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### The Sources of John Keat's Poem "Hyperion"

Elizabeth Grinnan Jackson  
*College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences*

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The Sources of John Keats's Poem Hyperion

by

Elizabeth Grinnan Jackson

The Sources of John Keats's Poem Hyperion

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS

OF

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY

for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

1937

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## Preface

The subject of this thesis was selected because of a warm, personal admiration for John Keats as a poet, an admiration that was first inspired by Miss Roberta D. Cornelius of Randolph-Macon Woman's College. The poetry of John Keats has been studied exhaustively. I understand that Professor John Livingston Lowes will soon publish a book on Hyperion that will make further investigation of the subject futile for any amateur. My plan, however, was to gather together the existing modern criticism of Hyperion, and to recheck all available known sources of the poem. Unfortunately I was unable to procure a copy of Sandys's translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses. This book was one of the first published in America and is now very rare. The edition of Lempriere's dictionary that I used is an American reprint and has been slightly altered from the one that Keats possessed. In essential details the editions are the same. The editors of the American Lempriere state that "with scrupulous care they have removed from the pages the offensive matter with which those of the first author were so profusely stained."

My original plan was to include the sources of The Fall of Hyperion but, on examination, I found that the mythological sources of the two fragments were identical, and that I could add

nothing to Professor Lowes' article Moneta's Temple in the December 1936, PMLA. It seemed necessary, however, to attempt to establish the dates of both poems since they are so inextricably connected.

I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Dean Grace Warren Landrum for her inspiration and invaluable help, and to Professor Charles T. Harrison for his guidance of my work.

E. G. J.

August, 1937.

Introduction

When John Keats died, in February 1822, he left, among other unfinished poems, Hyperion and The Fall of Hyperion. The purpose of this thesis will be to examine the available sources of Hyperion in order to evaluate the extent of influences, chiefly classical.

The dates of composition for both poems are doubtful. There is also some question as to which was written first. Miss Amy Lowell, in John Keats, states the theory that The Fall of Hyperion precedes Hyperion. She discounts the statement of Charles Armitage Brown that Keats, in the evenings during November and December 1819, was remodeling the Fragment of Hyperion into "a vision", because Brown was not always accurate in his statements, and was recalling events of twenty years past. Her conclusion is that "Hyperion was undoubtedly begun at Wentworth Place after Keats has abandoned his first attempt at the subject, which was the vision".<sup>1</sup> Professor Ridley disagrees and considers The Fall of Hyperion "a new poem".

I have said 'new' since I believe that we get nowhere at all in the examination of The Fall of Hyperion, and miss the greater part of its significance, if we persist in regarding it as a rather feeble recast of an earlier work. I do not believe that

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<sup>1</sup> Lowell, Amy, John Keats, II, 342.



the feeling in Keats's mind was just 'Now, I must try to finish Hyperion'. I think that it was much more nearly 'Now the ideas to which I gave only dim expression at the end of Hyperion have become more clearly defined; the kind of problem which they propose I cannot leave without an attempt to solve, and to express the solution; and to do this I must write a new poem; but in it I can use some of what I wrote before.'<sup>2</sup>

Professor Finney, in his philosophical study of Keats's poetry, concludes that Keats worked on the two poems alternately.

Keats worked steadily on Hyperion through the two last weeks of December 1818 and the two first weeks of January 1819.<sup>3</sup>

His work was interrupted in the latter part of January 1819 by the composition of The Eve of St. Agnes and resumed in April 1819 when he wrote the fragment of the third book and gave the manuscript to Woodhouse, who copied it on April 20. Professor Finney believes that Keats had composed the first draft of the introduction to The Fall of Hyperion in the latter part of September and the first part of October 1818.

The period from April 24 to October 24, 1818, was the only period in his life in which he professed humanitarianism and it is, therefore, the only period in which he could have composed this humanitarian introduction. He could not have composed it in the fall of 1819, for in this period he was hostile to humanitarianism.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ridley, M. R., Keats' Craftmanship, p. 267.

<sup>3</sup> Finney, Claude Lee, The Evolution of Keats's Poetry, II. 488.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 712.

The evidence from Keats's letters is not conclusive. Keats employed the titles Hyperion and The Fall of Hyperion to designate without distinction both the Wordsworthian and humanitarian dream and the Miltonic and humanistic epic. His first statement in regard to the composition of Hyperion occurs in a journal letter to George and Georgiana Keats, dated December 25, 1818.

