, tone, and scene, then his attempt fails. The pain of Books I and II resurfaces. Newly awake in his bower, Apollo waits in impotence and ignorance as he anticipates the experience of Jupiter's / Olympian power on his body, just as the Titans did. But while the Titans ineffectually resisted the experience, Apollo longs for it. He eagerly awaits the physicalized intoxication of poetic power: “deify me, as if some blithe wine / Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk” (III, ll. 118-19). When that power expresses itself through Apollo, Keats scripts it as painful pleasure and pleasurable pain:

Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs;
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
 Or liker still to one who should take leave
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
 As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
 Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd:
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed,
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
 Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length
 Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his limbs
 Celestial.

(III, ll. 124-36)

Apollo's election turns strangely Dionysian. It is not unlike the shift registered in Keats's Elgin Marbles sonnet, where the poet's resistance to submissive weakness gives way and becomes overlaid with sensual pleasure. There the reader follows the poet from his claim that “my spirit is too weak—mortality / Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,” to the startling reversal: “Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep” (“On Seeing the Elgin Marbles,” in *Poems*, p. 93; ll. 1-2, 6).

Whereas Olympian dominance in *Hyperion* Books I and II is understood by the Titans only as inflicted pain and as the distance from power and poetic agency, Apollo's participation in that Olympian order now enfolds distinctly eroticized pleasures. Not only do his “golden tresses,” the “fairness of his limbs,” and “flush” effeminize his male body, but the “wild commotions,” the hot “pang,” the “fierce convulse,” the “undulation,” and the final shriek all read overtly as a sexual climax. As described earlier by Clymene, Apollo's song also ties his poetic ascension to erotic transports. Her language of “living death” and “rapture” prefigures the final images of the fragment:

A living death was in each gush of sounds,
 Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
 That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
 Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:
 And then another, then another strain. ...

(II, ll. 281-85)

Apollo's bodily coherence shatters under the pressure of a masculine-identified force: Jupiter's knowledge / power. The birth of the poet is the moment when Apollo finds himself in the sexual position of a man identifying with a woman's pleasures.²³

Prior to this display, however, the transgressive energies of this coupling are subjected to certain strategies which efface their nature.²⁴ First and foremost, the narrator obscures the object of Apollo's desire: "Where is power? / Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity / Makes this alarum in the elements, / While I here idle listen on the shores / In fearless yet in aching ignorance?" (*Hyperion*, III, ll. 103-7; emphasis added). Keats does not so much repress as *neutralize* the illicit drive by dematerializing or disembodimenting the object.²⁵ In these lines we slide from Apollo's desire to feel or see the power of Jupiter's hand, to Jupiter's essence, and finally to Apollo's desire to know what he knows. Further, the infusion with Jupiter's disembodied power is mediated by a woman, the goddess Mnemosyne. Keats engages in these various strategies in order to push an implicitly homoerotic desire back into an acceptable homosocial sublimation. Given the climactic finale of the fragment, however, we could say that Keats's effacements fail to contain the intensities of Apollo's desire and his associations with a blurred gender.²⁶

With the Titans, Keats explores the cancellation of (poetic) agency within a hierarchical relationship of power and powerlessness. Here Apollo's subjectivity emerges within a sexualized hierarchy between men. In the classical encyclopedias known to Keats, Apollo, the god of poetry, has an ambiguous sexuality: he pursues the young men Hyacinth and Cypress as well as women.²⁷ Inheriting literary power amounts to the filling of an emptiness. The fantasy of sexual penetrability includes the imagining of psychic penetrability (Apollo is penetrated through his ear). Lee Edelman, in his work on discursive construction of the homosexual, argues that the perceived threat of sodomy in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England accrues precisely around the bourgeois male's fears of being invaded and dispossessed of an inalienable masculine identity. Deprived of what Locke calls a man's "'property' in his own 'person,'" a man filled with another man relinquishes both autonomy and interiority, tantamount to the loss of a self-signifying potential.²⁸ With his lack of subjective interiority—an *alienable* discursive identity—Apollo is effeminized by being receptive to and penetrated by a dominant masculine subject.

By virtue of the narrator's returns, his investment in displays of male submission and ego-loss emerges. Beyond expressing his complicity with a dynamic or impulse that he wants to mythologize as poetry's and the poet's origins, and beyond his use of masochism to establish the subjective basis of culture's seemingly objective authority and its internalization, in *Hyperion* Book III the narrator depicts an enjoyment in the scenario for the first time. His marginal position allows him to regard Apollo's pleasure without having to represent himself, the would-be poet, in that same position. With Apollo's deification, however, the impulse to narrate or to return to that fantasy site disappears.

In one crucial sense, the narrative of election is resolved. If narrative is the playing out of desire, then *Hyperion* concludes with its desire not frustrated but *fulfilled*.²⁹ The shift to Apollo's bower language (and to a discourse of homoerotic desire) marks *Hyperion* as a poet's success story, not the sign of his failure. The narrative orients itself around the desire for acknowledgment by a cultural order that installs effeminate men. Written neither as an oppositional nor a nostalgic mode, this desire is *Hyperion's* mode of acknowledging and attaining a share in patriarchal power. It designates and affirms a powerful, masculine Other who rewards Apollo with enjoyment *and* with the status of poet. In Keats's scenario, Apollo's bower poetry and the dominant socio-symbolic order find themselves in bed together. These are the terms he writes for his contract of succession.

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When Keats returns to the election epic after several months, it is to the interiorized dreamspace of *The Fall of Hyperion*. The bower returns in a revised form—and only briefly, as the pastoral meal with its awakening of hunger and promise of nourishment. And similar to *Hyperion*, *The Fall of Hyperion* appears to reject the intrusion of the Gothic mode even as it tropes the poet's experience as such. The transporting “draught” that the poet drinks is “No Asian poppy, nor elixir fine / ... / No poison gender'd in close monkish cell” (*Fall of Hyperion*, I, ll. 47, 49; cf. *Hyperion*'s “Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech” [I, l. 171]). Traces of Apollo's deification rematerialize as the poet swoons, overcome by the effects of the paternal drink:

... That full draught is parent of my theme.
No Asian poppy, nor elixir fine
Of the soon fading jealous caliphat;
No poison gender'd in close monkish cell
To thin the scarlet conclave of old men,
Could so have rapt unwilling life away.
Among the fragrant husks and berries crush'd,
Upon the grass I struggled hard against
The domineering potion; but in vain:
The cloudy swoon came on, and down I sunk. ...

(*Fall of Hyperion*, I, ll. 46-55)

This partial restaging of *Hyperion* Book III—the disempowering power to speak, the swoon, the domination by the father-figure—is overlaid in *The Fall of Hyperion*, however, with threats that are not present in the earlier poem. Jupiter, the father idealized and longed for by Apollo, is supplanted by a host of treacherous figures, the fathers common to Gothic and Gothic-Oriental tales, the “jealous caliphat” and “the scarlet conclave of old men.”³⁰

The poet submits unwillingly to the poisonous potion of these Gothic fathers, an ingestion that subjectively dispossesses him: being overcome by their will and desire (“I struggled hard against / The domineering potion”), what he stands to lose—and does lose in this instance—is himself. Now marked by his ineffectual resistance, the paternal domination that Apollo longed for feels like a violation or rape. The pleasures of the bower now read as its Gothicized, sodomitical terrors, as the word “rapt” overtly implies. Yet as disturbing as this scene is, the narrator reduces it to a prefatory stage, an incomplete introductory nightmare superseded by *The Fall of Hyperion*'s more extensive dream-vision.

The poet's new dreamwork will earn him his discursive inheritance from Moneta, the retainer of patriarchal knowledge and authority. As a figure for Memory, she suggests the ordering of time, its sequence, and thus at least the potential for a developmental narrative. No longer relying on seduction or passivity, as Apollo did, the poet labors to meet Moneta's demands with his ongoing physical and mental humiliation. He restrains his desire whenever it surfaces:

To count with toil the innumerable degrees.
Towards the altar sober-pac'd I went,
Repressing haste, as too unholy there. ...
... that lofty sacrificial fire,
Sending forth Maian incense, spread around
Forgetfulness of every thing but bliss,
And clouded all the altar with soft smoke,
From whose white fragrant curtains thus I heard
Language pronounc'd. “If thou canst not ascend
These steps, die on that marble where thou art.”

(I, ll. 92-94, 102-8; emphasis added)

The embodied pleasures in *Hyperion* succumb in *The Fall of Hyperion* to corporeal, measured punishments—the “innumerable degrees,” the sober pacing, the ascension of steps, the succession of questions and answers that suggest progress but make it impossible to gauge. When Apollo's shriek is voiced by the poet in *The Fall of Hyperion*, it no longer expresses the release of attained desire but rather the perpetual self-excoriation and self-violation that now characterize the poet-narrator's legitimation process:

I shriek'd; and the sharp anguish of my shriek
Stung my own ears—I strove hard to escape
The numbness; strove to gain the lowest step. ...
One minute before death, my iced foot touch'd
The lowest stair. ...

(I, ll. 126-28, 132-33)

Revising this constitutive fantasy, the narrator of *The Fall of Hyperion* penalizes Apollo and *Hyperion's* narrator, not for their submissive strategy to gain empowerment but for their open enjoyment of it. In *The Fall of Hyperion* the would-be poet's ambitions surface instead as the privileging and enforcement of a need for discipline.

Incorporated into the election ritual are specific gender expectations: namely, if the poet acknowledges an originary moment rife with homoerotic pleasures, then he must also invoke their subsequent refusal. By way of suffering, the poet proves that his worth is no longer affixed to discursive cruising but to discursive discipline.³¹ Intellectual empowerment aligns itself with suppressing the transgressive weakness of the male homoerotic body. Performing cruel, intimidating, or arbitrary tasks (“If thou canst not ascend / These steps, die on that marble where thou art” [I, ll. 107-8]), the poet mythologizes ritualized violence against the male body as systemic to a high-culture insistent on suppressing the (homoerotic) desire organizing it.³² The poet now “direct[s] [his] energies toward ‘passing’ within the system that oppresses [him]. [His] strategy is not simply that of the survivor. [He] fully incorporate[s] and perpetuate[s] the cultural split that enables hierarchy” (Massé, p. 43).³³ His unapologetic invective against lesser poets testifies to his overt identification with the cultural authority, a sadistic position that the poet now has Apollo assume as well:

“Apollo! ...”
Where is thy misty pestilence to creep
Into the dwellings, through the door crannies,
Of all mock lyrists, large self worshipers,
And careless hectorers in proud bad verse.
Though I breathe death with them it will be life
To see them sprawl before me into graves.

(I, ll. 204-10)

Keats does not fail to imagine his possible inclusion in this group, intent as he is on justifying the conditions for success.

The domed temple, by virtue of being a public monument and bearing a resemblance to the skull's interior, is the point where externalized and internalized pressures meet, where the social and the sexual converge in the constitution of the Romantic poet. By calling his dreamspace eternal, the narrator authorizes and rationalizes the conditions underlying poetic mastery. In *Language and Symbolic Power* Pierre Bourdieu writes of the physical body's complicity—at its own expense, something very like masochism—with the violence that the institutions of culture wield against it:

All groups entrust *the body, treated like a kind of memory*, with their most precious possessions, and the use made of the suffering inflicted on the body by rites of initiation ... is

understandable if one realizes ... that people's adherence to an institution is directly proportional to the severity and painfulness of the rites of initiation.

(p. 123; emphasis added)

If the poet-narrator's body engaged with its own initiation reflects a kind of cultural memory, then Keats places a bodily memory directly beside—and makes it subject to—Moneta, the figure of culture's discursive memory. As the container of legitimating knowledge, or as the embodiment of cultural capital, Moneta subjects the poet's body to pain, while the poet imagines that she converts that loss into his symbolic gain. As the figure of Memory suggests, such violence is unforgettable. The poet-narrator finds himself in a compromising position: his vulnerable, hypersensitive body remembers itself by its denigration; its self-betrayal is allied with the sensationless, gigantic body of Moneta. The desires that the poet seems intent on chastising becomes, paradoxically, constitutive of the very thing they supposedly stand in the way of: the legitimation he seeks, what he is proving himself capable of in *The Fall of Hyperion*.

This same contradiction inheres in the substantive inheritance, the things that he imagines come with poetic election. In noticeable contradiction to the physical sensuality and transformative pleasures of the deification act, what Apollo receives is memory, not as a lived experience but as already-written history: the “names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions, / Majesties, sovran voices, agonies, / Creations and destroyings ...” (*Hyperion*, III, ll. 114-16). The impersonal content of Apollo's inheritance, the undifferentiated list, betrays desire's specific pleasures in obtaining it. Similarly, in *The Fall of Hyperion*, when the poet-narrator stands before the monument's antique paraphernalia he cannot find any stirring of desire in his inheritance: it is immobilized into things. As he confronts a baffling collection of objects, the universal or collective nature of its ritual content and function overwhelms and excludes him: “All in a mingled heap confus'd there lay / Robes, golden tongs, censer, and chafing dish, / Girdles, and chains, and holy jewelries” (*Fall of Hyperion*, I, ll. 78-80). Whether it is Apollo or the poet-initiate, inheritance entails the cultural effacement of the subject of desire. Like cultural representations of the aristocratic sodomite who collects *objets d'art* and antiquities, the poet appears infertile, incapable of reproducing his image.³⁴

Borrowing from Marx, we could say that when the poet imagines his election, he imagines the heritage inheriting him.³⁵ He will be appropriated by the things that he desires to appropriate. Legitimation will efface his particular experience of desire, yet he will accrue the wealth of culture's most valued signifiers (the robes, golden tongs, censer, etc.). In Romantic texts such as the *Hyperion* fragments, a particular western European discourse of male homosexual identity appears, one that is severely punished for a “desire that dare not speak its name” but rewarded by being entrusted with the guardianship of all that it designates most valuable: its art, music, learning, taste, and refinement, i.e., its symbolic memory.³⁶ The narrator's undesiring response to the contents of inheritance, however, expresses his ambivalence about the legitimation ritual that he stages and the identity that he is to assume. Keats deems culture's “sodomitical” inheritance unpossessable, since it is not the narrator's own. The narrator remains uncommitted, prior to inheritance, in the position where his own illegitimacy may still be willed. As a not-yet poet, he places himself in the position of the immature boy so as to avoid affiliation; in Bourdieu's words he is a “symbolic warder” (p. 217), since he does not yet possess or have any symbolic capital of his own.

