

THE KEATSIAN MYTH OF THE POETIC APPROACH TO LIFE

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That Keats views myth as an important instrument in poetic creativity is evident from the pervasive use of myth in his works. For him, myth is an invaluable source of the symbolic language for expressing his conception of art, his notion of the nature and role of the artist, and his aesthetic vision of life. His works abound in classical allusions which are organically related to their thematic and structural development. Specific poems like the odes to Apollo and Maia are addressed to mythical deities who are symbolically relevant to his view of art and life. *Endymion* and the *Hyperion* fragments are distinctive recreations of old myths that enable the poet to project his own 'myth' of poetic existence.¹ "Sleep and Poetry" is fundamentally an enunciation of his poetic programme and principles by means of mythical symbolism. The great odes, in spite of the fact that only the "Ode to Psyche" is overtly centred on an old myth, draw upon classical myths as they contribute to Keats's mythic vision of the world. Even "To Autumn," the most naturalistic of the great odes, is conceived of in the vein of classical personification and derives much of its profundity from being a fascinating representation of how the seasonal changes in nature reflect those in man's life.

Basically, Keats's exposure to Greek mythology is traceable to "his reading Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary*, Tooke's *Pantheon*, Spence's *Polymetis*, Chapman's Homer," (Clarke 1948: 148) and "Elizabethan and seventeenth-century poetry, soaked like all Renaissance Literature in myths and allusions." (Hough 1967:159) However, his sustained interest in, and distinctive use of, classical mythology stem from the affinity of his mind or genius to the original Grecian spirit of myth-making, or what Clarke (his contemporary) refers to as "Keats's consanguinity with Greek mythology" (Clarke 1948: 147). The interfusion of ideal

¹ Keats believes that all worthwhile lives are poetic.

and sensuous life, humanity and divinity, imaginative and actual worlds in old myths fascinates Keats, more so, since it is in agreement with his aesthetic ideal of the unity of being in all true life. His sincere desire is, therefore, to employ the universal spirit of myth-making in the poetic expression of his mythic vision of the world.

I

Keats conceives of myth as a form of art that is analogous to Jung's "fantasy-thinking" but while Jung postulates a "collective unconscious" (Jung 1956: 1-3) as the fountain-head from which myths flow, Keats maintains that all great myths spring from the intense experiences and aspirations of individuals. Since ancient myths are products of man's intense experiencing of existence, Keats believes that they constitute "the very essence of our common humanity and living stuff of experience." (Baynes 1940: 244) "The real substratum of myths," like that of all great works of art, "is not a substratum of thought but of [the] feeling" (Cassirer 1944: 81) of the living beauty of the world.

As a form of art, myth is, in Keats's view, neither a visionary creation which "must actually be believed in" nor "a pretty irrelevant make-believe or idle fancy" (Brooks 1947: 152). And yet, he implicitly questions the validity of the eighteenth-century belief that myths should not be taken seriously when he avers that "they are very shallow people who take everything literally" (Keats 1931: 327). He maintains that the eighteenth-century attitude to myth (which, according to Freund, results from the fact that myth "seemed to the philosopher a piece of folly, to the literary critic a serious breach of decorum, and to the moralist a giving of hostages to the priests" (Freund 1965: 20) arises from a rather literal approach to myth. Hence, he considers myth to be "a verbal or pictorial expression of reality" (Blackstone 1959: 17) that must not be confused with, or substituted for reality, but must be seen as "a valid perception into reality" (Brooks 1947: 152).

For Keats, the ultimate value of any great myth lies in its subtle relationship to life. Though myths cannot be literally true, they are figurative statements of profound truths about man and his world. They are, for him, symbols in the Coleridgean sense. For Coleridge, "a symbol is characterized above all by the translucence of the eternal through the temporal" (Coleridge 1816: 432). But insofar as Coleridge's notion of the 'eternal' partly connotes the transcendental or that "which belongs to the world of absolute values," (Bowra 1950: 67) it is somewhat opposed to Keats's concept of the eternal. However, both views of eternity share an element of the universal which makes the poets' notions of symbolism identical.

Keats believes that myth is not just "a fantasy-way of suggesting truth"

but also an act of creating truth because myth has a reality of its own. For him, myth like any other good symbol "always partakes of the reality which it renders intelligible and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in that unity of which it is representative" (Coleridge 1816: 437, Keats 1931: 120-1). Since myth draws upon and creates from the "Ethereal things" that constitute Keatsian reality, it follows that myth simultaneously creates and represents reality. Moreover, the validity of myth lies jointly in its symbolic or anagogical function, its aesthetic truth, and the intensity of the myth-maker's experience.

