

DIALECTICAL OSCILLATIONS IN KEATS: A KRISTEVAN READING OF  
*ENDYMION, HYPERION AND THE FALL OF HYPERION*

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## ABSTRACT

DIALECTICAL OSCILLATIONS IN KEATS: A KRISTEVAN READING OF  
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By deploying Kristevan theory, this thesis argues that Keats's poetry oscillates between the semiotic and the symbolic and it asserts that the semiotic threatens to overwhelm the symbolic in *Endymion* while the poet strives to repress the semiotic in *Hyperion* poems but it returns and causes the poet to leave these poems as fragments. The poet is immersed in the semiotic in *Endymion*, a romance, while attempts are made to repress this immersion in the epicscape of *Hyperion* and in the allegorical vision of *The Fall of Hyperion*. Nevertheless, the semiotic resurfaces, thereby challenging the resolution to restrain the semiotic. This thesis also studies the Keatsian confrontation with the abject. Boundaries threaten to collapse in *Endymion*, which provokes repulsion in the encounter with the abject. *Hyperion* strives to maintain boundaries against the revolting presence of the abject; likewise, *The Fall of Hyperion* seeks to preserve distinctions in the face of the blurring of boundaries; nonetheless, both *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* are haunted by the abject. This study further

discusses how melancholy permeates these longer poems. The melancholic Endymion withdraws from the symbolic and retreats into the realm of the unnameable Thing where self and other are undifferentiated. The fallen Titans in *Hyperion* relapse into asymbolic melancholy while the Olympian Apollo, the new god of the black sun, merges with the unrepresentable Thing, obliterating the divide between subject and object. Similarly, the poet-narrator of *The Fall of Hyperion* mingles with the muse Moneta, eradicating the breach between inside and outside.

**Keywords:** Keats, the semiotic, the symbolic, abjection, melancholy

## ÖZ

### KEATS ŞİİRİNDE DİYALEKTİK SALINIMLAR: *ENDYMION*, *HYPERION* VE *THE FALL OF HYPERION* ADLI ŞİİRLERİN KRISTEVACI OKUMASI

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Kristeva'nın kuramından yararlanan bu çalışma Keats şiirinin semiyotik ve sembolik arasında salınımlar yaşadığını savunmaktadır; semiyotiğin *Endymion* şiirinde sembolüğü istila etme tehdidi olduğunu, buna karşılık şairin *Hyperion* şiirlerinde semiyotiği bastırmaya uğraştığını, ama yine de semiyotiğin geri döndüğünü ve bu şiirlerin yarım kalmasına sebep olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Şairin bir romans olan *Endymion* adlı şiirinde semiyotik olanı benimsediği ve onun içine gömüldüğü iddia edilmektedir. Diğer taraftan ise, epik bir şiir olan *Hyperion* ve bir alegori olarak görülen *The Fall of Hyperion* adlı şiirlerinde, semiyotikle olan bu kucaklaşma bastırılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Yine de, semiyotik ortaya çıkar ve böylece onu dizginleme kararlılığına meydan okur. Bu tez aynı zamanda şairin iğrençlikle karşılaşmasını da incelemektedir. *Endymion* şiirinde, sınırların muğlaklaşması tehdidi vardır; bu da şairde korku ve tikslenme duygularını uyandırır. *Hyperion* şiiri ise bu iğrenme duygusuna karşı, sınırları sağlamlaştırmaya çalışmaktadır; aynı şekilde *The*

*Fall of Hyperion* şiirinde de, şair sınırların bulanıklaşmasına karşı onları pekiştirmeye çabalamaktadır. Fakat tiksinti her iki şiirin de peşini bırakmamaktadır. Ayrıca bu tezin bir diğer maksadı da melankolinin bu şiirlere nasıl sindiğini tahlil etmektir. Melankolik Endymion sembolik düzlemden uzaklaşır, ben ve öteki arasındaki bölünmenin olmadığı, adlandırılmaz olan Şeyin etkisine çekilir. *Hyperion* şiirinde ise çaptan düşmüş, yenik Titanlar asembolik melankolinin alanına geri düşerken, Apollo, ya da Kristeva'nın kavramıyla söyleyecek olursak yeni *kara güneş* tanrısı, ifade edilemez olan Şeyle kaynaşır ve böylece özne ve nesne arasındaki ayrımı aşındırır. Benzer şekilde, *The Fall of Hyperion* şiirindeki şair-anlatıcı esin perisi olan Moneta ile birleşip, içeri ve dışarı arasındaki gediği ortadan kaldırır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Keats, semiyotik, sembolik, iğrençlik, melankoli

to Boza and my parents  
Günay and Ali Albayrak

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter first introduces the aim of the study and then moves on to Julia Kristeva and her theory. It locates Kristevan theory within French feminism, summarises Kristeva's intellectual journey and offers a detailed introduction to her concepts. It also puts Keats the poet in tune with Kristeva the theorist, thereby explaining how the Kristevan concepts such as the semiotic, the symbolic, abjection and melancholy allow for a revitalised understanding of Keats poetry.

### 1.1 The Aim of the Study

This thesis aims to analyse John Keats's poetry in the light of the theory of Julia Kristeva, a prominent figure of French feminist criticism. The primary concern of this dissertation rests on the analysis of Keats's *Endymion*, *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* by means of the Kristevan concepts of the semiotic and the symbolic, abjection and melancholy. Employing Kristevan theory, this study argues that Keats's poetry oscillates between the semiotic and the symbolic and it claims that the semiotic threatens to predominate over the symbolic in *Endymion* while the poet struggles to suppress the semiotic in *Hyperion* poems but it returns and causes the poet to leave these poems as fragments.

The discussion about this oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic revolves around the body. French feminism has been interested in describing and theorising "a writing of and through the body which will liberate the 'immense resources of the unconscious'" (Weil 162). The psychological background that French feminism draws on demonstrates that the "immeasurable, unconfined maternal body" (Kristeva *Tales* 253) is of central importance in the process of literary production; a poet's pre-Oedipal attachment to and identification with the maternal body energizes his/her literary writing. Therefore, this thesis investigates how the versifying body informs and marks poetic language, how the body, "the vocal apparatus", punctuates the communicative language through poetic surplus in Keats's poetry (Kristeva *Desire* 217). Poetry is "a

vocal, which is to say, a bodily art. The medium of poetry is a human body: the column of air inside the chest, shaped into signifying sounds in the larynx and the mouth. In this sense, poetry is just as physical or bodily an art as dancing” (Pinsky 8). Poetic language writes the body as “soft caressing sobs began / To mellow into words” (Keats *Endymion* II. 736-7); “caressing sobs” transform into words, which indicates the bodily base of poetic language and Keats’s “sensitivity to the material presence of words” (O’Rourke 5); the material of poetry is a human body, which posits the body as the origin of language. Hence, this thesis examines the transfusion of the living body into language and the language of a poet “who embraces the semiotic, choosing to enter the rhythmic maternal” (Gallop 126). The Kristevan semiotic is employed to examine the immersion in the material realm of the body, in “the *pulsating, carnal self*, mysterious and palpable” (Lawrence *Preface* 108). Keats’s poems, which indicate “the instinct for embodied existence” (Walsh 71), provide a fertile avenue for such an analysis that is interested in the material base of language since he, for instance, displays “a natural tendency to write onomatopoeically, settling as if by instinct upon words which, separately or in combination, sound like what they signify” (Garrett 73). This Keatsian tendency evokes the Kristevan semiotic since Kristevan theory, which puts forward “a more *embodied* understanding of signification” (Margaroni “Semiotic Revolution” 11), suggests that bodily drives manifest themselves in language through the semiotic aspect of signification. Once the living body is transfused into signification, poetic language becomes “distinct from language used as for ordinary communication” and it embodies “an otherness of language” attending to “the sounds and rhythms of words in transrational fashion” (Roudiez “Introduction” in *Desire* 5).

## **1.2 Julia Kristeva and Her Theory**

This thesis makes use of Kristeva’s concepts to analyse Keats’s poetry. Before attending to her theory closely, it is essential to briefly introduce French feminism in order to locate Kristevan theory within a context.

### **1.2.1 French Feminism**

The term ‘French feminism’ refers to a branch of feminist theories and philosophies that emerged from France between the 1970s and 1990s, even though the theorists do

not personally identify themselves as French; it is their theories that are called French feminism. French feminist theory is distinguished by an approach which is philosophical and literary. Its writings tend to be effusive and metaphorical, being generally focused on theories of the body. French feminists approach feminism with the concept of *écriture féminine*, literally feminine writing, a form of writing described as “beyond censorship” (Sellers xxx), which points to the inscription of the female body and female difference in language and text. Feminine writing is not afraid “to go outside narrative structures, or to create subjectivities that are plural and shifting” (Shiach). This form of writing rejects the traditional Western dichotomy between the mind and the body:

Woman, linked with body rather than mind, was supposed to be antithetical to writing, an activity said to be restricted to the intellect. The authors associated with *l'écriture féminine* have challenged these traditional notions in two ways: first, by celebrating woman's association with the body, thereby refusing the subordination of body to mind; and second, by refusing to accept the separation between the two. “Writing the body” or “letting the body be heard” are clearly attempts at refuting the sense of writing as a strictly mental thing (Herndl 331).

Thus, French feminists who are engaged with writing and the body challenge the conventional view that hierarchizes the cognitive over the visceral. This thesis draws on French feminism because poetic language writes the body, as poetry “calls upon both intellectual and bodily skills” (Pinsky 8). Poetic language undermines the disembodied self and emphasises the embodiedness of the subject. The Romantic distinction between “emotive language” and “cognitive language” and the Romantic veneration of the former allow space for a feminist critical approach to Romantic poetry (Abrams *The Mirror* 101). The rhythmical body is heard through the emotive language that Romantic poetry employs.

As a strain of feminist literary theory, *écriture féminine* originates through foundational poststructuralist theorists such as Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, whose “common ground is an analysis of Western culture as fundamentally oppressive, as phallogocentric” (A. R. Jones 357). Weil notes that “[a]lthough they did not think of themselves as a group, these women promoted an exciting, new approach to thinking about women, their bodies, and their desires” (153). Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva can be contextualized together since they deploy “post-Lacanian

psychoanalysis and focus on sexual difference” (Eden 104); although they are indebted to Lacan’s thoughts, they undermine his privileging of the Symbolic order. Nonetheless, their works indicate crucial differences.

Generally, these figures of French feminist criticism tend to focus their attention on language, analyzing the ways in which meaning is produced. They conclude that language as we commonly think of it is a decidedly male realm, which therefore represents and submits the world to the male point of view. Burke asserts that language is at the centre of French feminist theory: “The central issue in much recent women’s writing in France is to find and use an appropriate female language [...] When a woman writes or speaks herself into existence, she is forced to speak in something like a foreign tongue, a language with which she may be personally uncomfortable” (in Showalter 465). French feminism is considered to have contributed to “the construction of sexual difference and the specificity of women’s relations to language and writing” (Moi *Sexual/Textual* 94). The French feminist debate in relation to language and writing is of central importance to this thesis since it aims to investigate one’s relation to the maternal body and language, particularly poetic language and its manifestation in bodily writing which is energized by Kristeva’s notion of the semiotic *chora*. The notion of the maternal is significant for French feminists who focus on *écriture féminine*, “a peculiarly female mode of expression which is supposed to reflect the physical closeness between infant and mother” (Knellwolf 200). For instance, Cixous’s theoretical approach emphasizes that “the inscription of the rhythms and articulations of the mother’s body which continue to influence the adult self provides a link to the pre-symbolic union between self and m/other, and so affects the subject’s relationship to language, the other, himself and the world” (Sellers xxix). Likewise, the Kristevan approach to and analysis of the infant’s physical closeness with the mother and the maternal body, and its reflection in the material base of language is of primary significance to the interpretations of Keats’s poetry that are explored and presented in this study.

The biological sex of the poet/writer is not relevant since *écriture féminine* allows a space for the investigation of literary writing which is immersed in the feminine regardless of the sex of the writer, as is the case with Cixous’ analysis of Jean Genet

as a writer whose literary production qualifies as *écriture féminine* (“Medusa” 342). Morris points out that Cixous views Genet as “one male writer who is open to the anarchic force of bisexual desire and hence to pursuing a feminine writing practice” (125-6). In similar fashion, Kristeva explains that “this recourse to the [feminine] semiotic, the inscription of the archaic relation to the mother in language – it isn’t the monopoly of women. Men writers such as Joyce, Mallarmé or Artaud are proof of this” (“A Question of Subjectivity” 135-6). Similarly, Cixous argues that “the fact that a piece of writing is signed with a man’s name does not in itself exclude femininity. It’s rare, but you can sometimes find femininity in writings signed by men: it does happen” (“Castration” 52). These remarks demonstrate that the feminine is a cultural/linguistic construct and is not limited by biological sex. Therefore, Kristeva analyses the poems of such male poets as Mallarmé, Lautréamont and Baudelaire among many others. The idea of *écriture féminine*, particularly Kristeva’s notion of the semiotic, deconstructs certain binary oppositions such as masculine/feminine and male/female. Hence, Kristeva’s interpretations of those male poets through the semiotic undermine binary oppositions. In support of this view, Eagleton also notes that the semiotic dimension of language is “closely connected with femininity, but is by no means a language exclusive to women, for it arises from a pre-Oedipal period which recognizes no distinctions of gender” (188).

This thesis draws on Kristeva rather than Cixous and Irigaray in its analysis of Keats’s poetry. There are two reasons why I have chosen to concentrate on Kristeva and employ her concepts in my analyses of Keats’s poetry rather than Cixous and Irigaray although there are a few references to the latter two when they seem pertinent to the Kristevan discussion. Firstly, this resolution to draw on Kristeva results from the fact that her theory is invested in the oscillations between the semiotic and the symbolic and proposes that they are interrelated and interdependent, whereas Cixous’s and Irigaray’s theories may tend to prioritise the Imaginary in response to Lacan who is claimed to prioritise the Symbolic over the Imaginary as in Lacanian thought the Symbolic “encroaches upon the Imaginary, organizes it, and gives it direction” (Sarup

105)<sup>1</sup>. Bowlby argues that Cixous endorses a form of women's writing that "finally sweeps away all analytical power in a vague celebration of anarchic fluidity and endless writing" (121)<sup>2</sup>. However, Kristeva stresses the importance of the symbolic as much as she venerates the power of the semiotic, for she believes that the fundamental divide between the two registers is what constitutes (and deconstitutes) human subjectivity. Secondly, Faflak asserts that Kristeva "offers the possibility of reading psychoanalysis before its carnation as theory" and he adds that "[t]his psychoanalysis can be traced to Romanticism's exploration and dramatization of the subject" (*Romantic Psychoanalysis* 20). This view suggests that Kristevan theory and Romanticism speak to each other.