The figures of Mnemosyne and Moneta project an initiated poet as their sterile inheritor, the nongenerative repository of their capital. Some critics have emphasized Moneta's maternal nature: the poet-narrator's efforts to see what her brain “enwomb[s],” her voice's approximation at one point to a “mother's,” and his childlike positioning “beneath [her] knees” (*Fall of Hyperion*, I, ll. 277, 250, 181).³⁷ In these moments the poet-narrator suggests a mother figure (and even the longing for a pact between mother and son, one capable of resisting paternal power).³⁸ Yet this fantasy is barely sustained. Moneta (or Mnemosyne) rarely suggests female sexuality—she is oddly disembodied, referred to repeatedly as a voice, shade, and shadow; her physicality is denied, being immobile, unfeeling statuary; and the maternal gaze is replaced by eyes that blankly refuse to

recognize the poet. She most closely resembles Minerva, the virgin goddess born out of the forehead of her father, Jupiter; and like Minerva, Moneta/Mnemosyne possesses a “reproductive” capacity that is as abstract or metaphorical as her allegorical status suggests: contained in her brain, aligned with the existing cultural order, and closer to conventional metaphors of male (poetic) generation.³⁹ If the poet-narrator seeks to identify with a mother in order to refuse the paternal legacy, then Moneta (or Mnemosyne) does not answer that need. His act of seeing into her brain puts him in the position of being able to survey and internalize a history that does not rewrite the patriarchal order but rather reinscribes it as collective memory and the source of poetry.⁴⁰

What these figures finally do, however, is project the poet beyond the faultline of patriarchal humiliation. These asexualized feminine figures emerge as Apollo's and the poet-narrator's future. They ultimately gesture past the sadomasochistic fantasy of male intersubjectivity and homoerotic/homosocial bonding to a state of affective purity, where physicality and sexuality no longer feel out the issue of election. These depersonalized women, who refrain from physical contact with the poet, become a kind of alter ego for the effeminate man forced to give up the particularity and mobility of his desire. If elected, he lands in their place: temporally marginal, affectively distant, and with a subjectivity whose qualities signal an affinity with the museum. The sensory, painful staging leads to or implies this other place, yet the poet-narrator, breaking off the narrative, declines to inhabit it.

What the poet-narrator has claimed, however ambivalently, is an engagement with the dynamic that leads to this impasse, a dynamic that becomes the matter of repetition. Poetry's genealogy is subject to a compulsion to reproduce itself substantively; its contents are the plurals of Mnemosyne's lesson or the temple's antiquarian objects, making history look like sheer, indifferent accumulation. This *material* repetition gives way to a *formal* drive for repetition: to the structuring of its fantasy. The uncanniness of the spectator's experience lies not only in the subject matter to be inherited but also in his awareness of the “again and again” of that process: in other words, with an awareness of its compulsive nature.⁴¹ The Titans' reemergence at the end of *The Fall of Hyperion* propels a conclusive breaking off. The fragment does not resolve, but rather it symbolically rejects Apollo's and the poet-narrator's Gothic legacy.

In opposition to a transhistorical epic of mastery, of the transmission of an inheritance, the narrative impulse in the *Hyperion* fragments blocks succession and conclusion. Whether as homoerotic desire or as its sublimation into a disciplinary regimen, Keats offers a mythologized cultural contract whose non-linear, repetitive energies align it closely with the Gothic. And just as that contract invariably injures an effeminized male body, so it also invariably calls it forth. The poet-narrator's possibilities for identification fail to lead to mastery: the accession to a self-contained, stabilized masculinity able to transform the cultural contract. The specter of homoeroticism returns as the offer and refusal of the masculinizing epic of inheritance and succession, preserving the pleasures and punishments of effeminacy. At the expense of a possible and legitimate conclusion, the interminable fictions of the Gothic intrude as Keats's incomplete manuscript of election.

Notes

1. See Marjorie Levinson, *The Romantic Fragment Poem: A Critique of a Form* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1986); and John Whale, “Sacred Objects and the Sublime Ruins of Art,” in *Beyond Romanticism: New Approaches to Texts and Contexts, 1780-1832*, ed. Stephen Copley and John Whale (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 236. Marlon B. Ross situates Keats's fragmented discourse within larger issues of cultural politics (the capacity to perform “the discursive rituals of his culture”) and the individual's power over his own discourse (see “Beyond the Fragmented Word: Keats at the Limits of Patrilineal Language,” in *Out of Bounds: Male Writers and Gender[ed] Criticism*, ed. Laura Claridge and Elizabeth Langland [Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1990], pp. 110-31). In a more dialectical reading, Adrienne Donald contends that, within Romanticism, the

- surest sign of cultural centrality is to be situated on the margins (see “Coming out of the Canon: Sadomasochism, Male Homoeroticism, Romanticism,” *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 3 [1989], 239-52). Thomas McFarland also sees the fragment as a form that is intentionally chosen, but one that transcends “forms of fragmentation,” i.e., the consciousness of fragmentation and the poetic expression of that consciousness (see *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Modalities of Fragmentation* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981]). Edward Bostetter, rejecting the notion of Keats's fragments as either intentional or as mastery, sees them as the recognition of his inability to control a poetry that suggests wholeness (see *The Romantic Ventriloquists*, rev. ed. [Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1975]). Within Romanticism, critical work on poetic election began with Walter Jackson Bate's biography *John Keats* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1963), and his *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972). Bate presents an image of Keats attempting in the *Hyperion* fragments to negotiate the inherited literary tradition and his place in it, which Harold Bloom's oedipal model of literary history further elaborates as Keats's difficulty with writing epic after Milton (see Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973]). The question of Keats's ability or failure (deliberate or not) to master the epic form—specifically in the *Hyperion* fragments—becomes the vexed question of his status as a poet.
2. For an analysis of the social and socializing intersection of language, power, and politics, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1991).
 3. See Ross, pp. 110-11. Both Levinson and Ross note in their discussions that this notion of poetic maturation is figuratively aligned with physical maturation; when Keats becomes a poet, he will have become a man. I argue instead that Keats undoes this equivalence in the *Hyperion* fragments and rewrites poetic maturity as the refusal to assume a “mature” masculinity.
 4. See Bate, *The Burden of the Past*. Bloom discusses Keats's questioning of Milton and Wordsworth (and thereby himself) in *The Anxiety of Influence*, pp. 126-28; and Carl Plasa argues that Keats's relation to Milton in *Hyperion* Books I and II amounts to a repossession or revision of the tradition (Keats fills Miltonic language with himself as Satan does the serpent). In Book III Keats evades or represses the Miltonic influence, and his failed quest for an autonomous subjectivity is charted as the movement from a dialogue with Milton to a radical discontinuity (see Carl Plasa, “Revision and Repression in Keats's *Hyperion*: ‘Pure Creations of the Poet's Brain’,” *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 44 [1995], 117-46). Karen Swann reads “La Belle Dame sans merci” (1819) as an allegory for Keats's ambivalent initiation into a community of male poets (see “Harassing the Muse,” in *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. Anne K. Mellor [Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1988], pp. 81-92).
 5. “Effeminacy” has a rich array of meanings in the long eighteenth century. I use the term to signal, first, an indulgence of sensation, concern for elegance and refinement, and a desire to “live in a luxurious, endless dream,” as William Hazlitt defines it (see “On Effeminacy of Character,” in *Table-Talk: or, Original Essays*, in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt in Twenty-One Volumes: Centenary Edition*, ed. P. P. Howe [1931; rpt. London: Frank Cass and Co., 1967], VIII, 249). Second, the term signals the absence of an autonomous and agential self in men, as discussed by Anne K. Mellor in *Romanticism and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1993). And third, it signals the adoption of a passive sexual role, since “active and passive [sexual] roles were equated [in the eighteenth century] with masculine and feminine roles” (Theo van der Meer, “Sodomy and the Pursuit of a Third Sex in the Early Modern Period,” in *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*, ed. Gilbert Herdt [New York: Zone Books, 1994], p. 162).
 6. John Keats, *Hyperion: A Fragment*, in *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Jack Stillinger [Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1978], p. 334; Book I, ll. 169-76. All further references to both *Hyperion: A Fragment* (pp. 329-56) and *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* (pp. 478-91) are to this edition and are included in the text by Book or Canto and line numbers.

7. The “first” English Gothic novel, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), also features a gigantic, if campy, intrusion of the epic past—the enormous helmet of the paternal ancestor—into the diminished space of the present.
8. Robert Gittings notes Keats's references to the landscapes of Radcliffe and of William Beckford's Gothic-Oriental novel *Vathek* (1786) as they influence the settings of the *Hyperion* fragments (see Gittings, *John Keats* [London: Heinemann, 1968], pp. 255-56).
9. Massé's *In the Name of Love: Women, Masochism and the Gothic* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1992) studies the centrality of sadomasochism to Gothic novels and the alignment of its positions with cultural and fictional expectations about heterosexual gender roles for women. According to Massé, the Gothic sets up a fantasy of paternal omnipotence to which the “normal” woman responds passively, disavowing her desires in response to the man's. Sadomasochism, with its hierarchical positions and opportunities for shifting gender and sexual identifications, seems to be the norm in Keatsian poetry, which itself embodies a norm of blurred gender.
10. Three of the best-known examples occur in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797), and Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820).
11. Introduction to Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, ed. Chard (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), p. xvii. Steven Bruhm argues that Gothic representations of torture allowed the British reading public the fantasy of an impermeable English body (see *Gothic Bodies: The Politics of Pain in Romantic Fiction* [Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1994]).
12. Bruhm argues that Romanticism foregrounds this contradictory relation in its recurring representations of being both within and outside the pained object, and thereby processes the Gothic violence it represents by adopting the transcendent consciousness of the spectator (see *Gothic Bodies*, pp. xvi, xx).
13. When Keats represents the hierarchical relations between men that govern poetic election in the *Hyperion* fragments, he does not maintain a hard and fast demarcation between the homosocial and the homoerotic. This is not simply because male passivity is sometimes eroticized, but, more broadly, because of the Gothic subtext that Keats incorporates into the epic narrative. In writers of the Gothic such as Matthew Lewis, Thomas Beddoes, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, representations of gender and sexual transgression, especially by men, are the norm rather than the exception. Further, the predominant male writers of the genre were publicly known or rumored to be homosexuals, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick points out in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1985). Susan J. Wolfson examines the extent to which Keats's effeminacy and effeminate style became a way for male and female writers and readers to define changing norms of masculinity and a masculine style in the last two centuries (see “Feminizing Keats,” in *Critical Essays on John Keats*, ed. Hermione de Almeida [Boston: G. K. Hall, 1990], pp. 317-56; and “Keats and the Manhood of the Poet,” *European Romantic Review*, 6 [1995], 1-37).
14. Charles Cowden Clarke wrote in 1846 that Keats's “uncommon familiarity ... with the Greek mythology ... is to be traced to his reading Lemprière's Classical Dicty Tooke's Pantheon, Spence's Polymetis abridged for schools; and latterly Chapman's Homer” (Clarke, “A Few Memoranda of the Early Life of John Keats,” in *The Keats Circle: Letters and Papers and More Letters and Poems of the Keats Circle*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2d ed., 2 vols. [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965], II, 147-48).
15. Oceanus's historicized rationalization and Clymene's aestheticization of power are not necessarily identical to Keats's perspective; what they respond to and find compelling—as Keats does, I would argue—is power in its sublimated, symbolic guises.
16. In relation to the *Hyperion* fragments, Hazlitt's essay on Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* and his comments on the Elgin Marbles are telling. Writing on *Coriolanus*, Hazlitt draws an analogy between the rhetoric of power and the rhetoric of poetry: “The language of poetry naturally falls in with the language of power. ... The principle of poetry is a very anti-levelling principle. It aims at effect, it exists by contrast. ... It is every thing by excess. ... It puts ... might before right. ... The insolence of power is stronger than the plea of necessity. The tame submission to usurped authority or even the

- natural resistance to it has nothing to excite or flatter the imagination: it is the assumption of a right to insult or oppress others that carries an imposing air of superiority with it. We had rather be the oppressor than the oppressed” (Hazlitt, “Characters of Shakespeare's Plays,” in *Complete Works*, IV, 214-15). If Keats is in agreement with Hazlitt, as his quoting of Hazlitt's defense of this essay in a 13 March 1819 letter to his brother George suggests (see *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Maurice Buxton Forman, 2 vols. [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1931], II, 330-33), then it provides additional support for reading *Hyperion* anti-sympathetically (i.e., Keats is not siding with the Titans' “tamed submission” but rather is fascinated with the Olympians' “imposing air of superiority”). On the Elgin Marbles, Hazlitt says that “they seem to have no sympathy with us” (“Lectures on the English Poets,” in *Complete Works*, V, 11). David Bromwich quotes this passage and, writing of Hazlitt's influence on Keats, adds that they are “instances of power rather than sympathy: they are a kind of Coriolanus among art objects” (Bromwich, “Keats,” in *Critical Essays on John Keats*, pp. 248-49).
17. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes: “Of all the Gothic conventions dealing with the sudden, mysterious, seemingly arbitrary, but massive inaccessibility of those things that should normally be most accessible, the difficulty the story has in getting itself told is of the most obvious structural significance. This difficulty occurs at every level of the novels” (*The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* [New York: Methuen, 1986], pp. 13-14).
 18. I want to thank Claudia Brodsky Lacour for calling my attention to the idea of gratuitous language in *Hyperion*, as well as to its presence in the opening of Keats's “Ode to Psyche”, when Keats implores the goddess Psyche to “pardon that thy secrets should be sung / Even into thine own soft-conched ear” (*Poems*, p. 364; ll. 3-4). Like Thea to Saturn, Keats puts himself into the role of the apologetic speaker whose violation is the telling to his listener, Psyche, what she already knows. As in the *Hyperion* fragments, too, this speech of self-effacement or inaction in *Psyche* is set within a larger context of the questioning of authorial agency.
 19. In her reading of the Gothic, April Alliston discusses the protagonist's crisis as the dilemma of how to alter inherited familial history (see *Virtue's Faults: Correspondences in Eighteenth-Century British and French Women's Fiction* [Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996]).
 20. This expression comes from Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985).
 21. Hume in his *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) calls attention to the revulsion occasioned by seeing great distress, specifically mentioning the torture of the rack; because it destroys sympathy in the one afflicted and in the onlooker, he concludes, the sight of excessive pain is an anti-socializing experience (see *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978], p. 388). Page duBois asserts that lyricizing the tortured body is an act of dispossession since it then inevitably becomes the inscribed body of the master (see *Torture and Truth* [New York: Routledge, 1991], p. 141). See also Scarry, p. 53.
 22. *Torture* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p. 164.
 23. As mentioned in note 5, Theo van der Meer points out that active and passive sexual roles are equated in the eighteenth century with masculine and feminine roles. Both the so-called sodomites and prosecutors of sodomy referred to the assumption of a passive sexual role as “being used as a woman.” Van der Meer notes that since effeminacy became the hallmark or sign of the sodomite, men became increasingly concerned to avoid effeminacy for fear of being suspected of engaging in “unnatural behavior” (see “Sodomy and the Pursuit of a Third Sex,” pp. 162, 149).
 24. Keats's aesthetic handling of this moment may well reflect increasing pressures to render invisible the attributes of the third gender, or sodomite. Randolph Trumbach points out that during this time men were negatively defined as masculine, i.e., by their avoidance of sex with other men (see “London's Sapphists: From Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture,” in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub [New York: Routledge, 1991], pp. 112-41; and “The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660-1750,” in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr. [New York: New