Like Wordsworth, Keats rejects the use of mythical allusions and "personifications of abstract ideas as merely mechanical devices of style,"² contending that they are poetically effective only when they organically contribute to the realization of the concerns of particular works. Allusions can enhance poetic significance because they are usually based on mythical images and symbols that truly capture vital elements of human experience. These images and symbols are, to modern psychologists, archetypal representations of archetypal patterns of man's "reactions to often-repeated crises, needs and longing in the long tale of human existence" (Baynes 1940: 144).

Convinced that archetypal images and symbols in old myths must be integrated into poems to make them aesthetically relevant, Keats always strives to make old myths integral to his immediate poetic concerns by recreating what he sees as their origins in man's passionate response to nature and life. Similarly, he constantly seeks an intimate imaginative experience of the original emotions that engendered those old myths. As he puts it, "We read fine things but do not feel them to the full until we have gone through the same steps as the Author" (Letters: I, 154). Insofar as he is able to relive the events from which ancient myths spring, Keats feels that he can integrate the myths into his poems. Evert is, therefore, right in remarking that "Keats's mythology, except in some of his apprentice poetry, is not merely incidental, decorative, exotic or imitative" (Evert 1956: 22) but organic to his poetic and mythic view of the world.

Since Keats also believes that myth is "a form of ritual behaviour which does not find its fulfilment in the act but must proclaim and elaborate a poetic form of truth" (Frankfort 1949: 16), he views ancient myths (or classical organizations of archetypal images and symbols into mythical unities) as distinctive creations of cosmological structures. He draws upon these ancient means of indirectly creating metaphysical systems in his poetic attempts "to resolve the large, unanswerable perplexities that afflict all men by constructing his own myth" (Perkins 1959: 198). Van Ghent maintains that the Keatsian myth of the poetic approach to life "appears everywhere in

² See Wordsworth's "Preface to the 'Lyrical Ballads'" (Wordsworth 1971).

Keats's poetry, now under one mode of realization, now under another" (van Ghent 1954: 7). Many other critics like Bate, Balslev and Perkins implicitly or explicitly mention elements of the Keatsian myth. Perkins, for instance, remarks that "In the great myth, in the *Letters*, of human life as 'a vale of Soul-making' there is a gradual forming of a human identity or 'Soul' by means of 'a World of Pains and troubles;' in *Hyperion*, there is a similar myth of the cosmos, progressively evolving forms, more complex, aware and beautiful" (Perkins 1959: 197). In fact, Keats's speculations on Soul-making and the chambers of the human mind, in his letters, form the theoretical framework for the mythopoeic vision of the world that is discernible in all his poems.

II

Keats's central myth is that of "the making of a great poet or the 'birth' of a man of achievement" (*Letters*: 1, 77). It is essentially the depiction of the poet's ordeals or rites of passage in each of the three stages of myth-making first established by Keats in "I Stood Tip-toe." Since the three stages parallel the three chambers of the human mind in Keats's simile of life, it follows that the poet's search for profound mythic and poetic insight corresponds with his quest for the true meaning of art and life. As Kenneth Allott points out, Keats's "ideas on the meaning and function of myth are always bound up with his attempt to make sense of the human situation" (Allot 1958: 87). His myth of the birth of a great poet is thus symbolic of the birth of a great man because the ultimate meaning of life, discovered by the poet at the conclusion of his quest, is actually the Keatsian mythopoeic view of the world which according to Perkins, subsumes the "evil of the world within a wider, more hopeful vision of things" (Perkins 1959: 198).

While Keats's mythopoeic vision of the world is discernible in all his poems and in most of his letters, *Endymion* and the *Hyperion* fragments constitute the really explicit Keatsian myth of the poet's development. Not only are these poems Keats's *explicit* myths, but they also contain the most sustained elaborations of the three stages in a poet's progress towards maturity. That the poems are recreations of old myths does not detract from their originality. *Endymion* and the *Hyperion* fragments are neither imitative reproductions of classical myths nor "the mere filling out of the old myths with poetical ornaments." The poet's choice of these old myths as instruments for his own myth is not gratuitous. For him, the earlier *Endymion* and *Hyperion* myths are enactments of "the universal patterns of motivations and conduct" (Bidney 1955: 392) in the lives of "great spirits," and are therefore capable of furnishing him with valuable thematic and structural patterns for the realization of his 'modern' myth of the poet.