I think you knew before you left England that my next subject would be 'the fall of Hyperion'.<sup>5</sup> I went on a little with it last night, but it will take some time to get into the vein again. I will not give you any extracts because I wish the whole to make an impression.<sup>6</sup>

Again in the same letter he speaks of his large poem "which is scarce began". In February 1819 he writes; "I have not gone on with Hyperion - for to tell the truth I have not been in great cue for writing lately - I must wait for the spring to rouse me up a little."<sup>7</sup> In September, 1819, he writes to John Hamilton Reynolds: "I have given up Hyperion - there were too many Miltonic inversions in it."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> It is generally conceded that Keats refers here to the Miltonic and humanistic poem Hyperion.

<sup>6</sup> The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats, p. 342.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 355.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 408.

**Classical Dictionaries**

Chapter I

Early Greek mythology plays a large part in the subject of Hyperion. The statement of Woodhouse concerning Keats's purpose is given by Sir Sidney Colvin:

The poem, if completed, would have treated of the dethronement of Hyperion, the former God of the Sun, by Apollo, - and incidentally of those of Oceanus by Neptune of Saturn by Jupiter, etc., and of the war of the giants for Saturn's reestablishment with other events, of which we have but very dark hints in the mythological poets of Greece and Rome. In fact the incidents would have been pure creations of the Poet's brain. <sup>1</sup>

Sir Sidney Colvin believed that the essential meaning of the story was symbolic; "it meant the dethronement of an older and ruder worship by one more advanced and humane, in which ideas of ethics and arts held a larger place beside ideas of nature and her brute powers". <sup>2</sup>

Keats derived at least a part of his information concerning the Titans from classical dictionaries. It is known that he used Lempriere's Classical Dictionary, Tocke's Pantheon, Spence's Polymetis and Baldwin's Pantheon. Lempriere, a modern mythologist, derived his definitions of the gods from various and contradictory classical sources - from Homer, Hesiod, Apollodorus, Pausanias, Diodorus Siculus, Hyginus, Vergil, Ovid, and others. Professor Ridley considers Keats's use of Lempriere to be negligible.

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<sup>1</sup> Colvin, Sidney, John Keats, p. 427.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 427.

It is on the face of it improbable that any man of Keats' temper of mind was willing to stifle himself with the dusty entries of Lemprière if he could breathe the freer air of Chapman and other Elizabethan translators. <sup>3</sup>

However, for the purposes of reference, Lempriere must have been convenient. In the first book of Hyperion Keats introduces Saturn and Thea. Lemprière says that Saturn was a son of Coelus, or Uranus, by Terra, called also Titea, Thea, or Tithesia. "The god is generally represented as an old man bent through age and infirmity. He holds a scythe in his right hand, with a serpent which bites its own tail, which is an emblem of time and of the revolution of the year." <sup>4</sup> Keats speaks of Saturn as "gray-haired" and "his old right hand" is "unsceptered". His eyes are "faded" and his tongue "palsied". Thea, "The tander spouse of gold Hyperion", appears also in Lemprière. "Thea, a daughter of Uranus and Terra. She married her brother Hyperion, by whom she had the sun, the moon, Aurora, etc. She is also called Thia, Titaea, Rhea, Tethys etc." <sup>5</sup> Hyperion is given as the son of Coelus and Terra. <sup>6</sup> Coelus, or Uranus, "was son of Terra, whom he afterwards married." <sup>7</sup> Cybele was the daughter.

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<sup>3</sup> Ridley, M. R., op. cit. p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> Lemprière, J., Bibliotheca Classica, p. 773.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 780.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 722.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 698.

of Coelus and Terra, and wife of Saturn.<sup>8</sup> Keats makes no mention of the fact that she is Saturn's wife. Six of the Titans - Coeus, Gyges, Briareus, Typhon, Dolor and Porphyriion,

With many more, the brawniest in assault,<sup>9</sup>  
Were pent in regions of laborious breath.

Lempriere lists all of these except Dolor, Mnemosyne, whose name Keats later changes to Moneta,<sup>10</sup> has an interesting history:

Mnemosyne, a daughter of Coelus and Terra, mother of the nine muses, by Jupiter, who assumed the form of a shepherd to enjoy her company. The word mnemosyne signifies memory, and therefore the poets have rightly called memory the mother of the Muses, because it is to that mental endowment that mankind are indebted for their progress in science. 11

Creüs and Asia are not given in Lempriere, but Iapetus, Cottus, and Enceladus are entered as Titans. Keats disregards Lempriere's statement that "the flames of Aetna proceeded from the breath of Enceladus" <sup>12</sup> but speaks of him as "Tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wrath". Atlas, Phorcus the sire of Gorgons, Oceanus and his wife Tethys, Clymene the wife of Iapetus, Themis, and Ops the queen, all may be found in Lempriere; but, in most cases, John Keats has given them quite different personalities.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 700.

<sup>9</sup> Hyperion, II, (1), 21.

<sup>10</sup> In The Fall of Hyperion.

<sup>11</sup> Lempriere, Op. cit., p. 744.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 708.

