CHAPTER IV

The Course of Nature's Law

Hyperion

The Fall of Hyperion
Keats started working on Hyperion within a few months of completing Endymion. Endymion is a poetic romance set in the Golden Age. Hyperion is an epic of sorrow dealing with the end of the Golden Age. In a letter to Haydon, Keats commented on both the poems --

...in Endymion, I think you may have many bits of the deep and sentimental cast -- the nature of Hyperion will lead me to treat it in a more naked and grecian (sic) 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 Apollo in Hyperion being a fore-seeing God will shape his actions like one!  

Apollo Cynthia's lute-voiced brother is "once more the golden theme". Apollo, the sun-god, whose sway extends to the realms of music, poetry, prophecy and medicine had been the central figure in some of Keats's earlier poetry. With this beautiful and enigmatic deity Keats felt a kind of empathy and to celebrate his triumph over the Titans had been his ambition for quite some time.

Hyperion is an epic -- fragment in two versions. The second version, a re-cast of the first in the format of a dream, is called more specifically The Fall of Hyperion.
Keats's failure to complete the poem has been variously explained. An important reason is the general lack of spontaneity and vitality. Keats's sensuous and mythologizing imagination was curbed by the statuesque figures and sculptural backdrops of the poem. Another reason was that Keats had realized that 'there were too many Miltonic inversions in it'. By abandoning Hyperion, Keats was opting for the purity of spontaneous language. He had succeeded in 'convincing his nerves' that 'a fine writer is the most genuine being in the world'.

Keats was familiar with the myth of Hyperion long before he selected it as the primary subject of the long poem. Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary*, Edward Baldwin's *The Pantheon*, Hesoid's *Theogony* (Cooke's translation), Hyginus's *Fabulae* printed in *Auctores Mythographi Lahiri* had familiarized him with the battle between Olympians and the Titans and the consequent defeat of the latter.

According to Hesoid's *Theogony* from which Keats derived the basis of the mythological matter of *Hyperion*, Chaos was the first to come into existence. Next came Earth, Erebus and Eros. Earth bore Heaven, Hills and Sea. And Heaven and Earth, mating together, produced Oceanus, Coeus, Creus, Hyperion, Japhet, Thea, Rhea, Themis, Mnemosyne.
Phoebe, Tethys and Saturn, the youngest and the most terrible. Then came the Brontes, Steropes and Arges, followed by Cottus, Gyges and Briareus. Heaven confined his third brood in a secret place within Earth. But the strain proving too much for her, Earth appealed to Saturn for help. Saturn castrated Heaven with a scythe given to him by Earth. The blood which dripped on to Earth produced the Giants and the Furies and the nymphs called Melial. The members, thrown into the sea produced Venus. According to Hesoid, Heaven named his first brood Titans.

Saturn, taking Rhea as wife, became the ruler of the universe. He was warned by his mother that he would be dethroned by one of his children. So, as soon as each child was born, he swallowed it. Rhea, unhappy as the loss of her children, gave him a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes to swallow when her sixth child was born. This child was Jupiter. When he grew to maturity, he tricked Saturn into vomiting his children. Led by Jupiter, the younger gods declared war against the Titans. They took their stand on Mount Olympus and thus came to be known as the Olympians. The war continued for ten years. Jupiter now released Cottus, Gyges and Briareus who had been imprisoned inside Earth. They supplied him with thunder and
lightening in return for their freedom. Ultimately, the Titans fell before the thunderbolts and the Olympians came to rule over the universe.

This battle has various connotations. According to some mythologists it is a nature-myth, a kind of contest between the untamed and beneficent aspects of nature. Others feel that it represents the victory of the Olympian cult, brought to Greece by invaders, over the existing religion of the pre-Hellenic people. The myth contains the archetypal patriarchal cannibalism. Dorothy Van Ghent identifies 'an Oedipal quality' that she says, 'makes them particularly repugnant. Keats, however, offered a variation to the traditional myth. He gave the Titans a serenely beneficent character. He took pains to sift out the evil aspects supplied by traditional history and made the Titans majestically beautiful. To make the Olympians more beautiful, he invested them with an intellectual beauty, so that the 'first in beauty, should be first in might'. Traditionally the Titans were simply fertility daemons associated with the planets and the weather. The new breed of gods, the Olympians were a highly humanized race of gods. In Keats's version both are humanized. The Titans are physically stronger being giants,
whereas the Olympians are physically smaller but have a superior intellect.

Mythology, according to Keats, is not just a static storehouse of enchanting tales but a comprehensive system that comes to life under the mythic vision of the poet. Each time a myth is retold by a poet, it gains a new dimension. The mythical personalities occur again and again in different circumstances. The pattern of behaviour is reconstructed in every age and each time it provides a further revelation. Thus, mythology is a link between similar experiences down the ages.

Leigh Hunt once commented on Keats —

Talking the other day with a friend about Dante, he observed that whenever so great a poet told us anything in addition to or continuation of an ancient history, he had a right to be regarded as classical authority. For instance, said he, when he tells us of that characteristic death of Ulysses in one of the books of his Inferno, we ought to receive the information as authentic and be glad that we have more news of Ulysses than we looked for. 10

Keats makes full use of his principle in his treatment of the myth of Hyperion. He manipulates the myth to use it as a vehicle for defining a law of succession, and also to embody the archetypes of the cyclical rebirth
rituals. Apollo in Hyperion and the Dreamer in The Fall undergo the traditional rebirth of the King-succession rituals. Infact Hyperion stops abruptly at the rebirth of Apollo as the immortal poet.

