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KEATS'S POETRY AND PROSE

AUTHORITATIVE TEXTS
CRITICISM

Selected and Edited by

JEFFREY N. COX
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER

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a whole stage—and a 16 miler too" (p. 360, emphasis added). Since *ease* is the root of "dis-ease," Keats's mythologizing of the "warmth" produced by Devonshire girls can be seen, like "To Autumn" itself, as a very personal expression of a desire for health. It is hardly surprising that Devonshire, during this period, was being promoted as a particularly equable climate, "a favorite resort of the invalid," a region particularly suitable for counteracting consumption because of its "atmosphere, soft, warm, and charged with aquaeous vapour."[5] Keats admits that "To night I am all in a mist; I scarcely know what's what;' and he points out that lately he has suffered from depression, the "blue-devils," yet he nevertheless hopes that the place has a prophylactic power; you "need not fear . . . while you remain in Devonshire" (p. 359).

In September 1819 Keats hoped he had finally found a poetic style that no longer depended on or produced fever, one that would allow him to "look / Upon his mortal days with temperate blood" ("On Fame," ll. 1–2). He claimed he was no longer the person he once was. "From the time you left me, our friends say I have altered completely—am not the same person. . . . Some think I have lost that poetic ardour and fire 'tis said I once had—the fact is perhaps I have." He echoes Wordsworth in seeking to "substitute a more thoughtful and quiet power. . . . Quieter in my pulse, improved in my digestion; exerting myself against vexing speculations—scarcely content to write the best verses for the fever they leave behind." He goes on to stress, "I want to compose without this fever. I hope I one day shall" (pp. 368–69). Keats obviously hoped he had found a native poetry that would no longer make him ill, that having sojourned too long in a poetic tropics he had finally come home, gaining control over the fever that had become a regular part of his life. "I have got rid of my haunting sore throat—and conduct myself in a manner not to catch another" (*L*, 2: 200).[6]

This hope was not fulfilled, and much of the pathos of "To Autumn" derives from the sad personal circumstances that motivated this extraordinary celebration of a nativist aesthetic. It is the only poem in which Keats was able to create an unfevered literary environment out of the fevered landscapes of his earlier poetry, an achievement based on the belief that a poetry modeled on the English countryside would be healthier than other literary spaces. Yet this ideal environment, drawn largely from English landscape paintings, was not a space Keats had much experience with. It was, indeed, largely a national fiction, which grew in importance as more and more people left Britain for the colonies.[7] Alongside Keats's claim that he had adopted a new self should be set his admission that London has itself become foreign. "I walk'd about the Streets," he writes, "as in a strange land" (*L*, 2: 187). In March 1820, in one of many letters obsessed with the dangers of English weather, Keats remarks to Fanny Brawne, "What a horrid climate this is" (*L*, 2: 278).

5. Thomas Shapter, *Climate of the South of Devon; and Its Influence upon Health* (London: Churchill, 1842), p. 122.
6. Less than a month later, Keats became a vegetarian, explaining that "I have left off animal food that my brains may never henceforth be in a greater mist than is their by nature" (*L*, 2: 225).
7. For a good assessment of this aspect of the poem, see also Newey, "Keats, History, and the Poets," in Roe (ed.), *Keats and History*, pp. 185–90.

ANDREW BENNETT

The "Hyperion" Poems†

Failure

"Hyperion" opens with a catalogue of negations—death, silence, stillness—a catatonic opening to a poem which cannot move and which elaborates the epic negation of Romantic writing, that is the negation, embedded within the modern verse-epic, of the possibility of audience: "No stir of air . . . Not so much life . . . not one light seed . . . the dead leaf fell . . . A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more . . . No further . . . nerveless, listless, dead / Unsceptred . . . realmless eyes were closed" (1.7–19).