- American Library, 1989], pp. 129-40).
25. Jeff Nunokawa calls attention to a similar sublimating strategy in Wilde's representation of homoerotic desire (see "Homosexual Desire and the Effacement of the Self in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*," *American Imago*, 49 [1992], 311-21).
 26. Even Keats's friend Leigh Hunt, who stood accused of lacking a proper virility (both by nasty reviewers and by Byron), condemned the deification scene: according to Hunt, "there is something too effeminate and human in the way in which Apollo receives the exaltation which his wisdom is giving him. He weeps and wonders somewhat too fondly" (Leigh Hunt, "The Stories of Lamia, The Pot of Basil, The Eve of St. Agnes, & c. as Told by Mr. Keats," *The Indicator*, 1, no. 44 [9 August 1820], 350).
 27. Clarke indicates Keats's familiarity with Tooke (see note 14). For Apollo's androgynous appearance and the accounts of his erotic affairs with the young men Hyacinth and Cypress, see Andrew Tooke, *The Pantheon, Representing the Fabulous Histories of the Heathen Gods and Most Illustrious Heroes* ..., 6th ed. (1713; rpt. New York: Garland, 1976), pp. 33-41.
 28. See Edelman, "The Sodomite's Tongue and the Bourgeois Body in Eighteenth-Century England," in his *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 127-28. Although Edelman does not draw the connection between Gothic dispossession and sodomy, he describes the terrors of sodomy through a Gothic metaphor, namely, as the fear of speaking "with a foreign tongue" (p. 127). Mellor, limiting her focus to Keats's gender transgression without calling attention to its impact on the representation of erotic desire, notes that "in the medical discourse of the Romantic era ... the absence of an autonomous or agential self in men became a symptom both of gender-crossing and of disease" (*Romanticism and Gender*, p. 174). Michèle Cohen points to increasing cultural anxieties during the eighteenth century centering around British men speaking in a foreign tongue (see *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* [New York: Routledge, 1996], pp. 98-110).
 29. Hazlitt's critique of Keats addresses his poetic shortcomings as those of an effeminate character. He contrasts Keats's representations of the avoidance of pain in favor of an indulgence in pleasure: "Instead of voluntarily embracing pain, or labour, or danger, or death, every sensation must be wound up to the highest pitch of voluptuous refinement, every motion must be grace and elegance; they live in a luxurious, endless dream" ("On Effeminacy of Character," p. 249). It is interesting that in the *Hyperion* fragments Keats outdoes Hazlitt by imbuing pain, labor, danger, and death with "voluptuous" pleasure.
 30. Robert Gittings outlines in detail Keats's debt to Beckford's *Vathek* for the dwelling of Hyperion, the temple in *The Fall of Hyperion*, and the link between the Titans' subterranean recesses and Beckford's halls of the underworld Eblis, where "preadamite" kings suffer eternal torments (see *The Mask of Keats: A Study of Problems* [London: William Heinemann, 1956], pp. 101-4). Of greater significance are the thematic resemblances that Gittings does not mention. Common to both works is the obsession with secret knowledge—Vathek's "insolent curiosity of penetrating the secrets of Heaven," and the narrator of *The Fall of Hyperion*'s aching "to see what things the hollow brain / Behind enwombed" (William Beckford, *Vathek: The English Translation by Samuel Henley [1786] and the French Editions of Lausanne and Paris [1787]* [Delmar, N.Y.: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1972], p. 7; and *Fall of Hyperion*, I, ll. 276-77). The ambition for forbidden knowledge is inseparable in Beckford's novel from sensuality and perverse pleasures, whose mutual fulfillments lead to punishment—a narrative trajectory that Keats also traces as he moves from *Hyperion* to *The Fall of Hyperion*.
 31. Margaret Homans discusses Keats's compensatory wish to assert his own masculine authority when he is faced with women's real and imagined power over him; in the context of my discussion, Keats's response seems to emerge not toward women but toward his own perceived effeminacy (see Homans, "Keats Reading Women, Women Reading Keats," *Studies in Romanticism*, 29 [1990], 368). John Lockhart's scathing review in *Blackwood's Magazine* ridicules Keats as a "bantling," e.g., someone whose lisp suggests an effeminate sensibility (see "The Cockney School of Poetry," *Blackwood's*

- Edinburgh Magazine*, 3 [1818], 519-24); we might say that in *The Fall of Hyperion* Keats is chastising Apollo's tongue by getting rid of the bower scenario's "lisp." Both Wolfson and Nicholas Roe direct attention to the ways that criticism of Keats's poetry during his lifetime frequently coupled the accusation of an effeminate style (his "lispings" poetry) with his "inferior" class, a double-pronged attack evident in the prosecutions of sodomy throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as well (see Wolfson, "Feminizing Keats," p. 320; and Roe, "Keats's Lispering Seditious," *Essays in Criticism*, 42 [1992], 36-55). See also Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, p. 172.
32. Adrienne Donald defines Romanticism's notion of poetic vocation as the broader "alignment of intellectual power and physical [homoeroticized] suffering" ("Coming Out of the Canon," p. 245).
 33. See also Massé, p. 43, for the masochist's role in establishing the hierarchy of authority in the Gothic.
 34. In the eighteenth century Horace Walpole and William Beckford serve as examples where a reputed aristocratic homosexual identity is associated with the exaggerated impulse to collect art and antiquities. This also lies behind *Blackwood's Z's* implications of effeminacy in Hunt's "vulgar" form of this activity (thanks to Susan Wolfson for calling this to my attention). The proximity of the Gothic impinges once again, not only because of Walpole's and Beckford's own novels but also because it is the genre most closely associated at that time with impediments to inheritance and the transmission of symbolic value.
 35. This concept can be found in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology, Part One, with Selections from Parts Two and Three ...*, ed. C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 65.
 36. Jonathan Dollimore writes about this constitutive paradox of male western European homosexual identity: it is regarded as asocial or antisocial and at the same time as representative of the highest civility, as in Freud's "empirical observation that practising homosexuals may be especially civilized" (Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991], p. 193).
 37. See Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender*, p. 185; Ross, "Beyond the Fragmented Word," pp. 128-30; and Barbara A. Schapiro, *The Romantic Mother: Narcissistic Patterns in Romantic Poetry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1983), esp. pp. 55-60.
 38. Such a positioning corresponds to masochism as theorized by Gilles Deleuze in *Coldness and Cruelty* (see *Masochism: An Interpretation of Coldness and Cruelty, Together with the Entire Text of "Venus in Furs," by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch*, trans. Jean McNeil and Aude Willm [New York: G. Braziller, 1971]). Mellor argues that Keats rejects the "male preserve" of poetry by casting Moneta as a feminine/mother figure. Moneta, according to Mellor, represents female reproductive biology as sacred and prior to male poetic creation; Moneta is also the figure who articulates the "cultural meaning [of the reproductive process], the meaning of life itself" (*Romanticism and Gender*, p. 185). What Mellor overlooks is that the site of Moneta's vaunted "reproductive" capacity is her brain, which contains the Olympian hegemony—e.g., she reproduces the dominance of the father's symbolic legacy.
 39. Anne K. Mellor points to the identification of Mnemosyne with Minerva or Athena in eighteenth-century antiquarian history (see "Keats's Face of Moneta: Source and Meaning," *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 25 [1976], 66).
 40. Revealing the intimate connection between pain and mastery as he mounts the stairs or bears the burden of Moneta's vision, the poet-narrator uncovers "the learned misrecognition of injury as nurture ... toward a position of sadism and cultural 'authority'" (Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "A Poem Is Being Written," *Representations*, no. 17 [1987], 125).
 41. Interpreting Freud's notion of the uncanny, Neil Hertz observes that whatever formally reminds us of this compulsion to repeat is perceived as uncanny (see Hertz, "Freud and the Sandman," in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. Josué V. Harari [Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979], p. 301).

Criticism: Brian Goldberg (essay date 2000)

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[In the following essay, Goldberg examines Keats's use of Indian imagery in both *Endymion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*. Goldberg also looks at the prevalence of Indian exoticism in writings of the Romantic period.]

According to recent discussions, Keats's *Hyperion* fragments draw on a historiography of style that opens with the ancient sublimities of Egypt and moves on to the lucent beauties of Greece and Rome. This argument is based largely on descriptions of the Titans which allude to Egyptian sculpture, thus recasting the war with the classical Gods as an "international event" pitting the west against a "prototypical Orient."¹ The identification of the Titans with Egypt is also grounded in Keats's biography; Egyptian sculptures were displayed in the British Museum next to the Elgin Marbles, where the poet viewed and was impressed by both.² However, the Titans' spectacular temples and palaces are not exclusively or even primarily Egyptian. Rather, they participate in the Regency's architectural "exoticism," which included Egyptian and Greek designs but drew on a broader range of eastern styles among which Indian sources were prominent.³ Like the Egyptian, the Indian stood for antiquity and sublimity, for the commercial and imperial domination of the East by Europe, and for a generic thrill related to but separable from these other effects.⁴ Because of British involvement in the subcontinent, the Indian also foregrounded, more clearly than did domestically neutral Egyptian elements, the exotic style's potent but ambiguous status in the culture at large.⁵ Indian designs were pervasive and controversial, and if the discourse surrounding them tended in one way or another to "construct" India as "Other," it remained unclear whether this Other was properly an object of rigorous intellectual inquiry or a source of lucrative cheap thrills.⁶ Meditating on how best to please his audience, Keats had concluded that "what they want is ... sensation," and his descriptions of eastern architecture are significant not because they express a vision of history but because of their visual sensationalism, which poses itself against the anti-pictorial, anti-commercial orthodoxy of the Regency's critical establishment.⁷

The question of description is suggestive for an inquiry into the social elements of literary language and taste because it bears on the fundamental difference between image and word. This difference, which criticism has often emphasized in order to favor the latter over the former, has recently faced a "pictorial turn" in theory. W. J. T. Mitchell, for example, refuses to absorb poetry and painting into a single semiotic but argues that "there is no *essential* difference" between them, and Christopher Collins, surveying research in psychology, concludes that "mental imaging" closely resembles the seeing of the eye, although their physiological and phenomenological differences are also important.⁸ That is, we don't have to pretend to confuse poems with paintings in order to acknowledge that "visual conceptions can be transmitted through the agency of language" and that the pleasures of pictorial language are genuinely visual.⁹ The exclusively linguistic mind is thus a discriminating mind in an entirely social sense. The elite reader, whose interpretive strategies emphasize what is most difficult to do but also what can be naturalized over time, favors the culturally and semiotically allusive over the vulgarly, simply referential.¹⁰ Complex codes of linguistic signification are more difficult to internalize than the skills required by most pictorial strategies, which depend upon a combination of immediate, consensual understanding (a noun stands for a common, if potentially complicated, object) and detail-by-detail reconstruction of significant people, places, or things.¹¹

Conversely, when visual pleasure is generated by written language, not painting or sculpture, it offers to destabilize critical orders based in linguistic authority. As Collins argues, such orders "maintain their own credibility by asseverating the truth of their written messages," but the power of words to produce images is an all-too-vivid reminder of their power to lie.¹² Of course, this is not to say that every act of poetic description is inherently subversive, but that such acts, as well as the rhetoric of evaluation surrounding them, are likely to be bound up in extra-linguistic problems and premises.¹³ Because of local forms of "imperial

anxiety” and the long-standing equation of eastern cultures with deceptive visuality, Regency descriptions of the east demanded particularly to be reined in by structures that moderated, in one way or another, their sensual richness.¹⁴ Yet Keats's own descriptions are anti-institutional, if not entirely democratic. The *Hyperions'* stately blank verse and “naked, Grecian” language may be his attempt to act the gentleman poet instead of the working-class “pet lamb,” but his eastern architectural passages, by virtue of their Indian resonances and their aggressively visual appeal, reject the structures of cultural distinction upon which this stylistic division is based.¹⁵

Keats's earliest significant treatment of Indian material is in *Endymion*. In the final book of that poem, the young shepherd-king meets a displaced Indian maiden who has been seduced away from the banks of the Ganges River by Bacchus and taken on a triumphal march around Egypt, “Abyssinia,” “Tartary,” and India itself.¹⁶ Endymion eventually decides that loving this real, fleshly woman is preferable to continuing his quest for the un-attainable moon-goddess Phoebe, a choice of the Asian subcontinent over Greece that also emphasizes Keats's conventional connotation of the Indian as exotic, desirable, and physically attainable. The plot of the poem is quickly resolved when it is revealed that the “Swan of the Ganges” is Phoebe in disguise:

And as she spake, into her face there came
Light, as reflected from a silver flame:
Her long black hair swelled ampler, in display
Full golden; in her eyes a brighter day
Dawn'd blue and full of love. Aye, he beheld
Phoebe, his passion!

(4.982-87)

Endymion shall have east and west, sense and sensibility, at once; for in the rollicking narrative of *Endymion*, there is always room for these principles to co-exist, or, as the remarkable description of Phoebe's emergence as a literal dawning suggests, at least to succeed each other as part of a single, organic process. The Indian-maid-who-is-not-one is both an eastern counter to the western Phoebe and the corporal origin of the moon's spiritual arrival.

The Indian maid's metamorphosis reflects a central aspect of the Regency's stylistic exoticism: it works best when it is synthesized with the more familiar modes of gothicism and/or neoclassicism. An important architectural analogue is the Prince Regent's Brighton Pavilion, a folly that passed through a number of different stylistic identities before Richard Porden finally established an Indian theme for it by 1815.¹⁷ A twentieth-century critic describes some of the design issues raised by the building:

Porden's Indian style, influenced by George Dance's London Guild-hall of 1788, was in fact only skin deep. [Many details of the building] can be traced back to celebrated Indian buildings ... illustrated in the Daniells' *Oriental Scenery*. Yet the overall proportions are unmistakably classical.

(Gervase Jackson-Stops, in Nash 116)

The Brighton Pavilion riding house was immediately recognizable as an Indian building by contemporaries, but the relatively shallow Indian-ness of its detailing, like Phoebe's disguise, was also part of the point. Pierre Bourdieu notes that the spontaneous recognition of styles is an essential aspect of the aesthetic attitude, and a building like the Royal Pavilion offered ample opportunity for the exercise of that faculty (*Distinction* 50-52). The Maid and her transformation are not simply a stylish Indian flourish but a shrewd metaphor for the work of exoticism: Indian exterior and classical deep structure redeem each other in the eye of the genteel, discriminating Regency beholder, whose appreciation of classical lines grounds his apprehension of the good while his recognition of the oriental indicates his alertness to the fanciful and new.