### **1.2.2 Kristeva's Intellectual Journey and Her Conceptual Terrain**

Since this thesis is going to be an exploration of Keats's poetry in the light of Kristevan ideas, I intend to focus on her theory and therefore introduce her work in detail, under separate subheadings. This introduction first concentrates on Kristeva's intellectual journey and then moves on to her conceptual terrain.

In order to adequately understand Kristeva's intellectual trajectory and to prepare the ground for discussion in the analytical chapters of this thesis, it is essential to explain the intellectual and historical context in which Kristeva's work emerges and develops. This introduction to Kristeva traces her work from her notions on poetic language in the 1960s, through her theories of the semiotic and the symbolic in the 1970s, to her analyses of horror, love and melancholy in the 1980s. Kristeva is such a prolific writer that she continues to write in the 1990s and into the twenty-first century, but the conceptual framework of this thesis is built on the first three decades of her career,

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<sup>1</sup> Within the Lacanian framework of subject formation, the Symbolic seems to be more important than the Imaginary: "While the image equally plays a capital role in our domain, this role is completely taken up and caught up within, remoulded and reanimated by, the symbolic order" (Lacan *Seminar III* 9). Lacan seems to establish "a symbolic order that enacts another subordination of women" (Stone 54). Robson also notes that Cixous dismisses Lacanian privileging of the phallus as the transcendental signifier (123). French feminists challenge the phallogentricity of Lacan's account of the subject formation and focus on the pre-Oedipal relationship between the infant and the mother rather than the Oedipal relationship with the father (Morris 113-4).

<sup>2</sup> Cixous envisages a form of writing that is free-flowing and revels in the open-endedness of "the river I sail" (*Preface* xxi). For her, meaning is endlessly deferred and proliferates in the ceaseless heterogeneity of signifiers.

specifically her books *Desire in Language*, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, *Powers of Horror*, *Tales of Love* and *Black Sun*. However, her later work is referred to time and again insofar as it sheds light on her early work.

Kristeva started writing in the 1960s, which “witnessed a theoretical ebullience” (Kristeva *Desire* vii). The 1960s is a period characterised by “a dazzling eruption of theoretical innovation” and “a vibrant intellectual scene” (Simons 4), “a revolution of the mind, an intellectual turning point” (Calvino 90). It is also described as “a period of belief in the revolutionary power of language and of hopes for a shattering of millenary oppressive structures” (Conley 3), a period marked by “the theoretical upheaval wrought by the structuralists’ and poststructuralists’ interrogation of traditional philosophical and literary precepts” (Brandt 21). Kristeva’s work is situated within this “upheaval in thought”:

Recent developments in the sciences, both physical and human, are such an affront to our sense of self-certainty, to our attachment to identity, to our belief in unity and reality – to our senses, in a word, to our common sense(s) – that thinking is no longer the same as it was even thirty years ago. A few early indications of this upheaval in thought were Freud’s theory of the unconscious, Georg Cantor’s concept of the infinite in mathematics, Einstein’s shaking of our Newtonian world with his theory of relativity, and, more recently, Heisenberg’s ‘uncertainty principle’. To these early indications of an upheaval in thought may be added – for those who have a penchant for thinking in neat categories – the movements of structuralism, and its successors, poststructuralism and postmodernism. It was in this second phase of the upheaval in western thought that ‘man’ died: or rather the theoretical ‘form-man’ – to use the philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s term – began to pass away and something else, something as yet not entirely discernible, began to take its place (Lechte *Kristeva* 1).

In accordance with this upheaval in thought, Kristeva thinks that the subject is always in process/on trial (*Revolution* 22). Kristeva no longer views the speaking subject as a “transcendental ego nor the Cartesian ego but rather a subject in process/on trial” (*Revolution* 37). This Kristevan subject is a dynamic one and is always grappling with being produced, dissolved and constructed again. The subject in process/on trial is “a rhythmic reverberation in the symbolic” (Lechte “Art, Love, and Melancholy” 27). This rhythmicality within the domain of the symbolic unsettles the Cartesian self. Kristeva regards this rhythmical subject in language as “decentering the transcendental ego, cutting through it, and opening it up to a dialectic in which its syntactic and categorical understanding is merely the liminary moment of the process” (*Revolution*

30). Kristevan theory introduces otherness that upsets the unity and mastery of the transcendental subject and dethrones “the epistemological primacy of the ego” (O’Connor 48).

The Kristevan speaking subject is conceived of in the domain of thought developed after Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. In this field of thought, social contracts built on cohesiveness, unity and self-mastery are broken so as to “give way to the free play of negativity, need, desire, pleasure, and jouissance, before being put together again” (Kristeva *Desire* 23). These three thinkers challenge the human subject fabricated by the transcendental ego. The works of these three names

define the horizon of the contemporary knowledges of human subjectivity. Sharing little but a suspicion that the human subject, considered as a conscious, rational being, could no longer provide the foundation for theoretical speculation, each decentred the individual’s pretension to sovereignty, self-knowledge, and self-mastery. Each opposed a prevailing Cartesianism which had infiltrated liberalism, empiricism, idealism, and humanism. Each distrusted the centrality and givenness attributed to consciousness, seeing it as an effect rather than a cause of the will to power (in Nietzsche), class relations (in Marx), or psychical energies (in Freud) (Grosz 1).

Kristevan theory unsettles the Cartesian subject by positing the speaking subject (the subject of enunciation) as “the place, not only of structure and its regulated transformation, but especially, its loss, its outlay” (Kristeva *Desire* 24). As opposed to the Cartesian ego that is predicated on sovereignty and self-mastery, she regards subjectivity as a process (O’Connor 45). Kristeva puts forward “a theory of the speaking subject as split between the conscious and unconscious” (Lloyd 138). Kristevan theory bases this split subject on the divided, decentred and differential concept of the subject.

The first phase of Kristeva’s intellectual trajectory<sup>3</sup> outlines “a theory of semiotics capable of describing poetic language both as the ‘productivity’ of the text, and as a specific form of negativity” (Lechte *Kristeva* 4). As productivity of the text, it animates the text; as a form of negativity, it distorts the text. Kristeva studies poetic language in which “signified structure (sign, syntax, signification) is defined within boundaries

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<sup>3</sup> The Kristevan concepts of the semiotic and the symbolic, abjection and melancholy are going to be introduced in detail in the upcoming individual sections. This section briefly introduces Kristeva’s intellectual journey.

that can be shifted by the advent of a semiotic rhythm that no system of linguistic communication has yet been able to assimilate” (*Desire* 24). Poetic language enables a recalcitrant, wayward straying into the untrodden spaces from the straight, narrow, denotative, communative aspect of language. Hence, a Kristevan perspective offers

the concept of the bodily drives that survive cultural pressures toward sublimation and surface in what she calls ‘semiotic discourse’: the gestural, rhythmic, preferential language of such writers as Joyce, Mallarmé, and Artaud. These men, rather than giving up their blissful infantile fusion with their mothers, their orality, and anality, reexperience such *jouissances* subconsciously and set them into play by constructing texts against the rules and regularities of conventional language (A. R. Jones 358).

The Kristevan semiotic discourse indicates the playfulness and disruptiveness of the text beyond the traditional rules and regularities such as grammar and syntactical linearity. Kristeva pays special attention to semiotic practices which are “translinguistic” and “operate through and across language, while remaining irreducible to its categories” (Kristeva *Desire* 36). In other words, she seeks to develop “a theory of the dynamic and unrepresentable poetic dimension of language: its rhymes, rhythms, intonations, alliterations – melody; the music of language, in short; music which is even discernible in everyday speech, but which is in no sense reducible to the language of communication” (Lechte *Kristeva* 5). Kristeva’s work makes it possible to speak about what is unspeakable and unrepresentable since she enables one to think about “the black thrusts of a desire that borders on idiolect and aphasia” and her work also listens to “the call of the unnameable” which issues “from those borders where signification vanishes” (Kristeva *Desire* x). This is the primary reason why her work rings a bell in the study of Keats’s poems, considering the Romantic penchant for the unknown, the incommunicable, the invisible and the untrodden. Her theory of the dynamic, unrepresentable poetic rhymes and rhythms helps understand the Keatsian poetic voice that has “an impulse to ‘venture’ into rhyme”, that quests into the unsignifiable terrain of poetic language (Roe *Keats* 34).

The second period of Kristeva’s intellectual trajectory is characterised by her deep engagement with the construction of the subject in relation to language. In this phase she refines the concept of the semiotic designed to help articulate the realm of the pre-symbolic, the pre-linguistic, “the site of energies and bodily drives, and is thus

associated with rhythms and forces, movements and gestures, intonations and melodies” (Lloyd 138). She conceptualises the semiotic as “a signifying process understood, on the one hand, in relation to avant-garde poetics, and, on the other hand, through Lacanian theories of subject formation” (Weil 163)<sup>4</sup>. Hence, in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, she analyses “certain literary texts of the avant-garde” such as those of Mallarmé and Lautréamont through psychoanalytical accounts of subjectivity (88).

In *Revolution* Kristeva closely focuses on the semiotic which “precedes the establishment of the sign” (27). Margaroni suggests that *Revolution* could be seen as “a (temporal) venture into the dark; for its aim is to take us back to an anarchic *arkhe*, a beginning before ‘the Beginning’ (of time, the word or the subject)” (“Semiotic Revolution” 10). *Revolution* concentrates on Kristeva’s identification of the semiotic with the maternal: “those bodily rhythms and pulses which create a signifying bond between mother and infant both in the womb and in the period after birth” (Weil 166). For Kristeva, the semiotic “leads, or should lead, to a disruption or disaggregation of symbolic forms” (Rose “An Interview” 348). Those anarchic rhythms and pulses disrupt the symbolic structures of language. Thus, the semiotic is associated with the maternal and the bodily rhythms since it is

related to what psychoanalysts call the pre-oedipal, that is, to a time before sexuality has been ordered, to a time when the infant child is in a symbiotic state with the mother in which it cannot distinguish between its own body and hers. It is for this reason that the semiotic is conceived as intrinsically associated with the maternal body, a body that provides the first source of rhythm, touch, sound and movement for all humans (Lloyd 138).

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<sup>4</sup> The Kristevan distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic seems to roughly correspond to the Lacanian distinction between the Imaginary and the Symbolic. The Imaginary refers to “a pre-linguistic realm of sense perception, identification and an illusory sense of unity” while the Symbolic is conceived of as “a totalising concept in the sense that it marks the limit of the human universe” (Homer 31, 44). However, a post-Lacanian Kristeva seeks to undermine the primacy of the Lacanian Symbolic over the Imaginary by means of accentuating the importance of the semiotic in the signifying system: “Kristeva’s focus on the semiotic is an attempt to displace the Lacanian emphasis on the father’s role in the production of language and to give prominence to the mother in organizing the drives into a presymbolic or pre-oedipal signifying system” (Weil 166). Kristeva claims that all signification consists of two elements, the symbolic and the semiotic, thereby highlighting the importance of the maternal function.

The semiotic that is affiliated with the maternal is pre-linguistic; it distorts the symbolic strictures of language such as syntax and grammar.

The third phase of Kristeva's intellectual trajectory is marked by her focus on psychoanalytic theory in the 1980s. She develops the notion of abjection in *Powers of Horror*. In *Tales of Love* she deals with aspects of love, and writes about melancholy in *Black Sun*.

Kristeva arrived in Paris in the mid-1960s, a period in which Kristeva argues that "an intensity of white heat [...] set categories and concepts ablaze" (*Desire* vii). She claims that the French cultural life at the time was "receptive to the nomad, the outlandish, the implant, and the exogamous of all kinds" (in Lechte *Kristeva* 14)<sup>5</sup>. As "a foreigner experiencing and inducing 'dépaysement' (bewilderment, disorientation, feeling of strangeness and unfamiliarity)" in France (Lechte *Kristeva* 66), Kristeva studied the unspeakable and the unrepresentable; her outlandishness enabled her to delve into what may be considered exogamous in the symbolic realm, namely the semiotic; an outsider hears the music of (a foreign) language better than native speakers who might be too much preoccupied with the communicative aspect of language. Kristeva is Bulgarian-French; her hyphenated identity is of importance as her theories contest fixed and stagnant subjectivity. This diversity is to be cherished as her thinking upholds plurality and multiplicity. Being in a kind of exile in France takes on an intellectual significance; being a stranger in a place enables one to view it better from the outside; with alienation comes a unique insight

The French intellectual life at the time is marked by the influence of Hegel. Kristeva's work, particularly *Revolution*, is demonstrative of this influence. Hegel is a crucial name in the intellectual universe of Kristeva. She derives her concept of "the subject's conflicting movements from Hegel [...] but points out that she never subsumes them in a synthesizing rational position as he does" (Bovâe 15). Kristeva recreates "Hegelian negativity as the concept of 'rejection' (*rejet*) and locates it in the rhythmic

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<sup>5</sup> Lechte himself translates from the original French. At some points in this study Lechte functions as one of the primary sources in English since he offers an important account of a considerable portion of Kristeva's work which has never been translated from French into English.

movement of expulsion which drives the semiotic *chora* and traverses the movement of the thetic” (L. Hill 147). Hegel’s notion of negativity

comes to be the pivotal concept in Kristeva’s discussion of the relationship between the semiotic as embodied in poetic language, and the symbolic as embodied in the Law of the Father. [Hegelian] Negativity [...] would also open the way to an understanding of the nature of the repression as both constitutive and disruptive of the social order (Lechte *Kristeva* 75).

Differing from Hegel, Kristeva stresses “crisis and not reconciliation” (Oliver *Kristeva* 98). She foregrounds “the fourth rather than the third term of the Hegelian dialectic (i.e. negativity rather than reconciliation)” (Margaroni “Semiotic Revolution” 18).

For Kristeva, Hegelian negativity is different from Kantian negation:

In other words, the semiotic domain is not to be confused with the negative belonging to thought itself, a perfectly representable and knowable negative. Philosophically, the semiotic may be linked to the negative, but it is not the Kantian negation produced by a knowing, judging subject. To grasp the true import of Kristeva’s theory here, we have to come to grips with a negative that transcends Kantian negation: Hegelian negativity (Lechte *Kristeva* 133).