* * * I shall follow through the logic of the proposition that the negations which open "Hyperion" are related to Keats's earlier romance-epic, *Endymion* and, in particular, to the public responses to that earlier poem. The trope of negation which figures the opening to "Hyperion" will be read as a negation of *Endymion* and, in turn, be read as a response to the critical reception of that poem. * * *

* * * Indeed, the conditions of publication for "Hyperion" themselves announced the relationship between *Endymion*, "Hyperion," and Keats's audience as once again a poem was presented to the public with a gesture of a denial of audience: Keats's publishers added a notorious "Advertisement" to the 1820 volume stating not only that "Hyperion" was printed "contrary to the wish of the author," but also that the fragmentary nature of the poem was due to the reviews of *Endymion*: "The poem was intended to have been of equal length with *Endymion*, but the reception given to that work discouraged the author from proceeding." * * * [T]he Advertisement does indicate a very important source of authorial anxiety which informs the narrative shape of "Hyperion" and of its rewriting, "The Fall of Hyperion": rather than preventing Keats from continuing with "Hyperion" as the publishers' Advertisement stated, the reviews might be said to have provided an important generating force for the writing of "Hyperion" in the first place.

It is, therefore, worth considering the precise nature of the criticisms of *Endymion*. These criticisms may be schematically enumerated as follows: derivative language and style (especially from Leigh Hunt); irregular versification; "vicious" diction (neologisms, invented participles, compound epithets, "cockney" slang); misuse of classical mythology; obscurity/meaninglessness; overuse of "conceits"; immorality/obscenity; (social/literary) vulgarity; prurience; radical/Jacobinical politics; rambling narrative form.[1] "Hyperion" can be read, in part, as a reaction to these criticisms: the way in which the poem seeks to assert *Paradise Lost* as its linguistic model implicitly acknowledges the force of (some of) the criticisms by attempting to adopt a more respectable model of poetic decorum than, for

† From *Keats, Narrative, and Audience: The Posthumous Life of Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 144–58. Reprinted by permission of the author and Cambridge University Press. The author's notes have been edited. Page numbers for letters refer to this Norton Critical Edition; *L* refers to Rollins's edition.

1. See a selection of the negative reviews above, pp. 272–80. For a discussion of these attacks, see Kim Wheatley, "The *Blackwood's* Attacks on Leigh Hunt," *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 47 (1992): 1–31.

example, Leigh Hunt's *The Story of Rimini*. Similarly, the potential for charges of political or ethical subversion in "Hyperion" is limited not only by a focus on epic rather than libidinal and even incestuous themes, but also by a certain repression of "sensuous" language and a reduced concentration on sensuous perception. Moreover, there is a significant alteration in narrative form, towards a far simpler, more direct, and less wandering narration.[2] All of these may be seen in terms of acquiescence to criticism (sympathetic or not) to *Endymion*. On the other hand, in once again taking classical mythology as his subject, Keats is defiantly asserting both his right and his ability to rewrite the classics against the sarcastic irony of reviewers who mocked both his education and his class position in this respect. Similarly, the politics of "Hyperion," which may be read as at least "liberal" or "progressive" (if not exactly revolutionary), also stand in defiance of the tone of the critical reviews. Simply by writing a plot of revolution, simply by asking political questions about the nature and effect of revolution, Keats might be seen to be reacting against the kinds of political limitations which certain reviewers of *Endymion* (and the attacks on the "Cockney School") attempted to impose. Thus, to read "Hyperion" as a "reaction" to the more hostile reviews of *Endymion*, is to recognize the tensions within such a reaction, to recognize the contradictions and duplicities within the relationship between a poem and its empirically determined audience.