Exotic architecture had at its core an ongoing project in which studies of material artifacts were translated into a variety of different forms. The linguistic inquiry that produced Sir William Jones's late-eighteenth-century versions of Sanskrit was succeeded, in the eighteen-teens and -twenties, by “analytical” treatments of Indian and Egyptian buildings.¹⁸ The Indian revival in British architecture was a manifestation of this study, and although the movement itself was mainly sponsored by connoisseurs, the images associated with it circulated widely. Thomas and William Daniell, for example, following the lead of the artist William Hodges, published a very successful series of aquatints of Indian buildings throughout the period; they also regularly exhibited oils and watercolors at the Royal Academy and the British Institution, making Indian architecture familiar to attendants of London's galleries (Conner 119). Printed images were directly related to built realizations: a number of English country houses drew on engravings or aquatints to recapture the detailing of Indian structures that their owners, returned British nabobs, had seen first-hand.¹⁹ As images of artifacts were displayed, reproduced, and recirculated, absolute fidelity to Indian originals was sometimes abandoned, and the purely reproductive aspects of the project were replaced by an emphasis on novelty or “fancy.” Indian architecture is a two-sided tradition, and this distinction could also be lost on British audiences. The designs adopted for buildings in England drew on symmetrical Mughal work, but artists often illustrated, and writers often commented on, Hindu traditions that Regency audiences knew best from representations of the cave temples at Elephanta and Ellora.²⁰ Thomas Hope's famous “Indian Room” mingled these styles freely, and exhibitions at East India House also ranged across Mughal and Hindu material.²¹

In England, evaluative discussions of Indian culture were always implicated in the post-Hastings debate, and while Indian images received serious attention from scholars, they were never treated as entirely legitimate by British audiences at large. Utilitarian and evangelical critics had clear-cut political reasons for denigrating Hindu and Mughal achievements, and their attitudes were shared by an aesthetically conservative critical establishment.²² Describing the Brighton Pavilion in 1819, the *Monthly Magazine* derided India, the Prince Regent, and the exotic style at once, archly observing that the Regent “deemed it respectful to his Indian dependencies to exhibit a palace in conformity with their notions of architectural perfection” (quoted in Head 55). In poetry, Robert Southey's *The Curse of Kehama* (1810; fourth edition, 1818), its machinery drawn from Hindu materials, was characterized as “absurd,” and Thomas Moore's vastly successful *Lalla Rookh*, a Persian/Indian epic for which he received 3000 pounds in 1817, was dismissed as light.²³ On the other hand, 1817 was also the year James Mill published his *History of British India*, a work dedicated to insulting Indian culture in the face of what its author perceived as a widespread over-appreciation of it.²⁴ Despite critical resistance, the taste remained suited to those who profited directly from imperial trade, and, in its more diffuse form, to the larger group that could afford to evince an entirely neutral, deeply but not pedantically informed, appreciation of visual novelty.

Moore's *Lalla Rookh* and Southey's *Kehama* exploited Indian exoticism in the poetic marketplace, but if the sellability of eastern spectacle was apparent, the acts of description central to this mode were troublesome. Not only did Southey and Moore confront the questionable status of Indian representation. They also ran afoul of the critical establishment's post-Burkean anti-imagism, a bias that was in effect even as, paradoxically, the proper constitution of vivid poetic imagery was also under discussion.²⁵ Their specific labor was thus to establish an appropriate style for a popular but also (they hoped) intellectually respectable mode.²⁶ In doing so, they helped create the universe of formal possibilities against which *The Fall of Hyperion's* descriptive passages would define themselves.

Southey and Moore were not alone in their efforts to write poetry that negotiated the potential vulgarities of eastern description. Walter Scott's account of Byron's best-selling Levantine tales focuses on Byron's personal credibility and his verse's lack of concrete detail in order to distinguish Byronic picture-making from the crass mistakes of various anonymous pretenders:

There should be, even in poetical description, that *keeping* and *perspective* which is demanded in the sister art of painting, and which alone can render the scenes presented by

either distinct, clear, and intelligible. ... Thus, when a poet deals in materials of which he is not fully master, he is obliged, at the risk of outraging both taste and nature, to produce as frequently, and detain before the reader as long as possible, those distinctive marks by which he means to impress him with the reality of the story; and the outrage is committed in vain; for it is not enough for the representation of an eastern landscape, that the foreground should be encumbered with turbans and sabres, and the fantastic architecture of the kiosk or the mosque, if the distance be not marked by those slight but discriminating touches which mark the reality of the scene ... as in the following exquisite picture taken from one of the poems before us.²⁷

Scott goes on to quote Byron's "The Dream":

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Boy was sprung to manhood: in the wilds
Of fiery climes he made himself a home,
And his Soul drank their sunbeams; he was girt
With strange and dusky aspects; he was not
Himself like what he had been; on the sea
And on the shore he was a wanderer;
There was a mass of many images
Crowded like waves upon me, but he was
A part of all; and in the last he lay
Reposing from the noontide sultriness,
Couch'd among fallen columns, in the shade
Of ruin'd walls that had survived the names
Of those who rear'd them; by his sleeping side
Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds
Were fasten'd near a fountain; and a man
Clad in flowing garb did watch the while,
While many of his tribe slumber'd around:
And they were canopied by the blue sky,
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
That God alone was to be seen in Heaven. (28)

Byron's "Eastern picture" is exemplary, according to Scott, because "no part of it is so dwelt upon or laboured as to obscure the principal figure" (90). Its opening mass of undefined "images," which always contain the Boy as a "part," acts as a verse paraphrase of Scott's argument about perspective. Yet what is really striking about Byron's passage is not the poet's ability to subordinate authenticating details to thematically industrious wholes but his overall rejection of the "encumbrance" of careful, detailed description. The passage is arranged and indemnified by a masterly I whose focus on the central figure is undisturbed by merely ornamental detail. Byron's aristocratic "mastery" of the materials other poets handle clumsily finally lies not only in his skill but in Scott's (or our own) understanding that Byron, himself, has travelled in "the east," so that we can accept his generic and causal references to "fallen columns," "ruin'd walls," "camels," "steeds," a "fountain" and "a man in flowing garb" as all we need to know about the scene. Like Porden's dome, Byron's writing presents its reader with oriental subject-matter familiarly redeemed by classical proportions and, significantly, by the trustworthiness of the poet himself.

Southey and Moore might not be Scott's unnamed, unmasterful rival poets—Scott tactfully praises Southey's "erudition," and Moore is a friend of Scott and Byron both—but the strategies they use to describe India's often-represented, rarely witnessed landscape differ from the techniques Scott endorses in Byron. Scott's descriptive ideal is a poetic dream in which a reader's sense of encountering language, not vision, virtually disappears. His praise of clarity and intelligibility, as opposed to the "outrageous" vanity of the unqualified eastern fabulator, amounts to an emphasis on an aristocratic ease of access in which a reader can vicariously participate. This readerly ease is in turn dependent on a tactical lack of intellectual strain on the part of reader and writer both. One of the problems of vulgar eastern narrative is that in the absence of commonly picturable

referents its nouns can stand only for themselves; Byron cannot specify what species of “camel” or what order of “column” he means to describe because his vocabulary must not become too technical and interfere with the readerly dream. However, although Southey and Moore also depend on the generation of poetic dreams, they inflect those dreams with an exoticism that exceeds the simply visual. Despite appearances, the “distinction” and “impressiveness” of their descriptions (to borrow Scott’s vocabulary) have little to do with establishing “the reality” of their poems. Moore was happy to repeat the claim, by an old Indian hand, that *Lalla Rookh* demonstrated “reading over D’Herbelot is as good as riding on the back of a camel,” and Southey offsets his prefatory contention that Kehama’s Hindu references should be self-explanatory by including a handful of footnotes.²⁹ Yet because the second-hand writing thus produced, despite Scott’s formal critique and the authors’ own apologetics, is so studiously self-referential, its documentation cannot be mistaken as the source of any exacting truth claim. These poems affirm most strenuously that they affirm nothing, and in this they distinguish themselves from their scholarly sources and from Byronic self-marketing.

The association of eastern cultures with despotic visuality is central to this self-negation, which in turn acknowledges and reinforces the simply commercial, illegitimate status of poetic description; the equation of spectacle with the orient deprives the visual itself of intellectual legitimacy.³⁰ *The Curse of Kehama* begins with the vast, torch-lit funeral of Kehama’s son Arvalan, and *Lalla Rookh* opens with a marriage procession out of Delhi. *Kehama*’s opening demonstrates the poem’s concern with visuality and delusion:

Midnight, and yet no eye
Through all the Imperial City closed in
sleep!
With light that seems to kindle the red
sky,
Her myriads swarming through the
crowded ways!
Master and slave, old age and infancy,
All, all abroad to gaze.

(118)

And, in prose, the second paragraph of *Lalla Rookh*’s introduction:

The day of Lalla Rookh’s departure from Delhi was as splendid as sunshine and pageantry could make it. The Bazaars and baths were all covered with the richest tapestry; hundreds of gilded barges upon the Jumna floated with their banners shining in the water; while through the streets troops of beautiful children went strewing the most delicious flowers around, as in that Persian festival called the Scattering of the Roses, till every part of the city was as fragrant as if a caravan of musk from Khoten had passed through it. The Princess, having taken leave of her kind father, who at parting hung a cornelian of Yemen around her neck, on which was inscribed a verse from the Koran ... meekly ascended the palankeen prepared for her; and, while Aurungzebe stood to take a last look from his balcony, the procession moved slowly on the road to Lahore.³¹

Southey’s characters, of whatever station, are united by their collective “gaze,” and Moore’s “splend[our]” and “pageantry” are an appeal to his fictional viewers as well as to his real readers. But the mesmerized Indian crowd is not meant to be a model for the Regency audience’s self-imaginings. While *Kehama* and *Lalla Rookh* are built to dazzle, the difficulty or obscurity of the Indian artifact continues to remind at least some readers that they are reading and that this self-consciousness is the mark of a special, literally un-common, taste. Moore in particular punctuates his eastern spectacle with non-imagistic, and, it may be argued, non-sensual details, introducing “musk[s] from Khoten” and “cornelian[s] from Yemen” that presumably are valuable for their geographical novelty and not their concrete evocativeness. Both poems’ spectacular architectural

set-pieces replicate this mixed strategy: in *Kehama*, for example, the Diamond City of Padalon's "sea of flame," spanned by "a single rib of steel / Keen as the edge of keenest scymitar" is smoothly, characteristically pictorial (197); the catalogue of locations to be conquered by its prisoners—"Hemakoot," "Meru-Mount," "Indra's Swerga-Bowers"—is, like the "scymitar," exotically self-announcing (198). For Southey and Moore, scholarship redeems subject-matter not because it renders visual representations credible but because it lends the poems' visuality the legitimacy of a linguistic order while extensive description confirms that legitimacy by representing its negative. Scott's "dream" theories are not absurd or irrelevant, although his evaluative criteria can never be self-evident or self-sufficient. Moore's opening vista is highly pictureable and therefore successful, even for the unfortunate Regency gentleman who doesn't know exactly what a "palankeen" is. Still, the gentleman who does know gets a bonus, and in the works of Southey and Moore visual pleasure and stylish knowledge are equally redeemable and mutually containing.

Keats's involvement with the Indian and related exotic styles reflects the heterogeneous character of the Regency's constructions. The Indian maid's climactic role in *Endymion* has already been remarked; at the other end of his career, Keats's final long work, *The Jealousies*, presents the faery Emperor Elfinan of "midmost Ind" in a satire that also treats the eastern as both popular and unserious. Predictably, Keats himself had some direct contact with the Indian trade. For a time, he considered work on an East Indian ship as an alternative to being a poet, a plan which may have spurred a visit to the East India House's collection of artifacts.³² Further, his close friend Charles Brown was independent by virtue of his brother's Indian fortune, and Brown was another source of insight into the appeal of eastern spectacle. In a revealing episode, which took place during Keats's extended residence in Brown's home, Brown had suggested including an elephant into *Otho the Great* for "dramatic effect." While Keats eventually rejected the idea of transplanting an Asian animal to medieval Germany, he did insert a disguised Arab prince into his drama. "If we get on in [drama] as well as we do in painting," Keats writes at the time, "we shall by next winter crush the Reviews and the Royal Academy," and he is not only joking when he daydreams out loud about the violent market-based overthrow of the critical establishment.³³ Keats's Indian maneuvers, vocational and aesthetic, cannot easily be disentangled from the poems we now recognize as his more serious work. Brown would later suggest that Keats had written *The Fall of Hyperion* at the same time as he composed his Indian satire, and while subsequent editors have doubted this claim, it is significant that the bulk of Keats's poetry, famously produced over little more than a year, is bracketed by *Endymion* and *The Jealousies* (see Stillinger 481-83). If Keats's classicism bears the burden of his reflections on history, his exoticism pertains to his present and to his living, breathing audience.

Bourdieu identifies the "double refusal" of "pure art" that eschews the commercial success of romance and the ethical or political meaningfulness of realism, but in Keats's eastern descriptions we find a surprising form of double acceptance. His Asiatic buildings gesture toward a genteel, paying audience, while *The Fall's* exploration of visuality attempts to recast access to visual pleasure as the source of a more generalized, more nearly democratic congruence of writer and reader (Bourdieu, *Rules of Art* 105). Sensitive to the precedents of Byron, Southey, and Moore, Keats positions himself and his style according to a rigorous logic of differentiation. His imaginative eclecticism distinguishes his work from Byron's, and his principled consideration of the importance of actual sight inverts the linguistic protocols endorsed by Moore and Southey. Again, the question of description is the focus of an ongoing struggle over style and taste. "Lord Byron cuts a figure—but he is not figurative," Keats observes, and "[Byron] describes what he sees—I describe what I imagine—Mine is the hardest task."³⁴ Byron's dependence on his own ease robs his poetic labor of its ability to generate value, and Keats conceives of this as an opposition between mere description and description which follows, to use Keats's term, "imagination." Keats does adopt a Byronic, lexical familiarity in describing sights nobody has actually seen, however, and his appeal to the power of the exotic is distinct from Southey and Moore's negations because it embraces a fabricating visual imagination and does not flinch at the possibility that pure vision may occlude language. Keats's speaker-poet confronts the pleasures of spectacle, and learns that what is seen or imagined may sometimes be more profound and saving than what is narrated, documented, or explained. This lesson contradicts the principles of distinction

enunciated variously by the other poets, but it is no less intended for a wide audience for whom exoticism had its accustomed appeal.³⁵

Southey and Moore had been adept at taking advantage of established attitudes toward description and the east, but *The Fall of Hyperion* begins with a wholesale reorganization of writers and readers around the question of visual experience:

Fanatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave
A paradise for a sect; the savage too
From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
Guesses at heaven; pity these have not
Trac'd upon vellum or wild Indian leaf
The shadows of melodious utterance.
But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die;
For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,
With the fine spell of words alone can save
Imagination from the sable charm
And dumb enchantment. Who alive can say
"Thou art no poet; may'st not tell thy dreams"?
Since every man whose soul is not a clod
Hath visions, and would speak, if he had lov'd
And been well nurtur'd in his mother tongue.
Whether the dream now purposed to rehearse
Be poet's or fanatic's will be known
When this warm scribe my hand is in the grave.