Kantian negation remains at the level of the symbolic since it is formulated as the communicable and the signifiable, and produced by the knowing subject that considers himself as the master of the symbols. However, Hegelian negativity resonates with the semiotic. This Kristevan interest in Hegelian negativity is important in this thesis since Keats’s work performs, according to Milnes, “(whether he knows it or not) the negativity that Hegel, Marx, Adorno and others expose at the heart of the romantic will to ‘value’, ‘beauty’, and ‘truth’” (67). Hegelian negativity meets Keatsian negativity within a Kristevan framework.

The French intellectual life of the time is also marked by the influence of Nietzsche, who regards “the subject ambivalently poised between the Dionysian and the Apollonian, his terms for will and representation” (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 69). Nietzsche borrows these terms from the Greeks

who reveal the profound mysteries of their view of art to those with insight, not in concepts, admittedly, but through the penetratingly vivid figures of their gods. Their two deities of art, Apollo and Dionysos, provide the starting-point for our recognition

that there exists in the world of the Greeks an enormous opposition, both in origin and goals, between the Apolline art of the image-maker or sculptor (*Bildner*) and the imageless art of music, which is that of Dionysos. These two very different drives (*Triebe*) exist side by side, mostly in open conflict, stimulating and provoking (*reizen*) one another to give birth to ever-new, more vigorous offspring in whom they perpetuate the conflict inherent in the opposition between them, an opposition only apparently bridged by the common term ‘art’ – until eventually, by a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic ‘Will’, they appear paired and, in this pairing, finally engender a work of art which is Dionysiac and Apolline in equal measure: attic tragedy (Nietzsche 14).

Nietzsche’s notions of the Apollonian and the Dionysian which he explores in *The Birth of Tragedy* are integral to the discussion of this thesis in terms of the similarities between the Nietzschean Apollonian and Dionysian, and the Kristevan symbolic and semiotic respectively. Mortensen explains the Nietzschean Dionysian/Apollonian duality:

For Nietzsche, the Attic tragedy finds its sublime expression in the fusion between the two forces generated from the gods Dionysus and Apollo. The Dionysian finds expression in the choral lyric as the spirit of music that provides the primordial link with the spirit of nature in all of its horrific splendour and which has the power to fragment the unity of the Apollonian force of individuation created by the power of illusion that creates the image of the spectacle (103).

The Dionysian as an expression of the spirit of music and “the primordial link with the spirit of nature” resonates with the Kristevan semiotic. Likewise, the unity of the Apollonian force of individuation evokes the Kristevan symbolic. Nevertheless, the Nietzschean Dionysian/Apollonian duality “presupposes an established unity that is subsequently disintegrated” (Mortensen 104), while the Kristevan theory suggests that “the relation between the semiotic and symbolic is a dialectical relation” (Lloyd 140)<sup>6</sup>. By means of foregrounding negativity in the dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic, Kristeva “avoids reducing her dialectic into a dualism” (Margaroni “Semiotic Revolution” 20, 23).

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<sup>6</sup> Kristevan approach is not built on a neat dialectical progression and linearity; instead, she is invested in dialectical oscillations. Her theory has been shaped by her deployment of “the ideas of Bakhtin [his dialogical approach], combined with her training in Marxist theory, a critical approach to Hegelian dialectics and a burgeoning interest in Freudian psychoanalysis” (Lloyd 136). Hence, a Kristevan approach to dialectical oscillations is pertinent to Bakhtin’s dialogical approach and critical of Hegel’s dialectics.

In addition to Hegel and Nietzsche from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Derrida is another philosopher from the 20<sup>th</sup> century who has an impact on Kristeva. Derridean ideas such as the metaphysics of presence and *différance* are important for the Kristevan theory. Derrida deconstructs the Western metaphysics of presence. Derridean approach reveals that the notion of presence provides the support for the founding centres of the Western philosophy. Derrida points out that

the centre receives different forms and names. The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metonymies. Its matrix [...] is the determination of Being as *presence* in all senses of this word. It could be shown that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the centre have always designated an invariable presence (*Writing and Difference* 353).

The centre is named and saturated with being and presence; it is predicated upon unvarying foundational notions. The centre claims to “rule over the system of thought by remaining unsullied and unimpeachable, by belonging to itself, in such a way that it remains spatially and temporally self-present and self-identical” (Sharman 87). The founding centres designate themselves as uncontaminated by the peripheral.

*Différance* is crucial in Derridean thought. The theorisation of *différance* points to “a conceptualisation of difference that is not founded upon opposition, but explores the way in which meaning is always constructed in a space-time continuum, and so relies upon structures of deferral that can never be closed” (Dobson 120). Hence, fixed structures, identities and unchanging positions that do not acknowledge difference and deferral of meaning are contested in Derridean philosophy. Derridean deconstruction

waged a final assault on the logic of identity by replacing the very notion of identity with that of difference, or “*différance*.” Written in French with an “a” to make it a verbal noun, *différance* emphasizes the illusory status of identity that is always being deferred – either spatially or temporally. To put it another way, identity is only negative – not this, not that, and it can never be absolute since it is always relational to something outside of itself. Derrida builds on the logic of difference to subvert what he calls the “logocentric” foundations of Western, metaphysical thought, its faith in a single origin of truth and meaning, or in a consciousness that can say “I am that I am” without reference to anything outside itself (Weil 158).

Thus, the Western metaphysics based on the notions of origin, truth, self-mastery, identity and presence is questioned. In *Of Grammatology* Derrida asserts that the

Western philosophical tradition has been logocentric. He maintains that logocentrism supports “the determination of the being of the entity as presence” (*Of Grammatology* 12). Within the Western metaphysics of presence, the centre renders itself incommensurable with the elements outside it that are deemed contaminated; the centre is not in relation with what lies around it.

As opposed to speech, writing is where the Western metaphysics of presence is challenged in Derridean universe:

By a hardly perceptible necessity, it seems as though the concept of writing – no longer indicating a particular, derivative, auxiliary form of language in general (whether understood as communication, relation, expression, signification, constitution of meaning or thought, etc.), no longer designating the exterior surface, the insubstantial double of a major signifier, *the signifier of the signifier* – is beginning to go beyond the extension of language (Derrida *Of Grammatology* 6-7).

Writing goes beyond the boundaries of the logocentric understanding of language and subjectivity. Derridean deconstruction demonstrates that neither transcendental signifier nor transcendental signified is able to stabilise meaning. The Derridean logic of difference subverts the notion of unity perpetuated by the Western metaphysics. Writing, in Derridean universe, places the subject in tune with not only unity and coherence but also dissolution and contradiction. Writing enables one to jolt out of fixed subjectivity, as writing, in a Derridean sense, is “the gesture that both frees us from and guards us within, the metaphysical enclosure” (Spivak xli). Influenced by the Derridean philosophy of *différance*, Kristeva suggests that subjectivity is always in process/on trial (*Revolution* 22).

Kristeva’s theoretical notions that she introduces in *Revolution in Poetic Language* are “roughly contemporaneous” with some of the works published by Derrida; Roudiez points out that Kristeva benefits from his philosophical discussions (“Introduction” in *Revolution* 6). For instance, as she defines the semiotic in *Revolution*, she refers to Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*; she alludes to Derridean *différance* as she explains that the semiotic is “articulated by flows and marks: facilitation, energy transfers, the cutting up of the corporeal and social continuum as well as that of signifying material” (40). Hence, the Kristevan semiotic resonates with the Derridean *différance* in terms of their challenging the Western metaphysics of presence that venerates unity and

coherence while devaluing flows, disintegrations and decompositions. She also references Derrida in a section where she explains negativity, which shows that she is indebted to Derrida:

Grammatology retains the essential features of a nonsubstantial, nonsemantic, and nonphenomenal device that might enable us to sort out the logocentric entanglement of substance, meaning, and phenomena, and indicate its exorbitant mobility. It is, in our view, the most radical of all the various procedures that have tried, after Hegel, to push dialectical negativity further and elsewhere. Difference, the trace, the gramme, writing [écriture], contain, retain, and harbour this dialectic in a way that, while avoiding totality, is nevertheless definite and very precise (*Revolution* 140).

This shows that Kristeva draws on Derrida as she theorises her notion of negativity as “a constitutive absence” (*Revolution* 141). Derrida’s critique of Western metaphysics of presence chimes with Kristeva’s valuing of absence as productive. For both thinkers, the living body transfused into writing/language rather than a disembodied centre is fundamental in their discussions.

Besides the philosophical ideas of Hegel, Nietzsche and Derrida, Kristeva is influenced by Saussure’s theory of anagrams in poetic language. This theory points out that certain letters and phonic patterns are repeated in anagrammatic form. But Kristeva prefers to use the term ‘paragram’ rather than ‘anagram’ because

she is intent on emphasizing the idea that language is, in its essence, doubly constituted: it has a material base which insists poetically (that is, materially, as the geno-text, or as ‘music’) in the textual message or in the text as a vehicle of communication (Lechte *Kristeva* 78).

Kristeva’s paragram reveals “the phonic pattern of language” (Lechte *Kristeva* 78); it renders visible the volume of language which “breaks up the linearity of the signifying chain” (Kristeva *Revolution* 152). Certain letters and phonic patterns are repeated and dissolved into other “signifying differentials”; “the sounds and graphic marks of signifiers” function differentially (Lechte *Kristeva* 78). This notion of paragram indicates Kristeva’s focus on the materiality of signification, and her “passion for ventures with meaning and its materials (ranging from colours to sounds, beginning with phonemes, syllables, words)” (Kristeva *Desire* x). By focusing on the materiality of language, Kristeva attempts to do justice to “the ‘instinctual rhythm’ that punctures

and punctuates meaning” (Margaroni “Semiotic Revolution” 7). She emphasises that such material elements of signification as the sound of a word and the rhythm of a line cannot be banished from the realm where meaning is constituted and deconstituted. This Kristevan account of the materiality of language proves useful to analyse the work of Keats whose “greatest gift was an uncanny ability to experience language materially” (O’Rourke xii), a poet who desires to attain “an almost tactile apprehension of words” (Bennett 62).

In the cultural and intellectual climate of the 1960s France, the understanding of language is contested; the intellectual of the time “becomes, in the late sixties, a materialist writer: the sounds and rhythms of language are highlighted and together display a plurality of meanings” (Lechte *Kristeva* 21). Kristeva is influenced by the spirit of the time which emphasises the materiality of language. She refutes an understanding of language as a static object or product; for her, meaning is not a static “sign-system but a *signifying process*” (Kristeva “Speaking Subject” 28). This signifying process reveals “the body’s imprint in language” (Lechte *Kristeva* 99). She believes that a view of language as a static sign-system does not apprehend “anything in language which belongs not with the social contract but with play, pleasure or desire” (Kristeva “Speaking Subject” 26). Within the signifying process, bodily drives are released and articulated, which reveals the materiality of language in the sound and rhythms of words.

As a critic seeking to “unexpress the expressible” (Barthes *Critical* 15), Roland Barthes is important in the intellectual journey of Kristeva who attempts to theorise the untheorisable (Moi *Sexual/Textual* 161). Barthes is “Kristeva’s Parisian mother” according to Lechte (*Kristeva* 66). Barthes makes a distinction between two kinds of writing: *écriture*, a form of writing which engenders *jouissance*, “the French word for orgasm or for a pleasure so intense that it is at once of the body and outside it” (Weil 153), and *écrivance*, a form of writing “treated purely as an instrument (as in scientific discourse)” (Lechte *Kristeva* 23). Barthes, who proposes that “we are scientific out of a lack of subtlety” (*Roland Barthes* 161), would privilege a form of writing which is immersed in the Kristevan semiotic since, for him, “writing is strangeness, because it is *jouissance*, and *jouissance* insofar as it is strangeness” (Kristeva *Hatred and*

*Forgiveness* 253). The Barthesian writerly text, which can be found “by accident, fleetingly, obliquely, in certain limit-works” (Barthes *S/Z* 4-5), resonates with the semiotic which Kristeva analyses in avant-garde poetry. The writerly text is “ourselves writing, before the infinite play of the world”; it points to a textual dispersal “within the field of infinite difference” (Barthes *S/Z* 5). *The Pleasure of the Text* transforms the distinction between the readerly text and the writerly text into the distinction between pleasure and *jouissance*: the text of pleasure refers to “the text that contents, fills, grants euphoria; the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, is linked to a *comfortable* practice of reading” whereas the text of *jouissance* points to “the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain boredom), unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions [...] brings to a crisis his relation with language” (Barthes *Pleasure* 14). The former is related to “the kind of reactive joy of the readerly, a confirmation of ‘what goes without saying’” whereas the latter designates “the bliss/ecstasy of the writerly, as affectively experienced by the subject as reader-writer who also experiences the concomitant dispersal of coding” (Stafford and McManus 77). The writerly text which does not reconfirm existing codes but enacts “an avant-garde dispersal of such codes” (Stafford and McManus 78) evokes the Kristevan semiotic which blurs the boundaries, pluralizes meaning and distorts grammar; therefore, Barthes’ writing should be considered as “the undeniable backdrop” to Kristeva’s theory (Lechte *Kristeva* 67).

Within the framework of the Barthesian dispersal of codes and textuality, the idea of language as purely transparent is challenged. Lechte notes that “[t]ransparence is implied within an empiricist framework when the latter presents language as the coincidence of words and things where there would be complete adequation between language and reality” (*Kristeva* 23). Transparent language is undermined; the production of writing as opaque is emphasised. Thus, Kristeva explores the opaqueness of poetic language, regarding it as “almost an otherness of language”, as “the language of materiality as opposed to transparency” (*Kristeva Desire* 5). The Barthesian pleasure of the text paves the way for “Kristeva’s studies of the often disruptive *jouissance* of language’s barely coded, and barely theorizable side” (Lechte *Kristeva* 68).

The notion of writing as opaque evokes the Kristevan semiotic aspect of signification. The idea of language as opaque also resonates with the indeterminate, dense, obscure and perverted poetic diction used in Keats's poems, which challenges the empiricist view of language, and where the chasm between words and things distorts the correspondence between signifiers and signifieds, and opens a barely symbolizable terrain which resists signification. The Romantic penchant for the unknown, the unsignifiable and the incommunicable suggests that writing is opaque and it is an affectively registered experience of limits which engenders *jouissance*.

Having introduced the cultural climate and the intellectual universe where Kristevan theory emerges and flourishes, it is time to focus on her conceptual terrain and introduce her notions in detail under separate subheadings.

### **1.2.3 The Semiotic and the Symbolic**

Kristeva's most important contribution to contemporary theory is the distinction she makes between the semiotic and the symbolic elements of signification, and the dynamic interplay between the two. Kristeva explains why she has established such a distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic:

It is simply an attempt to think of "meaning" not only as "structure" but also as "process" or "trial" [...] by looking at the same time at syntax, logic, and what transgresses them, or the trans-verbal. [...] The semiotic is not independent of language, but underpins language and, under the control of language, it articulates other aspects of "meaning" which are more than mere "significations," such as rhythmical and melodic inflections (*Hatred and Forgiveness* 11).