The Titans, as they appear in Hyperion, experience pain and wrath, but not barbaric pain and wrath. Keats makes it quite clear that their rage has been brought about by their fall from power and that their previous existence had been one

Of influence benign on planets pale,  
Of admonitions to the winds and seas,  
Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting.<sup>13</sup>

Spence's Polymetis is a large book bound in gold tooled, brown leather. The format is excellent, and the plates are beautifully engraved. Keats, with his "delicate and snail-horn perception of beauty" must have derived a pure esthetic pleasure from the mere outward aspects of the book. In the introduction the author makes it clear that he has confined himself solely to the consideration of "the Imaginary, or Allegorical Beings; as received among the Romans, in the better ages of their state. Strictly speaking, I have nothing to do with their theology: my subject, being the Descriptions and representations of their deities; and not the doctrines they held, in relation to them".<sup>14</sup>

Professor Ridley describes the influence of Spence's Polymetis as "considerable".<sup>15</sup> He describes the book thus:

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<sup>13</sup> Hyperion, I, © 108-110.

<sup>14</sup> Spence's Polymetis, Preface.

<sup>15</sup> Ridley, M. R., Op. cit., p. 60.

This is a work of considerable learning, with extensive quotations from the classical writers, written by a man genuinely interested in his subject in a somewhat ponderous but eminently readable eighteenth-century style, and above all illustrated with a large number of excellent plates. 16

He cites the plate on page 219, where Neptune is described as "passing over the calm surface of the sea in his chariot drawn by sea horses" as being directly relevant to Hyperion II, 234. 17

his chariot, foam'd along  
By noble creatures he hath made?  
I saw him on the calmed waters scud.

An examination of the book reveals only a few similarities with Hyperion. It seems necessary to disagree with Professor Ridley's adjective "considerable" and to replace it "slight".

From Spence's Polymetis Keats learned that Saturn "is very old, and decrepit, as well as chained; and appears, in all respects, like one that must go on extremely slowly". 18 The plate<sup>19</sup> pictures him with wings but his feet are manacled together. Keats makes no use of this latter fact. Hyperion and Thea do not appear in the Polymetis; and of the list of Titans given in Hyperion II the names of Coeus<sup>20</sup>, Dolor, Mnemosyne, Creüs, Cottus, Phorcus, Clymene, Themis and Ops are derived from some other source than the Polymetis.

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16 Ibid., p. 299.

17 Ibid., p. 299.

18 Spence's Polymetis, p. 182.

19 Ibid., XXVI, Plate II.

20 Spence mentions Coeus as one of "this class of daring monsters" and gives Vergil as his authority. The names are possibly the same.



It is possible that Spence may have influenced Keats in his picture of Asia. Keats describes her thus:

Asia, born of most enormous Caf,  
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,  
Though feminine, than any of her sons:  
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,  
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,  
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk  
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.<sup>21</sup>

In the Polymetis "this goddess appears as in deep distress, for the sufferings and desolation of her people".<sup>22</sup> The plate next to Asia is one of Africa who has on "an elephant-helmet" and is often represented "with an elephant at her feet". Keats may have found, in these lines and in these two adjoining plates, the germ for his description.

So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk  
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.

Spence, in his account of "the rebel giants" says:

"Typhoeus seems to be distinguished by the poets, as one of the chief leaders in this attempt for the sovereignty of heaven. Horace mentions him first in his account of the battle: and gives us the names of four more of them; Mimas, Porphyrion, Rhaecus, and Enceladus. Vergil adds Coeus and Iapetus, to this class of daring monsters; and Aegeon; and the two sons of Aloeus. We learn from Ovid that Gyges was a principal in this affair; and that

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<sup>21</sup> Hyperion II, 53-63.

<sup>22</sup> Spence, Op. cit., p. 242.

Typhon was concerned in it.<sup>23</sup>

This is meagre information and would justify the conclusion that Keats did not derive a great amount of information from Polymetis for use in Hyperion, however familiar he may have been with its delightful pages.

Tooke's Pantheon is described as "arid", but Professor Ridley places some emphasis on the importance of E. Baldwin's Pantheon.

It is, as Sir Sidney Colvin describes it, a 'well-felt and well-written little primer of mythology'. It is no more than a primer, but it is written by one who really cares for what he is writing about, and it is thoroughly readable. And Baldwin gives us Tellus, tells us that Saturn married Ops, otherwise called Cybele, gives a list of the Titans, and in the list of the giants includes both Enceladus and Porphyryon.<sup>24</sup>

Since Lemprière gives the same information it is difficult to understand why Professor Ridley considers Baldwin's Pantheon more important. It is evident that Keats could have derived all of the characters listed in Hyperion from the combined classical dictionaries that he is known to have had access to except for Dolor and "the most unclassical Caf".