(1.1-18)

The savage/fanatic is endemically susceptible to the lure of vision but incapable of retrieving vision into language. Yet the function of language, according to this passage, must finally be to reproduce and retransmit vision, so that, in the words of one critic, "the text of *The Fall of Hyperion* ... refuses the hierarchical superiority of language over dreams or visions."³⁶ This refusal is a historical as well as a figural phenomenon, for it raises again the question of poet and audience. Can fanatic visions ever constitute poetry? and if they are shared by writer and reader, whose visions are they? Keats's allusion to being "nurtur'd in a mother's tongue" is pointed, for the Cockney School to which he supposedly belonged was famously mocked for writing about classical topics without the appropriate education. (The widely cited attack by Lockhart which damns his "sickly fancy" also condemns the way he "profane[s] and vulgarizes every [classical] association.")³⁷ Evaluation is thus intimately related to the question of visual or visionary experience because the sharing of visions potentially transcends education and culture, with a simpler form of literacy pragmatically assumed.³⁸ Posterity may still choose among dreamers and poets, but acts of writing (and reading) are, at least, delivered from the corrosive and interested judgment of the reviews and referred to a wider body of auditors.

Keats's attention to the "savage" Indian in the induction strikes a note of temporal and geographical distancing, consistent to both fragments, that signals the presence of the eastern style. The first *Hyperion* explicitly embraces *Endymion*'s syncretism in its mingling of various ancient cultures; Thea and Hyperion are described in terms drawn from Egyptian art, and, in a more wide-ranging adaptation of eighteenth-century theories of historical progress, Asia predicts her own ascent after the fall of the Titans:

More thought than woe was in her dusky face,
For she was prophesying of her glory;
And in her wide imagination stood
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.

(2.56-60)

In *The Fall*, some of Keats's eastern material is excised: Hyperion's association with the Egyptian king Memnon occurs outside of *The Fall*'s truncated narrative, as does Asia's prophecy, and the characterization of Thea as a “sphinx” has been removed from a description which remains otherwise intact. It may be that some of these revisions are aimed at muting the presence of an undigested, potentially distracting exoticism that Keats himself sensed as vulgar. However, the Regency's orientalism remains a central stylistic characteristic of *The Fall*, even if it is sometimes manifested antithetically or obliquely.

While the most obvious use of exotic architecture in *The Fall* is Hyperion's fiery, many-layered palace—a scene to which I shall return—exotic topics proliferate throughout. The “parent” of the speaker's “theme” is a draught stronger than any of eastern or gothic vintage:

No Asian poppy, nor elixir fine
Of the soon fading jealous caliphate;
No poison gendered in close monkish cell
.....Could so have rapt unwilling life away.

(1.47-51)

The metaphor is telling, for in reaching after a language of powerful dazzlement and neurological tyranny (the potion is “domineering” [1.54] and will result in visions), Keats combines the gothic and the oriental into a single inverted simile. As the subsequent narrative makes clear, this negation does not simply mark the draught as not-gothic and not-eastern. Rather, the potion's naming remains an imaginative gesture that reaches backwards beyond gothic and eastern periods and places, to a pre-historic moment that precedes the differentiation of these original cultures but also (as in Asia's prophecy) looks forward to them. More important, the figure has a synchronic element, collapsing as it does two closely related visual styles, the gothic and the oriental, from the Regency's exotic constellation.

The proto-Asian, proto-gothic draught tyrannizes the speaker and temporarily deprives him of consciousness, but exoticism quickly becomes a source of vitality in the poem. After the speaker comes to, a long description of Moneta's temple to Saturn renews the momentum of the narrative. The goddess Moneta's Roman origins and the seemingly Greco-Roman outlines of her fane have encouraged most critics to mark this giant building as straightforwardly classical.³⁹ However, the “mingled” accoutrements of various religions that the speaker sees here (1.78), as well as the temple's thematic links to the “vale of soul-making” Keats believed relevant to “Christian, Zoroastrian, and Hindoo schemes of redemption,” are important reminders that Keats's east-looking syncretism is a notable constituent of the passage.⁴⁰ My suggestion is that this syncretism derives its force from the Regency's exotic style as much as from a synthetic vision of history:

I look'd around upon the carved sides
Of an old sanctuary with roof august,
Builded so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds
Might spread beneath, as o'er the stairs of heaven;
So old the place was, I remembered none
The like upon the earth; what I had seen
Of grey cathedrals, buttress'd walls, rent towers,
The superannuations of sunk realms,
Of nature's rocks toil'd hard in waves and winds,
Seem'd but the faulture of decrepit things
To that eternal domed monument.

(1.61-80)

Keats's treatment combines an educated Englishman's knowledge of architectural theory with an acute sensitivity to the eastern artifact. Asia's prophecy in the first *Hyperion* does not only reiterate the narrative of

eastern cultures as original civilizations. With its river banks and “rival,” “palm-shaded fanes,” it also reproduces a motif of the Indian print in which Hindu and Mughal buildings were juxtaposed for picturesque effect. More subtly, the “carved sides” of this structure, otherwise undelineated, might suggest a richly decorated Hindu temple as readily as a Roman one, and the dome itself, a characteristic Islamic as well as a Roman citation in nineteenth-century architecture, is another eclectic gesture.⁴¹ The speaker's attention to the temple's antique sublimity—it looks older than cathedrals, towers, and caves—is one more potentially Indian reference; British architects had speculated that the ornate designs of the Indian subcontinent were the historical source of European gothicism, or, alternatively, that the traditions had a common origin in a primeval experience of cave-dwelling.⁴² My point is not to relocate the Roman goddess Moneta to a Hindu temple or a Mughal mausoleum (although representations of Ellora and Elephanta are part of the same store of Regency images as Pericles' temples), but to note the overdetermination of ancient domes and carved spaces as signs of an engagement with the exotic style that is mediated by related, classical references. Rather than absorbing the temple's “blend[ing] ... of religious traditions” into an argument about the poem's negation of all religion, this blending should be recognized as an aesthetic tactic of appeal.⁴³

The Regency's architectural exoticism is also manifest in Keats's handling of the structure's sense of space. The effect I allude to combines Piranesian perspectivism and Asian antiquity and is perhaps most familiar in literature from *The Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. De Quincey's dreams of architectural infinity and entrapment (brought on not by looking at prints, to reemphasize the linguistic transmission of visual phenomena, but by having prints of Piranesi's gothic “Dream” described to him by Coleridge) are quickly succeeded by claustrophobic reflections on Asian cultures which explain that he is horrified and awed by Asia's role as the “cradle of the human race,” its “ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate religions,” its antiquity, its fecundity, and the breadth of its empires.⁴⁴ Although De Quincey fears “the Malay” and initially emphasizes his horror of China, it is readily combined with India and Egypt in his visions:

I ran into pagodas, and was fixed for centuries at the summit, or in secret rooms; I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Siva lay in wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris; I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at.

(442)

Other literary analogues for *The Fall's* vast spaces include the caves, temples, and palaces of *Kehama* and *Lalla Rookh*, and one or both of these poems may well be a direct influence on Keats. As I will argue, however, Keats modifies the style's affect, replacing the tyrannies of the described with the liberties of the actually built. The spaciousness of his setting offers the possibility that elaborateness, antiquity, and breadth need not be accompanied by a cruel and suffocating fecundity or hallucinogenic guilt but may enable a humane, popular expansiveness.

The heterogenous orientalism of Keats's style attests to his imaginative freedom in drawing on popular sources—an oneiric license that exceeds Moore and Southey's library-work and Byron's supposed reportage—and their staged appeal to the inner eye foregrounds the poem's attempt to produce a visionary space that a wide audience might share.⁴⁵ The speaker's dialogue with Moneta, in which he attempts to differentiate “poets” from “dreamers” and calls on Apollo to bring death to his contemporary rivals, establishes clearly (and familiarly) enough that this section of the poem is interested in the nature and value of the poetic vocation (1.198-210). My concern is with the aesthetic transactions and understandings suggested by the non-discursive descriptive portions, understandings that are not always congruent with Moneta's claim that “the poet pours out a balm upon the world”:

Turning ... with awe, once more I rais'd

My eyes to fathom the space every way;
The embossed roof, the silent massy range
Of columns north and south, ending in mist
Of nothing, then to eastward, where black gates
Were shut against the sunrise evermore.
Then to the west I look'd, and saw far off
An image, huge of feature as a cloud,
At level of whose feet an altar slept.

(1.81-89)

The speaker positions himself as an observer: no action is as common in this passage as seeing, generally presented in the first person. But Keats's descriptive strategies also bring the unseeable audience into Moneta's fane. The simple panning of the speaker's viewpoint may encourage bodily identification with him—he “turns,” “raises his eyes,” and “looks” to the west—but the passage's “fathom”ing of the temple's depths and insistence on simple but multiple linear perspectives also creates an imaginative space for the audience itself. As picturesque prints offer an invitation to the eye, so this descriptive passage takes advantage of an expansiveness it presents in triplicate: the speaker experiences it, the reader pictures what the speaker sees, and the reader pictures the speaker, seeing. Collins argues that the kind of readerly imaging I here propose, which is in excess of the actual, verbal cues of the text, is potentially “obstructive,” but Keats's induction locates poetry's origin in vision, not lexicon.⁴⁶ It invites readers to explore an organized variety of viewpoints.

In its demand for readerly imaging, the passage also raises a question about space that it transforms into a question about collective apprehension: does “Cartesian perspectivalism” imply a single “world” or a multiplicity of contingent, relative ones?⁴⁷ An advantage poetic space has over painted space (to lapse for a moment into the language of visual/verbal conflict) is that while it can be genuinely picturable, it can also present a coherent series of singular perspectives. Despite its verbal nature, the space of the temple offers itself as “systematic,” not “aggregate,” as pre-existent to the bodies within it while joining them in a system of stable, legible relations.⁴⁸ It may be observed, in this connection, that while the temple is profoundly abandoned, it retains the floorplan of the house of worship designed to focus multiple acts of attention in a single direction. Like De Quincey's pagoda/temple, in which a single subject may act at once as idol, priest, and sacrifice, Moneta's fane is an intimate theater in which audience and player can share, if not exchange, their roles. In contrast to De Quincey's vision, however, this sharing does not threaten but reinforces the fundamental discreteness of the subjects involved. The reader closely follows the speaker's experience, understands (probably) that the speaker is, thematically, a stand-in for the poet, and, in a moment of appreciation which emphasizes both the poem's seductive potential and its excess, Indian referentiality, recognizes and admires the exotic background that the real poet, Keats, has so expertly provided. The rehabilitability or the shared habitability of the divine artifact become figures for the transaction between reader and writer.

Rereading Moneta's temple within eastern idioms may still be said to intensify, not to change, its overt identification with stasis and death, but the sheer visuality of the scene forecloses some of these implications of its Asian references. On one level, Keats is interested in the stasis and negativity connoted by Egypt and (in a different way) by India, but he is also working in the tradition of a lively Regency exoticism that can be read into the silence and solitude of the scene. That is, the eastern register does not only work at the level of its historiographical associations. In reaction to his own suburban Floralism, Keats insists that the exotic and constructed aspects of a contemporary style are active even as the profound stillness of the temple is also emphasized.⁴⁹ One of the achievements of the passage is that, while it contains perhaps the single most dramatically effective sequence in Keats's poetry, the speaker's near-death on the stairway, it also conveys the antinomic nature of time in Moneta's temple.⁵⁰ The speaker may make progress from the stagnant east (foreclosed by “black gates”) to a western scene of revelatory power, but the scene's stylistic invocation of orientalized spectacle encloses this progress within the suspended action of dramatic scene-setting. The effect

of enclosure is enhanced by the information that the black gates of the east “are shut against sunrise evermore,” but while natural process is perpetually arrested, other processes, including the saccadic process of the (readers' and the speaker's) eye, remain vital.

However, while the scene's Asian/Classical visuality, marked particularly by its representation of perspective, generates a stylish and enlivening visual pleasure, its infinite recessions, which stand at the border of the seen and the unseeable and call to mind the repetitions of DeQuincey's hallucination, also threaten simply to reaffirm the terrifying differences of colonial space. This threat leads Keats to his attempted recuperation of visuality itself; as the speaker struggles to understand the conditions of being that account for the temple, its “spatial intransigence” leads him not into a “threadbare and dangerous literalism” but into acts of seeing that reject fear and alterity and define themselves in terms of deep understanding and sympathy.⁵¹ Transported by Moneta to the “shady sadness of a vale,” the speaker undergoes a sensory transformation that has at least the potential to redeem the seductions of vision and the spectacular:

A power within me of enormous ken,
To see as a God sees, and take the depth
Of things as nimbly as the outward eye
Can size and shape pervade.

(1.302-6)

“Sight” is reconceived as the faculty that grasps the relative “depth” of events the poem consistently represents in spatial terms. Nor is it simply the case that Keats has fallen into the trap of describing non-visual experience through the use of visual metaphors. The speaker is genuinely and productively a spectator, seeing as a God sees not only because of his understanding of events but also because of his distance from them, his refusal or inability to “pervade”—that is, to pass through—them. He stands in a relationship to Titanic events that correlates to the reader's view of the speaker, a relationship of shared autonomy in which emotional affect is supplanted by neutral appreciation. The aesthetic recognitions of the reader are this way doubled into an unlooked-for ethical insight into the nature of what Nancy Moore Goslee calls “communal subjectivity.”⁵²

The speaker is not at first able to live on simple spectatorship, but the eye soon becomes an instrument of relief as well as comprehension. Compelled to spend a month looking at the figures of the Titans before they speak to each other, he “prays intense” for death to unburden him, and in order to rescue him from this aesthetic dysphoria, the poem returns to its spectacular idiom. Reader and speaker are treated to the sight of another, even greater building: Hyperion's fiery palace, where sympathy and Asiatic spectacle most nearly converge. The speaker/spectator is eased into the sight of the palace by a bridging dialogue. The palace is first described to him by Moneta in language that is for the most part adapted from *Hyperion*—but, “[t]hither we tend,” she finally announces, and the speaker reports that “Now in a clear light I stood / Relieved from the dusky vale” (2.49-50). In this sequence, the distinctions among descriptive language, reported speech, and the actually seen are dissolved; the enwombed sights of Moneta's skull are literally be-held by the speaker, and Moneta, present alongside the speaker, re-beholds them herself. Whereas in the first poem, Hyperion

From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
Until he reached the great main cupola[,]

(1.217-21)

in the second poem, the speaker reports that “*my quick eyes ran on / From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,*” and so into the descriptive passage (2.53-54). Moneta's verbal descriptions re-emphasize the labor of

[T]here

flared,

“humaniz[ing]” prophetic language, a labor that is transferred from Moneta to the speaker to Keats himself (2.2). To understand Hyperion's situation, to be in his place, is to reproduce his experience with one's running glance and to “see” the meaning of his environment.⁵³ Keats's escape from the trial in the vale is in this sense also an accession to productive, “relieving” visuality.