Keats's Hyperion begins with the defeat of the Titans. The giants are presented writhing in pain and anger, immediately after the Olympians have usurped power. The battle is alluded to as an event of the past. This is in keeping with the poet's mythic vision. His symbolic conception of the myth was to use it as a vehicle for defining the law of succession. Thus, the description of the battle fell outside his range.

In one of his notes on Milton's Paradise Lost, Keats had stated --

There is a cool pleasure in the very sound of a vale. The English word is of the happiest chance.... It is a sort of Delphic Abstraction -- a beautiful thing made more beautiful by being reflected in a mist. 11

Delphi is a city with an oracular shrine and precinct of Apollo, situated in a deep rocky cleft on the south-west spur of Mount Parnassus. Keats describes the vale as a 'Delphic Abstraction', instinctively linking all beautiful things to Apollo.
The opening scene of _Hyperion_ is set in a 'vale'. There is a misty aura over the vale, suggesting events of a far-off time --

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 grey-haired Saturn,
quiet as a stone,

( Bk I. 11. 1-4 )

These lines evoke a funereal environment. Everything is unnaturally still and the general mood is one of tragic grimness. 'Deep' 'sunken' 'Stone' suggest a grave. This is the ritual burial at the end of a seasonal cycle. The reign of the Titans has come to an end. There is no air, no light, no sound, no movement. It is almost like the paralysis of Chaos. According to Hesoid, Chaos was a yawning abyss composed of Void, Mass and Darkness. Light succeeded Chaos and all matter came to life. The myth has now been inverted. Light and life have left the earth and blank darkness is gradually taking over --

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 feathered grass
But where the dead leaf
fell, there did it rest.

(Bk I, ll. 6-10)

This is a claustrophobic image. There is no comfort, no solace, no hope, only desolation and despair. The layered forest represents a dark masa, a solid covering separating Earth from creativity and life. There is no movement save that of a dead leaf falling. That, too, is a downward moved—

A stream went voiceless
by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen
divinity
Spreading a shade; the
Naiad 'mid her reeds
Pressed her cold finger
closer to her lips.

(Bk I, ll. 11-14)

Naiads are stream nymphs. In her 'voiceless' state, this naiad is reminiscent of the tongueless Procne. Procne's tongue was cut off by her husband, King Tereus, when he wanted to marry again. She was confined to the slaves' quarters at the time of her husband's second marriage. Her troubled state can also be matched with Saturn's 'fallen divinity'. The adjectives 'deadened' and 'cold' emphasise the sterility of the atmosphere.
Saturn, the fallen Titan, is stationed against this morbid backdrop. Saturn literally means 'The sower'. He is the god of agriculture and his age has been described as the age of gold. As Titan king, his 'god like exercise' had been --

Of influence benign on planets pale,
Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
Of peaceful sway above man's havesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in.

(I. 11. 108-12)

His reign had been characterized by great cosmic serenity. Progress, evolution and dynamism were unknown in the Titan world. There was a mist of dreamy timelessness over the universe which was ripped apart by his overthrow. In this post-war scene, Saturn's divine powers are paralysed. His beneficence has expired and his right hand, the symbol of his power lies 'nerveless, listless, dead'. The fallen god faces a mental void and he is unable to comprehend his misfortunes. Like a lost and forlorn child he turns to his Ancient Mother, Gaia, for comfort and advice. The role of the archetypal mother figure in Keats's poetry is crucial.
Again and again the bruised hero turns to her for solace and comfort. She is omnipotent, beneficent and immortal and never completely away from his poetry.

Upon the scene now appears the Titaness Thea. Her physique has a massive sculptural quality. She is so tall that an Amazon appears like a pygmy before her. The Amazons were women warriors who lived in heroic times. Thea's strength is so great that she could have taken Achilles by the hair and bent his neck.

All the Titans are giant nature daemons. In *Sleep and Poetry* Keats describes the poet as a giant --

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Then the events of this
wide world I'd seize,
Like a strong giant,
and my spirit teaze
Till at its shoulders,
it should proudly see
Wings to find out an
immortality.
( ll. 81-84 )
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The poet must understand all the secrets of nature i.e. the 'symbol-essences' of Earth, air, fire and water. So, it is only appropriate that the Titans are elemental spirits. Apollo, is a giant poet with the superior intellect who seeks immortalization.
Back in the poem, Thea too seems to have lost her divine attributes and joined the ranks of the mortals —

One hand she pressed upon
    that aching spot
Where beats the human heart,
    as if just there,
Though an immortal, she
    felt cruel pain;

( Bk I. 11. 42-44 )

Thea can only sympathize with Saturn. There is solemnity in her but no intellect and foresight. Saturn's sovereign relationships with the four elements have come to their cyclic end. There is confusion all around. This confusion must persist until a new system of relationships is established. Saturn's tragedy lies in his inability to perceive the necessity of such a change and accept it as the inevitable movement of the cycle.