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<sup>23</sup> Spence, Op. cit., p. 278.

<sup>24</sup> Ridley, M. R., Op. cit., p. 61.

## **Classical Translations**

Chapter II

Keats derived some of the mythological material in Hyperion from English (chiefly Renaissance English) translations of Greek and Roman poems and histories. Professor Finney believes that:

He was especially indebted to Chapman's translations of Homer's Iliad, Odyssey, and Hymns, and Hesiod's Georgics, (or Works and Days); Cooke's translation of Hesiod's Works and Days and Theogony (printed in Chalmer's English Poets, 1810); Sandys's translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses; and Booth's translation of Diodorus Siculus's Historical Library.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Ridley mentions Keats's indebtedness to "Chapman's translation of Hesiod's Works and Days, Cooke's translation of Hesiod's Theogony, and Sandys's translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses, not to mention more casual allusions, scattered all up and down Elizabethan and other literature, to the Titans and their war with the Olympians".<sup>2</sup>

Why professors Ridley and Finney both name Hesiod's Works and Days as a source for Hyperion is difficult to explain. A careful study of Cooke's translation yields no possible comparison with Hyperion. The Greek poet recounts the history of the five ages on earth: the golden age, the silver age, the brazen age,

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<sup>1</sup> Finney, C. L., Op. cit., p. 494.

<sup>2</sup> Ridley, M. R., Op. cit., p. 60.

the age of heroes, and the iron age. No mention is made of any of the Titans except Saturn. The Theogony is a different matter.

In the Argument Hesiod's purpose is translated by Cooke:

This poem, besides the genealogy of the deities and heroes, contains the story of Heaven, and the conspiracy of his wife and sons against him, the story of Styx and her offspring, of Saturn and his sons etc.<sup>3</sup>

The birth of the pre-Olympian gods is described in swift heroic couplets:

At length the Ocean, with his pools profound,  
Whose whirling streams pursue their rapid round,  
Of Heaven and Earth is born; Coeus his birth  
From them derives, and Creus, sons of earth:  
Hyperion and Japhet, brothers, join:  
Thea, and Rhea, of this ancient line  
Descend; and Themis boasts the source divine:  
And thou, Mnemosyne, and Phoebe crown'd  
With gold, and Tethys and her charms renown'd;<sup>4</sup>

Keats also couples Mnemosyne and Phoebe together:

Mnemosyne was straying in the world; <sup>5</sup>  
Far from her moon had Phoebe wandered;

Hesiod continues:

The fruitful Earth by Heaven conceived again,  
And for three mighty sons the rending pain  
She suffer'd; Cottus, terrible to name,  
Gyges, and Briareus, of equal fame;<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Works of Hesiod, trans, from the Greek by Thomas Cooke.

<sup>4</sup> Theogony, l. 214-222.

<sup>5</sup> Hyperion II, 29, 30.

<sup>6</sup> Theogony, l. 235-239.

"Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons" may be found in Lempriere and also in Hesiod:

Enyo with her sacred veil: the same  
To Phorcys bore the Gorgons.<sup>7</sup>

Clymene is given as the daughter of Tethys and Ocean:

Tethys and Ocean, born of Heaven, embrace,  
Whence springs the Nile, and a long, watery race,  
-----  
Hence Hippo, and hence Clymene, we trace.<sup>8</sup>

Keats does not mention the fact that Phoebe and Coeus are mates and lists them separately. Hesiod says:

Phoebe with fondness to her Coeus cleaved,  
And she a goddess by a god conceived;<sup>9</sup>

There is some basis for a parallel between Hyperion II, 19-28 and the Theogony I. 916-621.

Coeus, and Gyges, and Briareus,  
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon,  
With many more, the brawniest in assault,  
Were pent in regions of laborious breath;  
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;  
Without a motion, save of their big hearts  
Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed  
With sanguine, feverous, boiling gurge of pulse.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., I. 427.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., I. 521 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., I. 625.



From the Iliad Keats could have learned something of the origin of the gods, but on this subject Homer is not very explicit. He was acquainted with the existence of an older dynasty deposed by the Olympians, the dynasty of Cronus and the Titans. In The Iliad Jove says to Hera:

I weigh not thy displeas'd spleen, though to  
th' extremest bounds  
Of earth and seas it carry thee, where endless  
night confounds  
Japhet, and my dejected sire (Cronus), who sit  
so far beneath  
They never see the flying sun, nor hear the winds  
that breathe,  
Near to profoundest Tartarus:11

And in the beginning of Book VIII, Jove threatens:

I'll cast him down as deep  
As Tartarus, the brood of night, where Barathrum  
doth steep  
Torment in his profoundest sinks, where is the  
floor of brass,  
And gates of iron; the place for depth, as far doth  
hell surpass,  
As heaven for height exceeds the earth; then shall  
he know from thence  
How much my power, past all the Gods, hath  
sovereign eminence.12

Keats also describes the abode of the Titans as dark:

It was a den where no insulting light  
Could glimmer on their tears.13

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11 Homer's Iliad, trans. by George Chapman, p. 107.