The symbolic points to the structures of language while the semiotic denotes what transgresses them. The dialectical interplay between the semiotic and the symbolic indicates that meaning is also in process or on trial. Kristeva, who attempts to "decenter the closed set and elaborate the dialectic of a process within plural and heterogeneous universes", believes that there is a constant dialectical interplay between the two aspects of signification (*Revolution* 14).

The semiotic and the symbolic are the two components of the signifying process. The semiotic exceeds the denotative efficiency of the ordinary, communicative aspect of

language. The semiotic is related to the infantile pre-Oedipal; it is a realm associated with the maternal, the preverbal, the rhythmic, the musical and the poetic; it lacks structure and precedes sign and syntax. The semiotic is pre-Oedipal since it “*precede[s]* the distinction between ‘subject’ and ‘object’” (Kristeva *Revolution* 34). The semiotic element refers to an opaque, ambiguous, condensed, poetic word which is reminiscent of the undifferentiated realm of the pre-linguistic; therefore, it is seen by the symbolic as an aberration to be eliminated in the interest of clarity and the complete transparency of the word. The transverbal semiotic underlying the symbolic is “rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation; it is musical, anterior to judgement, but restrained by a single guarantee, syntax” (Kristeva *Revolution* 29). By contrast, the symbolic is the realm of language where the speaking subject is posited by structure and law; it is related to sign, syntax and other linguistic categories. As opposed to the semiotic, the symbolic is an “inevitable attribute of meaning, sign, and the signified object” for the consciousness of a transcendental ego (Kristeva *Desire* 134). The distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic is between “the somatic and rhythmic impulses that originate in the pre-oedipal” and “formal systems of language” respectively (Buhle 334). Since it is closely tied with the pre-Oedipal body, the semiotic “logically and chronologically precedes the establishment of the symbolic” (Kristeva *Revolution* 41).

The semiotic is related with bodily drives which are discharged through rhythms and intonations; the semiotic aspect of signification allows “the speaking animal to sense the rhythm of the body” (Kristeva *Desire* 34). The rhythms of the body are transfused into language. The rhythmicality of the semiotic is beyond the symbolic capacity for representation or signification. Although it designates the unrepresentable in the linguistic realm, the semiotic refers to “an evocation of feeling or, more pointedly, a discharge of the subject’s energy and drives” (McAfee 15-6). It is “the extra-verbal way in which bodily energy and affects make their way into language”; the semiotic might be “expressed verbally” even though it is not restrained by “regular rules of syntax” (McAfee 17). Since it is not subject to the strictures of the symbolic, the semiotic is manifested through a “plurality of meaning and subversion of grammar and syntax” (Christodoulou 115). Expressions found in music, dance, and poetry are manifestations of the semiotic element. The semiotic accentuates “the essential kinship

of poetry and music”, the “musical quality” of poetic language, the “musical quality which bears in it the stress of emotion” (Lowell 69). Music, dance and poetry are the realms where the speaking subject ventures beyond the rules of the symbolic established by a conscious ego. To recap, the semiotic component of the signifying process “roughly refers to the affective, corporeal elements of language that contribute to meaning, but do not intend or signify in the way that symbols do” and it corresponds to “the rhythms and tones of poetry or music, or the affective dimension of language that is part of but remains heterogeneous to the symbol” (Keltner “Introduction” 2-3).

In contrast, the symbolic is related to sign, syntax and structures. The symbolic aspect of signification is “what philosophers might think of as meaning proper”; the symbolic is “the element of signification that sets up the structures by which symbols operate”; it is “the structure or grammar that governs the ways in which symbols can refer” (Oliver “Introduction” xiv). The symbolic refers to an articulation of orderly meaning clearly expressed by means of the structures of language such as grammar and syntax. In other words, the symbolic is

the realm of language understood as a rule-governed system, of grammar and syntax and what Kristeva refers to as ‘propositions’ and ‘positions’. In a more general sense it is also the realm of social order and law. It is, in psychoanalytic terms, post-oedipal, that is, it relates to a time when the mother/baby dyad is separated and the child becomes conscious of itself as an individuated, linguistic being (Lloyd 138-9).

In the symbolic mode of signifying, the speaking subject attempts to articulate meaning with as little ambiguity as possible by means of using what Kristeva terms as propositions and positions in the realm of signification; this “positionality” establishes “the *identification* of the subject and its object” (Kristeva *Revolution* 43). In the domain of the symbolic representation, the symbiotic mother-infant relationship is already severed; the dyadic mother-infant symbiosis is replaced by the triadic symbolic – “signifier, signified, and signifying system” (Herndl 400).

Kristeva maintains that signification operates in two interdependent modes: the symbolic and the semiotic. These two modalities of the signifying process are “inseparable within the *signifying process* that constitutes language, and the dialectic between them determines the type of discourse (narrative, metalanguage, theory,

poetry, etc.) involved” (Kristeva *Revolution* 24). Kristeva’s use of these two terms demonstrates that they are interdependent; the semiotic element is discharged into the symbolic. Kristeva does not cling to the hierarchized binary thinking of the Western metaphysics; she argues that these two modes of signification are interrelated: “Instead of holding to the dualistic thinking of the West, Kristeva is showing how the poles of these dichotomies [nature versus culture, body versus mind besides the distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic] are intertwined” (McAfee 17). The interaction and interconnection between these two modalities constitute the signifying process (Moi “Introduction” 12; McAfee 18; Eagleton 188; Keltner “Introduction” 2-3; Oliver “Introduction” xvi; O’Connor 46; Sjöholm 14). The semiotic and the symbolic are “dialectical constructs” which “represent two systems that can both be transposed into the other in the process of signification” (Sjöholm 14). The dialectic between these two components of the signifying process is constitutive of the subject: “Because the subject is always *both* semiotic *and* symbolic, no signifying system he produces can be either ‘exclusively’ semiotic or ‘exclusively’ symbolic, and is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both” (Kristeva *Revolution* 24).

The interplay between these two modes of signification means that the semiotic drives and articulations destabilize and unsettle the symbolic; the symbolic element is “energized by a semiotic dimension” (McAfee 18). Similarly, Eagleton posits that the semiotic “is the ‘other’ of language which is nonetheless intimately entwined with it” (188); the semiotic is the disruptive other of the symbolic. McAfee makes it clear that “the symbolic mode of signification is meaningful because of the way the semiotic energizes it” and adds that without “the bodily energy that speaking beings bring to (and put into) language, language would have little if any meaning for us” (18).

Kristevan work is built on figuring out “the balance between sociality and madness” (Kristeva *Revolution* 214-5); therefore, a dialectical interpenetration of the semiotic and the symbolic is fundamental to her *oeuvre*. To be utterly immersed in the semiotic would make one “feel lost in a chaos of sounds and rhythms, colours and lines, without rhyme and reason” as Pierre Bourdieu says about sophisticated, subtle, intellectually complex works in *Distinction* (2). Total immersion in the anarchic unrepresentability of the semiotic disrupts the symbolic. Hence, we also need neat categories to talk about

poetic subtleties, intimations that resist articulation, words that do not easily lend themselves to signification, sounds and rhythmical free-flowing cadences that connote the unsignifiable; poetry's rhyme (scheme for instance) and reason would enable one to articulate in the symbolic, as well.

The interdependence between the semiotic and the symbolic makes the Kristevan subject oscillate between these two modalities of the signifying process. Kristeva brings the speaking body back into the discourses of the human sciences, thereby extending "the limits of the signifiable, perhaps to the extent of relativizing the role of the symbolic order" (Lechte *Kristeva* 56). The subject who is posited by the symbolic is challenged by the corporeal semiotic; what is signified by the symbolic is extended by the affective dimension of the language which transgresses the symbolic law and structures. In accordance with poststructuralist psychoanalysis which undermines "notions of self-mastery" (Weil 158), Kristevan theory unsettles the concept of unified, fixed self because she "insists on semiotic negativity, which produces a dynamic subjectivity" (Oliver "Introduction" xvi). Semiotic negativity is what is anterior to the linguistic sign and structures. Nevertheless, Oliver points out that Kristeva also questions "theories that would reduce subjectivity to chaotic flux; she also insists on symbolic stasis and identity" ("Introduction" xvi). Thus, Kristevan theory would not allow the speaking animal that senses the rhythm of the body to completely overthrow the symbolic order; neither would it permit the rule-governed subject rigidly constructed by the symbolic structures and law to utterly repress the rhythmical semiotic. Through the interdependence of the symbolic static identity and the semiotic motility, the Kristevan subject swings back and forth between the semiotic and the symbolic elements in signification, which renders subjectivity dynamic and open to change.

This thesis regards the Kristevan maternal and paternal functions as metaphoric<sup>7</sup>. Kristevan theory "testifies to a struggle to move away from biologism and towards a

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<sup>7</sup>This is similar to the Lacanian phallus that does not refer to the penis; the father as a person, a parent is replaced by the Name of the Father, a cultural and linguistic construct; the phallus is not an organ, but "a belief in bodily unity, wholeness, perfect autonomy" (Luepnitz 226). Thus, the phallus becomes the representation of the Law of the Father in Lacanian thought; the Name of the Father does not refer to a real father, but to a signifier (Lacan *Écrits* 153).

metaphorisation of parental categories” (Gambaudo 4). Therefore, this study does not intend to imprison the maternal into an exclusively corporeal role and the paternal into an exclusively disembodied, cultural role: “Kristeva’s praise of the re-birth of the child into the paternal function is founded upon a different, more metaphoric, understanding of parental categories. It is this metaphoric understanding of ‘father’ and ‘mother’ that interests us” (Gambaudo 37). Similarly, Oliver points out that Kristeva “says that the maternal function is not necessarily the domain of females and the paternal function is not necessarily the domain of males. Recall that she maintains that we could call them ‘X’ and ‘Y’” (*Kristeva* 129). Lloyd also notes that for Kristeva, femininity is “a fiction” (146); so is masculinity. In the words of Kristeva, the semiotic that comes before the symbolic is “only a *theoretical supposition* justified by the need for description” (*Revolution* 68). Accordingly, this study intends to read the Kristevan concepts of the maternal and the paternal as metaphors; they are functions, theoretical constructs, positions from which to interpret; in this thesis, they do not refer to the physical female/male body, but to a principle that may be found in both men and women as Kristeva suggests.

### **The Semiotic *Chora***

Kristeva draws on the term *chora* used by the Greek philosopher Plato, who employs it to designate a receptacle which has maternal overtones (*Timaeus* 42). Kristeva turns to the Platonic *chora*, “an ambiguous *mi-lieu* at the borders between Form and Matter, the intelligible and the sensible” as she is concerned with “opening both the biological and the social to a mediating space/spacing *before* the violent break introduced by ‘the Word’” (Margaroni “Semiotic Revolution” 14). It is called the semiotic *chora* because it is marked by an “uncertain and indeterminate *articulation*”, which differs from a symbolic “*disposition* that already depends on representation” (Kristeva *Revolution* 25). The semiotic *chora* is characterized by an uncertain articulation as the term *chora* denotes “an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases” (Kristeva *Revolution* 25). What the semiotic *chora* articulates is undetermined and changeable because it precedes the establishment of the symbolic and therefore lacks position, unity or identity.

Accordingly, “subject and object positions are missing from the *chora*” (Beardsworth “Revolt Culture” 39). Kristeva defines the semiotic *chora* at length:

Discrete quantities of energy move through the body of the subject who is not yet constituted as such and, in the course of his development, they are arranged according to the various constraints imposed on this body – always already involved in a semiotic process – by family and social structures. In this way the drives, which are “energy” charges as well as “psychical” marks, articulate what we call a *chora*: a nonexpressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated (*Revolution* 25).

In this semiotic process energy charges are displaced, condensed and inscribed on the body prior to the establishment of the subject by the symbolic. The so-called totality of the disconnected drives is nonexpressive because these energy charges are arranged not in the symbolic realm of thesis, position, unity or distinct identity, but in the presymbolic space of the body, in “the locus of the drive activity underlying the semiotic” (Lechte *Kristeva* 129).

Although it is theoretically describable in the discourse of representation, the semiotic *chora* is nonexpressive since it is anterior to sign and structure and “as rupture and articulations (rhythm), precedes evidence, verisimilitude, spatiality, and temporality” (Kristeva *Revolution* 26). This semiotic process cannot lend itself to signification in the domain of representation as it is outside symbolic constructions of time and space. All the same, Kristeva stresses that the discourse of representation “moves with and against the *chora* in the sense that it simultaneously depends upon and refuses it” (*Revolution* 26). This suggests that the symbolic is predicated upon the semiotic; “this motility [of the semiotic *chora*] is the precondition for symbolicity, heterogeneous to it, yet indispensable” (Kristeva *Revolution* 240).

The semiotic *chora* refers to an asymbolic realm; it is “not yet a position that represents something for someone”; neither is it “a *position* that represents someone for another position” (Kristeva *Revolution* 26). In other words, the semiotic *chora* suggests a space devoid of signs or signifiers; it is “pre-syllable, pre-word”; since this space antecedes “numbers and forms”, it is “*amorphous*” (Kristeva *Revolution* 239). Therefore, it is unrepresentable in the discourse of symbolic constructions and structures; the *chora* “can never be definitively posited” (Kristeva *Revolution* 26).

The semiotic *chora* also “precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization” and is correspondent “only to vocal and kinetic rhythm” (Kristeva *Revolution* 26). The semiotic *chora* does not involve signifiable figures and designs in the realm of symbolic representations; neither does it involve specularly formed identities; it antecedes forms and patterns; it articulates what is not yet singular. The *chora* is a “rhythmic space” marked by the “gestural and vocal play” of the semiotic motility; this rhythmic space has “no thesis and no position” (Kristeva *Revolution* 26). Kristeva emphasises that although the *chora* lacks unity and identity, it nonetheless undergoes “a regulating process”; this process differs from “that of symbolic law but nevertheless effectuates discontinuities by temporarily articulating them and then starting over again and again” (Kristeva *Revolution* 26). The semiotic *chora* is subject to “vocal and gestural organization” although the linguistic sign is not yet established to designate the absence of an object in this rhythmic space of the pre-verbal or pre-symbolic.