The night is 'tranced' or in the grip of an energy that is not in the control of these fallen divinities —

Those green-robed senators
    of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed
    by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all
    night without a stir,

( Bk I. 11. 73-75 )

This is an intensely mythical picture. There is an
immense, changeless serenity about the oak-grove. The oak-grove, traditionally, is the scene of the nuptial union of the vegetation king and the Great Goddess. Also, by virtue of being a green recess, it is symbolic of the powers of regeneration. However, right now its potential has been curbed and like Adonis the "senators of the mighty woods" have fallen into a deep sleep.

When Saturn awakes, Thea asks him to come and comfort their fallen house --

He followed, and she turned to lead the way
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nests.

( Bk I. 11. 155-57 )

The eagle is the sacred bird of Jupiter. It carried Hercules's soul to Olympus through the mist created by the smouldering logs of his funeral pyre. Like the oaks, the eagle, too is linked with death and regeneration. Through these mythic motifs the poet is gradually establishing the regime of the Olympians. He is following the Greek concept of the time cycle where the seed of birth is present in death.

The scene now shifts to Hyperion's palace. Hyperion
has the titular role in the poem. According to the myth, Hyperion is the son of Coelus and Terra. His spouse is Thea. Unlike Apollo, he is only the god of the sun and is not connected with any other office. He enters the poem 'Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light'. Hyperion's bower is not a green recess so it is not regenerative. Its 'enwreathed light' indicates his still intact divinity. The ancient cosmic laws still function as day and night follow each other. However, his powers too, are curtailed. Monstrous nightmarish phantoms have conquered the once-resplendent place of the sun. He cries out --

'O dreams of day and night!
O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
O Spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
O lank-eared phantoms of black-weeded pools!

(Bk I. 11. 227-30)

Anxiety grips his throat and he cannot speak further. Out of the mist and scum emerges a vast serpentine wave of torture that grips him in its coils --

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 convulsed
From over-strained might.

( Bk. I. 11. 259-63 )

This image of torture is rather Miltonic as it recollects the demonic serpent of Biblical mythology. It must be noted that, in his narrative, Keats does not prefer or adopt any single system of mythology. He draws freely on various systems and wherever it suits him, he smoothly brings about a fusion of different mythologies. This technique gives an additional dimension to his treatment of mythology.

As Hyperion waits at his palace door 'the Heaven with its stars/ Look'd down on him with pity' and he hears the voice of his ancient father Coelus. According to the myth, Coelus was on severely hostile terms with his children. Keats, however, invests him with paternal tenderness. Coelus speaks to him from 'the universal space' which is always the setting for Keats's mythical poems. He talks about 'joys and palpitations sweet' that had been experienced by the powers that met at his creation. The poet, here is referring back to Endymion where love and creativity had been the major theme. Coelus says --
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.

(Bk. I. 11. 340-43)

Coelus accepts that his own life had been governed by the natural order but he cannot understand the grief of the Titans as the next necessity in the evolutionary cycle. He admonishes Hyperion and orders him to strive. At his bidding, Hyperion descends to the Earth.

In the reconstruction of ritual circumstances to fit a new analogy, once the role of the father had been recognized, the archetypal father-son combat had also been recognized. Keats, however, alters the archetype to present it as the cyclical rebirth ritual. There is no real combat. The father-figure, like Glaucus in Endymion, gives ethical support to his bewildered son.

Bk. II opens with the depiction of the misery of the fallen Titans. Keats's rendering of the scene owes a part to the infernos of both Milton and Dante. The Titans are stationed in a den that is immense, mysterious and dark. Like the original Tartarus, it is characterized by huge, subterranean caverns and stony pits. Primeval cataracts
plunge into bottomless depths 'pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where'. Nightmarish animal-shaped crags grapple with locked 'monstrous horn'. The dungeons are like the 'veins of metal' symbolic of anxiety, fear, frustration and impotence.

Among the rigid sculptured forms, their ancient mother Cybele can be identified. She sits in this infertile, barren, stone vault unable to revive her fallen children. Cybele, traditionally, is an Asiatic goddess associated with the powers of nature. She is one aspect of the Great Goddess. In Endymion she appeared in her negative aspect. In Hyperion, however, she represents the sorrowful mother whose generative powers have been suspended.

Among the other Titans Coeus, Gyges and Briareus, Typhon, Dolon and Porphyrian 'were pent in regions of laborious breath'. According to traditional mythology, Coeus, Gyges and Briareus were the hundred-handed giants who had been imprisoned by Cronus in a secret place within the Earth. Saturn continued to keep them in imprisonment. They were released by Jupiter when they agreed to help him in the battle against the Titans. Keats alters the myth. He represents them as fighting on the side of Saturn
instead of Jupiter. Another variation that he makes is to present Typhon as a Titan. Traditionally Typhon was born after Jupiter had overthrown Saturn. He had a hundreded serpent-heads, fiery eyes and a tremendous voice. Keats's law of succession depended greatly on the law of beauty -- 'the first in beauty should be the first in might'. Thus, all ugly, monstrous daemonic figures are listed as Titans.

The other Titans are free but 'scarce images of life'. Among these he mentions Mnemosyne, Phoebe, Creus, Iapetus, Cottus, Asia, Enceladus, Atlas, Phorcus, Clymene and Themis. Traditionally Asia and Clymene were the same persons. Keats differentiates between the two. Clymene, according to him, is the wife of Iapetus and Asia is the daughter of Caf. The name of Caf does not occur in classical mythology at all. He is probably the Arab mountain god Kaf, who can be equated with the Greek Atlas. Over this morbid congregation hovers the shapeless form of Ops, the shrouded queen of death.