Unfortunately, the eye may be unsuited to its saving role. The fragment comes to an end frozen by the question of representation. While the sight of the palace is a relief to the Keatsian speaker, it is a source of growing torment to Hyperion. Spectacle is, in fact, part of the problem: “horrors portion'd to a giant nerve” inform Hyperion that his fall is near:

His palace bright

Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
Glar'd a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush'd angerly[.]

(2.24-30)

The architectural features of the scene are an anthology of the Regency's exotic, sublime mode. Even Hyperion's “pyramids,” the main critical justification for an exclusively “Egyptian” reading, are potentially Indian or Chinese (Mitter 194-95). In contrast to the description of Moneta's fane, however, these lines forestall as much as they invite precise, spatially oriented picturing. For Wolf Z. Hirst, the significance of the poem's climactic dissolution of perspectives is that the speaker has finally come to “see” for himself, so that Moneta's narrative, and the speaker's own self-conscious self-references, are no longer necessary (Hirst 312). Keats, Hirst implies, has won his way back to a fully absorptive third-person perspective. One aspect of this absorption is an abandonment of precise visualization: the infinite repetitions of Moneta's fane, organized according to the points of the compass, are easily handled from the speaker's embodied first-person viewpoint, but the infinitely various “courts, arches, and domes, and fiery galleries” are imaginatively provocative in the fashion of Byron's dream while defying the grasp of the eye. The sequential presentation of these items is technically standard, but it also marks a necessary and challenging divergence from the descriptive strategies of the rest of the poem. If the speaker now “owns” the story whole, that propriety acts as a barrier to feeling and action. Changing the nature of described space interferes with the pattern of companionate identification between speaker and reader that has driven the poem up to this point. Keats has intensified the possibility of reading this fragmented epic as either high meditation or low spectacle, and the Indian display of the palace remains an isolable pleasure, linked to but also differentiated from the discourse about audience and value which surrounds and justifies it.

I have suggested that *The Fall of Hyperion* takes on the lively energy of a popular architectural style, and that this liveliness, which is founded on the heterogeneity of the Indian and the appeal of the visual, has potentially commercial, anti-institutional implications. That architectural exoticism did have this potential, and that it was particularly dynamic in reaching across fields and forms, is demonstrated by the work of John Martin, whose painting *Belshazzar's Feast* (1821) is tonally aligned with *The Fall*.⁵⁴ *Belshazzar's Feast*, an oil in reds, oranges, and yellows, depicts a tiny Belshazzar in the midst of blazing architectural glory, and Martin, who had engraved some of the Daniells' Indian paintings and would go on to illustrate *Paradise Lost*, drew on the range of eastern architectures that had gained currency in Regency culture to decorate the palace. In his note to the painting, he would go so far as to argue that, as the son of an international conqueror, Belshazzar would of course have a palace designed by architects of all the nations of antiquity:

It was the custom of Nebuchadnezzar, the conqueror of Egypt and India to bring from these parts to Babylon all the architects, the men of science and handicrafts, by whom the Palace

and the external parts of the Temple of Bel etc. were built; therefore I supposed the united talents of the Indian, the Egyptian and Babylonian architects were employed to produce these buildings.⁵⁵

Further, in an echo of Keats and Brown, Martin believed that *Belshazzar's Feast* would be popular enough to overcome critical resistance on the part of the artistic establishment (Feaver 49). In fact, the painting was exceedingly popular although critics did resist its bombast. As Lamb writes of the painting, which he defines, unflatteringly, as an example of the “material sublime”: “Not all that is optically possible to be seen, is to be shown in every picture.”⁵⁶ What Martin has refused to do, according to Lamb, is to subordinate details to wholes in the manner of Byron's “Dream.” What Martin does subordinate is exactly what Lamb wants to see: the painting is all architecture and virtually no psychology. It fascinates by virtue of its detail and by its sense of open, spectacular space. In it, as in the descriptive passages of Southey and Moore, the image announces itself as image; although taking Biblical narrative as its occasion, the point of *Belshazzar's Feast* is clearly its own spectacle, constituted by the cheapest tricks—vast perspective, intriguing and multiplicitous detail, and vibrant color—of which spectacle is capable.

Martin's appeal is based at least partially on the pleasantly dizzying dialectic of power such painting evokes in a viewer. Its receding and virtually person-less architectural sublimity makes the gazer feel bodiless and transcendent. Its intricate detailing yields itself up to the mastering pleasures of exploration. As Martin Meisel puts it, “the perceiver empathizes with ... the radical duality of the miniscule human and the majuscule inhuman.”⁵⁷ Yet the relocation of Keats's Asian eclecticism, from the body of *Endymion's* maiden to the buildings of the *Hyperion* poems, represents a partial resistance to a Martinian commensurability of all spectacle. *Endymion's* consummation, in which the boy hero wins Greece, India, and Woman at once, glibly combines intellectual, imperial, and sexual appropriation, but *The Fall of Hyperion* refuses such consummation by displacing these overlapping factors into a non-human, non-exploitable form. The relationships among writer, reader, and spectacle can only be mediated by a roaming, embodied sympathy that never resolves itself into eroticized consumption. To see, in these poems, is exciting and is meant to be, but until the end it is never quite the same as mastery. At the same time, the definition of Keats's spectacles as shareable, essentially fictional dream-spaces enables the recuperation of materials—the architecture of the east and India in particular—that Southey and Moore had delegitimized as they had also delegitimized the democratic powers of vision itself. Like the bombast of Martin's painting, *The Fall's* spectacle asks to be enjoyed on its own energetic, heterogeneous terms. Although the fragment's quest for a saving vision falters at the end, *The Fall of Hyperion* suggests that the poet's privileges must stem at least in part from a sense of awe and delight with which the audience is equally at home.

Notes

1. See, particularly, Alan J. Bewell's “The Political Implication of Keats's Classicist Aesthetics,” *SIR [Studies in Romanticism]* 25.2 (Summer 1986): 224. Bewell argues that Keats's political sympathy for Egypt in the face of Napoleonic invasion mitigates his “Enlightenment” belief in progress and brings *Hyperion*, intended as an allegory of such progress, to a halt. Wolf Z. Hirst includes Egyptian statuary in his list of “raw materials” for the poem (“How Dreams Become Poems: Keats's Imagined Sculpture and Re-Vision of Epic,” *The Romantic Imagination: Literature and Art in England and Germany*, ed. Frederick Burwick and Jurgen Klein [Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 1996] 302); Tilottoma Rajan also adopts the Titan-Egypt identification, emphasizing the association of Egypt with “stasis” and positing this stasis, in *The Fall of Hyperion*, as a sign of Keats's “negative analysis” of history (“Keats, Poetry, and ‘The Absence of the Work,’” *Modern Philology* 95.3 [July 1998]: 350).
2. Bewell 223-24. See also Ian Jack, *Keats and the Mirror of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967) 164-71.
3. The Regency's vogue for exotic architecture is examined in John Morley, *Regency Design 1790-1840* (New York: Harry N. Abrams 1993) and, in a treatment focusing particularly on Islamic art, John Sweetman's *The Oriental Obsession: Islamic Inspiration in British Art and Architecture, 1500-1920*

- (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), esp. Chapter Three: “1750-1820: Models East of Rome.” For a specific discussion of Indian influences, see Raymond Head, *The Indian Style* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986), esp. Chapter Two: “A Pleasing and Tasty Style,” and Patrick Conner, *Oriental Architecture in the West* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), Chapter Nine: “The Indian Revival,” and Chapter Ten: “The Royal Pavilion at Brighton.”
4. In *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), Nigel Leask argues that the “colonization of diverse or ‘primitive’ cultural forms by a universalized (i.e. European) moral imperative” is common to political and literary treatments of the Orient (22-23). While accepting the point, my focus is slightly different; Keats's reception of Indian images is conditioned by a set of circumstances driven largely by domestic and international politics, but they cannot exhaustively be explained by them.
 5. As Saree Makdisi writes, the “Ottoman Levant,” which included Egypt before and after France's 1798-1802 occupation, “was in Byron's time largely a ‘neutral zone.’” *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 129.
 6. Leask points out that while “it is not difficult for modern critics to idealize British ‘orientalist’ discourse of the Romantic period” because of its genuine “fascination” and lack of “aggress[ion],” “‘positive’ knowledge of Hindu culture ... was the product of an instrumental construction of the Indian Other” (102).
 7. John Keats, “To George and Georgiana Keats,” 17-27 September 1819, in *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1958) 2.189.
 8. W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986) 49; Christopher Collins, *The Poetics of the Mind's Eye: Literature and the Psychology of the Imagination* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1991) 91. On the pictorial turn, see Mitchell, “The Pictorial Turn,” in *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994); on anti-imagistic trends in literary criticism, see for example Susan Esrock, *The Reader's Eye: Visual Imaging as Reader Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1994), esp. Chapter Two: “The Linguistic Mind.”
 9. Lawrence Lipking, “Quick Poetic Eyes: Another Look at Literary Pictorialism,” in *Articulate Images: The Sister Arts from Hogarth to Tennyson*, ed. Richard Wendorf (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983) 7.
 10. I here adopt Pierre Bourdieu's theory of “distinction.” The relevant components of the theory are these: 1) The “aesthetic attitude” of the elite consumer is based on socially determined access to the means of appreciating complex works of art; 2) “Ease” and “difficulty” are related, competing principles; a demand for the vulgarly “facile” indicates a lack of social training, but spontaneous appreciation of the difficult, which signals the internalization of complex procedures, is a mark of distinction. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984) 56-76.
 11. In an exemplary discussion, Michael Riffaterre, focusing on the thematic work of description within figural language, draws a broad conclusion: “The primary function of literary description is not to make the reader see something. ... The mimesis is ... subordinated to the significance, rather than the other way around.” *Yale French Studies* 61 (1981): 125. In practice, of course, critics and poets have it both ways. Keats's famous advice to Shelley to “‘load every rift’ ... with ore” may be a call for vivid images that bear thematic weight (“To Percy Shelley,” August 16, 1820, *Letters* 2.323); in the twentieth century, Paul D. Sheats identifies Keats's “stylistic discipline” as his ability to emphasize the “logical, thematic, or moral significance of concrete [descriptive] particulars.” “Stylistic Discipline in *The Fall of Hyperion*,” *Keats-Shelley Journal* xvii (1968): 77.
 12. Christopher Collins, *Reading the Written Image: Verbal Play, Interpretation, and the Roots of Iconophobia* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1991) 173-74. Collins' powerful generalization pertains to the breadth of western history; Regency constructions of the problem are particular without necessarily being unique.

13. This formal issue has recently been taken up under the rubric of the “ekphrastic”; the idea that pictorialism may have implications for extra-literary structures of distinction is also implied in W. J. T. Mitchell's categories “ekphrastic hope” (that the destructive distinctions between Others can formally be overcome), “ekphrastic fear” (that necessary distinctions are in danger of being overcome) and “ekphrastic neutrality” (that language will remain language, and image image, no matter what). “Ekphrasis and the Other,” in *Picture Theory* 151-65.
14. Javed Majeed notes that Robert Southey's *The Curse of Kehama* and the “Arabian” *Thalaba the Destroyer* allowed British audiences to “revel irresponsibly in the Orient ... while remaining faithful to the [Classical] standards by which such revelry was condemned.” *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's “The History of British India” and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 85. Majeed's reading of Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* is still more challenging: the poem allegorizes Protestant rule in Ireland, but also, by virtue of its erotic, exotic “slightness,” enables a “therapeutic unloading of the anxieties of [an imperial] sensibility” (102). The tensions between “style” and “content” uncovered by Majeed in these Oriental epics are also, I will argue, at play at certain moments of *The Fall of Hyperion*.
15. The argument that the *Hyperions'* diction is an attempt to transcend class limitations is articulated by Marjorie Levinson in *Keats's Life of Allegory: The Origins of a Style* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988) 195; in *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekphrasis, and the Visual Arts* (Hanover: UP of New England, 1994), Grant F. Scott argues that Keats's ekphrases “reflect both his close imaginative proximity and material distance from classical culture and from the culture of the aristocracy” (20). In describing buildings of potential vulgarity and urban familiarity, however, *The Fall of Hyperion* plunges toward a different, democratic aesthetic.
16. John Keats, *Endymion*, in *John Keats: Complete Poems*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982), lines 182-273. Further citations to Keats's poetry will be given parenthetically. Keats's mythological syncretism is here drawn partially from Poussin's “The Indian Triumph of Bacchus,” Titian's “Bacchus and Ariadne,” (see Ian Jack 159) and Sandys' *Ovid English'd* (see *Keats's “Endymion”*: A Critical Edition, ed. Stephen T. Steinhoff [Troy, NY: Whitson Publishing, 1987] 240), but my argument is that these specific, relatively consecrated sources are only part of a general stylistic background that includes active traditions of Regency design.
17. Gervase Jackson-Stops, in John Nash, *Views of the Royal Pavilion*, introduction and commentary by Gervase Jackson-Stops, foreword by HRH The Prince of Wales (London: Pavilion Books, 1991) 20.
18. Mark Crinson, *Empire Building: Orientalism and Victorian Architecture* (London: Routledge, 1996) 27.
19. On the well-documented influence of the Daniells' *Oriental Scenery*, see for example Sweetman 100-105.
20. See for instance Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977) 123.
21. On Thomas Hope, see Sweetman 86-87. On East India House, see Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge: Belknap P, 1978) 298-300.
22. On evangelicals and utilitarians, see Percival Spear, *A History of India, Volume 2* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968) 121-23.
23. On the response to *Kehama*, see for example [John Foster], review, *The Curse of Kehama*, *Eclectic Review* April 1811, in *Robert Southey: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Lionel Madden (London: Routledge, 1995) 138; for the response to *Lalla Rookh*, see Majeed 100-107.
24. On Mill and Indian architecture, see Mitter 176.
25. On the unimportance of images, see Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton (Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1958) 62. As Jean Hagstrum points out, many eighteenth-century poems praised by contemporaries for their vividness are only vivid by way of convention, not verbal detail. *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1958) 267.