Van Ghent maintains that Keats's poet-hero is not only like the main character in the traditional hero myth but that his quest is also similar to that of earlier heroes because he "is afflicted with a feverish 'strife of opposites'" and forced to undertake an archetypal quest in which he descends underground (or ascends pinnacles)" before he eventually "wins immortality or 'identity'" (van Ghent 1954: 7). The "strife of opposites" which precipitates the poet-hero's quest in Keats's myth is variously represented in the poems. In *Endymion*, for instance, the strife results from the seeming incompatibility of human and divine love in the mind of the protagonist, in *Hyperion* the ostensible conflict is between change (fall) and progress (redemption), while in "The Fall of Hyperion" the apparent opposition between art and life is the cause of the conflict. Whatever the sources of strife are in the different poems that project the Keatsian myth, it is certain that the goal of the poet-hero's quest is the same in all poems; that is, the discovery and intimate experiencing of the harmonious coalescence of the supposed opposites.

All Keats's poems contribute to the full realization of the Keatsian myth of the making of the great poet or man. Each depicts the poet-hero at some point in his search for the meaning of art and life. Nevertheless, *Endymion's* quest for the ideal love is Keats's central and most sustained single effort at the mythic representation of the poet-hero's education because *Endymion* provides the reader with the most complete version of the Keatsian myth. Moreover, the main *telos* of the adventure of the poet-hero is fully stated and worked out in *Endymion*. The poet-hero's goal, revealed to the reader in the introductory section of the first book of *Endymion*, is the experiencing of the essence of beauty in all things (I, I-33). This objective is restated by *Endymion* himself as the attainment of "fellowship with essence" (I, 779) and reaffirmed in Glaucus's scroll as a participation in "the symbol essences of all motions, shapes, forms and substances" (III, 697-703).

When the main action begins in *Endymion* (I, 63ff.), the protagonist is dissatisfied with the "thoughtless participation mystique" of the Latmian worshippers of Pan. Like the Infant-poet in part of "I Stood Tip-toe," the Latmians in *Endymion* 'thoughtlessly' accept the bond between all things, creatures, persons, and deities which to them is unquestionably fostered by Pan. They believe that Pan is the visible and invisible source of the being that flows through all things, quickens nature to productivity and provides the basis for happiness in the lives of all people. The priest enumerates the many manifestations of Pan as he urges the Latmians to offer their thanks to Pan for all the blessings they have received:

Yea every one attend! for in good truth
Our vows are wanting to our great god Pan.
Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than
Night-swollen mushrooms? Are not our wide plains

Speckled with countless fleeces? Have not rains
 Green'd over April's lap? No howling sad
 Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had
 Great bounty from Endymion our lord.
 The earth is glad: the merry lark has pour'd
 His early song against yon breezy sky,
 That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity.

(I, 212—222)

In enumerating the manifold blessings from Pan, the priest reiterates the general Latmian faith that human happiness and natural bounty come from a rather concrete world of myth. Even the joys of Endymion's reign are seen as divine gifts by the Latmians who live in an Infant world where myth and reality interfuse. In *Hyperion*, the unfallen Titans live in an Infant world which is similar to that of the Latmians. The interfusion of the actual and the imaginative is evident in Saturn's recall of the life of the Titans before the fall — a life consisting of

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

 “Beautiful things made anew, for the surprise
 “Of the sky-children.” (I, 107—112; 132—3)

The sky-children are the heavenly counterparts of the earthly Latmians. Yet, both the sky-children and the Latmians live in a world in which myth and reality are undifferentiated; hence, the manner in which Saturn's act of love benefits the sky-children in *Hyperion* is identical with how Pan's act of love benefits the Latmians in *Endymion*.

The Latmians, the unfallen Titans and the Infant-poets are all regarded by Keats as 'Intelligence' whose unconscious lives of bliss make them "gods" and enable them to live either in "a long immortal dream" (*Lamia*, I, 127—8) or "a haven in the world, /Where they may thoughtlessly sleep away their days" ("The Fall of Hyperion," I, 150—1). All these "Intelligences" are, in Keats's myth of the poet's growth, symbols of human beings who are satisfied with the bliss of the Infant world and are therefore under no pressure to progress beyond this stage. Just as the Infant-poets are free from the need to strive for maturity, so also are the Intelligences spared the ordeals that ultimately lead to the acquisition of Identities or Soul-states. Little wonder then, that while the Latmians are happy in the Infant world, Endymion recoils from what he considers to be the naivete of his people.