The tale of their mammoth downfall has been recorded by the elemental historians, the trees, to be narrated to posterity --

There is a roaring in the bleak-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 mountained world,
No other sound succeeds;

( Bk. II. 11. 116-124 )

Keats's auditory imagination finds expression in this awe-inspiring picture. The mysterious, haunting tree-voices are treated as the primal metaphor for antiquity and immortality and are equated with the majestic utterances of the Titans. Trees, in Keats's mythic vision, are the immortal historians with oracular properties. In The Fall Moneta says --

Thou might’st better listen to the wind,
Whose language is to thee a barren noise
Though it blows legend-laden through the trees.

( Canto II. 11. 4-6 )

With the arrival of Saturn to the den, begins the council of the Titans. The Titan "rebel crew" of Keats's
mythological poem are the pagan images of the "rebel crew" of Angles in Milton's magnificent Biblical poem. However, the psychological character of the entire situation is purely Keatsian. His inferno imagery is borrowed only at the visual level. The subterranean prison is not the usual place of punishment for the damned souls but a vision of the Earth itself as a place where universal human suffering is inevitable. The Titans are suffering not because they were evil and over-ambitions like Milton's fallen angels but because they have suddenly been reduced to mere mortals. Keats visualizes a pre-Biblical fall where the elements suffer the agonies of fear, impotence and death.

Saturn tells the other Titans that he has searched the entire realm of knowledge available to him in order to detect the cause of their downfall. Even after studying the 'old spirit-leaved books' viz. the sibylline prophetic books Saturn is unable to 'unriddle' the problems. The Cumaen Sibyl, a priestess of Apollo, sold these books to a Roman Emperor. However, in Keats's version, she is more ancient than the Titans. Saturn's tragedy lies in his lack of comprehension and in his inability to place these problems in their proper perspective. He turns to Oceanus, one of the oldest gods, for help. The ancient myths do not
identify Oceanus as the thoughtful one among the Titans but Keats bestows this role on him. Like the shepherds in Endymion, he is contemplative and his wisdom is the result of 'cogitation in his watery grove'. Oceanus recognizes the law of evolution 'We fall by course of Nature's law not force/ Of thunder, of Jove' Oceanus explains that evolution is necessary and ever-present and this is the eternal truth —

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;

( Bk. II. 11. 212-15 )

These lines contain the cardinal theme of the poem. In mythological terms, the poet guides the psyche from darkness to enlightenment. He defines growth of cyclic. Knowledge, in Biblical mythology, comes through suffering and defeat. Oceanus's words echo the same sentiment. The ideas also find parallels in one of Keats's letter of the same period —

...there is really a grand march of the intellect -- it proves that a mighty providence subdues the mightiest mind of the service of the time being. 12
The next speech is by Clymene, the daughter of Oceanus. Her speech can be described as the musical paean of Apollo. She narrates how she had found a shell and heard a 'golden melody' from it. She put her hands to her ears but --

A voice came sweeter, sweeter
than all tune,
And still it cried 'Apollo!'
Young Apollo!
The morning-bright Apollo!
Young Apollo!
I fled, it followed me, and
cried 'Apollo!'

(Bk. II. 11. 293-96)

According to the myth, Apollo's arrival on Earth was heralded by the sweet music of nightingales and swallows. He brought beneficence of spring and freedom from autumnal dangers and diseases. These sensuous implications are recollected by Clymene. She is young like Apollo but she is ignorant and hence incapable of facing the struggle of evolution.

Enceladus has been listed as the fiercest and wildest of the Titans. According to the original myth, Enceladus and Typhon were the same person. Keats distinguishes between the two. He represents Enceladus as 'tiger-passioned, lion-thoughted'. Enceladus reacts angrily and reminds the Titans of their humiliations. He dismisses Clymene's speech.
as 'baby-words'. War with the Olympians must be continued until the Titans can --

....Singe away the swollen clouds of Jove
Stifling that puny essence in its tent.

( Bk. II. 11. 330-31)

It must be noted that the superior muscular strength of the Titans is being emphasized again and again. The Olympians, in comparison, are described as 'puny'. Enceladus's target is the victory of the 'winged things'. In mythology, the goddess of victory was always represented with wings.

Upon the scene now arrives Hyperion. The brilliance that he radiates is too full of heat to be generative. Hyperion stands silent, dejected and mournful. This sorrowful reunion sets the seal on the defeat of the Titans. Enceladus's anger that matches the heat of Hyperion's brilliance, can only be treated as blind obstinacy. Most important of all is the indication from 'the Mother of the Gods/ In whose face there was no joy'.

Bk. III opens with an invocation of the Muse to leave behind the agony and tension of the Titans and to
turn her attention to Apollo —

Meantime touch piously the
Delphic harp,
And not a wind of heaven
but will breathe
In aid soft warble from
the Dorian flute;
For lo! 'tis the father
of all verse.

( B.III. 11. 10-13 )

In pre-Hellenic days, Delphi was the shrine of Mother Earth guarded by a Python. Apollo slew the Python and established his oracle at Delphi. Delphi, hence is associated with Apollo. The poet defines the notes of Apollo's harp as the first verse.