The silence, the stillness, the lack of speech and inability to speak which structures the opening lines of "Hyperion," then, might be read as a negation of the fecund wordiness of *Endymion*—the fault of a poet who was, in J. R. Lowell's term, "overlanguaged" (*KCH*, p. 361)—a poem which was governed by the intricate arabesque of (micro)narrative line, and the abundance of embedded narratives. The silencing figured in the opening to "Hyperion"—represented by the Naiad who "'mid her reeds / Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips" (1.13–14)—also involves a repression of narrative form, a silencing, at least, of the extrinsic, decorative, surrogate encrustations of narrative in *Endymion*. Numerous critics have pointed out that Keats seems to have achieved what he said he would in "Hyperion," that is a poem written "in more naked and grecian manner," a poem in which "the march of passion and endeavour will be undeviating" (*L*, 1: 207). In fact, however, although this seems to be an adequate description of the projected narrative, the extant fragment is characterized most generally by a stunted narrative form, by narrative potential. * * * This impossible narrative trajectory or the impossibility of narrative trajectory itself, is asserted in Saturn's first speech with his agonized claim that "it must—it must / Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King" (1.124–5), and his dilation on this sense of obligatory narrative progression:

> "Yes, there must be a golden victory;
> There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown
> Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival

2. On the relationship between the narrative form of "Hyperion" and *Endymion*, see Martin Aske, *Keats and Hellenism: An Essay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 73–4; Michael Ragussis, *The Subterfuge of Art: Language and the Romantic Tradition* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 39–41, also comments on the "implicit distinction' between the two poems.

> Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
> Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
> Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
> Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
> Of the sky-children; I will give command:
> Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?" (1.126–34)

The sense that these potential narratives will remain potential is given by the "command" which appears as a question, "where is Saturn?" Similarly, the first description of "Hyperion" is marked by a comparable force of negation:

> Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
> Or the familiar visiting of one
> Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
> Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;
> But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
> Oft made Hyperion ache. (1.171–6)

* * * [I]t is precisely the resistance to stories in the traditional sense which provides the generative anxiety for Keatsian narrative—an anxiety over tellability which includes both the ontological possibility of their being told and the pragmatic possibility of their gaining an audience.

With this in mind, we might suggest that the narrative trope most characteristic of "Hyperion" is that which Gerald Prince has defined as the "disnarrated." Prince explains the "disnarrated" as "all the events that *do not* happen but, nonetheless, are referred to (in a negative or hypothetical mode) by the narrative text." Prince makes the important distinction between the "disnarrated," on the one hand, and on the other hand narrative ellipsis, in which events are left untold "because of some narrative call for rhythm, characterization, suspense, surprise, and so on."[3] Furthermore, Prince also emphasizes the significance of the disnarrated to the pragmatics of narration. Through the inclusion of the "disnarrated," the poet can assert the tellability of his story by comparing it favourably with other possible/potential tales: if the disnarrated includes narratives which do not deserve to be told or cannot be told, the narration which *is* told is, by implication, tellable. Bearing in mind that one of the most virulent attacks on *Endymion*, that by John Wilson Croker in the *Quarterly Review*, opens with an assertion that the reviewer was unable to read beyond the first book of the poem (*KCH*, pp. 110–11), the question of tellability, of enticing or seducing the reader into reading on, might be understood to have been a crucial consideration in "Hyperion."

We might elaborate Prince's concept of the "disnarrated" in terms of its being constituted by two related formal strategies: negation and alterity. The disnarrated produces negation by referring to what is not or cannot be narrated. At the same time, by asserting an alternative to its own narrative this negation produces what we might term "alterity" or the "other" of narrative.[4] A narrative is then defined in terms of narratives which are not itself. A few examples of strategies of alterity and negation in "Hyperion"

3. Gerald Prince, "The Disnarrated", *Style*, 22 (1988), p. 2.
4. Prince, *ibid.*, p. 8, n. 1, suggests, as an alternative to "disnarrated," the term "alternarrated," which would explicitly express this alterity.

will give some indication of the extent to which the poem is structured around the "disnarrated," and the extent to which it is produced by this (de-)construction—by the failure of "Hyperion."