III

Endymion's dissatisfaction with the Infant love of the Latmians for Pan which marks the beginning of his fascination with Cynthia symbolizes the self-consciousness of the poet-hero and signals his progress from the stage of infancy to Maiden-Experience. Similarly, the apparent contrast between Endymion's possession of Cynthia in the dream world and his loss of her in the real world represents the seeming incompatibility between the Maiden-poet's imaginative and actual experiences. The discovery of the ostensible opposition between the real and the ideal, art and life, change and progress constitutes the main education of the poet in this stage.

Endymion, the fallen Titans and other Maiden-poets in Keats's works undergo ordeals that are symbolic of those undergone by the poet-hero in this stage. For instance, the dreamer's experience in "The Fall of Hyperion", Saturn's dream about his Infant reign over the sky-children in *Hyperion*, the Maiden-poet's single-minded pursuit of the dream offered by the nightingale's song in the "Ode to a Nightingale" and the protagonist's dream about an airy Cynthia in *Endymion* variously depict the poet-hero's exposure to the "brightness" of Maiden-Experience. On the other hand, the dreamer's immediate reaction to the tragic figure of Saturn in "The Fall of Hyperion," Saturn's agony caused by his fall in *Hyperion*, the Maiden-poet's frightening exposure of the tragic circumstances of life in the "Ode to a Nightingale" and Endymion's experiencing of the unattractive realities of life without Cynthia are variations on the poet-hero's feeling of the "darkness" of Maiden Experience.

In *Endymion*, the protagonist's pursuit of his limited understanding of the nature of Cynthia constitutes the poet-hero's fascination with art as a means of escaping reality. Since Endymion sees Cynthia as an ideal that relieves him of the responsibility of being associated with reality in this stage, he believes that the goddess of his dream (art) is unrelated to any actual maiden in Latmos (reality). For Endymion, therefore, the winning of Cynthia's love is "a higher hope/. . . of too wide, rainbow-large a scope" that frees him from all responsibilities to his society (I, 774—6). Moreover, he feels that "to fret after the myriads of earthly wrecks" (I, 776—7) is outside the sphere of anyone who seeks the ultimate. He is interested in only such activities as are capable of leading him to an ideal that is absolutely unrelated to the ordinary world. He seeks a 'heavenly religion' derived from the enchantment of Aeolian music, melodious prophecy, and charms of the mythical world. When tragic incidents surface in his idealized vision, they are usually unrelated to reality; the giant battles of gods become theatrical diversions. He does not at this point understand the symbolic relation of giant battles to the

human situation. His belief at this point that if anyone feels these great events he can "step/Into a sort of oneness, and his state/Is like that of floating spirits" (I, 795—7) is more like that of the Maiden-poet in the "Ode to a Nightingale" who feels that he can "leave the world" (II, 9) and its suffering behind (III), fly to the world of the immortal bird (IV), and be "released from the painful world or actuality" (Brooks 1939: 31). Similarly, his view of love as the highest ideal (I, 805—7) is vitiated by transcendentalism. The Cynthia he seeks at this stage is too airy to be either true or related to reality.

While Endymion's wish to live in the dream world of Cynthian charms is the 'ordeal' based on the bright effect of the chamber of Maiden-Thought, his "venoming of all his days" in the normal world (like the dream in "The Fall of Hyperion") is the ordeal based on the dark effect of this chamber. His loss of Cynthia in real life and his deep sense of disappointment causes him to exaggerate the ugliness in nature and the treachery in life:

...all the pleasant hues
Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest shades
Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny glades
Were full of pestilont light; our taintless rills
Seem'd sooty, and o'erspread with upturn'd gills
Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns out-grown
Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird
Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and stirr'd
In little journeys, I beheld in it
A disguis'd demon, missioned to knit
My soul with darkness. (I, 691—702)

The darkness in Endymion's soul is the horrid mood that infects nature in this scene. These negative features in nature are reminiscent of the "eternal fierce destruction" in the epistle "To J. H. Reynolds" (97). Endymion's horrid mood also affects his perception of life and the Latmian society because he recoils from his people's worship of Pan, regards real maidens as worthless in comparison with Cynthia, and views his royal duties in Latmos as uninspiring.