26. For the “specific labour” of the poet in the face of social determinations, see Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995) 104. Because poets like Southey and Moore overtly recognize the claims of the marketplace (and identify with various established structures), their work is particularly heteronomous—it is vulnerable to criteria of value enforced not only by the mass of paying customers but also by the occasionally contradictory strictures of journal criticism. As the remainder of my discussion should make clear, “heteronomy” and “autonomy” are relative terms, and even Keats would not recognize the claims of a technically autonomous, “pure” poetry. For the application of these terms, see Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art* 216-18.
27. Walter Scott, review of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage Canto iii*, *Quarterly Review* xvi (October 1816) in *Byron: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Andrew Rutherford (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970) 89-90.
28. George Gordon, Lord Byron, “The Dream,” in *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986) 4.26, lines 105-25.
29. Moore is quoted in Javed 101; Southey's comment is in *The Curse of Kehama*, original preface, in *Poems of Robert Southey*, ed. Maurice H. Fitzgerald (London: Oxford UP, 1909) 117. Subsequent references will be in the text.
30. Barbara Maria Stafford, *Artful Science: Enlightenment Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Education* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994) 8.
31. Thomas Moore, *Lalla Rookh, an Oriental Romance* (London: Longman, 1817) 2-3. Subsequent references will be in the text.
32. Phyllis G. Mann, “Keats's Indian Allegory,” *Keats-Shelley Journal* vi (Winter, 1957): 5-6. Discussing “The Eve of St. Mark,” Robert Gittings identifies an episode in which Keats had an East Indian screen directly described to him and reproduced the screen in poetry; the significance of the episode is not, of course, confined to the incident itself, but demonstrates again the availability of the “Indian” in Keats's milieu. *John Keats: The Living Year* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1954) 90-91.
33. (With Charles Brown) “To C. W. Dilke,” 21 July 1819, *Letters* 2.135.
34. “To George and Georgiana Keats,” 19 February 1819, *Letters* 2.67; “To George and Georgiana Keats,” 20 September 1819, *Letters* 2.200.
35. Andrew Bennett identifies the months June-September 1819 as the months when “the question of money, and the related question of popularity, had become a major motivating factor for the poetry.” *Keats, Narrative, and Audience: The Posthumous Life of Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994) 52.
36. Eugenio Donato, “The Writ of the Eye: Notes on the Relationship of Language to Vision in Critical Theory,” *MLN [Modern Language Notes]* 99.4 (September, 1984): 973.
37. John Gibson Lockhart, “Cockney School of Poetry No. iv,” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (August 1818), reprinted in *Keats: The Critical Heritage*, ed. G. M. Matthews (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971) 104.
38. Levinson defines Keats as “lack[ing] those skills prerequisite to a transparent ... appropriation” of works in the classical canon because of his lack of a classical education (7). In a strong reply to the implications of this argument, Nicholas Roe has pointed out “Keats's eloquence as a representative voice of the most vital sector of contemporary English culture: that is, the culture of dissent in which ideological opposition to and consequent exclusion from the establishment formed the intellectual dynamic of enlightened progress.” *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997) 15. Thus, while a critic like Jefferies may imagine he has won an argument by pointing out Keats's lack of Greek, Keats is busily constructing a language of vision and sublimity that renders purely classical linguistic achievements theoretically moot. The induction goes even further, however, insofar as it considers the value of vision and of extremely simple forms of popular literacy.
39. Martin Aske notes that the Asian and Greek are, in syncretic accounts, both continuous and “doubled” (*Keats and Hellenism: An Essay* [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985] 24-32.) In the discourse of style, this relationship is complex; classical “restraint” is conventionally opposed to oriental “excess,” but

historical relationships among Egypt, India, Persia, Greece, and Rome also underlie various forms of eclecticism.

40. "To George and Georgiana Keats," 21 April 1819, *Letters* 2.102-3.
41. Sweetman 53-55; for a nineteenth-century dome that is eastern rather than Roman, Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" provides a readily accessible example.
42. The literature on "monogeneticism" is extensive, but see Sweetman 55-59, 87-88.
43. An attention to Regency traditions of exotic architecture and spectacle thus complicates Harold Bloom's influential contention that "Keats blends five religious traditions—Christian, Jewish, Egyptian, Olympian, Druidic—because he wants the abandoned temple of Saturn to represent the shrine of religious consciousness itself. The death of one god is for Keats the death of all." *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1971) 423.
44. Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, in *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson (Edinburgh: Adams and Charles Black, 1890; rpt. NY: AMS Press, 1968) 3.438-42.
45. As Bennett argues, *The Fall of Hyperion* thematizes reading itself as a "disjunctive" act, for the speaker is as much a reader (of Moneta's face, of his surroundings, of the "story" of the Titans) as he is a poet. The moral of *The Fall*, according to this account, is that "the reality of the dream is not constructed by the dreamer ... but by the transgressive reading of the dreamer's audience" (158). Bennett's discussion informs my own in two important ways: I agree that figuring the speaker as a reader of events is appropriate, and more generally I agree that the primary dynamic of *The Fall* concerns the relationship of the speaker not to his own psychology or to an abstracted "inspiration" but to his own sense of audience.
46. Collins, *The Poetics of the Mind's Eye* 150. Susan Esrock points out that one of the legitimate uses of readerly imaging is that it "positions the reader within the text" (196), a generally useful suggestion which, I have argued, has a particular applicability in this case.
47. The term "Cartesian perspectivalism," which defines the inquiring subject in terms of its unblinking and disembodied gaze, is borrowed from Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1994) 49-70; Erwin Panofsky summarizes the issue: "Plato condemned [the perspectival view of space] ... because it distorted the 'true proportions' of things, and replaced reality and the *nomos* (law) with subjective appearance and arbitrariness; whereas the most modern aesthetic thinking accuses it, on the contrary, of being the tool of a limited and limiting rationalism" (*Perspective and Symbolic Form*, trans. Christopher S. Wood [New York: Zone Books, 1991] 71). Panofsky collapses these objections, arguing that in either case what is objected to is the empirical ordering of visual phenomena and the transformation of "reality" into "appearance" (71-72). My comments on Moneta's fane accept Panofsky's conclusion that "reduc[ing] the divine to ... subject matter for human consciousness ... conversely ... expands human consciousness into a vessel for the divine" (72), at least insofar as this seems to mirror Keats's viewpoint on the apprehension of spectacle. The relationship between spectatorship and the body so energetically grappled with by the Keatsian speaker is also alluded to, in a different but related context, by William Galperin, who writes that the experience of the early nineteenth-century panorama "worked ... to establish an equivalency between the 'familiar'—the perceiving subject's recognition of himself as part of a public and as coextensive with the peculiar aggregate now viewing the world—and the unfamiliar, or the world currently on view" (*The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993] 42). Galperin's particular interest is in actual, physical situations of seeing (such as the circulation of a Regency audience through panoramic spectacle) and how such situations recast seeing itself; while the Keatsian speaker is in one sense profoundly alone in the fane, it has been my contention, and Galperin's discussion is consonant, that the imagination of this space has an inherently public, collective component.

Regency audiences also noted the relationship between literal, physical circumstances of seeing and poetic representations of eastern spectacle; one critic, seeking perhaps for a connection with his own

- periodical, defined Kehama, emphatically, as a “panorama” (Review of *The Curse of Kehama*, *Literary Panorama*, June 1811, reprinted in *Robert Southey: The Critical Heritage* 146).
48. On “systematic” vs. “aggregate” space, see Panofsky 42. That Keats's attention to perspective in this passage stands as a partial Westernization of colonial space is underlined by another factor in the history of the Indian image in England: When Indian artists were called on to illustrate Indian buildings for British audiences (c. 1806), their productions reflected both European and subcontinental representational traditions: “The perspective is not consistent; [a] building itself may be accurately drawn by European conventions but the foreground ... often appears standing on end. ... The Indian love of detail also asserts itself.” Mildred Archer, *Indian Architecture and the British* (London: RIBA, 1968) 55.
 49. The domesticated naturalism of Keats's suburbanism is discussed in Elizabeth Jones, “Keats in the Suburbs,” *Keats-Shelley Journal* 45 (1996). While Keats's move to a sublime mode in the *Hyperion* poems may be reactive, his emphasis on built environments and bowers (rather than on mountains, etc.) extends a stylistic trait; the exoticism of these poems is also a marker of an urban sensibility.
 50. According to Kathleen Lundeen, Keats's verse confronts a “conspiracy between time and space” to estrange the human subject from infinity and immortality. “Keats's Post-Newtonian Poetics,” *Keats-Shelley Journal* 44 (1995): 109. In Moneta's fane, such details as the speaker's “repres[ed] haste” and Moneta's “lang'rous flame,” dying for lack of fuel, emphasize time's passage but also its running-down.
 51. Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992) 6.
 52. *Uriel's Eye: Miltonic Stationing and Statuary in Blake, Keats, and Shelley* (U of Alabama P, 1985) 121.
 53. Goslee, who has written the most extensive and systematic treatment of “sight” in *The Fall of Hyperion*, alludes to this important revision (132), and interprets it in the context of her argument that the speaker “passes from a superficial experience of the scenic picturesque through a confrontation with centered sculptural forms or figures, and finally develops in response to them a more profoundly, ‘metaphysically’ picturesque consciousness of contrarities of life and death, process and immortality” (98). Goslee considers the terminal sequence of the fragment a moment of “sight exultant at its own regeneration” (132); I argue below that the prospect of a fully absorptive sight presents a problem, not a solution, for the speaker.
 54. Ian Jack notes that an earlier Martin, *The Fall of Babylon* (1819) may have been a direct influence on *The Fall of Hyperion* (171). *Babylon* displays the extensive architectural syncretism that also characterizes *Belshazzar's Feast*; my focus is on the later painting because 1) I am more interested in the broad circulation of a style than in specific moments of exposure, and 2) it is in his commentary on *Belshazzar's Feast* that Martin is most explicit about the stakes of his own Indian sublime. Intriguingly, Morton D. Paley suggests that *Belshazzar's Feast* may be Martin's satirical “transformation” of the Brighton Pavilion. *The Apocalyptic Sublime* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986) 135.
 55. Quoted in William Feaver, *The Art of John Martin* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975) 44.
 56. Charles Lamb, “Barrenness of the Imaginative Faculty in the Productions of Modern Art” (*Athenaeum*, January 12, 19, 26, and February 2, 1833) in *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas (London: Methuen, 1903; rpt. NY: AMS Press, 1968) 2: 228-30.
 57. *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983) 188.

Critical Essays: Further Reading

BIOGRAPHY

Barfoot, C. C. "Hyperion to a Satyr": Keats, Carlyle, and 'This Strange Disease of Modern Life.'" In *Victorian Keats and Romantic Carlyle: The Fusions and Confusions of Literary Periods*, edited by C. C. Barfoot, pp. 7-19. Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999.

Considers Keats's and Thomas Carlyle's personal lives as evidenced in their poetry, and considers Carlyle's assessment of Keats.

CRITICISM

Almedia, Hermione de. "Prophetic Extinction and the Misbegotten Dream in Keats." In *The Persistence of Poetry: Bicentennial Essays on Keats*, edited by Robert M. Ryan and Ronald A. Sharp, pp. 165-82. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998.

Examines the presence of Romantic perspectives dreams and evolution in the two Hyperion poems and considers their relationship to ideas about history.

Fitzpatrick, Margaret Ann. "The Problem of 'Identity' in Keats's 'Negative Capability.'" *Dalhousie Review* 61, no. 1 (spring 1981): 39-51.

Views Keats's "negative capability"—that quality which distinguishes poets from others—according to John Locke's writings on identity.

Goslee, Nancy M. "Plastic to Picturesque: Schegel's Analogy and Keats's *Hyperion* Poems." *Keats-Shelley Journal* 30 (1981): 118-51.

Uses A. W. Schegel's lecture on the relationship between ancient and modern arts to analyze the Hyperion poems, suggesting The Fall of Hyperion demonstrates the "picturesque."

———. "Keats's *The Fall of Hyperion*: 'Like Sculpture Builded Up Upon the Grave Of ... Power.'" In *Uriel's Eye: Miltonic Stationing and Statuary in Blake, Keats, and Shelley*, pp. 96-133. University, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1985.

Analyzes four scenes in The Fall of Hyperion with a focus on Keats's use of dreams, sculptural images, and the "picturesque."

Gurney, Stephen. "Between Two Worlds: Keats's *Hyperion* and Browning's 'Saul.'" *Studies in Browning and His Circle: A Journal of Criticism, History, and Bibliography* 8, no. 2 (fall 1980): 57-74.

Uses Keats's and Robert Browning's poems to make connections between the concerns of the Romantic and the Victorian period, especially morality and evil.

Hartman, Geoffrey H. "Spectral Symbolism and the Authorial Self: An Approach to Keats's *Hyperion*." *Essays in Criticism: A Quarterly Journal of Literary Criticism* 24, no. 1 (January 1974): 1-19.

Examines the two Hyperion poems as a single but incomplete work.

Lachman, Lilach. "Keats's *Hyperion*: Time, Space, and the Long Poem." *Poetics Today* 22, no. 1 (spring 2001): 89-127.

Considers Keats's use of time-space poetics in Hyperion and The Fall of Hyperion. Also reconsiders the use of space as both Romantic and postmodern.

Mori, Masaki. *Epic Grandeur: Toward a Comparative Poetics of Epics*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997, 261 p.

Evaluates epic poetry and provides a case study on The Fall of Hyperion as a transitional epic. Also provides a bibliography of Keatsian scholarship.

Reed, Thomas A. "Keats and the Gregarious Advance of Intellect in *Hyperion*." *ELH: English Literary History* 55, no. 1 (spring 1988): 195-232.

Considers the social-political dimension of Hyperion in its depiction of revolution and historical change and emphasizes Keats's belief in progressive history.

Roe, Nicholas, ed. *Keats and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 320 p.

Offers historical readings of Keats's poetry, including several essays treating Hyperion and The Fall of Hyperion.

Saly, John. "Keats's Answer to Dante: *The Fall of Hyperion*," *Keats-Shelley Journal* 14 (winter 1965): 65-78.

Asserts Keats's The Fall of Hyperion was influenced by Dante's Divine Comedy, and compares Moneta with Beatrice as salvation figures.

Schapiro, Barbara A. "Keats." In *The Romantic Mother: Narcissistic Patterns in Romantic Poetry*, pp. 33-60. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.