In the first of the poem's overtly self-reflexive statements of poetic incompetence, when the narrator attempts to repeat or express Thea's speech, we find a narratorial sense of an alternative discourse:

> Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
> Would come in these like accents; O how frail
> To that large utterance of the early Gods! (1.49–51)

On one level this is a further assertion of the silence of the written text: the pathos of writing is suggested by the negative force of "tongue . . . accents . . . utterance" and by the previous line's fore-grounding of the materiality of voice, "solemn tenour and deep organ tone."[5] On another level, however, Keats is providing an example of the doubling of the disnarrated: "Hyperion" is structured as an other of narrative. Similarly, the very syntax of Saturn's speech, his assertion of power and of narrative possibility, are expressed in terms of negation:

> "But cannot I create?
> Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
> Another world, another universe,
> To overbear and crumble this to nought?
> Where is another chaos? Where?" (1.141–5)

Here the repeated negative "cannot" works against the interrogative mode almost as if the phrase "cannot I . . ." was semantically identical with "I cannot." Saturn's sense of his own impotence conflicts with his understanding of "another universe": thematically, the "disnarrated" is represented by the fallen Titans' sense of their failure. Moreover, this pressure of negation deep within the language affects the narrative ordering of plot and subplot: moving from Saturn to the other Titans, Keats reproduces the alterity of Saturn's speech so as to assert the congruence of narrative worlds:

> Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
> More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
> Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe. (1.158–60)

Negation and alterity are explicitly expressed in what might otherwise have been a conventional modulation from one scene to another; but here the lexicon of alterity—"other . . . like . . . such like too huge . . . or"—alerts us to the fact that in this articulation of poetic inadequacy a more crucial sense of potential narrative failure is indicated.

Paradoxically, perhaps, when the modulation is achieved, we find a disconcerting familiarity in the predicament of Hyperion, as if the alternative narrative line, which promised to rescue the threatened silence of the narration of the fallen Titans, is simply a repetition of the first, providing no possibility of development. The descriptions of Saturn and Hyperion overlap in their stillness: "Blazing Hyperion on his orbed fire / Still sat, still snuff 'd the incense" (1.166–7). The adverbial "still" of a continuing action also involves adjectival motionlessness and silence: indeed, there is a chias-

5. On the question of voice in "Hyperion," see Anya Taylor, "Superhuman Silence: Language in *Hyperion*," *SEL*, 19 (1979), pp. 673–87, and Aske, *Keats and Hellenism*, pp. 94–6.

tic reciprocity of grammar and meaning in the two senses, because although the word works grammatically as an adverb denoting continuation, this presupposes a former reference which is unavailable to the reader—an anterior disnarrated—so that the sense of stillness or silence is produced through narrative absence. The phrases also point to another kind of "disnarrated" in their syntactic echoing of Miltonic inversion. Indeed, this sense of an anterior disnarrated repeatedly disrupts reading with an overwhelming sense of an alternative narrative lying deep within the uncluttered syntax of the verse.* * * These local failures of narrative form, all of them failures of narrative transition (on the level of *discours*), seem to be symptoms of an underlying problem with the narrative form of "Hyperion," and seem to predict—even to predicate—the "failure" and abandonment of the poem: if these structural features—the internal mechanisms of narrative—alert the reader to narrative incompetence or solecism, then the superstructure of narrative telling seems unlikely to succeed.

* * * [T]he failure of "Hyperion" may be read in a number of different ways: the stilling of narrative may be understood to be generated by the fear or anxiety that there will be no audience for this poem and a consequent paralysis of narrative; it may be read in terms of a crucial and irreducible disjunction between the language of men and the language of gods by which the epic mode articulates the language of gods and in so doing excludes itself from audience (see 1.49; 2.101; 2.120); it may be read in terms of the mode of reading configured by the poem—perplexity and incomprehension (2.130f.; 3.48) and an impossible figure of reading as an access to immortality (3.111), a reading into which the reader dies.