Endymion's 'dream-life' with Cynthia (which accounts for his wish to substitute visionary for real experiences) represents his feeling of the bright effect of the chamber of Maiden-Thought, while his 'waking-life' without Cynthia (which is responsible for his viewing reality as repulsive and for his "venoming all his days") constitutes his experiencing of the dark effect of the same chamber. Nevertheless, his Maiden-Experience is marked by many exposures to each of the two effects. In the first book of *Endymion* alone, the protagonist is exposed to each of the two effects for up to four times. In the second, third and fourth books, his many exposures to these effects are

augmented by his being a sensitive witness to experiences like his own in the relationships of other lovers such as Venus and Adonis, Arethusa and Alpheus, and Glaucus and Circe. Each new feeling of the effects of the chamber intensifies his Maiden-Experience by revealing to him new aspects in his dream-life with Cynthia (art) and his waking-life without her (reality). Many scenes like the Cynthian world of love (I, 540—670; II, 707—827), the underworld palace of Dian (II, 259—262; 301—313), the consummation of Venus's love for Adonis (II, 477—589) and the celebrations in the palace of Neptune (III, 862—932) combine to form Endymion's feeling of the brightness of Maiden-Experience. And scenes like the Latmian world without Cynthia (I, 691—702; II, 855—869), Venus's pining for Adonis's love (II, 457—478), the pathetic existence of Glaucus (III, 192—230) and the sorrow of the Indian maiden (IV, 30—250) constitute Endymion's feeling of the darkness of Maiden-Experience.

In many of the great odes, the main character is involved in activities that may be regarded as reflections of his feeling of the dark and bright effects of Maiden-Experience. For instance, in the "Ode to a Nightingale," the experiencing of the brightness of this stage in the poet-hero's quest is evident in the pleasure he associates with lethe (I, 4), "melodious plots" (I, 8—10) and mythical worlds (II, 3—10; IV, 1—10; V, 1—10), while his feeling of the darkness is obvious in the sorrow he sees in "the fever and fret" of human existence (III, 3), the sickness and death of young people (III, 4—6) and the tragedy of Ruth (VII, 6—10). In the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," the bright and dark effects correspond with the permanence of art and the transience of life respectively, while in the "Ode on Melancholy," all attempts to escape reality and those connected with "the wakeful anguish of the soul" (I, 10) form the Maiden-Experience of the protagonist and symbolize the poet-hero's ordeals in the second stage of his quest for mature poetic insight.

In *Hyperion*, Saturn's recall of his Infant reign over the world, like the dreamer-poet's sojourn in the mysterious garden in "The Fall of Hyperion," reveals his feeling of the first effect of Maiden-Experience. On the other hand, Saturn's agony caused by his fall, like the dreamer-poet's experiences in the temple of Saturn, marks the second effect noticeable in this stage. Keats captures Saturn's sad plight by portraying his pathetic appearance (*Hyperion*, I, 1—14), and by making Thea outline the changes that Saturn's fall has caused in the universe:

"... heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
"Knows thee not, thus afflicted for a God;
"And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
"Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air
"Is emptied of thy hoary majesty.

"Thy thunder conscious of the new command,
 "Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
 "And thy sharp lightning in unpractis'd hands
 "Scorches and burns our once serene domain."

(I, 55—63)

The chaotic state of the universe which Thea depicts results from Saturn's loss of control over the various natural forces through whose activities he ruled over heaven and earth.

Saturn's fall affects other Titans, too. Hyperion is first plagued by bad omens before he falls or relinquishes his role as sun god. Oceanus, the god of the sea, and Enceladus, the god of wrath and volcanoes, are among other Titans like Mnemosyne, Thea, and Clymene who fall with Saturn. With the fall, the Titans shed the divinity which made them "solemn, undisturb'd/
 /Unruffled" (I, 330—1) and take on human frailties like "fear, hope and wrath;/
 /Actions of rage and passion" (I, 332—3). The dethronement of the Titans and its attendant suffering in *Hyperion* become part of the dreamer-poet's vicarious feeling of the dark effect of Maiden-Experience in "The Fall of Hyperion." The dreamer-poet witnesses the intense sorrow of the Titans (I, 215—460) as a complement to his difficult task of ascending the steps leading to Saturn's shrine, and to his rather unsettling dialogue with Mnemeta.