With the term *chora*, Kristeva describes how an infant’s psychic environment is oriented to its mother’s body; it is the maternal space which underlies the symbolic:

Drives involve pre-Oedipal semiotic functions and energy discharges that connect and orient the body to the mother. We must emphasize that “drives” are always already ambiguous, simultaneously assimilating and destructive; this dualism [...] makes the semiotized body a place of permanent scission. The oral and anal drives, both of which are oriented and structured around the mother’s body, dominate this sensorimotor organization. The mother’s body is therefore what mediates the symbolic law organizing social relations and becomes the ordering principle of the semiotic *chora*, which is on the path of destruction, aggressivity, and death (Kristeva *Revolution* 27-8).

Kristeva highlights the importance of the maternal function in the semiotic *chora*. For Plato, Kristeva argues, the *chora* is a “receptacle, unnameable, improbable, hybrid, anterior to naming, to the One, to the father, and consequently, maternally connoted to such an extent that it merits ‘not even the rank of syllable’” (Kristeva *Desire* 133). For Kristeva, the semiotic *chora* seems to be something which “belongs to each person in particular before he or she develops clear borders of his or her own personal identity” (McAfee 19). In this pre-verbal space, the maternal body provides an orientation for the child’s drives, the most instinctual of which is the death drive (Kristeva *Revolution* 28).

The semiotic *chora* is the pre-symbolic space where the meaning that is produced is semiotic: “the echolalias, glossolalias, rhythms, and intonations of an infant who does not yet know how to use language to refer to objects, or of a psychotic who has lost the ability to use language in a properly meaningful way” (McAfee 19). Since the linguistic sign is not yet constituted in this asymbolic space, the *chora* is “a rhythmic pulsion” which underlies the symbolic component of the signifying process and thus refers to “the heterogeneous, disruptive dimension of language” (Moi *Sexual/Textual* 161). Semiotic rhythmical articulations are irreducible to language. The child who is immersed in the semiotic *chora* expresses himself/herself through sounds and gestures, the vocal and gestural aspect of language; s/he inhabits a translanguistic space where s/he does not yet realize that an utterance can express something. When the subject is constituted in the symbolic, the *chora* will be “more or less successfully repressed and can be perceived only as pulsional *pressure* on symbolic language: as contradictions, meanglessness, disruption, silences and absences in the symbolic language” (Moi *Sexual/Textual* 161). Kristeva explains that the semiotic “takes us back to the pre-linguistic states of childhood where the child babbles the sounds s/he hears, or where s/he articulates rhythms, alliterations, or stresses, trying to imitate her/his surroundings” (“A Question of Subjectivity” 133). In this pre-verbal state, voice, gesture and colours are semiotized (Kristeva *Revolution* 28). In this rhythmical space of the semiotic *chora*, the principles of metonymy and metaphor are “indissociable from the drive economy underlying them”; the processes of displacement and condensation play a vital role in the organization of the semiotic (Kristeva *Revolution* 28).

### **The Thetic**

The thetic is another crucial term in Kristeva’s thought. She explains it as follows:

We shall distinguish the semiotic (drives and their articulations) from the realm of signification, which is always that of a proposition or judgement, in other words, a realm of positions. This positionality [...] is structured as a break in the signifying process, establishing the *identification* of the subject and its object as preconditions of propositionality. We shall call this break, which produces the positing of signification, a *thetic* phase. All enunciation, whether of a word or of a sentence, is thetic. It requires an identification; in other words, the subject must separate from and through his image, from and through his objects. This image and objects must first be posited in a space that becomes symbolic because it connects the two separated positions,

recording them or redistributing them in an open combinatorial system (*Revolution* 43).

The rupture between the semiotic and the symbolic is called the thetic. All enunciations are thetic in the sense that they separate an object from the subject. The break between the rhythmic space of the semiotic and the realm of positions and propositions is “the threshold of language” (Kristeva *Revolution* 45). This cleavage establishes signification; without the thetic phase, language would be impossible. The speaking being “must cross a particular threshold” in order to come into existence in the symbolic domain, in the realm of signification (Lloyd 139). As a result of the thetic break, the child starts to realize his/her difference from his/her surroundings and to recognize “the difference between self (subject) and other (object)” (McAfee 20-21; Moi *Sexual/Textual* 161; Lechte *Kristeva* 135). The semiotic continuum is split, which produces signification.

Kristeva states that the thetic is “a stage attained under certain precise conditions during the signifying process”; signification is produced at two points: “the mirror stage and the ‘discovery’ of castration” (*Revolution* 44, 46).

Following Lacan, Kristeva sees the mirror phase<sup>8</sup> as the first step that opens the way for the constitution of all subject and object positions which will detach the infant from the semiotic *chora*: “in order to capture his image unified in a mirror, the child must remain separate from it, the body agitated by the semiotic motility [...] which fragments him more than it unifies him in a representation” (Kristeva *Revolution* 46). Capturing his image unified in a mirror and the drive investment in this image engenders “primary narcissism” and leads to “the constitution of objects detached from the semiotic *chora*” (Kristeva *Revolution* 46). The child utters his/her first holophrastic words as he/she is detached from the surrounding heterogeneous continuity. Signification becomes established on the basis of this splitting, the separation from the maternal body: “Language learning can therefore be thought of as an acute and

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<sup>8</sup> In Lacanian thought, the mirror stage is seen as an identification: “We have only to understand the mirror stage as an identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image” (Lacan *Écrits* 1-2). Roudinesco notes that the mirror stage is “a matrix foreshadowing the evolution of the ego as imaginary” (112).

dramatic confrontation between positing-separating-identifying and the motility of the semiotic *chora*” (Kristeva *Revolution* 47).

The second point at which the thetic break is established is the discovery of castration. Kristeva regards the discovery of castration “as the moment in which the process of separation or splitting is fully achieved” (Moi *Sexual/Textual* 161). Kristeva contends that castration “puts the finishing touches on the process of separation that posits the subject as signifiable, which is to say separate, always confronted by an other, *imago* in the mirror” (*Revolution* 47). Before the thetic break, the mother is the phallus, with her “replete body” and as “the receptacle and guarantor of demands” (Kristeva *Revolution* 47). However, the child is detached from his dependence on the mother as a result of the discovery of castration. Following this splitting, the subject finds his identity in the symbolic, “*separates* from his fusion with the mother, *confines* his jouissance to the genital, and transfers semiotic motility onto the symbolic order” (Kristeva *Revolution* 47).

The formation of the thetic break posits the gap between the signifier and the signified. The fusion with the mother is severed and transformed into a symbolic relation to an other, which is indispensable for signification; therefore, “the signifier/signified break is synonymous with social sanction” (Kristeva *Revolution* 48). Hence, the fissure between the semiotic and the symbolic is marked by a break within the symbolic itself, the rupture between the signifier and the signified. Kristeva argues that “*Symbolic* would seem an appropriate term for this always split unification that is produced by a rupture and is impossible without it” (*Revolution* 49). Kristeva explains that the symbolic etymologically refers to “an ‘object’ split in two and the parts separated, but as eyelids do, [...] the symbol “brings together the two edges of that fissure” (*Revolution* 49). The scission between the signifier and the signified within the symbolic signification is reminiscent of the rupture between the semiotic and the symbolic.

The thetic is challenged when the instinctual semiotic preceding signification disrupts the symbolic through poetic language because poetic language would “wipe out sense through nonsense and laughter” (Kristeva *Desire* 142). Poetic distortions within the

realm of the signifier remind us of “the insistent presence of drive heterogeneity” which underlies all signification (Kristeva *Revolution* 49). The unfolding of the refusal of the thetic can be found in poetry (Kristeva *Revolution* 50). Once the thetic is refused, the semiotic “pulverizes” language (Kristeva *Revolution* 51). The positing of the symbolic is subverted and the semiotic *chora* disturbs the thetic position. The symbolic is corrupted by poetic language (Kristeva *Revolution* 59). The semiotic dismantles the symbolic in poetry because the thetic phase is “shifted toward the stases of the semiotic *chora*” (Kristeva *Revolution* 64).

To recap, Kristeva emphasizes the interplay between the semiotic and the symbolic modes of signification. First, the child is immersed in the semiotic *chora* where its first sounds and gestures express and discharge feelings and energy; then, the child comes to see itself as separate from its surroundings during the thetic phase and becomes ready to use language symbolically. Despite this fissure between the semiotic and the symbolic, Kristeva maintains, the two modes of signification are interdependent and interconnected: “in Kristeva’s view, as the child takes up the symbolic disposition, it does not leave the semiotic behind. The semiotic will remain a constant companion to the symbolic in all its communications” (McAfee 23-4).

### **Genotext and Phenotext**

Kristeva comes up with the terms “genotext” and “phenotext”; she makes this distinction to describe two aspects of a literary text. The distinction between genotext and phenotext is similar to the distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic modes of signification: “In light of the distinction we have made between the semiotic *chora* and the symbolic, we may now examine the way texts function” (Kristeva *Revolution* 86). The genotext refers to the semiotic dimension whereas the phenotext points to the symbolic element of signification; the genotext destabilizes the relation between the signifier and the signified whereas the phenotext stabilizes the relation between the signifier and the signified. The genotext pulverizes and pluralizes what language tries to denote; it defers denotation; the genotext speaks beyond the borders of referential language; the genotext signifies through an emotive, affect-laden language, so it is not liable to be expressed in a structured and linear verbal articulation;

the cerebral is strained in favour of the emotional limits of poetry. This divide between the genotext and the phenotext recalls the distinction between “emotive” and “referential” language in Romantic poetry in which the former predominates the latter (Abrams *The Mirror* 77).

The genotext refers to “drives, their disposition, and their division of the body” while the phenotext “encompasses the emergence of object and subject” (Kristeva *Revolution* 86). The former corresponds to “the motility between the words, the potentially disruptive meaning that is not quite a meaning below the text” whereas the latter is “what the syntax and semantics of the text is trying to convey, again, in ‘plain language’” (McAfee 24). In order to designate the genotext in a text, Kristeva argues, we must point out

the transfers of drive energy that can be detected in phonematic devices (such as the accumulation and repetition of phonemes or rhyme) and melodic devices (such as intonation or rhythm), in the way semantic and categorical fields are set out in syntactic and logical features, or in the economy of mimesis (fantasy, the deferment of denotation, narrative, etc.) (*Revolution* 86).

The genotext is not composed of linguistic signs and structures; it is discerned in the semiotic investment of the text. The genotext is “a *process*, which tends to articulate structures that are ephemeral [...] and nonsignifying” (Kristeva *Revolution* 86). What the genotext articulates is unstable, indeterminate and threatened by discrete drive energies. While the genotext can be viewed as “language’s underlying foundation”, the phenotext is meant to “denote language that serves to communicate” (Kristeva *Revolution* 87). Kristeva explains the differences between the two:

The phenotext is constantly split up and divided, and is irreducible to the semiotic process that works through the genotext. The phenotext is a structure (which can be generated, in generative grammar’s sense); it obeys rules of communication and presupposes a subject of enunciation and addressee. The genotext, on the other hand, is a process; it moves through zones that have relative and transitory borders and constitutes a *path* that is not restricted to the two poles of univocal information between two full-fledged subjects (*Revolution* 87).

The genotext is characterised by the rhythmical space of the semiotic *chora*; on the other hand, the phenotext is marked by the symbolic realm of sign, structure and representation. Therefore, the signifying process includes both the genotext and the

phenotext. While the genotext refers to the infinity of the signifying process, the phenotext stands for what obliterates the infinity of the process. Kristeva contends that in revolutionary periods, the signifying process inscribes “within the phenotext the plural, heterogeneous, and contradictory process of signification encompassing the flow of drives, material discontinuity, political struggle, and the pulverization of language” (*Revolution* 88). The genotext disarticulates the phenotext, thereby making it dynamic and opening it up to new possibilities.

The semiotic disrupts the symbolic; therefore, poetic language leads to a shattering of discourse since poetic language cannot be contained within the strictures of grammar and syntax and it does not recognise “the linear time of history, but time as rupture and discontinuity” (Smith 6). McAfee explains how the semiotic disrupts the symbolic: “The semiotic is the more archaic, unconsciously driven, one might say even ravenous mode of signifying. When it seeps out in signification, as it does in avant-garde poetry, it disrupts the more orderly, symbolic effort at communication” (39). The signifying process, with the semiotic, can thus be transgressive, disruptive and revolutionary; the “relation between bodies and language has a subversive force insofar as it provides the possibility of disruption and breakdown of the subject’s and discourse’s registration in the symbolic” (Christodoulou 115). The semiotic in poetic language is revolutionary as it subverts the symbolic and leads to changes: “Kristeva shows great interest and faith in the power of certain avant-garde practices to produce ruptures in the symbolic, ruptures which may thus lead to changes in the very way the subject is produced” (Weil 163-4). The semiotic eats away at the symbolic, which may open up space or a *sortie* for alternative subject formations; the materiality of language pluralises meanings, making language mean more than one thing at a time.

The semiotically invested genotext organizes itself in the phenotext that is encompassed in the symbolic domain. This happens on four levels: the morphophonematic, the syntactic, the pronominal and the contextual; these four levels constitute “part of what she [Kristeva] calls the ‘semiotic disposition’ of the text, which is normally outside the province of scientific (especially linguistic) research” (Lechte *Kristeva* 140). These four levels reveal the “translinguistic” and the “trans-symbolic” rhythm of the genotext which is “a battle against syntactic linearity” (Lechte *Kristeva*

142)<sup>9</sup>. The semiotic genotext disturbs the conventional forms of the phenotext such as its grammar and syntax, the structure of well-formed sentences, the basis of communicative language. The genotext is analysed through semiotic devices such as rhythm, repetition, condensation which “reveal the drive basis of the symbolic order” (Lechte *Kristeva* 142). The genotext discloses “the drive basis of phonation”; “the phonemic drive base” becomes “perceptible in displacements, condensations, transpositions, and repetitions”; these phonemic devices distort syntax and grammar (Lechte *Kristeva* 142-3). These sound differences pulverise meaning.

Kristeva says that these sounds at the semiotic level consist of “oral and anal phonemes indicative of intense drive activity which are particularly evident in the infant’s first morphemes” (Lechte *Kristeva* 143). The infant who utters these first units of sound is called the “semiotizing *infans*” (Kristeva *Black* 63). This Kristevan approach argues that “the acquisition of language involves a period in which drive activity dominates the production of sounds” (Lechte *Kristeva* 143). The rhythm of phonic patterns highlights the semiotic *chora*; the phonemic devices which are irreducible to the language of communication disrupt the ossified forms of syntax and grammar, thereby generating a means of breaking loose from the constricting symbolic and its entrenched formal limits.