This latter explanation for the stilling of narrative is, of course, related to our notion of Romantic posterity as the posthumous life of writing, and might be approached through the figure of the dead hand of Saturn with which "Hyperion" opens. There are two hands in the opening twenty lines of "Hyperion," both of which strongly figure negation: first there is the admonitory hand of the Naiad—"the Naiad 'mid her reeds / Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips" (1.13–14). This deadened hand at the start of the poem interdicts speech, language, poetry and prefigures the dead hand of Saturn four lines later:

> Upon the sodden ground
> His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
> Unsceptred. (1.17–19)

* * * Similarly, the opening to "The Fall of Hyperion" figures the hand as the still-life or living-death of poetry and of the relationship between text and audience:

> Whether the dream now purposed to rehearse
> Be Poet's or Fanatic's will be known
> When this warm scribe my hand is in the grave. (1.16–18)

The Induction to "The Fall" reads the dead hand of the opening to "Hyperion"—just as the whole of "The Fall" may be understood as a reading of the earlier poem[6]: the later poem explicitly refigures the relationship of

6. See James Kissane, "The Authorization of John Keats," *KSJ*, 37 (1988), p. 70: "The Fall" is "a parasitic engrafting upon the original, a kind of palimpsest."

poetic death to audience in "Hyperion." In the Induction to "The Fall," the death of the poet and his status as "poet" or "fanatic" is implicitly related to the "death" of the reader not only because of the way that the lines allow no reading other than that mediated by "This living hand," but also because there is already within these lines a question of the life or death of the audience: "Who alive can say / 'Thou art no poet; may'st not tell thy dreams?'" (1.11–12). If there is no one *alive* who can judge on the poetic merits of the poem, then the explicit request for such judgement and its deferral to a time after the death of the writer might also be read as a reading or "saying" deferred until after the death of the reader.

The crucial difference between "Hyperion" and "The Fall of Hyperion," then, is this: "Hyperion" figures death as a pre-condition for inspiration, it is a poem crucially concerned with the notion of dying into poetic creation, a mortal creativity; "The Fall," on the other hand, is crucially concerned to figure *reading* as an activity irreducibly bound up with death. And it is through "The Fall" that we can read the death of the audience in "Hyperion." In what follows, I shall attempt to elaborate the figured reader in "The Fall" and implicitly to read "Hyperion" through this figured reading.

Faulture

* * *

Unlike the minor alterations, the pragmatic and socially (in-)decorous revisions to "The Eve of St Agnes," Keats's rewriting of "Hyperion" amounts to a comprehensive doctoring of its earlier form.[7] The rewriting of "Hyperion" as "The Fall of Hyperion" results in a central inquiry into the nature of the poet-reader relationship. Although critics tend to insist on reading "The Fall" as an allegory of the birth of poetic creativity, such a birth is crucially mediated by the notion of reading: despite critics' attempts to elide or suppress this point, the narrator is primarily figured as a "dreamer"—and a dreamer who watches and reacts, who provides an audience for a "tragedy"—while the question of the narrator's status as a creator or poet is explicitly and repeatedly placed in suspense. And while "The Fall" seeks to assert the irreducible conflation of poetic reading with poetic writing, the extant narrative produces a dying into reading. * * * What are the narrative strategies brought into play here? To what extent are the concerns of the passage generated by their audience?

> Fanatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave
> A paradise for a sect; the savage, too,
> From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
> Guesses at Heaven: pity these have not
> Trac'd upon vellum or wild Indian leaf
> The shadows of melodious utterance.
> But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die;
> For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,
> With the fine spell of words alone can save

7. For studies of these alterations, see Jeffrey Baker, *John Keats and Symbolism*, p. 108; Paul D. Sheats, "Stylistic Discipline in *The Fall of Hyperion*," *KSJ*, 17 (1968), pp. 85–7; and Robert D. Wagner, "Keats's "'Ode to Psyche' and the Second 'Hyperion,'" *KSJ*, 13 (1964), pp. 35–6.