IV

Insofar as Keats believes that an intense feeling of both effects of Maiden-Experience leads to insights which facilitate progress to the final stage (Mature-Experience), it follows that there are inherent pointers to maturity in the second-stage experiences of Endymion, the Titans, the protagonist in the great odes, and the dreamer-poet in "The Fall of Hyperion." These representatives of the poet-hero must, however, understand the pointers before they can progress to the next stage. Hence, it is reasonable to regard Endymion's ability to pursue the ideal revealed to him in dream as an indication that he may eventually progress beyond the second stage. Furthermore, what he learns from the Venus-Adonis myth, and from collaborating with Glaucus suggests that the 'ideal' love which is the goal of his quest is actually attainable. That the love he eventually wins in the third stage differs from his earlier notion of it demonstrates how effectively the inherent pointers to his success have contributed to the correction of his limited understanding of the ideal.

Endymion's dream-encounter with Cynthia is, in the words of Campbell, his "call to quest" (Campbell 1956). What Endymion seeks is the meaning of his dream. Peona's contention that dreams are meaningless because "they're more slight/
 /Than the mere nothing that engenders them" (I, 754—6) does

not make him give up the quest. Believing in the Keatsian dictum that "What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth—whether it existed before or not" (Letters: 177), Endymion continues the quest which takes him beyond the immediate Latmian environment. He descends into the underworld, explores the inner seas, and takes a flight into the air where he witnesses and participates in other quests that are related to his own. His contact with other lovers in the world of myth enables him to understand his own plight, encourages him to persevere in his search, and prepares him for a new vision of the ideal.

The myth of Venus and Adonis points towards Endymion's progress to the next stage by making his goal an attainable one. The myth shows that Endymion's quest is basically a reenactment of the Adonis story. Aware that the alternation between bliss and agony had once troubled Adonis, Endymion's hope for immortality through Cynthia is re-kindled. Venus herself encourages Endymion by informing him that his quest will be successful if he perseveres. The awakening of Adonis from his long slumber also enables Endymion to become aware of how the ideal is related to the real, because Adonis's revival symbolizes the coming of spring.

While the myth of Adonis points out the path to success, the myth of Glaucus reveals possible obstacles on the way to success, and suggests ways of overcoming them. Endymion is told how Glaucus's impatience cost him the love of Scylla and exposed him to Circe's curse. Glaucus's pathetic appearance enlists Endymion's sympathy, while his humanitarian task of storing all the drowned lovers makes Endymion a willing collaborator in the reviving of the ship-wrecked lovers. The celebrations in the palace of Neptune mark both the revival of a sense of social responsibility in Endymion and the neutralizing of the Circean curse on Glaucus. Having helped to free Glaucus from his curse and having taken part in the lovers' feast, Endymion is poised for progress to the next stage of his quest. Glaucus's dilemma in his relationship with Scylla and Circe also foreshadows Endymion's internal conflict caused by his love for the Indian maiden in spite of his pursuit of Cynthia.

Just as the intensity of Maiden-Experience provides Endymion with a valuable insight into the nature of his quest and makes it possible for him to progress from Maiden to Mature Experience, so also does Saturn's plight (like that of other Titans) contain elements that suggest the possibility of his progress to the final stage. Saturn's determination to find out why the Titans fell (I, 27—149) paves the way for his discovery of what may help him survive the agony of the fall and inch him towards Mature-Experience. Oceanus offers his explanation of the fall to Saturn in the council of the fallen gods. He maintains that the fall of the Titans is natural because it is in accordance with the "eternal law/
 /That first in beauty should be first in might" (II, 228—9). Oceanus insists that "to bear all naked truths,
 /And envisage

all circumstances, all calm, /... is the top of sovereignty" (II, 203—5). If Saturn wishes to regain his sovereignty—albeit under the new regime of Apollo—he must learn to feel the 'naked truth' of his fall intensely and calmly.

Insofar as Oceanus and Clymene are willing to make the necessary adjustments, and accept all the changes resulting from the fall of the old gods, they can be regarded as Titans who are poised on the threshold of the final stage of the poet-hero's development. Hence, it is fair to suggest that if Saturn and other Titans ever overcome their despondency and accept the natural course of events, they can proceed to the stage of Mature-Experience. In fact, the intensity of their grief seems to point towards the possibility of their surviving the worst effects of the fall — a possibility that may have become a certainty if Keats had completed the poem. In the extant fragments of the poem, however, Keats portrays Mnemosyne as the only Titan who actually becomes part of the new order of things. Not only has Apollo seen her in his dreams, he also gains the Knowledge that deifies him from her (*Hyperion*, III, 63—132). In "The Fall of Hyperion," Mnemosyne becomes Moneta. She guards the temple and shrine of Saturn. She reveals the tragic history of the gods to the dreamer-poet in order to educate him and make him a mature poet. Keats finds the Mnemosyne-Moneta symbol useful in expressing the transition from the old to the new order of things. This transition symbolizes the poet-hero's progress from Maiden to Mature poetic insight.