Apollo is to be 'reborn' as the new god of the Sun. Along with his solar functions, his sway will extend to divination, prophecy, music and poetry. In other words, he will be the god of reason, order, symmetry, harmony, and also instinct and intuition. He will represent the finer aesthetic impulses. His radiance will --

Plush every thing with a
vermeil hue,
Let the rosy glow intense
and warm the air.

( Bk.III. 11. 14-15 )

At the touch of the golden rays, the maids 'Blush keenly,
as with some warm kiss surprized'. The description contrasts sharply with the angry heat radiated earlier by Hyperion. There is warmth, creativity, beauty and sensuousness in Apollo's radiance. In fact, it would not be wrong to say that we are now back in the familiar world of nature, myth and song, so expressive of Keats's poetic vision. The island of Delos with its 'olive green'... 'lawn shading palms', and singing zephyrs remind us of the 'sides of Latmos'. The epic format is already beginning to lapse into the lyric mode.

Like Endymion, Hyperion too has moved through universal space. From the green oak grove the scene shifted to Hyperion's airy world of 'bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light' and from there to the subterranean stone vault of Bk.II, to return finally to the green isle of Delos.

Delos is a small island in the midst of the Cyclades. It is the birth place of Artemis and Apollo. Leto, their mother, was loved by Zeus. Hera learnt of their union and was immensely jealous. Due to her anger, no land was willing to receive Leto. When the time of birth drew near, she came to Delos which was a floating island and hence not in the power of Hera. Later, Delos became an important
centre for the worship of Apollo.

The new hero is not an epic hero. He is, like Keats, the sentimental and youthful poet. He is torn apart by opposing emotions. He is waiting 'in fearless yet in aching ignorance', in blind darkness where 'painful vile oblivion seals my eyes' for the godhood that he intuitively knows he must obtain. He does not, as yet, know how to use the powers he finds burgeoning within him.

Keats's mythic vision treats the correctness of divine functions as the quintessence of godhead. If these duties are imperfectly rendered, the gods can degenerate into sub-divine beings. This is the lesson that Mnemosyne is to teach Apollo. He confesses that his ignorance makes him feel 'cursed and thwarted' and begs the knowledgeable goddess to 'Point me out the way'.

Mnemosyne is the goddess of memory, the mother of the Muses. She has a large stature and a solemn countenance and she is amply robed. Keats treats the process of rebirth at two levels -- the first psychological and the second physical.

The psychological transformation takes place when Apollo stands before her mute countenance --
Mute thou remainest - mute!
yet I can read
A wondrous lesson in thy
silent face
Knowledge enormous makes
a God of me.

( Bk. III. 11. 111-13 )

He feels as though he has drunk a 'blithe or bright elixir' and 'become immortal'.

After the psychological experience, Apollo has to undergo certain physical rituals before his rebirth process can be completed. Apollo trembles, flushes and struggles in pain. The whole body, each muscle, each cell has to respond to the ritual. During the process 'Mnemosyne upheld/ Her arms as one who prophesied'. While the god is reborn in his divine shape, Mnemosyne assumes the magical, ritual posture of the pontiff.

The knowledge that Apollo gains is not ordinary knowledge but an intuitive understanding of the universe. The moment of divinization is really the moment of enlightenment when beauty is born into his soul.

Keats abandoned the poem at this point. Begun as a conventional epic, the poem detoured to become a symbolical discussion of a different kind. Keats's imagination was essentially Romantic. The poem moved out of the epic
format into the lyrical realms that Keats handled so well. Thus, Hyperion the epic could continue no further.

II

Two months after abandoning it, Keats recast the poem as a dream, calling it more specifically The Fall of Hyperion, A Dream. The dream framework has hypnotic associations that add mystery and enchantment to the original narrative. The narrative, in Hyperion, had seemed misty and distant. By entering the poem as the Dreamer, the poet establishes direct contact with the mysterious Matriarch who selects the candidates for rebirth. It is rather ironic that Keats himself was very near death when he wrote The Fall.

In the first few lines, the poet defines his poetic theory in mythic terms, spurred on by his myth-making instincts. Keats presents the structure of poetry as a temple guarded by a veiled goddess. The poet is the mortal intruder who, like Endymion, is subjected to various tests before he is permitted to enter the inner sanctum.

Dreams have a deep significance. The poet says 'Since every man whose soul is not a clod/ Hath visions and would
Dreams that feed the imagination are fertile and creative and related to true poetry. The man whose soul is a 'clod' is the false poet whose dreams are empty. Like Apollo, in the final book of the abandoned *Hyperion*, Keats too, feels oppressed with the ideas burgeoning within him. The themes of evaluation and the sovereignty of beauty had become too important to be discarded and forgotten. The myth of Apollo's triumph had too much personal significance to be abandoned. So, Keats returned to the poem with a new approach. The Fall is a visualization of the recurrent Keatsian archetypal scenes and figures on a single canvas.

The 'dream' commences in the familiar archetypal green bower --

Methought I stood where trees
   of every clime,
Palm, myrtle, oak and sycamore
   and beech,
With plantain, and spice
   blossoms, made a screen;
In neighbourhood of fountains,
   by the noise
Soft-showering in my ears,
   and by the touch
Of scent, not far from roses.