Besides these phonetic ones, semiotic devices can also be semantic; drive-based condensation and displacement are semantic devices; a condensation of semantic features pulverise signification and pluralize meaning. These phonetic and semantic features of poetic language give expression to “the death drive which underlies, and at the same time threatens, every signifying practice”. The death drive “emerges at the point where communicative language is about to be extinguished”. Once the semiotic genotext shatters syntactic linearity and makes it utterly unintelligible, the death drive threatens to destroy the symbolic. Therefore, the semiotic genotext both animates and threatens to devitalize the phenotext; the semiotic and the symbolic are “evocative of death and life”, so they are “in creative tension” (Lechte *Kristeva* 144).

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<sup>9</sup> Lechte quotes from the untranslated portion of *Revolution in Poetic Language*, only one third of which has been translated into English. Therefore, Lechte sometimes functions as the only primary source that I can reach.

## Negativity and Rejection

Kristeva seeks to understand the de/constitution of split subjectivity through an encounter between Hegelian negativity and Freudian rejection. Kristeva draws on the notion of Hegelian negativity which may be considered as “both the cause and the organizing principle of the process” (*Revolution* 109). This concept of negativity refers to “the indissoluble relation between an ‘ineffable’ mobility and its ‘particular determination’” (Kristeva *Revolution* 109). Negativity “reformulates the static *terms* of pure abstraction as a process, dissolving and binding them within a mobile law” (Kristeva *Revolution* 109). This notion of Hegelian negativity makes every reality dynamic, exposing it to other realities; it puts the process in “an endless mobility – positing elements (time of rest), reactivating the whirlwind (time of the crossing)” (Kristeva *Revolution* 99). Therefore, negativity is “the liquefying and dissolving agent that does not destroy but rather reactivates new organizations and, in that sense, affirms” (Kristeva *Revolution* 109). This concept of negativity is an affirmative negativity since it opens up space for new subjectivities. Thus, it produces the Kristevan subject in process/on trial, the subject as “a process, an intersection – an impossible unity” (Kristeva *Revolution* 118). This notion of negativity splits and prevents the closing up of the symbolic law, structures and positions; it unsettles reified or ossified representations and judgements in the domain of the symbolic. Hegelian negativity “prevents the immobilization of the thetic [...] and lets in all the semiotic motility that prepares and exceeds it” (Kristeva *Revolution* 113). The semiotic flux, that is the heterogeneity of the semiotic, disconcerts the symbolic; however, this notion of negativity is “a *productive dissolution*” since it reorganizes the process (Kristeva *Revolution* 113).

Kristeva prefers the term “rejection” instead of negativity. She states that negativity is “undoubtedly an inappropriate term for this semiotic movement, which moves through the symbolic, produces it, and continues to work on it from within” (*Revolution* 117). She employs negativity as a term “to designate the process that exceeds the signifying subject” (*Revolution* 119). She believes that “*expenditure* or *rejection* are better terms for the movement of material contradictions that generate the semiotic function”; these terms are preferable because of their “implications in drive theory” (*Revolution* 119).

Her investment in drive theory and energy charges indicates that she reads Hegel through Freud. Hegelian process, Kristeva maintains, subordinates “the moment of rupture” (*Revolution* 113). Kristevan understanding of process goes beyond the moment of the rupture, into the semiotic realm prior to the constitution of the symbolic function. Therefore, she says that we “must leave the verbal function and move toward what produces it, so as to understand the process of rejection which pulsates through the drives in a body that is caught within the network of nature and society” (*Revolution* 122). She thinks that one should focus on “*preverbal gestures*” that “precede the positing of the static terms/symbols of language and syntax” (*Revolution* 122-3).

Rejection embodies “the key moment shattering unity”; it “presupposes thetic unity as its precondition and horizon, one to be always superseded and exceeded” (Kristeva *Revolution* 147). Rejection designates “the instinctual, repetitive, and trans-signifying aspect of the dynamics of signifiante” (Kristeva *Revolution* 147); it is called trans-signifying since it describes the pre-verbal heterogeneous semiotic function. Since it implies “the heterogeneity of signifiante”, rejection unlocks “an a-signifying, indeed prelinguistic, crucible” (Kristeva *Revolution* 147).

The Kristevan conception of rejection oscillates “between the two poles of drives and consciousness”, which indicates “the ambiguity of process itself, which is both divided and unitary” (Kristeva *Revolution* 148). These two threads, drives and consciousness, are considered to intersect and interweave. Consciousness maps out “the *unity of reason*” which is always shattered by the rhythm of drives (Kristeva *Revolution* 148).

Kristeva focuses on the anal drive, which is “equivalent to the separation of the subject from the mother through the expulsion of the maternal object” (Lechte *Kristeva* 136). She emphasises “the importance of anal rejection or anality, which precedes the establishment of the symbolic”; she contends that anal rejection is both the precondition and the repressed element of the symbolic (*Revolution* 149). She states that the reactivation of the anal drives “agitates the subject’s body in his subversion of the symbolic” (*Revolution* 149). The return of rejection dissolves the symbolic and thus signifies the presence of the death drive. Kristeva stresses that the aggressive anal

drive hides the “jouissance of destruction” which “passes through an unburying of repressed, sublimated anality” (*Revolution* 150). All the same, rejection is an affirmative negativity since it subverts the symbolic and leads to changes:

What we mean by *rejection* is precisely the semiotic mode of this permanent aggressivity and the possibility of its being *posited*, and thus *renewed*. Although it is destructive – a “death drive” – rejection is the very mechanism of reactivation, tension, life; aiming toward the equalization of tension, toward a state of inertia and death, it *perpetuates* tension and life (Kristeva *Revolution* 150).

Rejection vascillates between the two poles of drive-based motility and symbolic positing. The suppression of anality implies “the acquisition of a capacity for symbolization”; in other words, it implies language acquisition. Therefore, the return to “nonsublimated, nonsymbolized anality” dismantles the symbolic (Kristeva *Revolution* 152).

The suppression of anality suggests language acquisition, but it is always present in the symbolic. Rejection renders the symbolic “unstable and open to potentially new forms” because “semiotic processes constantly shake up the symbolic” (Lechte *Kristeva* 137). Kristeva explains how it subverts the symbolic function:

Rejection therefore constitutes the return of expulsion [...] within the domain of the constituted subject: rejection *reconstitutes* real objects, ‘creates’ new ones, reinvents the real, and re-symbolizes it [...] Although rejection includes the moment of ‘excorporation’ [...] this motorial discharge and corporeal spasm are invested in the sign – in language – which is itself already divided, reintroducing and unfolding within it the very mechanics by which the separation between words and things is produced (*Revolution* 155).

Rejection as the precondition of the symbolic not only renders the symbolic unstable and puts it in process/on trial but also opens it up to new forms. Kristeva also tries to show that signification does not only belong to the realm of the symbolic but it is also of the semiotic realm; the body signifies through “excorporation”, through “motorial discharge”; the anal-aggressive drive is equivalent to the separation of the subject from the mother, drawing boundaries between inside and outside, which facilitates signification.

Kristeva speaks of two signifying modalities which appear to allow “the survival of rejection to the extent that they harmonize the shattering brought about by rejection, affirm it, and make it positive without suppressing it under paranoid paternal unity” (*Revolution* 152). The first one is “oralization”; it amounts to

a reunion with the mother’s body, which is no longer viewed as an engendering, hollow, and vaginated, expelling and rejecting body, but rather as a vocalic one – throat, voice, and breasts: music, rhythm, prosody, paragrams, and the matrix of the prophetic parabola; the Oedipus complex of a far-off incest, “signifying,” the real if not reality (*Revolution* 153).

The maternal body transforms into a vocalic body that emerges in poetic language. The second modality, always inseparable from “oralization”,

appears in the reunion with brothers’ bodies, in the reconstitution of a *homosexual phratry* that will forever pursue, tirelessly and interminably, the murder of the One, the Father, in order to impose one logic, one ethics, one signified: one, but other, critical, combatant revolutionary – the brothers in Freud’s primal horde, for example, or Michelangelo’s “Battle of the Centaurs” in Florence (*Revolution* 153).

Lechte argues that homosexual phratry “breaks up the unity of a single rationality, punctures the homogeneity of a system – pluralizes the law, in effect, or at least refuses to accept the existing law. It introduces the *other* into the symbolic” (*Kristeva* 137). The murder of the Father is meant to revolutionise the symbolic and transform it.

#### **1.2.4 The Abject and Abjection**

Abjection is one of the most fundamental processes of the Kristevan subject in process and on trial. The abject is not only that which is rejected by, and disturbs social reason and order, but it is also considered to be a necessary precondition for the symbolic realm. Separation is necessary for the subject to construct a distinct subjectivity; this is the positive side of the dialectic between the semiotic and the symbolic. On the other hand, the negative side of the dialectic is that the semiotic seems to threaten the symbolic realm.

The abject is marked by the unnameable and the unknowable. The abject is not an object defined by the symbolic and positioned in relation to the subject in the symbolic domain. Kristeva states that “[w]hen I am beset by abjection, the twisted braid of

affects and thoughts I call by such a name does not have, properly speaking, a definable *object*. The abject is not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine” (*Powers* 1). Therefore, the abject refers to what lies beyond the scope of the symbolic. What is abject does not allow the subject “to be more or less detached and autonomous” (Kristeva *Powers* 1). Beset by abjection, the subject cannot achieve individuation.

The abject is “the jettisoned object” (Kristeva *Powers* 2). What is abjected is that which is excluded from the subject; therefore, abjection is done to the part of ourselves that we cast off. What is abject is “radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses” (Kristeva *Powers* 2). Since the abject lies beyond the scope of the identifiable, the signifiable and the ponderable, it does not agree to the symbolic law; as a result, meaning, identity, structure and discourse collapse where the abject looms. The abject lies outside the symbolic domain; however, it does not cease challenging the symbolic realm “from its place of banishment”; unsignified, the abject “beseeches a discharge, a convulsion, a crying out” (Kristeva *Powers* 2). The abject refers to what is excluded but never banished entirely; it “hovers at the periphery of one’s existence, constantly challenging one’s own tenuous borders of selfhood” (McAfee 46).

Kristeva contends that the abject “simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject” (*Powers* 5). Not only does the abject unsettle the subject, but also abjection enables the subject to be constituted by means of separating itself from others. The infant develops borders between self and other by “a process of abjection, a process of jettisoning what seems to be part of oneself” (McAfee 46). Therefore, Kristeva argues that “I abject *myself* within the same motion through which “I” claim to establish *myself*” (*Powers* 3). In other words, the abject is “both a precondition of and an element that disrupts subjectivity and the symbolic” (Lloyd 141). Abjection is “an extreme state of subjectivity - a crisis in which the borders of the self and other radically break down”; however, it is also “a precondition of subjectivity itself, one of the key dynamics by which those borders of the self get established in the first place” (Becker-Leckrone 151).

The abject is what we spit out, reject from ourselves. As examples of what is expelled, abjected, Kristeva mentions curdling milk, dung, excrement, vomit, and corpses; she explains how one regurgitates at their presence:

Food loathing is perhaps the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection. When the eyes see or the lips touch that skin on the surface of the milk – harmless, thin as a sheet of cigarette paper, pitiful as a nail paring – I experience a gagging sensation and, still farther down, spasms in the stomach, the belly; and all the organs shrivel up the body, provoke tears and bile, increase heartbeat, cause forehead and hands to perspire. Along with sight-clouding dizziness, *nausea* makes me balk at that milk cream, separates me from the mother and father who proffer it. ‘I’ want none of that element, sign of their desire; ‘I’ do not want to listen, ‘I’ do not assimilate it, ‘I’ expel it (*Powers* 2-3).

The abject which is neither subject nor object elicits such reactions as retching, convulsions, dizziness and nausea.

Death is of importance with regard to the abject. The presence of a corpse sets off abjection since it stands for the breakdown of the distinction between subject and object, life and death. The corpse is a direct reminder of one’s materiality and the inevitability of death:

The corpse (or cadaver: *cadere*, to fall), that which has irremediably come a cropper, is cesspool, and death; it upsets even more violently the one who confronts it as fragile and fallacious chance. A wound with blood and pus, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay, does not *signify* death [...] corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These bodily fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my condition as a living being (Kristeva *Powers* 3).

The rotting corpse is seen as an underground container where sewage is stored; one casts this corpse off in order to live. The corpse as a sickening waste violates the border between life and death; in Kristeva’s words, death infects life (*Powers* 4). Death defiles life because the corpse is “both human and non-human, waste and filth which are neither entirely inside nor outside the socio-subjective order” (Lechte *Kristeva* 160). When we are faced with a corpse, we realize the fragility of our life; the presence of a cadaver is unsettling since it challenges the tenuous borders of our subjectivity.

The abjection of the maternal body that “gives life, but also death” (Lechte *Kristeva* 165) is of central importance in the process of the constitution of subjectivity. Kristeva

points out that the abject confronts us “with our earliest attempts to release the hold of the *maternal* entity even before ex-isting outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language”, adding that it is “a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling” (*Powers* 13). The maternal body must be symbolically murdered so that the child could enter language; the pre-symbolic symbiosis of mother and child is to be “denied or rendered unspeakable in order for signification to occur” (Lloyd 143). The child’s symbiotic identification with the mother is to be renounced for the speaking subject to emerge: “the first ‘thing’ to be abjected is the mother’s body, the child’s own origin (McAfee 48).

The abject mother is never entirely cast off; it is never completely submerged in consciousness. The fear of falling back into the maternal *chora* causes the feeling of uncanniness:

A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A “something” that I do not recognize as a thing. A weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me. On the edge of non-existence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me (Kristeva *Powers* 2).

Kristevan maternal abjection is similar to the Freudian uncanny which is “something that has been repressed and now returns” (Freud “The Uncanny” 147). Freud says that “the uncanny [the ‘unhomely’] is what was once familiar [‘homely’]; the negative prefix *un-* is the indicator of repression” (“The Uncanny” 151). The emergence of uncanniness evokes fear since a movement towards the unrepresentable causes anxiety; the uncanny is “a movement towards non-signification, or that which lies outside signification or representation” (Jensen 185). That which lies beyond the scope of signification crushes the subject, threatening to annihilate him/her.

Kristeva argues that the sublime provides the abject with a border (*Powers* 11). As stated above, the maternal body is never entirely thrust aside; according to Kristeva, it is expressed through the semiotic side of poetic language. Through sublimation, the abject is kept under control; sublimation offers “the possibility of naming the pre-nominal, the pre-objectal, which are in fact only a trans-nominal, a trans-objectal”

(Kristeva *Powers* 11). The maternal body returns not only to strike but also to animate the symbolic; it emerges in the poetic side of language; it radically deforms syntax, leads to cognitive dissonance and causes “semantic fuzziness” (Kristeva *Powers* 191); it challenges the symbolic and puts one in touch with the drive-based materiality of language; it emerges in the “trans-syntactic inscription of emotion” (Kristeva *Powers* 204), in the semiotic aspect of the signifying process.