> Imagination from the sable charm
> And dumb enchantment. Who alive can say
> "Thou art no poet: may'st not tell thy dreams?"
> Since every man whose soul is not a clod
> Hath visions, and would speak, if he had lov'd
> And been well nurtured in his mother tongue.
> Whether the dream now purposed to rehearse
> Be Poet's or Fanatic's will be known
> When this warm scribe, my hand, is in the grave. (1.1–18)

The interpretive shift which is needed here is that which would move from hermeneutics to pragmatics. In fact, whatever the confusions of thought in the Induction, the lines have demonstrably produced a reception of "The Fall of Hyperion" which is defined within the terms presented by the Induction itself. The Induction offers the reader an explicit commentary on the poem to follow, a commentary which both directs readers' attention and provides evaluative comment. It asserts, most fundamentally (and logically prior to any thematic or analytical statement), a social function for poetry, an acknowledgement of the pragmatic, public nature of poetic discourse and, at the same time, a recognition of the fundamental importance of the relationship between poet and audience: if the audience judges well, then the poem exists as a poem, if they judge against it, the dream is a "fanatic's." This is a radical redescription not only of the poet's role, but of the very nature of poetic discourse and of the definition of "literature": the poem can only exist as poetry with the consent of its audience.[8] This may explain the significance of "rehearse": only when the audience receives and approves the poem will it be "performed." The last line of the Induction is an accurate metaphor for the nature of literary production in an age of mechanical reproduction, where the living hand of the poet, his handwriting, is "dead" as it is read in its printed form: the line lucidly marks the gap between writing and reception. Usually taken as an attempt to define the poet against the dreamer/fanatic, the Induction also vitally asserts the public nature of the poetry.

This assertion of the pragmatic basis of poetic expression is also implicitly asserted by the alterations in narrative form made in rewriting "Hyperion," the most notable of which is the alteration made in narratorial voice from third to first person. Through this alteration in voice, the narrator becomes the reader-surrogate, and the narrative of the Titans is mediated through his reactions to the story: Keats's rewriting of the poem recognizes the limitations of the earlier poem's attempt to isolate poetry from its audience. As many critics have recognized, "Hyperion" seems to be deeply ambivalent about its sympathy towards the Titans and the Olympians: the poem fractures and halts in its movement from the tragic to the Apollonian.[9] The disnarrated which characterizes the form of "Hyperion" is another expression of this ambivalence. The first-person narration of "The Fall," then, allows for an altered focus of narrative and an altered emphasis on the events: instead of the question of sympathy for the Titans or the Olympians, the emphasis falls on the

8. In fact, this is the kind of pragmatic definition of "literature" produced by, for example, Costanzo Di Girolamo, in *A Critical Theory of Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981), p. 65.
9. See William C. Stephenson, "The Performing Narrator in Keats's Poetry," *KSJ*, 26 (1977), p. 63, and Balachandra Rajan, *The Form of the Unfinished: English Poetics from Spenser to Pound* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 231.

narrator's reactions to events—a shift which organizes the narrative around the question of response. What this reader-narrator makes possible is, precisely, the alterity to which "Hyperion" continually alluded: the story which Keats writes now is the alternative, the supplementary story.

In "Hyperion," the crucial mechanics of the transition from one character to another, from one episode to another, is constituted by disjunction, resulting in a narrative form which seems to reflect the picture of the fallen Titans as broken statues strewn around the poem: thematic *disjecta membra* are actualized in narrative form. In "The Fall," by contrast, these limitations, these fault-lines in the narrative texture, become the transitions between levels of framing and are motivated by the subjective experience of the narrator (from consciousness to sleep, from solitude to dialogic exchange, from talk to vision, from *discours* to *histoire*, etc.). Thus, instead of breaking off from one line of narrative and moving to another, "The Fall" is crucially structured around the "faultures" of narration.[1] It is within the spaces formed by the disjointed articulations of narration, that "The Fall" is narrated, just as it is the *supplementary* narrative of response that becomes critical. This is a movement from immobility to movement, from the totalities of narrative or history to the dispersal of event or process, from continuity to disjunction, from place to space, and thus from failure to faulture.