12 Ibid., p. 100.

13 Hyperion, II, 5.



and as very deep:

Far sunken from the **healthy** breath of morn,  
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star.<sup>14</sup>

But the "shady vale" that Keats describes is, in the romantic tradition, a rocky, forested region, and has no floor of brass.

Keats learned from Chapman that the gate of heaven was guarded by the hours:

Saturnia whipped her horse,  
And heaven gates, guarded by the Hours, oped by  
their proper force;  
Through which they flew:<sup>15</sup>

He transfers this detail to the palace of Hyperion:

Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope  
In smoothest silence, - - - - -  
- - - - -  
He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath;  
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,  
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,  
That scared away the meek ethereal Hours  
And made their dove-wings tremble.<sup>16</sup>

There is also a possible similarity between the two following descriptions:

while sometimes eagle's wings,  
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,  
Darken'd the place; and neighing steeds were heard,  
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.  
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths  
Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills,<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., I, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Homer's Iliad, Op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>16</sup> Hyperion I, 205-217.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., I, 182-186.

Midway betwixt the earth and heaven; to Ida then  
    he (Jove) came,  
Abounding in delicious springs, and nurse of  
    beasts untame,  
Where, on the mountain Gargarus, men did a fane  
    erect  
To his high name, and altars sweet;<sup>18</sup>

In the fourteenth book of the Iliad, Somnus alludes

    all the gods, of the infernal state,  
Which circle Saturn.<sup>19</sup>

Professor Finney notes this quotation but does not call attention to the fact that Keats also places the Titans in a circle around Saturn:

Scarce images of life, one here, one there,  
Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque  
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor.  
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,  
In dull November, and their chancel vault,  
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Homer's Iliad, Op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>20</sup> Hyperion II, 33-38.

<sup>21</sup> The Druid stones, as Miss Amy Lowell observes, are remembered from Keats's Scotch tour, when he and Brown saw them in a Scotch mist. "On our return from this circuit, we ordered dinner, and set forth about a mile and a half on the Penrith road, to see the Druid temple. We had a fag up hill, rather too near dinner time, which was rendered void by the gratification of seeing those aged stones on a gentle rise in the midst of the Mountains, which at that time darkened all around, except at the fresh opening of the Vale of St. John". (Letter to Thomas Keats, June 29, 1818.)

This examination of two of the Renaissance classical translations that Keats used shows that there is no indebtedness to Cooke's translation of Hesiod's Works and Days, that the poet may have derived names and genealogy from the Theogony, and that there is some slight similarity of ideas and phrasing in Chapman's Homer and Hyperion.

**The Miltonic Influence**

Chapter III

The Miltonic influence in Hyperion has been discussed more widely than any other influence, probably because of Keats's own statement in a letter of John Hamilton Reynolds, dated <sup>to</sup> September 22, 1819.

I have given up Hyperion - 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 a mark X to the false beauty proceeding from art, and one || to the true voice of feeling. Upon my soul 't was imagination - I cannot make the distinction - Every now and then there is a Miltonic intonation - But I cannot make the division properly.

Keats was thoroughly familiar with Lycidas, Comus, Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes, as well as with Milton's "delectable prose".<sup>1</sup> He began his study of Shakespeare in April and his study of Milton in October and November 1817, "learning intensity and negative capability (or objectivity) from the one and conciseness, intensity, and sublimity from the other".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Keats, John, Op. cit., p. 294.

<sup>2</sup> Finney, Claude Lee, Op. cit. p. 506.

Professor Finney believes that:

Hyperion is a conscious and direct imitation of Milton's Paradise Lost, which is a classical epic in genre and which has many classical and un-English characteristics in diction, imagery, figures of speech, and sentence structure. Keats had too much creative imagination, however, to make a literal and mechanical imitation. He employed the devices of Milton's style as creatively as Vergil had employed those of Homer's style and as Milton had employed the stylistic devices of Homer and Vergil.<sup>3</sup>

He quotes Ernest de Selincourt's excellent analysis of the Miltonic qualities and devices in the style of Hyperion:

One of the most characteristic and effective features of the style of Paradise Lost is the studied repetition of words and phrases. This is a development of the poetic device called by Dryden the "turn", but which the same word or phrase is used twice in a different relation - its repetition giving a particular significance to the part which it performs on the second occasion. The "turn" can be employed for mere emphasis, or for musical effect, or, more satisfactorily, for both combined; but its finest use is informed with a certain pathos, or subtle but telling irony, as in Vergil's lines on the fatal impatience of Orpheus to see his bride (Georgics, IV. 488, 489)-----In classical literature the "turn" found most favour with Ovid, in whom it degenerated into a mere prettiness, and the early Elizabethans caught it principally from Ovid, though Spenser developed to the full its most delicate musical possibilities. But in English poetry Milton has the most constant recourse to it; in his work it is found in all its forms, from the vulgar Ovidian pun, which fortunately Keats escaped, to its finest and highest use.<sup>4</sup>

Sir Sidney Colvin considers that:

The Miltonisms in Hyperion are rather matters of diction and construction - construction almost always derived from the Latin - than of rhythm: sometimes also they are matters of a direct verbal echo and reminiscence.-----Through-out the fragment Keats uses frequently and with fine effect the Miltonic figure of the 'turn' or rhetorical iteration of identical words to a fresh purport.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 506.

<sup>4</sup> Finney, Claude Lee, Op. cit., p. 506 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Colvin, Sidney, Op. cit., p. 430.

Professor Havens, in his exhaustive study of the influence of Milton on English poetry, concludes that Hyperion is more like Paradise Lost than any other great poem.

Nor is it a question merely of certain stylistic qualities, of some unusual words and a few borrowed phrases, but of the entire conception, tone, and handling of the work. Instead of copying Milton's peculiarities, Keats, one might almost say, tried to write a poem as Milton would have written it, and as a result Hyperion is more like Paradise Lost than is any other great poem we have.

To realize how Miltonic the poem is we have only to compare it with other epics. Keats is not at all Homeric; his gods, for example have almost nothing in common with the very human deities of the Iliad and Odyssey, nor has he the action, the swiftness and buoyancy, of the Grecian. He leaves an impression, as Milton does in the main, of characters, places, and scenes rather than of events; and he is concerned entirely, as Milton is largely, not with mortals, as are other epic poets, but with gods and demi-gods. This is of course one reason why both poems lack human interest. The entire action of Hyperion, furthermore, raised as it is above human passions, has the largeness, the exalted dignity, the solemnity, the aloofness, which are particularly associated with Paradise Lost.<sup>6</sup>

The parallel passages, listed by Professor Havens, are as follows:<sup>7</sup>

Those winged steeds, with snorting nostrils bold  
Snuff at its faint extreme.

P. L. IV, 364-5.

Hyperion---still snuff'd the incense.

Hyperion I, 66-7.

With delight he snuff'd the smell.

P. L. X, 272.

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<sup>6</sup> Havens, Robert S., The Influence of Milton on English Poetry, p. 203.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Appendix A, p. 621 ff.

And thus in thousand hugest fantasies.  
Hyperion II, 13.

A thousand fantasies  
Begin to throng into my memory,  
Comus, 205-206.

Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn  
Hyperion I, 2.  
Sweet is the breath of morn.  
P. L. IV, 641.

Am I to leave this haven of my rest,  
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,  
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,  
These crystalline pavilions and pure fanes?  
Hyperion I, 235-8.  
'Is this the region, this the soil, the clime'  
Said then the lost Archangel, 'this the seat  
That we must change for Heaven? this mournful gloom  
For that celestial light?'  
P. L. I, 242-5.

When the chill rain begins at shut of eve.  
Hyperion II, 36.  
Return'd at shut of evening flowers.  
P. L. IX, 278.

Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs.  
Hyperion II, 54.  
Which cost Ceres all that pain.  
P. L. IV, 271.

With locks not oozy.  
Hyperion II, 170.  
His oozy locks he laves.  
Lycidas, 175.

Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth  
Hyperion II, 266.  
The soft delicious air- - - -  
Their soft ethereal warmth.  
P. L. II, 400, 601.

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In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute.

Hyperion III, 12.

The Dorian mood. Of flutes and soft recorders.

P. L. I, 550-1.

Professor Ridley notes the following passages in Hyperion that are similar to lines in Milton's poems:<sup>8</sup>

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,  
Still as the silence round about his lair;  
Forest on forest hung about his head  
Like cloud on cloud.

Hyperion I, 1-7.

Full forty days he passed - whether on hill  
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night  
Under the covert of some ancient oak  
Or cedar to defend him from the dew,

P. R. I, 303-306.

This passage in Milton was also connected in Keats's mind with "the silent valley" of Paradise Lost:

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.

P. L. II, 546-550.

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<sup>8</sup> Ridley, M. R., Op. cit., p. 68ff. Professor Ridley does not quote the passages in full, but gives book and line references. In many cases he duplicates the parallel passages given by Havens. Havens derived many of his from de Selincourt's study of Hyperion.