To sum up, abjection holds an essential role in Kristeva’s theory of subjectivity. Abjection refers to the process of differentiation that characterises the shift from the semiotic realm to the symbolic domain. The abject signifies that which needs to be expelled in order for a clean and proper body to be established. It is a process by which what is regarded as other to oneself is expelled. The abject never completely recedes, but it continues to haunt the subject; it challenges the subject and threatens to unveil what has been constituted in the process of subjectivity; therefore, one’s own sense of self is never fixed and settled.

### **1.2.5 Melancholy**

In *Black Sun*, Kristeva attempts to identify a narcissistic melancholy in which the melancholic mourns not the object, but the “Thing”, an archaic, unnameable, pre-linguistic pre-object (13). Without a secure link to the symbolic order, the melancholic narcissist embraces a bottomless sorrow, mourning for the Thing. Kristeva states that she is addressing “an abyss of sorrow, a noncommunicable grief that at times, and often on a long-term basis, lays claims upon us to the extent of having us lose all interest in words, actions, and even life itself” (*Black* 3). This abyss of sorrow is inarticulable since it is beyond the symbolic scope of the thinkable, the signifiable and the representable. The existence of the depressed narcissist is on the verge of collapsing; the lack of meaning in an existence racked by melancholy appears “glaring and inescapable” according to Kristeva; she calls it the black sun: “Where does this black sun come from? Out of what eerie galaxy do its invisible, lethargic rays reach me, pinning me down to the ground, to my bed, compelling me to silence, to renunciation?” (*Black* 3). The Greek etymology of melancholy - *melan* means black (OED) - shows that the existence of the melancholic is marked by the black sun; it is

dark and glaring at once. The notions of the Thing and the black sun characterise Kristeva's *Black Sun*.

There is no object for the melancholic; Kristeva says that there is only an indeterminate, unnamed "Thing" (*Black* 13). Since the child cannot make a distinction between subject and object, s/he cannot name or symbolize what s/he has lost. The melancholic "does not search for meaning (constituted through a synthesis of signifier and drive affect)" because of "a failure to develop of imaginary and symbolic capacities (language in a word) which would ensure a successful separation and a viable identity for the subject" (Lechte *Kristeva* 185). Meaning created in the linguistic realm does not exist for the melancholic who is not dis severed from the un signifiable Thing. Kristeva posits the Thing "as the real that does not lend itself to signification, the centre of attraction and repulsion, seat of the sexuality from which the object of desire will become separated" (*Black* 13). Kristeva draws on Lacan's idea of the Real, which "resists symbolization" (Leader 36) and is the "impossible to describe, but also ineliminable residue that resists articulation. It is there, but it is ineffable" (McAfee 62)<sup>10</sup>. The melancholic gravitates toward a union with this (Lacanian) Real, which is a union with the mother and death within a Kristevan lexicon. The melancholic is crushed under the weight of meaninglessness when the symbolic structures of life break down; thus, death takes over.

Kristeva is impressed by the French poet Nerval's metaphor of the black sun. She employs this metaphor in order to speak of the indeterminate Thing, and she uses it as the title of her book, *Soliel Noir / Black Sun*, in which she explores melancholy: "Of this Nerval provides a dazzling metaphor that suggests an insistence without presence, a light without representation: the Thing is an imagined sun, bright and black at the

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<sup>10</sup> The Real "continually returns into the symbolic and imaginary to enunciate itself as the excess" (Ragland 12). The Real disrupts imaginary identifications and symbolic representations as it is "a nonsymbolized kernel that makes a sudden appearance in the symbolic order" (Žižek 39). The Real precedes imaginary identifications and symbolic representations; it is "capable of representation or conceptualization only through the reconstructive or inferential work of the imaginary and symbolic orders"; it "has no boundaries, borders, divisions, or oppositions; it is a continuum of 'raw materials'" (Grosz 34). This Real refers to "an impossible place of fullness outside language" (Smith 109). It is outside the linguistic domain, but it distorts and dislocates "our imaginary and symbolic representations and identifications" (Stavrakakis 20).

same time” (*Black* 13). The symbolic aspect of language cannot signify the Thing; it is unrepresentable; it cannot be replaced by an object. The Kristevan Thing appears as the unspecified, the elusive.

Kristeva explains why the melancholic barely speaks or has the willingness to speak: “Knowingly disinherited of the Thing, the depressed [Kristeva uses depression and melancholy interchangeably] person wanders in pursuit of continuously disappointing adventures and loves; or else retreats, disconsolate and aphasic, alone with the unnamed Thing”; the depressed person “has the impression of having been deprived of an unnameable, supreme good, of something unrepresentable,” the Thing that “no word could signify” (*Black* 13). The aphasic, speechless, as the Greek etymology of *aphasia* suggests (OED), melancholic is not capable of producing speech; a withdrawal into the realm of the unnameable, incommunicable Thing hampers one’s entry into the symbolic domain of language. Therefore, the melancholic is the one that does not use language, words to make up for the lost Thing; s/he does not attempt to chase what s/he has lost: as a result, for the melancholic, “no erotic object could replace the irreplaceable perception of a place or preobject confining the libido or severing the bonds of desire” (*Black* 13). The melancholic does not feel s/he belongs to the realm of the symbolic: “Lacking an interest in any objects, the melancholic lacks motivation to engage in the symbolic realm – that is, to speak or write. Words seem pointless [...] The depressed person is like an orphan in the symbolic realm” (McAfee 63). The deprived and disinherited melancholic feels that he has been bereaved as the Greek etymological root of *orphan* points to bereavement (OED). Kristeva states that the melancholic who is disinherited of the Thing suffers since s/he has lost his/her primary love while still in the *chora*. Kristeva explains her notion of narcissistic depression as follows:

Far from being a hidden attack on an other who is thought to be hostile because he is frustrating, sadness would point to a primitive self – wounded, incomplete, empty. Persons thus affected do not consider themselves wronged, but afflicted with a fundamental flaw, a congenital deficiency. Their sorrow does not conceal the guilt or the sin felt because of having secretly plotted revenge on the ambivalent object. Their sadness would be rather the most archaic expression of an unsymbolizable, unnameable narcissistic wound, so precocious that no outside agent (subject or agent) can be used as referent. For such narcissistic depressed persons, sadness is really the sole object; more precisely it is a substitute object they become attached to, an object

they tame and cherish for lack of another. In such a case, suicide is not a disguised act of war but a merging with sadness and, beyond it, with that impossible love, never reached, always elsewhere, such as the promises of nothingness, of death (*Black* 12-3).

Instead of bearing animosity toward some object, the depressed narcissist feels flawed, incomplete, and wounded. The bottomless sorrow of the melancholic is marked by an unrepresentable wound that is suffered due to the separation from the mother; the infant becomes “irredeemably sad before uttering his first words” and thus entering the symbolic register because “he has been irrevocably, desperately separated from the mother”; this is “a loss that causes him to try to find her again, along with other objects of love, first in the imagination, then in words” (Kristeva *Black* 6). McAfee points out that the melancholic “would feel personally wounded – the loss she suffered was part of herself, insofar as the wound was suffered before she could distinguish her mother from herself”, adding that this wound “manifested itself linguistically, disrupting her ability to symbolize and to name” (61). This “unsymbolizable” wound causes melancholy which corresponds to a union with the mother and death. Therefore, melancholy is “based on a withdrawal from the symbolic, from life” and it constitutes “an example of an unsuccessful separation from the mother” (Lechte *Kristeva* 185).

Kristeva stresses the importance of a primary identification with the imaginary father before the onset of the symbolic:

The “primary identification” with the “father in individual prehistory” would be the means, the link that might enable one to become reconciled with the loss of the Thing. Primary identification initiates a compensation for the Thing and at the same time secures the subject to another dimension, that of imaginary adherence, reminding one of the bond of faith, which is just what disintegrates in the depressed person (*Black* 13-4).

The Kristevan imaginary father is “a counterbalance to the abject mother” (Oliver “Revolt” 83). Kristeva emphasises that the imaginary father is not to be confused with “the subsequent father who forbids, the oedipal father, the father of the law” (*Sense and Non-Sense* 52-3).

The primary identification with the imaginary father secures other symbolic identifications. The “looming” Thing wrests one away from the symbolic domain;

however, clinging to the other enables “the premature being” to survive the abyss of the incommunicable grief (Kristeva *Black* 15). For the melancholic to survive this abyss, sublimation is an attempt to approach the place where the archaic Thing holds sway: “through melody, rhythm, semantic polyvalency, the so-called poetic form, which decomposes and recomposes signs, is the sole “container” seemingly able to secure an uncertain but adequate hold over the Thing” (Kristeva *Black* 14). An adherence to the unnameable archaic Thing is indeterminately articulated through poetry which decomposes language through semiotic elements such as musicality and ambiguity in meaning, and which also recomposes language through symbolic elements such as forms, genres and conventions.

Kristeva dwells on the similarity between the death drive and the state of the melancholic disconnected from the realm of the symbolic and relapsing to an archaic state. In this archaic state, boundaries are permeable, things merge with other things; in this heterogeneous realm self and other are not differentiated. Such a regression to this archaic state is “akin to what Freud called the death drive” (McAfee 63). The fall into the realm of the unnameable, archaic Thing is similar to “the notion of the death drive as a tendency to return to the inorganic state and homeostasis, in opposition to the erotic principle of discharge and union” (Kristeva *Black* 16). The melancholic is in the realm of the Freudian death drive, that is “the instinct to return to the inorganic state”, as opposed to the realm of Eros, “the preserver of all things” (Freud *Pleasure Principle* 38, 52). The narcissistic melancholic displays the death drive “in its state of disunity with the life force” (Kristeva *Black* 17); this discontinuation of the life force refers to the destruction drive. The existence of the melancholic is marked by a withdrawal from the symbolic domain and a regression into the realm of the death drive. As a result of being severed from the symbolic, the melancholic experiences a disintegration of bonds, a splitting of self. For the melancholic, words “become cut off from their drive base and emotions become detached from symbolic constructions” since melancholy “holds the drives and the symbolic quite apart” (Lechte *Kristeva* 186). The melancholic becomes attached to the Thing as he becomes detached from the symbolic. Being severed from the symbolic results in disintegration and it unsettles one’s sense of cohesion. Kristeva quotes Klein explaining disintegration in the state of melancholy:

The early ego largely lacks cohesion, and a tendency towards integration alternates with a tendency towards disintegration, a falling into bits ... the anxiety of being destroyed from within remains active. It seems to me in keeping with the lack of cohesiveness that under the pressure of this threat the ego tends to fall into pieces (in *Black* 19).

The depressed narcissist does not simply surrender to the self-destructiveness of melancholy; s/he seeks to shield herself with the state of sadness. Kristeva explains how the shield of sadness helps reconstitute one's sense of cohesion:

Following upon the deflection of the death drive, the depressive affect can be interpreted as a defence against parcelling. Indeed, sadness reconstitutes an affective cohesion of the self, which restores its unity within the framework of the affect. The depressive mood constitutes itself as a narcissistic support, negative to be sure, but nevertheless presenting the self with an integrity, nonverbal though it might be. Because of that, the depressive affect makes up for symbolic invalidation and interruption (the depressive's "that's meaningless") and at the same time protects it against proceeding to the suicidal act. That protection, however, is a flimsy one. The depressive denial that destroys the meaning of the symbolic also destroys the act's meaning and leads the subject to commit suicide without anguish of disintegration, as a reuniting with archaic nonintegration, as lethal as it is jubilatory, "oceanic" (*Black* 19).

For the melancholic, signs are completely bereft of drive affect; he identifies with the death drive and withdraws from the symbolic; imaginary identifications and symbolic representations amount to nothing for the melancholic. The unnameable Thing can be expressed through the semiotic dimension of language, through transcending non-meaning, the void, the unrepresentable; thus, the melancholic can resurrect in signs. Lechte points out that "[t]he overcoming of suffering in signs, in imagination – in writing – constitutes one as a symbolic being" (*Kristeva* 191). However, the fusion with the archaic Thing is fatal as well as exuberant.

### **1.3 A Kristevan Analysis of Keats's *Endymion*, *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion***

Prior to a general introduction to the Kristevan exploration of Keats as a Romantic poet and his poems, it is essential to briefly introduce Keatsian criticism from the nineteenth century into the present day. This review of scholarship on Keats is meant to locate this thesis within the critical studies on Keats.

### 1.3.1 Literature Review on Keats

De Almeida points out that the contemporaries of Keats “alternately maligned the verse for political reasons and canonized the poet for emotional reasons” (“Intellectual Keats” 1-2). The twofold reception of Keats evokes the Keatsian oscillation between his (semiotic) distortion of language and his attempt to restrain this, to symbolise the semiotic and to semiotise the symbolic, between *Endymion* as a work of a fragile and delicate poet and *Hyperion* as a poet of iron and flint, between a poet of sensations and a poet of thoughts.

Despite his friends and admirers who thought he was “a genius” (Matthews 1), certain conservative contemporary reviewers of Keats disparaged his works (especially early poems and *Endymion*); their reviews were filled with bitter criticism and malice. The Tory reviewers such as J. G. Lockhart and J. W. Croker denigrated Keats for his supposed “‘lower-class’ background, his febrile eroticism and his liberal politics” and condemned him for “his association with the so-called ‘Cockney School’ of Hunt” (Strachan 25). The term “Cockney” was “a class slur by which the well-educated Tories portrayed their liberal counterparts as ill-bred social climbers” (Wu 37). Yet, the meaning of the term is more multifaceted than this political definition. Cockney is “a cover term for political opposition, heresy, lower-class vulgarity, unmanliness, immaturity, poetic license, and moral licentiousness” (Wolfson *Keats* 4). This explanation about how the word “cockney” was used shows certain viewpoints from which Keats’s poetry has been studied since the contemporary “violent” response to Keats is “so promiscuous in its blending of social, sexual, and stylistic critique” (Levinson 3). This merging of critical aspects demonstrates that an approach which only focuses on the sexual or the stylistic in Keats’s poetry is always already political; class and gender markers fortify each other. In other words, these hostile remarks of Keats’s contemporary commentators indicate that the political was not discriminated from the aesthetic (Roe “Introduction” 3). Also, Keats’s being labelled as a Cockney poet and thus his being seen as an outsider, a poet from the lower middle class may be said to have given him much more space (than other Romantic poets who belong with the status quo) to be subversive, challenge the established rules and laws and thus punctuate the symbolic.