The framing structure of "The Fall" is the most complex of all of Keats's narratives.[2] Eventually in "The Fall," the several layerings of frame look like this:

Induction > garden > dream > vision> "Hyperion"

The Induction (1.1–18) frames the whole poem; the first scene within the garden (1.19–57) is a vision which is interrupted by sleep and opens out into another embedding in the dream of the struggle of the narrator to become a poet or reader (1. 58–256); this leads to a greater visionary potential, represented in the vision of Moneta's face which I have classified as a further embedding, as "vision," because the narrator seems to be on a qualitatively different narratorial level (1.256–90); this visionary potential opens out into Moneta's narration of the immortal struggle which, referring to Keats's first attempt, I have labelled "Hyperion" (1.291–end). Such rigorously complex embedding provides an unstable, liminal quality to the poetry, which continually threatens to slide, through a "faulture," on to a different plane of narration, just as Moneta's narrations continually slide into the narrator's "vision." At the same time, such a technique radically distances the *histoire* from "the world" and from the reader, who must view the tale through the various implicit commentaries of embedded narrative level:[3] like the poet-narrator (the reader's surrogate), the reader must struggle through various thresholds before he or she is able to approach the story of "Hyperion." This is, on one level, a typically Romantic manoeuvre, asserting epistemological dislocation and authorial suspension and, in contrast to the first "Hyperion," suggests ways in which that poem's desire

1. "Faulture" is Keats's neologism in "The Fall" (1.70).
2. On Keats and framing, see Robert M Adams, "*Trompe l'Oeil* in Shakespeare and Keats," Sewanee *Review*, 61 (1953), pp. 245–6.
3. Through the use of the first-person narrator, there is, of course, a strong sense of narratorial intimacy: see F. K. Stanzel, *A Theory of Narrative*, 2nd edn., tr. Charlotte Goedsche (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 79–110, on the choice of first- and third-person narrators. John Barnard, *John Keats* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 129, comments on the way in which "The Fall" "paradoxically attain[s] a severe impersonality through intense subjectivity."

for coherence, for narrative form, and, by implication, for a negation of audience, has evolved into a poetics inhabiting the unstable interstice of text and audience.

The major episode of reading in "The Fall" is that in which the figured reader, the narrator-poet, reads Moneta's face. For Helen Vendler, Moneta's eyes figure the inspiration of the poet, asserting an aesthetic which explicitly denies audience:[4]

> Half closed, and visionless entire they seem'd
> Of all external things—they saw me not,
> But in blank splendour beam'd like the mild moon,
> Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not
> What eyes are upward cast. (1. 267–71)

If we read Moneta's face with Vendler as a figure for poetic inspiration and a denial of audience, it becomes clear that Keats's text is itself a transgression of precisely this law of authorial ignorance or disdain: how would it be possible to read Moneta's face as a negation of audience in poetic creativity if "The Fall of Hyperion" does not itself engage with precisely this question? In as much as "The Fall" presents an implicit ideology of the poet detached from and ignorant of its audience, the poem itself must fall outside of this definition of poetry because of its explicit engagement at this point with the question of reading. But audience is not only figured by this "figural" ideology of authorial ignorance. We have already seen that the Induction presents the poem as constituted by its audience. At the same time the notion of the unbridgeable ontological gap between poet and reader apparently presented by the face of Moneta is also transgressed by the scene itself which, despite many critics' apparent blindness to the point, is constituted as a figure of reading. It is clearly the case that the narrator explicitly *reads* Moneta's face:

> As I had found
> A grain of gold upon a mountain's side,
> And twing'd with avarice strain'd out my eyes
> To search its sullen entrails rich with ore,
> So at the view of sad Moneta's brow,
> I ached to see what things the hollow brain
> Behind enwombed. (1.271–7)

* * * Keats's letter to Shelley, which exhorts the older poet to "'load every rift' of your subject with ore" (p. 524) is an obvious counterpart to these rich entrails, and in "The Fall" the poet is exhorting his readers, by the use of a reader-surrogate, to "strain [their] eyes": if Keats's poetry is "loaded with ore," the task of the reader must be to extract the wealth embedded within it. Earlier, the voice of Moneta had declared that if the narrator cannot ascend the steps "thy bones / Will wither in few years, and vanish so / That not the quickest eye could find a grain / Of what thou now art" (1.110–13): the poet who is no poet will lack all reception, will be invisible to the public eye. Thus the "faultures" by which the narrative is organized, the liminal stratifications of narrative embedding, provide rich pickings for the eyes of avaricious readers.