( I, ll. 19-24 )

This bower is more magnificent and awesome than any other
Keatsian bower for it belongs to the most ancient of the gods. This cosmic forest is part of Eden where grow trees of 'every clime' nourished by fertilizing water. In this magical bower of the Golden Age, the poet experiences untroubled contentment. There is an 'arbour with a drooping roof/ Of trellis vines and bells'. It resembles the arbour in the Garden of Adonis and also the arbour in the 'Ode to Psyche'. This arbour is used by Angels and primordial goddesses possibly Mother Eve, for tasting the ritual offerings of special food in order to renew the fertilizing and generative properties of the Earth. The poet feasts 'deliciously' on the remnants and then drinks a 'full drought' from a 'fabled horn' that he identifies as the cornucopia of Ceres, the Mother of Proserpine.

Keats, here, is telescoping two variant rituals. The remnants of the divine feast were not to be traditionally shared by mortals. Mystic meals were shared by votaries in certain rituals related to Orphic cults. The Keatsian Dreamer from the strictly religious point of view performs a sac-religious act. However, as with myth, Keats freely combines rituals and archetypes, too. Traditionally, fasting was recommended in preparation for spiritual experiences. Keats inverts the custom by
ofering a full magical feast to the Dreamer. By eating at the eternal natural source from which life is sustained and renewed, the Dreamer absorbs the divine grace of the Great Goddess and thus prepares himself for the spiritual experiences to come. Then he falls into a 'swoon'.

Keats presents Eve and Ceres on the same canvas. This telescoping adds a new dimension to the poet's already rich mythic vision. It also sheds valuable light on Keats's myth-making instincts. One discovers a series of screens or masks. In the mask of the dream vision the poet enters the myth. In the mask of the myth he presents his poetic theory and within the poetic theory is the seed of his mythologizing imagination.

When the Dreamer recovers from his swoon, he finds that he has been transported to a stone temple. This apparent awakening from a swoon symbolizes the movement from the subconscious to the unconscious resulting in a more profound involvement with the myth.

The stone temple is a primeval construction. It is the architecture of Nature herself, an 'eternal domed monument'. Its rows of columns extend both 'north and south' to end in a 'mist of nothing'. Eastward are the
black gates 'shut against the sunrise' and westward there is an image 'huge of feature as a cloud'. There is a staircase with a 'marble balustrade' leading up to the altar. To scale the 'innumerable degrees' of the staircase seems a 'prodigious toil' to the Dreamer.

In architectural terms, the temple is Grecian. Potter in his Antiquities writes --

Almost all the temples were then so contrived, that the entrance and statues should look towards the east, and they who paid their devotion, towards the west. The place of the images was in the middle of the temple, where they stood on pedestals raised above the height of the altar. 13

At the symbolic level the 'eternal domed monument' with its 'strange vessels' and 'dyed asbestos' represents the structure of poetry. Joseph Campbell says that ancient temples 'still nurtured in mythology' are symbolic of 'the Inexhaustible Point'. The aim of the devotee who enters the sanctury 'is to rehearse the universal pattern as a means of evoking within himself the recollection of the life-centering, life-renewing form'. 14

The Keatsian Dreamer experiences the "life-centering, life-renewing" ritual. He is told by a veiled priestess that he is "dust and ashes" unless he can "mount up these
The veiled priestess is Moneta. In the earlier fragment, Moneta had appeared as Mnemosyne. Keats probably felt that Moneta was more appropriate to his new conception of the priestess's wisdom and prophetic power. Some classical authorities associate Moneta with Minerva, the Greek adaptation of the Egyptian Isis. Isis represents the productive forces of nature. She is also linked with universal knowledge and truth. Lempriere relates that inscriptions on the statues of the goddess were often in these words --

I am all that has been, that shall be, and none among the mortals has hitherto taken off my veil. 15

Keats seems to have created the same awe and mystery in his portrayal of Moneta. Moneta has a deathly pallor, and a tyrannous attitude. The confrontation of Moneta and the Dreamer is similar to the confrontation of the hero of the 'Ode on Melancholy' with 'Veil'd Melancholy in her sovran shrine'. In 'Ode on Melancholy', Keats said about the hero --

His soul shall taste the sadness of her might
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

( Stz.III. 11. 29-30 )
The Dreamer's ordeal in veiled Moneta's temple is similar. The altar is 'horned' and there is a 'sacrificial fire' burning.

The Dreamer encounters a curtain of 'Maian incense'. Maia, in Greek mythology, is the daughter of Atlas and the mother of Hermes. In a rather Dantesque comparison Keats says --

...the small warm rain
Melts out the frozen incense
from all flowers,
And fills the air with so
much pleasant health
That even the dying man
forgets his shroud;

( Canto I. 11. 98-101 )

The incense issuing from the sacrificial fire has regenerative potential. It revives a dying man so much that he 'forgets his shroud'. Dramatically energized, the Dreamer begins to ascend the steps. A 'stifling... suffocating... palsied chill' descends on him but after the first step has been taken --

... life seemed
To pour in at the toes.
I mounted up,
As once fair Angles
on a ladder flew
From the green turf
to Heaven.