Keats wrote, in the margin of his Milton, beside the former passage:

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, etc.  
How much of the charm is in the valley!<sup>9</sup>

Professor Ridley believes that the first eight lines, "the morn, noon, eve series", are a reminiscence of the fall of Mulciber, but there seems little basis for such a comparison. "A summer's day" has certainly no individual, or Miltonic mark.

Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn  
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,  
A summer's day, and with the setting sun  
Dropt from the zenith,

P. L. I, 742-744.

He also calls attention to "the blaze of noon" in Samson Agonistes<sup>10</sup> as the inspiration of Keats's "fiery noon". Such a point is too unimportant to cavil over; but Keats certainly did not need to go to Milton to discover the non-distinctive epithet of "fiery".

Professor Ridley finds a similarity in this stately opening scene, as a whole, and Milton's border of Eden. In this instance, he is justified:

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<sup>9</sup> Finney, Claude Lee, Op. cit., p. 512.

<sup>10</sup> Samson Agonistes, 80.

and overhead up-grew  
Insuperable highth of loftiest shade,  
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,  
A Sylvan Scene, and, as the ranks ascend  
Shade above shade, a woody theatre  
Of stateliest view.

P. L. IV, 137-42.

Also from Paradise Lost comes the magnificent revenge  
of hurling mountains at the <sup>enemy</sup> evening. Enceladus

meditated, plotted, and even now  
Was hurling mountains in that second war,  
Not long delayed, that scared the younger Gods  
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.<sup>11</sup>

Hyperion II, 69-72.

The blank verse of Hyperion is at times as full and as  
sonorous as that of Milton, but it has more simplicity. Its  
periods are not so complex; and the similes in no instance attain  
the involved patterns of Paradise Lost.<sup>12</sup> Naturally, Keats  
cannot compete with Milton in his wealth of allusions to the  
literature of the past. In only one field is Keats the master,

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<sup>11</sup> Woodhouse has suggested that these lines give Keats's plan for the future development of Hyperion. (Colvin, Sidney S. Op. cit., p. 428.) Greek mythology has many instances where the gods assumed the guise of beasts and birds. It is quite possible that Keats intended the Titans to wage an unsuccessful war on the Olympians, and that he foreshadows the event in the mind of Enceladus.

<sup>12</sup> The Miltonic simile has been reduced to logical patterns, which exceed in variety those of any ancient poet. See James Whaler's article The Miltonic Simile, PMLA, December 1931.

and that is when he describes natural scenery. Only John Keats, pre-eminently the sensuous poet, could write such lines as:

No stir of air was there,  
Not so much life as on a summer's day  
Rebs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,  
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.<sup>21</sup>

and:

As when, upon a tranced summer night,  
Those green-robed sensators of mighty woods,  
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,  
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir?<sup>22</sup>

It is apparent, however, that Hyperion is strongly Miltonic in conception and phraseology.

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<sup>21</sup> Hyperion I, 7-10.

<sup>22</sup> Hyperion I, 72-75.

**Miscellaneous Sources**

## Chapter IV

There are several miscellaneous sources of Hyperion to be considered that do not fall into any of the preceding categories. Dolor and Caf are still to be accounted for. Keats was familiar with Hyginus's Fabulae. He must have first noted this name given as an authority at the end of the notations in Lempriere. Hyginus's genealogy of the gods differs in many particulars from Hesiod's and also from Lempriere's. Keats does not follow Hyginus in representing the Titans as the sons of Aether and Terra and the Giants as sons of Tartarus and Terra; but he must have remembered the name of Dolor from the Fabulae:

Ex Aethere & Terra, Dolor<sup>1</sup>, Dolus, Ira, Luctus, Mendacium, Jusjurandum, Ultio, Intemperatia, Altercatio, Oblivio, Socordia, Timor, Superbia, Ingestum, Pugna, Oceanus, Themis, Tartarus, Pontus, & Titanes, Briareus, Gyges, Steropes, Atlas, Hyperion, & Ptolus, Saturnus, Ops, Moneta, Dione, Furiae tres, id est, Alecto, Megaera, Tisiphone.<sup>2</sup>

Caf has been traced, by Professor Ridley, through a hint from de Sélincourt, to William Beckford's spicy and extravagant tale, Vathek.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Not underlined in the original.

<sup>2</sup> Finney, Claude Lee, p. 497.

<sup>3</sup> It is clear that Keats had read Vathek, from the allusion in a letter of July 1818, "I should like to employ Caliph Vathek to kick him". Certainly Vathek possessed high talent in this art.)