In the great odes, Keats bases the poet-hero's transition on the perception of the inadequacy of experiences that reflect only one of the two effects of Maiden-Experience. Basically, the opposition between the two effects becomes less significant as the poet-hero feels each of the effects intensely. He discovers that the bird's song in the "Ode to a Nightingale" is melodious and enchanting, but he also finds out that the song belongs to "faery lands forlorn." He is fascinated by the unchanging beauty represented by the urn in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," but he is disappointed that the beauty of the urn lacks the warmth of real life. And in the "Ode on Melancholy," he is attracted by the promises offered by "Lethe" and yet he realizes that those promises include that of oblivion. All the fascinations offered by the bright part of Maiden-Experience seem to lack the distinctive attractions of the dark effect which is represented by the tragic world of suffering in the "Ode to a Nightingale," the world of process and change in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and the "wakeful anguish of the soul" in the "Ode on Melancholy". By intensely feeling each of the two effects of Maiden-Experience, the poet-hero becomes less able to distinguish one from the other. This state of confusion-in-intensity marks the transition from the second to the third stage. It is this state that forces the poet-hero to ask, "Do I sleep or wake?" in the "Ode to a Nightingale."

V

The poet-hero does not seem to move beyond the transitional point in the "Ode to a Nightingale." When the poem ends, his intimate feeling of the two effects of Maiden-Experience smoothens the sharp edges of the split between his imaginative and actual experiences but it does not necessarily create a bond between the opposites. This bond, is however, created in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and the "Ode on Melancholy" as a sign of the poet-hero's attainment of mature poetic insight in the third stage of his quest. Beauty and truth are equated as a demonstration of the poetic insight into life that the poet-hero has felt in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn". "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" summarizes the mature poet's vision of the world. In the "Ode on Melancholy," the mature poet states his vision thus:

Ay, in the very temple of delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might
And be among her cloudy trophies hung. (III, 6—10)

The poet-hero can now perceive the unity of being in all things that is symbolically depicted in "To Autumn" by placing the "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" in concordant relationship with other seasons. This seasonal harmony symbolizes the harmony in the life of a mature man, the interrelation of art and life, and the "principle of beauty in all things."

Endymion's sojourn in the "Cave of Quietude" (*Endymion*, IV, 513—562) and the Indian maiden's rejection of his love mark the transition from Maiden to Mature Experience. As soon as the pleasures of the aerial trip vanish with the loss of Cynthia and the Indian maiden who accompanied him in his flight, Endymion descends into the Cave of Quietude for solace:

...Happy gloom!
Dark paradise! where pale becomes bloom
Of health by the due; where silence dreariest
Is most articulate; where hopes infest;
Where those eyes are brightest far that keep
Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.
(IV, 537—542)

The intensity in his feeling of loss blurs the distinction between sorrow and joy—"anguish does not sting; nor pleasure pall" (IV, 526)—in a manner that recalls the Indian maiden's "Ode to Sorrow." When Endymion leaves the Cave of Quietude, he beholds the Indian and declares his love for her while repudiating Cynthia and all forms of ideals. He declares:

I have clung
 To nothing, lov'd nothing, nothing seen
 Or felt but a great dream! O I have been
 Presumptuous against love, against the sky,
 Against all elements, against the tie
 Of mortals each to each, against the blooms
 Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs
 Of heroes gone!

.....
 No, never more
 Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore
 Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast.
 Adieu, my daintiest dream! (IV, 636-43; 653-6)

Although he has been presumptuous about love, humanity and nature, Endymion's sin is not the pursuit of the ideal; hence, his rejection of the dream is as bad as his rejection of reality. In fact, his supposed affirmation of actuality is vitiated by his desire to live with the Indian maiden in a kind of hazy world that is separate from where other human beings live:

Let us aye love each other; let us fare
 On forest fruits, and never, never go
 Among the abodes of mortals here below
 Or be by phantoms duped. (IV, 626-9)

In a sense, he now spurns both the real and ideal worlds in the life he offers his loved one. The maiden rejects this offer and forces him to move on to the third stage of his quest where he can find out that the ideal resides in the ordinary and vice versa.