( Canto I. 11. 133-36 )
These lines are uttered in a Christian vein. Keats's mythic vision continues to draw from the Bible. M. Allott traces the source of these lines to Genesis XXIII, 12 --

And Jacob ... dreamed, and behold the angles of God ascending the descending on it. 16

In this respect Keats differs from Shelley who used mythology mainly as an instrument for criticizing the Church. Keats's vision is not limited or restricted. He happily fuses pagan and Christian beliefs in a manner that is extremely fascinating.

While the Dreamer undergoes the nightmarish experience of the death-fantasy in order to fulfill the Medusa - rituals Moneta watches from above. Medusa is an ancient aspect of the Great Goddess. Her gaze could turn one to stone. The Dreamer ascends effortlessly. He has conquered profane death through a mystic rebirth involving a defiance of gravity.

On reaching the summit, he stands safe beneath the knees of the massive statue. He addresses the priestess--

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

(Canto I. 145-46)
Monetn continues to tend the sacrificial fire. She says that there are three classes of men. The first is the 'true poet', the second is the 'idle sleeper' and the third is philanthrop who 'come [s] not here'. She also informs him that this is the temple of Saturn. The Dreamer beholds --

...the snowy locks
Hung nobly, as upon the face
of heaven
A midday fleece of clouds.

( Canto I. 452-54 )

The ritualistic rebirth includes the presence of the father-god along with the mother figure unlike Hyperion where Mnemosyne had been alone. The Dreamer expresses his gratitude to Moneta for the favour she has done him by admitting him to the cosmic garden, saving him from death, and 'medicining' him --

That I am favoured for unworthiness,
By such propitious parley medicined
In sickness not ignoble,
I rejoice, --
Aye, and could weep for love of such award

( Canto I. 11. 182-85 )

Finally, she declares "the sacrifice is done" and
turning to the Dreamer bestows the supreme favour of letting him see into her brain. This a repetition of Apollo's divinization where he had looked into Mnemosyne's face. Moneta's brain has been visualized as the 'entails' of an earth-cavern that are 'rich with ore'. It can also be identified as the womb 'what things the hollow brain behind enwombed'. The description of 'the dark secret chambers of her skull' reconstructs a death's head. Keats once again identifies the grave with the womb. In this case, the regenerative archetype has been located inside the head of Moneta. Now, before the Dreamer's eyes, unrolls the history of creation, of the primeval gods and of the universe.

Moneta parts her veils and --

...then saw I a wan face,
Not pined by human sorrows, but
bright-blanchèd
By an immortal sickness which
kills not
It works a constant change,
which happy death
Can put no end to;

( Canto I. 11. 256-60 )

Thus divinized, the Dreamer, like Glaucus in *Endymion* can now have visions of the divine world. Before attempting to apostrophize Apollo, the poet had divinized himself. By
entering the myth, he is attempting to combine divine forms with human experiences and to present the vision in subjective terms. The revised method also did not work out. Basically, the content of the myth was too lofty and celestial to be defined in Keats's sensuous terms.

Moneta in *The Fall* takes on the garb of Keats's archetypal mother-figure. She dominates the poem like Cynthia dominated *Endymion*. Her deathly paleness, "plenatary eyes", 'globed brain' and 'sphered words' are qualities that link her with Cynthia. Mnemosyne in *Hyperion* had been an Earth-goddess, maternal intuitive and awesome. Moneta is a more comprehensive mother-figure. She is fierce and tyrannical as well. Her death-essence, which she shares with Cynthia, suggests the erotic aspect. Thus, in shifting from Mnemosyne to Moneta, Keats shifted from an aspect of the Great Goddess to a comprehensive presentation of her varied attributes. She is now a symbol of poetic consciousness as well. She invests the Dreamer with primary knowledge of himself both as poet and as human being. Analysed in the context, the Dreamer's ascent symbolizes the poet's quest for immortal identity.

The first vision that the Dreamer has is a depiction of Saturn 'Degraded, cold, upon the sodden ground'. Thea,
no longer of superhuman size and strength, as she had been in *Hyperion* comes to comfort him. Thea has been humanized. There is an intense emotional quality in *The Fall*. Having seen the vision first-hand, the Dreamer defines 'the load of this eternal quietude' that grips the scene.

The verdant dreaming oak grove has been replaced by a forest where just 'a solitary gust' swells and dies. The total picture is dismal, bleak and unpromising. The promising of regeneration which had been identified in *Hyperion* is absent here. The tabulear grief continues for almost an eternity --

> For by my burning brain I measured sure Her silver seasons shedded on the night, An ever day by day methought I grew More gaunt and ghostly.  

( *Canto I. 11, 393-96* )

Universal nature had mourned the downfall of the Titans in *Hyperion*. The rich mist of grief that had been the backdrop for *Hyperion* has given way to an eerie and frightening atmosphere. The poet talks about 'mossy glooms', in 'time-eaten oaks' and 'foxes holes'. These are images of stagnation and decay.
Saturn, finally, addresses the solitary Pan. Pan had not figured in *Hyperion*. However, in his attempt to reclothe the myth in a subjective garb, the poet instinctively turns to the lonely god of universal nature. Pan was the only one of the Olympian deities who was not given a heavenly realm but confined to the earthly Arcadia. His was abandoned by his mother at birth and used by the gods as a source of entertainment. The poet, in this context, probably desires to highlight the loneliness and desolation of the fallen Titans.