Kaf is mentioned several times:

Are we arrived at the horrible Kaf?<sup>4</sup>

In the dark caverns of Kaf<sup>5</sup>

In the notes, Beckford explains:

This mountain, which in reality is no other than Caucasus,<sup>6</sup> was supposed to surround the earth like a ring encompassing a finger; - - - - - To arrive at the Kaf a vast region, far from the sun and summer gale, must be traversed; over this dark and cheerless desert the way is inextricable without the direction of supernatural guidance. Here the dives or giants were confined after their defeat by the first heroes of the human race, and here also the peries, or fairies, are supposed to reside.<sup>7</sup>

Vathek offers several interesting possibilities for comparison with Hyperion. When Thea comes to wake Saturn

One hand she press'd upon that aching spot  
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,  
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain;  
Hyperion I, 42-44

Could this idea have followed from reading of the Giaour's punishment for the pre-Adamite Kings, and indeed, for all travellers so unfortunate as to arrive at last in his underground cavern?

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<sup>4</sup> Beckford, William, Vathek, p. 108.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 228.

<sup>6</sup> See Hyperion II, 52-54.

<sup>7</sup> Beckford, William, Op. cit., p. 255.

each holding his right hand motionless on his heart.<sup>8</sup>

till then I am in torments, ineffable torments!  
And unrelenting fire preys on my heart.<sup>9</sup>

the intrepid Princess was corrugated with agony;  
she - - - - fixed, no more to be withdrawn, her right  
hand upon her heart, which was become a receptacle of  
eternal fire.<sup>10 11</sup>

Sir Sidney Colvin lays stress on a source that he believes to have been fresher in Keats's mind than Hesiod or Ovid: namely, Ronsard's ode A Michel de L' Hospital,  
X Chancelier de France. This ode, in the Pindaric form, was written in 1550. It is derived partly from Hesiod and partly from Horace but contains some of Ronsard's own imaginative treatment. He recounts the story of the nine muses, the daughters of Mnemosyne and Zeus, who are taken by their mother to visit their father in the palace of Oceanus. There, before Zeus, they sing in chorus of the strife between Neptune and Pallas for the soil of Attica, and of the battle between the Olympian gods and "les heretiques geants".

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>11</sup> See Hyperion II, 26-28.



Ronsard describes Apollo:

Phébus, du milieu de la table,  
Pour dérider le front des dieux,  
Mariait sa voix délectable  
À son archet mélodieux,<sup>12</sup>

Familiar names appear in the ode:

Là, tout debout devant la porte,  
Le fils de Japet fermement,  
Courbé dessous le firmament,  
Le soutient tout de sa main forte.<sup>13</sup>

Styx d'un noir halecret rempare,  
Ses bras, ses jambes et son sein,  
Sa fille amenant par la main  
Avec Cotte, Gyge et Briare.<sup>14</sup>

Dedans ce gouffre béant  
Hurle la troupe hérétique  
Qui, par un assaut bellique,  
Assaillit le Tu-géant.<sup>15</sup>

Neptune, à la fourche étoffée  
De trois crampons, vint se mêler  
Dans la troupe contre Typhée  
Qui rouait une fronde en l'air;  
Ici Phébus, d'un trait qu'il jette,  
Fit Encelade trébucher;  
Là Porphyre lui fit breucher  
Hors des poings l'arc et la sagette.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ronsard, Pierre de, Chefs-D'Oeuvre Poétiques, p. 93.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

Sir Sidney Colvin concludes that Keats was "surely" haunted by the strophes of Ronsard.<sup>17</sup> Only a small portion of the ode is devoted to the fall of the Titans, however, and Ronsard's treatment is nearer to a romantic than an epic treatment.

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<sup>17</sup> Colvin, Sir Sidney, Op. cit., p. 429.

**Conclusion**

It is evident from this study of Hyperion that John Keats derived the mythological motif of his poem from classical dictionaries, notably Lempriere's, and from translations of Hesiod's Theogony. It is also evident that Keats does not follow his sources in representing the Titans as a crude and barbaric race of giants, but gives them personalities of his own imagining.

The Miltonic influence on the poem is marked. This influence is shown far more in allusion and cadence than by the borrowing of definitely Miltonic words. The echoes from Paradise Lost do not tend to deflect Keats from his theme, but merely strengthen it. Keats did not follow any of his sources slavishly. Innumerable compositions and decompositions had taken place between the source material and Keats's own intellect before any idea appeared in its final form in Hyperion.

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Vita

Name: Elizabeth Grinnan Jackson

Place of birth: Hendersonville, North Carolina

Date of birth: December 10, 1904.

Education: Maury High School, 1918-1922.

Randolph-Macon Woman's College, 1922-1925.

William and Mary College, A. B. degree, 1935-1936.

Married: October 25, 1925 to Guy S. Jackson, in Norfolk,  
Virginia

Children: Mary Shull, born February 1, 1928.

Frances Bland, born September 15, 1929.

John Randolph Bryan, born September 8, 1931.