The transformation of the maiden into Cynthia before Endymion's eyes compels his maturity. This 'miracle' convinces him of the interpenetration of the imaginative and real. He learns that he can have "fellowship with essence" only when he is able to have fellowship with the normal. As soon as he recognizes that the Indian and Cynthia are one, the maiden accepts his love. He returns to the normal world of Latmos with his new love and is willing to perform his royal duties because he has now discovered the symbolic significance of Pan to his people. Of course, his ultimate achievement symbolizes the mature vision of the poet-hero who discerns the aesthetic ideal in the veridical world.

While in *Endymion* love is the instrument by which the artist feels his way towards the discovery of the essence of things, in *Hyperion* the agony of the Titans is the means by which the poet-hero feels the tragic circumstances of man's life. Apollo's intimate perception of the grief of Saturn precipitates the deifying pangs that constitute a transition from the reign of Saturn (Maiden-Experience) to that of Apollo (Mature-Experience):

Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs:
 ... and with a pang
 As hot as death is chill, with fierce convulse
 Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd:
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.

(III, 124-5; 128-135)

With the subsiding of his pangs of deification, Apollo takes over the kingdom lost by the Titans. His reign (which commences in the third and final stage of the poet-hero's quest) is the reign of beauty (the artist) because Oceanus maintains that the enthronement of Apollo is in accordance with "the eternal law/That first in beauty should be first in might" (II, 228-9). Since the suffering of the Titans symbolizes the fate of mankind, and since Apollo (the artist) is enthroned only after he has intimately felt the suffering of the Titans (mankind), it follows that Apollo's rule is a symbolic affirmation of the usefulness of art and the artist in a world "where men sit and hear each groan;/Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,/Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies".

Apollo's reign (which is coterminous with the rule of the artist) is manifest through "the blissful melody" (II, 280) which pervades the entire universe. Apollo in *Hyperion* is the same "God of the golden lyre" in the "Hymn to Apollo" whose music fuses with that of all immortal poets and flows through nature in the "Ode to Apollo." If the god's "blissful melody" in the ode and in the hymn seems to reflect the brightness of Maiden-Experience, in *Hyperion* the melody definitely reflects Mature-Experience because it comes from Apollo's "enormous knowledge" of the tragic part of life. Insofar as his "lyre all golden" (III, 63) produces the "new tuneful wonder" (III, 670) and captures the tragic events that deified Apollo, it is music that can "soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of man" ("Sleep and Poetry," 247): thereby justifying the rule of the artist.

In "The Fall of Hyperion," Keats makes the nascent poet (dreamer) go through experiences that are similar to those of Apollo as a means of establishing the symbolic link between the god and the artist. The dreamer-poet's transition from Maiden to Mature vision parallels that of Apollo in the sense that his throes of transformation are like Apollo's pangs of deification. The same goddess (Mnemosyne-Moneta) is in charge of guiding both of them through the trauma that leads to maturity. Also, the reason which Moneta gives for the admission of the dreamer to the shrine of Saturn is reminiscent of that given by Mnemosyne for the enthronement of Apollo: "Thou

hast felt/What 'tis to die and live again before/Thy fated hour, that thou power to do so/Is thy safety" (I, 141—4). The dreamer gains maturity or becomes a poet only after he has sympathetically identified himself with Saturn's grief and perceived how the fate of the Titans represents the fate of mankind. As a mature poet, he is aware that the true poet is not "a mere dreamer" but is he to whom "the miseries of the world/Are miseries, and will not let him rest" (I, 148—9).

Essentially, Keats uses the mythical quests of various poetical characters to symbolize the poet's quest for mature aesthetic insight. The three stages which they pass through enable them to examine various aspects of imaginative and actual experiences before they can embrace the aesthetic ideal. The stage of Maiden-Experience, with its two effects and its transitional point, marks the most significant part of the poet-hero's education in Keats's myth. Whatever mission each character undertakes — Endymion seeks ideal love, the dreamer wishes to become a mature poet, and Apollo "seeks" a kingdom — leads to the same goal. The goal is the attainment of what is to Keats the aesthetic ideal. In all successful quests, the poet-hero discovers the necessity of life to art and vice versa. Art, for Keats, cannot turn its back on human suffering. Therefore, the poet-hero at the conclusion of his quest knows that art recognizes the tragic elements of life and endeavours to create beautiful things that are joys for even because they are "a cheering light/Unto our souls, and bind to us so fast/That whether there be shine or gloom o'ercast/They must be with us, or we die" (*Endymion*, I, 30—33).

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