Canto II opens with Moneta's warning that the events that she is describing to the poet have been humanized. Keats also re-emphasizes the change of approach--

Mortal, that though 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.  

( Canto II. ll. 1-6 )

These lines are reminiscent of the theory of mythology that Keats had expounded in *Endymion*. The elemental origins of
the 'legends' and their retelling by the winds are referred to once again. The four elements viz. air, water, earth and fire are used to connect the mortal and immortal worlds. Myths, once again, are treated as authentic records of higher experiences.

Moneta now directs the poet's gaze to Hyperion's palace. The passage has been slightly altered from that of the first version. The modifications were made, mainly to avoid the Miltonic echoes. The portents of the eagle's wings and neighing steeds have been omitted, as has been the description of the opening palace door. The 'other realms' have been changed to 'melancholy realms' and the 'mammoth brood' is now described as an 'eagle brood'. The hopelessness of the Titans increases as they are described as listening not 'in sharp pain' but 'in their doom'. The 'omens drear' traced by the poet as a Miltonism, is changed to 'dire prodigies'. Hyperion, instead of coming 'slope upon' is 'sloping tc'. However, before he can reach the 'great main Cupola', The Fall was finally abandoned.

III

Keats had intended to use the myth as a vehicle for
defining the law of progress. However, the archetypes of
cyclical rebirth, the Great Goddess, the fertility hero,
the green bower, and the old man imposed a circular struc-
ture on the poem. As definition of the law of progress
the movement should have been in terms of an upward ascent.

Apollo's rebirth ritual involves the fertility myth. Apollo, himself, becomes the fertility god whose fertility
functions are extended into the realms of poetry and aes-
theses. He represents the generative spirit behind the
entire universe, both physical and intellectual. In this
role, he is permanently bound to the wheel of time which
follows a circular pattern. Hyperion is a discussion of
the mystical dimensions of the ritual whereas The Fall
furnishes the psychological dimensions.

Poetry, for Keats, is not the mere literary rende-
ing of ideas but a comprehensive cognitive crystallization
of relationships of life itself to all its primary forms
viz. to the elements — earth, air, water, fire to the
vegetation of the Earth, to love, to death, to all the
agonies of the human heart. Mythology serves as the
sensual and fertile metaphor for his poetic vision. In his
treatment of the Hyperion myth, the poet is offering a
mythical elaboration of his own poetic desires.
Keats explained his decision to abandon *Hyperion* to Reynolds in his letter dated 21st September —

There were too many Miltonic inversions in it — Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an 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 mark X to the false beauty proceeding from art, and one ||— to the true voice of feeling. 17

The immediate reason for stopping work on *Hyperion* was because Keats felt that 'life to him [Milton] would be death to me'. The lofty Miltonic idiom was dramatic, not narrative as Keats believed true poetry should be. *Hyperion* served as nourishment to Keats's critical potential. He learnt how to enlarge his poetic universe with a philosophical dimension, and also to change his rather indolent Spenserian verse with a new kind of force.

During the Romantic period, with the rejection of Augustanism, Milton came to stand for all that was lofty, epic and severe in the English poetic tradition. The second generation of the Romantics were deeply impressed by his heroic individuality, his serene assumption of the poet's public roles as moral teacher and spiritual healer and most of all by the supreme confidence with which he undertook his lofty theme.
The Romantic period was a period of revolt and Keats had the same lonely mission as the other great Romantics -- to proceed to the heart of humanity through poetry. *Hyperion* and *The Fall* are poems about the poet and poetry.

Apart from the Miltonisms, Keats's *Hyperion* also frequently echoes Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Spenser's *Faerie Queen* and Beckford's *Vathek*. The first twenty lines of *The Fall* echo Dante. The reconstruction of the poem as a vision may have been the influence of Coleridge's *Allegoric Vision* and Addison's *Vision of Mirzah*.

The first readers of *Hyperion* were impressed by its fragmentary form. Leigh Hunt described it as 'a fragment -- a gigantic one, like a ruin in the desert'. Byron felt that the 'fragment of *Hyperion* seems actually inspired by the Titans, and is as sublime as Aeschylus.'

Modern critics like W.J. Bate, Gittings and Bush have praised it for its fine opening and the sustaining of poetical qualities throughout the three books. *The Fall* has been described by Bridges, as Keats's "most mature attempt... to express his own convictions concerning human life." Critics like Colvin and Murry have generally
recognized the strengthened promise of poetic maturity both in the new material and in the adaptation of passages from the earlier version.

Keats's retelling of the myth of Hyperion, its adaptation, expansion and treatment are essentially individual. Loaded with symbolic significance and used as a mode for defining not only his poetic theory but also his mythic vision and ultimately the attempt to use it as a vehicle for defining the law of evolution are Keats's own contributions.

It is clear, therefore, that Keats was no blind imitator but a brilliant and talented artist hampered by inexperience and ill health. There is, in spite of Keats's own dissatisfaction with it, strengthened promise of poetic maturity in the two fragments.
Notes and References


2. Apollo is the central figure in 'Ode to Apollo', 'Epistle to George Felton Mathew' 'Hymn to Apollo' and 'Apollo to the Graces'.

3. Indications to this effect were made in the Preface to Endymion.


8. Rose, op.cit., p. 44.


16. Ibid., p. 665.