4. Vendler, *The Odes of John Keats*, pp. 216, 222, 224.

What "The Fall" would seem to present, then, is a figure of poetry which is not self-identical: that is, the role of the reader is presented in "The Fall" as a shattering of the self-identical, hermetic inspiration of poetry. The face of Moneta may, as Vendler and others have read it, produce an ideology of solipsistic, self-enclosed and self-referential poetic making, and we might (mis)read the word "disinterested" as Keats's word for this process (see *L*, 1: 205, 293; 2: 79, 129, 279). But at the same time this figure of poetry demands to be read, demands to be read as a figure of reading, and as such threatens to shatter the illusion of aesthetic isolation. As such, "The Fall" figures the activity of reading as a transgression of the poetic text.

* * *

If reading in "The Fall" is transgressive, the poem also emphasizes its difficulty—not only in terms of the hermeneutic difficulties of ignorance, confusion, bewilderment of "Hyperion," but also in the way that reading is strenuous and physically and emotionally draining. In particular, the narrator's struggle towards Moneta which I have been "reading" is figured as a struggle *against* the condition of the fallen Saturn:

> I strove hard to escape
> The numbness; strove to gain the lowest step.
> Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace: the cold
> Grew stifling, suffocating, at the heart;
> And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not. (1.127–31)

* * * Episodes such as the vision of Moneta must be understood to have been phenomenally successful in controlling the audience through its figuration of poetic inspiration, its presentation of a particular configuration of the ideology of poethood, while at the same time presenting a transgressive undermining of precisely that audience response. * * * [O]ne can make one's dream real—as Moneta does—by making others dream it. The reality of the imagination, the reality of Adam's dream, is constituted by the audience for that dream: the reality of the dream is not constructed by the dreamer, who knows that it is only a dream. Rather, the reality of the dream is constructed by the transgressive reading of the dreamer's audience.

John Keats: A Chronology

JK = John Keats
GK = George Keats
TK = Tom Keats
FK = Fanny (Frances Mary) Keats
FB = Fanny Brawne

1795 JK born October 31 at the Swan and Hoop Livery Stables, 24 Moorfields Pavement Row, London. He was the eldest child of Frances Jennings Thomas and Thomas Keats, who was chief ostler of the Swan and Hoop, owned by Frances's father. 1795 is a bad year for crops, leading to high food prices. Napoleon's army has invaded Italy. George III's coach is stoned at the opening of Parliament in January; Pitt introduces the "Two Acts" to prevent mass protest meetings.

1797 GK born February 28.

1799 TK born November 18; the Keatses move to Craven Street, City Road.

1801 Edward Keats born; he dies before February 1, 1805.

1803 FK born June 3; in August JK and GK begin attending John Clarke's Enfield Academy, a school rooted in dissenting and radical traditions. JK meets Charles Cowden Clarke at Enfield. TK would later join his brothers there. War with France is resumed in May after the Peace of Amiens.

1804 Thomas Keats dies in a riding accident on April 16. Frances is remarried to William Rawlings on June 27. The Keats children move in with their maternal grandparents, John and Alice Jennings, at Ponders End near Enfield. Pitt starts his second ministry; Napoleon has himself declared emperor.

1805 Grandfather Jennings dies in March; the family moves to Edmonton. Admiral Nelson dies at the victory at Trafalgar; Napoleon scores a major victory over the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz.

1806 JK's mother leaves her husband and severs contact with the children until 1809.

1810 JK's mother dies of tuberculosis and is buried on March 20. Grandmother Jennings appoints John Sandall, a merchant who later fled to Holland, and Richard Abbey, an old family friend and a tea broker, as guardians for the children; the Keats brothers would have disputes with Abbey over their inheritance.

1811 JK leaves Enfield Academy and is apprenticed by Abbey to Thomas Hammond, an Edmonton surgeon and apothecary. GK becomes a clerk for Abbey but later quits over a dispute with a junior partner,