Provides a psychoanalytic reading of Keats's poetry, particularly Endymion and The Fall of Hyperion, focusing on narcissism and images of women.

Swaminathan, S. R. "Keats's *The Fall of Hyperion*." *Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin* 20 (1969): 11-12.

Analyzes one passage about poets and dreaming as suggesting the imagination has prophetic power.

Vitoux, Pierre. "Keats's Epic Design in *Hyperion*." *Studies in Romanticism* 14, no. 2 (spring 1975): 165-83.

Examines the mythological elements, particularly the character of Apollo, in The Fall of Hyperion.

Additional coverage of Keats's life and career is contained in the following sources published by the Gale Group: *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vols. 96 and 110; *DISCovering Authors*; *DISCovering Authors: British*; *DISCovering Authors: Canadian*; *DISCovering Authors Modules: Most-Studied Authors and Poets*; *Poetry Criticism*, Vol. 1; and *World Literature Criticism, 1500 to the Present*.

Analysis: The Poem

Hyperion is a fragment of an epic poem in blank verse, divided into two complete books and a third incomplete book: Book I contains 357 lines, book II has 391 lines, and book III leaves off in mid-sentence at line 136. John Keats turned from this poem to compose his great odes in the summer of 1819 before returning to the subject of *Hyperion*. Instead of completing this epic, however, he began an entirely different poem (also incomplete) called *The Fall of Hyperion* (1856).

The title of *Hyperion* indicates the name of its hero, the ancient Greek god of the sun. Hyperion was one of the Titans, the offspring of Coelus (the sky) and Tellus (the earth). Saturn was ruler of the Titans, overthrown by his three Olympian sons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto. Keats's epic is based upon this episode of mythology, when the Olympians overthrew the Titans and Olympian Apollo took the place of Titanic Hyperion. The story of the poem begins at the point when all the Titans except Hyperion have been defeated.

Book I opens in a dark valley of great stillness, where Thea (wife of Hyperion) is searching for Saturn. She finds him alone, massive but deeply dejected and utterly stunned. Thea urges him to look up; then she ceases, realizing that theirs is a hopeless cause. The two of them do not move for four months. Then Saturn opens his eyes and asks Thea to help him understand what has happened; he is supposed to be king of the gods, but he is so impotent he must have lost his identity. He makes himself believe that he can still command a force to recover his throne. Thea feels hope and urges Saturn to follow her to where other fallen Titans have gathered.

The poem then shifts to observe the behavior of the only Titan not yet fallen. Hyperion is in his sky-palace, stalking its hallways nervously, feeling great dread. He asks if he is also about to fall, like all of his brethren. He cries out in defiance that he will attack the rebel Olympians. Hyperion threatens to drive the sun through the sky to start the day at an unnatural time, but not even a god can disturb "the sacred seasons." His father, Coelus, sympathizes, urging Hyperion to use his remaining powers to help the Titans, to act and not wait to be acted against: "Be therefore in the van of Circumstance." The first book ends with Hyperion plunging into the darkness below, "like to a diver in the pearly seas."

Book II describes the arrival of Saturn and Thea at the dark den where the Titans have congregated. It is a woeful scene, where giant forms lie listlessly about in angry astonishment. They are roused when Saturn appears. He cannot explain their defeat, but he asks them how to respond to the Olympians.

The first to give advice is Oceanus, who counsels resignation. The triumph of the Olympians is a phase in the process of natural law, which governs history and creates progress, as the old must give way to the new in all things. The Titans should be wise and recognize the truth of natural process. Oceanus says that the Olympian gods are young and beautiful, a new generation of advancing truth; "first in beauty should be first in might." The only consolation available to the Titans, he says, is to "receive the truth, and let it be your balm."

While the other Titans remain quiet, little-regarded Clymene timidly ventures to express her feelings. She describes how she had tried to console herself by blowing into a seashell to make music. She threw away the shell when she heard a strange, enchanting "golden melody" that seemed to drift across the ocean. She tried to stop her ears, but she heard the cry of a sweet voice, calling "Apollo! young Apollo!" Clymene tells her tale without interpreting it, simply illustrating the fact of a new regime.

Her brother Titan, huge Enceladus, is indignant at both the timidity of Clymene and the resignation of Oceanus. Enceladus offers to lead an assault on their conquerors, and he reminds them that Hyperion remains unfallen. At that moment, Hyperion appears, brightening the dark den with his burning presence. The Titans see that Hyperion is himself dejected, so they are tempted to become despondent again despite the fighting words of Enceladus. Some shout out the name of Saturn, and Hyperion answers the same. On this note, the second book ends.

Book III shifts to the young Apollo, about to assume his divine mission. He is wandering alone, perplexed about the strange emotions he feels. He sees a goddess approach, and he believes that he knows her from his dreams. She announces that she has been watching over his growth for some time, that she has forsaken her own people to be with him. Suddenly, Apollo recognizes that she is Mnemosyne (memory, mother of the Muses), and he struggles to control his feelings of sadness even as he speaks. Apollo explodes with a barrage of questions, asking Mnemosyne to account for the universe itself. Abruptly he halts his questioning and exclaims, as he looks into the eyes of the goddess, "Knowledge enormous makes a God of me." Then he

writhes in pain, his face grows pale, and even his hair begins to move. He shrieks in agony, and the poem stops without completing its last sentence.

Analysis: Forms and Devices

Hyperion was designed to follow the epic form of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667). The opening is an imitation of the scene that opens Milton's epic, describing the army of angels who have followed Satan in their rebellion against God and who have been cast down into Hell. The summoning of the Titans to a conference by Saturn is a repetition of the call by Satan. Keats's poem strikes a new direction, however, by leaving its titular hero unfallen, awaiting the challenge from young Apollo. Yet perhaps there is an imitation here also, with some similarities between Hyperion/Apollo and Satan/Christ. Where the poem would have gone if finished cannot be known, and perhaps Keats abandoned it because he could not take it beyond Milton's epic in a way satisfactory to Keats himself. When he returned to the subject in *The Fall of Hyperion*, Keats chose a new form and adopted a new style altogether, as he made himself the heroic medium for the transfiguration of Apollo into a god.

There is more to *Hyperion*, however, than an imitation of the narrative introduction and heroic characters found in *Paradise Lost*. The blank verse is "Miltonic" in its construction, using similar metric design and sentence structure. The normal subject-verb order is inverted, and the subject comes at the end of a long sentence, following a series of parallel modifying phrases. This device is a typical way to imitate the classic English epic style; thus, the poem opens in Book I with "Deep in . . . / Far sunken from . . . / Far from . . . / Sat gray-hair'd Saturn." This sentence is still not finished with the identification of its subject, for it continues with more balanced clauses for another two-and-a-half lines. The catalog of identifying features used here, and elsewhere, is representative of epic style as well.

There are distinctive figures of speech, usually similes, which mark *Hyperion* as a poem of epic ambition. The most common kind of epic simile is the extended comparison, as when Thea is compared (or contrasted) with an Amazon in book I and when the forest where Saturn lies is compared with a meeting of a senate, also in book I.

Long set speeches, particularly in the first two books, contribute to the epic form of the poem. These occur in book III as well, but they are interrupted by exclamations and hurried expressions of surprise and recognition. The style of book III seems deliberately varied, then, to reflect the changes which are occurring in the character of Apollo as well as in the order of divine government. The poem further imitates classic epic form by setting its action throughout the cosmos, transcending human affairs, and exploring all possible realms of being. When Keats wants to suggest how far the Titans have fallen, in fact, he compares them with human beings, as in book II, when he says, "As with us mortal men," Saturn moves with a heavy heart.

The poet's apostrophe to the Muse to ask for inspiration is another typical device of the epic, and it is employed, with some individuality, in *Hyperion* to open book III: "O leave them, Muse! . . . / Leave them, O Muse!" The poet who calls out to the muse actually is commanding rather than pleading or requesting. This aggressive and demanding attitude by the speaker as epic and prophetic poet is maintained through most of the poem, as Keats uses the privileged voice of a bard to pass judgments on his characters and to surround them with an understanding which surpasses their own—even if they are gods and he is merely human. This attitude will be more completely realized as a shaping form of the poem when it is presented as dream and vision in the later *The Fall of Hyperion*.

Analysis: Hyperion

Ever since the composition of *Paradise Lost*, English poets with epic ambitions have written under the shadow of Milton. *Hyperion*, Keats's effort along the Miltonic line, is powerful and extraordinary but a tour de force that he could not sustain.

As the poem begins, most of its action has already taken place. Saturn and the other Titans, with the sole exception of Hyperion, god of the sun, have been replaced by Jupiter and his fellow Olympians. Thus what occurs is not the issue. The questions to be raised are how and why benevolent gods have been overthrown. The difficulty of offering good answers combined with the static nature of the story to make *Hyperion* virtually impossible to complete.

Book I depicts, in sculptural detail, the throneless Saturn, whom Keats envisions as majestic, powerful, and beautiful--in fact, so thoroughly divine that it would be hard to imagine his superior. The second book brings Saturn to the gathering place of the Titans. Here, the deposed gods voice reasons for, and responses to, their great change of state. Oceanus, former ruler of the sea, advances the most convincing argument. The Titans are guiltless, he acknowledges, yet they have been superseded by beings yet more excellent--in a natural progression.

Book III bears out Oceanus' claim by presenting the young Apollo, who has not yet replaced Hyperion but who feels an aching eagerness to assume his divinity. Mnemosyne, the Titan goddess of memory, shows Apollo what he has not yet realized, that suffering and destruction precede creation, that life is change. This tragic "knowledge enormous" makes a god of Apollo, and the fragment breaks off as he undergoes his apotheosis.

Attempting to complete the poem, Keats transformed *Hyperion* into *The Fall of Hyperion*. In revising, he moved away from the influence of Milton and toward that of Dante. *The Fall of Hyperion* begins with an allegorical vision in which a dreaming poet enters a temple where the goddess Moneta reveals the story of Hyperion to him. Again, however, the epic remained unfinished.

Quotes: "In This World A Man Must Either Be Anvil Or Hammer"

Context: The idea that a man is either the smiter or the one smitten is an old one. If he does not assert himself, he will be put upon by others. Some writers have varied the expression, to insist that in his lifetime man plays both parts, and must act in either role to his utmost capacity. In the days of Christian martyrdom, the second century Bishop of Antioch, St. Ignatius Theophorus, told his followers: "Stand like an anvil when it is beaten upon." A later religious poet, George Herbert (1593-1633) advised in *Jacula Prudentum* (1640): "When you are an anvil, hold you still;/ When you are a hammer, strike your fill." More recently the American poet, Edward Markham (1852-1940) wrote in "Preparedness": "When you are the anvil, bear--/ When you are the hammer, strike." Longfellow, in his longest prose work, *Hyperion*, employed the same figure. Based on the New England poet's trip to Europe in 1835-1836 to study at Heidelberg, *Hyperion* embodied Longfellow's own experiences and even used as heroine Frances Appleton, whom he was to marry five years later. About Paul Flemming (representing Longfellow), the hero of this sentimental romance, the novelist declares in Book I, chapter IV: "One half of the world must sweat and groan, that the other half may dream." In Part IV, a priest, after telling Flemming a story, bids him goodbye with the comment:

"I shall not see you in the morning, so goodbye, and God bless you. Remember my parting words. Never mind trifles. In this world a man must either be anvil or hammer. Care killed a

cat!" "I have heard you say that so often," replied Flemming, laughing, "that I begin to believe it. But I wonder if Care shaved his left eyebrow after doing the deed, as the ancient Egyptians used to do!" "Aha! now you are sweeping cobwebs from the sky! Good night! Good night!"

Quotes: "Knowledge Enormous Makes A God Of Me"

Context: The Titans, the elder gods, have been overthrown by Jupiter and his brothers and sisters, the younger gods. Saturn, formerly the king of the world, dethroned and defeated in open war by his own children, lies stupefied upon the earth. He is visited by Thea, wife of Hyperion, who leads him to a dark, wild, rock-strewn region where many of the other defeated Titans lie in the dejection of defeat. Meanwhile, Hyperion, a Titan not deprived of his ancient office of driving the sun across the sky, finishes his day's work and repairs to his golden palace in the heavens. He is disturbed at the thought that he, as well as the other Titans, may be deposed. He plunges through the black night and arrives at the spot where the other Titans lie. After a catalogue of the Titans not unlike the catalogue of the devils in Book II of *Paradise Lost*, there is a conference similar to the one in *Paradise Lost* where the devils plot how to regain heaven (Book II). Saturn asks for suggestions on how they can war against the gods. The first to answer is Oceanus, who says that what has happened is in accordance with nature. The Titans are neither the beginning nor the end: they have brought forth a more beautiful race than themselves, and it is proper for the young to succeed to the rule. Then Clymene tells that she heard a far more beautiful music than any that the Titans could produce. But Enceladus is all for open war and revenge for the blows the new gods have dealt them. While the Titans debate, Apollo is wandering about the earth in sadness when he meets Mnemosyne, or Memory, and begs her to fill him with knowledge, because enormous knowledge makes a god of him:

O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp, That waileth every morn and eventide, Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves! Mute thou remainest—Mute! yet I can read A wondrous lesson in thy silent face: Knowledge enormous makes a God of me. Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions, Majesties, sovran voices, agonies, Creations and destroyings, all at once Pour into the wide hollows of my brain, And deify me, as if some blithe wine Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk, And so become immortal. . . .

Quotes: "The Same Bright, Patient Stars"

Context: Hyperion is an account of the overthrow of the old gods, the Titans, by Zeus, or Jupiter, and his brothers and sisters, the younger gods. The king among the Titans was Cronus, here called by his Roman name, Saturn. The opening scene is one of absolute stillness; beside a river lies the giant body of the monarch Saturn, deposed from his throne as ruler of the world by his own children. There has been bitter war, and the fallen king is stunned by his defeat. He is visited by Thea, wife of the sun-god Hyperion; she tries to comfort him in his misery. He wonders why he cannot create a new world to rule, and Thea leads him away to where the other gods lie. Meanwhile, one Titan who had not been deposed, Hyperion, has been busy conducting the sun across the heavens. He finishes his journey and enters his great golden palace in the sky. He is in a rage at what has happened to his fellow Titans and wonders if he too will be removed from his office and driven from his home. His mother, Coelus, attempts to comfort him and tells him to consult with Saturn down on earth. Hyperion, heeding her words, arises and looks at the stars—the same bright patient stars—and plunges into the night.

Ere half this region-whisper had come down, Hyperion arose, and on the stars Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide Until it ceased; and still he kept them wide: And still they were the same bright, patient stars. Then with a slow incline of his broad breast, Like to a diver in the pearly seas, Forward he stooped over the airy shore, And plunged all noiseless into the deep night.