On the one hand, the circle of Leigh Hunt regarded Keats as a promising poet. In “The Young Poets”, Hunt championed Keats as one of the three “young aspirants” who belonged to “a new school of poetry rising of late, which promises to extinguish” the school of Pope (in Matthews 41-2), “the neoclassical ‘school’ of order and decorum favoured by the Tory establishment and epitomized by Alexander Pope” (Kandl 1). Reynolds, a friend of Keats and another one of these young aspiring poets, saw Keats as “a genius that is likely to eclipse them [Lord Byron and some other poets] all”, “a genius of the highest order” (in Matthews 45, 117). Another friend of Keats, John Bailey viewed him as a “real genius” who had “an ethereal imagination maintained by vast intellectual power” (in Matthews 82). Shelley, who wrote *Adonais: An Elegy on the Death of John Keats*, classified Keats “among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age” (430). Even the obituary of Keats renders his passing as “the death of genius” (in Matthews 244).

On the other hand, Keats’s works were roughly treated. The contemporary reviews labelled Keats’s poetry as “a stylistically self-indulgent verse: prolix, repetitive, metrically and lexically licentious, overwrought” (Levinson 3). *Endymion* was considered “a monstrously droll poem” and its idiom “ludicrous”; he was severely criticised for “very foul language”, “unmeaning absurdity”, “the gross slang of voluptuousness”, “immoral images”, disgusting “impurity” of words, and “the artifices of vicious refinement” (in Matthews 91-4). According to Lockhart, Keats “caught the infection”, suffered from “poetical mania”, with “a sudden attack of the malady”; he found Keats’s *Poems* frenzied, and the “drivelling idiocy of *Endymion*” alarming; he denigrated Keats for identifying with “the meanest, the filthiest, and the most vulgar of Cockney poetasters [Hunt]”; further, he deprecated Keats’s poems for being “prurient and vulgar”, “sickly” and “profane” (in Matthews 98-104). For Lockhart, the poetic language that Keats used was “itself reprobate, an insolent challenge to the establishment” (Roe “Introduction” 3). Likewise, Croker disparaged Keats’s works; he said that Keats was “unhappily a disciple of the new school of what has been somewhere called Cockney poetry; which may be defined to consist of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language”; he added that Keats was “a copyist of Mr Hunt, but he is more unintelligible, almost as rugged, twice as diffuse, and ten times more tiresome and absurd than his prototype” (in Matthews 111). Unlike

Shelley, Byron was no admirer of Keats, and he made “recurrently negative and snobbishly sarcastic or condescending judgements” about Keats’s poetry (Keach “Byron Reads Keats” 203). Keats’s “onanistic inefficacy” revolted Byron” (Milnes 87), and he did not restrain himself in insulting his poetry, calling it “Johnny Keats’s *p-ss a bed* poetry” and referring to “a trash of Keats”; he thought Keats’s poetry was “a sort of mental masturbation”, “the *outstretched* poesy of this miserable Self-polluter of the human mind”, who was “always *f-gg-g* his *Imagination*” (in Strachan 39)<sup>11</sup>. All these views about Keats and his poetry picture a figure of Keats “promiscuously eroticized, precociously arrested, at once too full of himself and completely lost to his medium” (Swann 31). The nineteenth-century image of Keats was “unworldly, insulated from actuality” (Roe “Keats’s ‘Green World’” 63). These views about Keats were also reflected in one journal announcing his demise as “the death of the radically presumptuous profligate” (in Matthews 245).

By the 1850s, Keats’s reputation had risen considerably. The first biography of Keats was published by Richard M. Milnes in 1848. By the mid-Victorian period, “the positive myth-makers had triumphed over the Tory demonisers in their celebration of the doomed, ethereal poet” (Strachan 26). A feminised Keats prevailed in the nineteenth-century criticism. This feminised image was partly prompted by Shelley, who in his preface to *Adonais*, described Keats as a “delicate and fragile” figure and maintained that the “savage criticism on his *Endymion* [...] produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued” (431), which contributed to the vulnerable image of Keats’s. Shelley’s *Adonais* offers an image of Keats as a “young genius whose life and career were cut short – some said by the hostility of reviewers” (Stillinger “The ‘story’ of Keats” 246). This cultural reception of Shelley’s elegy kept alive “Keats’s name on earth as a type unable to suffer the slings and arrows of critical fortune” (Wolfson “Keats Enters History” 19). Shelley’s portrait of Keats as fragile and delicate helped produce a feminised myth of the poet. Keats’s being

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<sup>11</sup> Schulkins also remarks that Byron saw Keats as “an adolescent masturbator” and his poetry as “a mindless sensual titillation produced for the immediate gratification of the passing fancy” (Schulkins 1). In his comments Byron diminishes and infantilises Keats “both in the reference to ‘Johnny’ and by describing him as a ‘mankin’, by which one assumes he means literally a ‘little man’” (Whale 6).

disparaged by the malicious reviewers was seen as “a case of the poet’s ‘feminine’ innocence [...] being violated at the hands of a malevolently masculine press” (Aske “Keats” 51).

The feminised image of Keats permeated the literary reception of the poet. Hazlitt discussed Keats’s effeminacy of style in his article “On Effeminacy of Character”: “I cannot help thinking that the fault of Mr Keats’s poems was a deficiency in masculine energy of style” (in Matthews 248). Similarly, Hunt found the deification of Apollo in *Hyperion* “too effeminate” (in Matthews 174). In similar fashion, Hopkins viewed Keats’s poetry as “abandoning itself to an unmanly and enervating luxury” (in Aske *Keats* 63). W. M. Rossetti also thought that Keats’s poetry had a “morbid tone, marking want of manful thew and sinew” (in Strachan 26). In the same way, Thomas de Quincey considered *Endymion* to be a combination of the “very midsummer madness of affectation, of false vapoury sentiment, and of fantastic effeminacy” (in Matthews 309). On the other hand, Howitt strived to release Keats from the charge of effeminacy:

His nature was one pure mass of the living light of poetry. On this world and its concerns he could take no hold, and they could take none on him. The worldly and the worldly wise could not comprehend him, could not sympathize with him. To them his vivid orgasm of the intellect was madness; his exuberance of celestial gifts was extravagance; his unworldliness was effeminacy; his love of the universal man, and not of gross distinctions of pride and party, was treason (in Matthews 311).

Similar to Howitt, Arnold avoided the Victorian myth of Keats as an “abundantly and enchantingly sensuous” poet, attempted to discard the figure of “that imagined sensuous weakling”, and instead wanted to emphasise that “he has something more, and something better [...] Keats had flint and iron in him, that he had character” (43-4). Arnold attempts to kill off the sentimentalised figure of poet in order for the virile poet to emerge.

Having an insight into how Keats was received in the nineteenth century is beneficial for several reasons. To begin with, contemporary reviews of the early nineteenth century intimate the possibility of a context beyond the textual limits of the poems themselves. We gain an insight into the early nineteenth century understanding and constructions of gender, sexuality, subjectivity, poetry, class, morality and so forth

through the work of a poet who was “perceived as unsettling to contemporary literary, political, social, and sexual orthodoxies” (Roe “Keats’s Commonwealth” 195). Reading contemporary reviews also enables one to realise that Keats was “a contentious, troubling and controversial figure” (Strachan 32).

Studying contemporary reviews is useful for this thesis in two aspects. Firstly, spiteful attacks by conservative critics demonstrate that Keats was seen as a queer, presumptuous, frenzied and profligate poet and that his language was deemed perverse, impure, disgusting, filthy, vulgar, sickening and indecorous, which evinces that Keats composed poetry beyond conventional strictures, distorted language by carrying it to the outer limits of the symbolic law. The hostile reception of Keats’s violation of the English language, or “the most shocking abuse of his mother-tongue” in the words of de Quincey (in Matthews 309), shows that his poetry was seen as an infectious disease and thus associated with the abject, with that which revolts and sickens. The multitude of malicious critical responses to Keats cues an angle on the abjection of the subversive Keatsian poetics that challenges linguistic and stylistic decorum. Secondly, the Victorian assessment of Keats as an effeminate poet and of his poetry as trespassing “the conventional cultural construction of masculinity by embracing feminine qualities such as passivity, sentimentality and luxury” (Schulkins 1) is related with the strand of thought that runs through the feminist criticism of Keats in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Contemporary reviews also indicate that discussions on language, subjectivities, gender and sexual identities, the body and the political affiliations are all interconnected. Accordingly, Strachan points out that “the debates about the poet’s politics and his sexual identity which resound through the earliest critical writing are those which have dominated Keatsian criticism since the 1980s” (33). Strachan refers to the feminist and historicist interpretations of Keats that began in the late 1970s and have continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> century since then. Before jumping to the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is essential to look into the Keatsian criticism in the early decades of the century.

Keats’s poetry has provoked different interpretations; his poems have been read and evaluated from an infinitude of viewpoints. Early twentieth-century Keatsian criticism is marked by critical biographies. Colvin published *John Keats* in 1917. Colvin

regarded *Endymion* as an allegory; he saw it as “a parable of the adventures of the poetic soul striving after full communion with this spirit [the moon goddess] of essential Beauty”; he viewed Keats’s romance as an allegory marked by the hero’s “divine quest”, his “celestial mistress” and her “transcendental and essential beauty”, and “gleams of confident spiritual illumination” (166-73). J. S. Hill points out that Colvin’s study of Keats is part of a critical approach that defended the view that *Endymion* should be interpreted as “a serious attempt at Neoplatonic allegory – a parable of the adventures of the poetic soul (Endymion-Keats) questing after communion with the spirit of ideal Beauty (Cynthia)” (15). This view was further developed by Murry in *Keats and Shakespeare* and Finney in *The Evolution of Keats’s Poetry*. This allegorical school should be seen as a response to the Victorian assessment of Keats’s sensuality; they may have wished to give a different account of Keats as a Neoplatonic poet instead of a voluptuary. This study does not follow this line of thought which may be presenting a disembodied Keats; instead, this thesis draws on the interpretation of Keats’s orgasmic intellect (Howitt in Matthews 311) as it understands that the sensual and the intellectual are fused in Keats. Therefore, this study benefits from the critical approaches that offer insights into Keats’s embodied thinking and his “sensual Platonism” (Barnard *Keats* 46).<sup>12</sup>

The preoccupation with Keats’s life continued into the middle of the twentieth century<sup>13</sup>. Bate’s biography of Keats combined “biography with perceptive literary criticism” (Strachan 28) and concentrated “primarily on events in the poet’s inner life” (Roe *Culture of Dissent* 3). Ward’s biography “explored the political contexts for Keats’s writing and constructed a psychoanalytic narrative to trace the development of Keats’s mature view from his childhood experiences” (Sandy “Keats Criticism” 1322). This interest in Keats’s life was rejuvenated with two biographies published in the

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<sup>12</sup> In addition to these early biographies of Keats, Lowell published *John Keats* in 1925 and Garrod published *Keats* (1926). Garrod focused on Keats as a political thinker, on his “early revolutionary sympathies”, regarding him as “the child of the Revolutionary Idea” (in Strachan 45).

<sup>13</sup> Three seminal biographies of Keats were published in the 1960s: Bate’s *John Keats* (1963), Ward’s *John Keats: The Making of a Poet* (1963) and Gittings’s *John Keats* (1968).

1990s<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, Keats's life has continued to fascinate scholars into the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>15</sup>.

Twentieth-century Keatsian criticism is also marked by New Critical readings of Keats's poetry<sup>16</sup>. New Critical assessments appreciated "the rich paradoxes" and "the playful irony of Keatsian poetic language" (Sandy "Keats Criticism" 1322). New Critical explorations of Keats's poetry had "a vigorous afterlife in Vendler's *The Odes of John Keats*, a book, which, though it has been criticised for its inattention to social and political context, offers impressive and sustained formal close readings of the odes" (Strachan 28). This thesis also practices the method of close reading in order to attend closely to Keats's evocation of the sensing body that provides the source of rhythm, touch, sound and movement, to the Keatsian predilection for the visual, the aural, the tactile, the olfactory and the gustatory in the elemental world, and to the Keatsian affective investment in the proximity of breathing bodies. However, this practice of close reading employed in this study departs from the New Critical tendency that focuses on formal unity and symmetry. Disintegrations and dissolutions are also of primary concern in this dissertation on Keats.

Irony and paradox in Keats have been vantage points for many scholars. Sandy notes that the "ironic inter-play between absence and presence, ideal and real, imagination and reality characterised major critical inquiries into Keats's poetry from the fifties

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<sup>14</sup> Coote's *John Keats: A Life* (1995) and Motion's *Keats* (1997). Coote's biography "re-orientated the social-political circumstances that affected Keats's creative life within a broader European context" (Sandy "Keats Criticism" 1322).

<sup>15</sup> White published his *John Keats: A Literary Life* in 2010 and Roe published his *John Keats: A New Life* in 2012. White points out that Keats had "the consciousness of being a child" (13); like children, he writes, Keats had a "rootless, and often homeless, way of life" (Roe *Keats* xviii). This notion of being rootlessness like children may be considered to be in tune with the poetic spirit uprooted, dislocated from the symbolic realm; the homeless child might be seen as the vagrant hero of a poetic romance; one becomes rootless if he or she is not located in the symbolic realm of positions and structures. This rootless child reminds one of Endymion who finds that there is "no depth to strike in" (*Endymion* II. 161); he is so disaffiliated from the realm of the symbolic register that he cannot see a place to strike roots into

<sup>16</sup> New Critical explorations of Keats's poetry conducted in the 1920s and the 1930s include Thorpe's *The Mind of John Keats* (1926), Ridley's *Keats's Craftsmanship* (1933) and Finney's *The Evolution of Keats's Poetry* (1936).

onwards” (“Keats Criticism” 1323)<sup>17</sup>. The Keatsian irony and paradox also intrigued and inspired the Yale School of Keatsian criticism. The Yale School of deconstruction created “a Romanticism that can no longer be read as a mere exhortation to and emblem of wise passiveness, oneness with nature, and bringer of peace to an otherwise tortured modern individual” (Simpson 17-8). The Yale deconstructionists such as de Man and Hartman focused on “disturbing ambivalence, disrupted meaning” (Sandy “Keats Criticism” 1323). As opposed to the New Critical approach which had emphasised “a formal unity”, “the coherence of the poem” and seen the text as “a self-contained unit” (Masson 203-4), the Yale school interpreted Keats’s work as “a rhetoric of self-consciousness and fragmentation” (O’Rourke 2)<sup>18</sup>. This tortured, fragmented modern individual seems to be consonant with the Kristevan subject in process / on trial; an analysis of oscillations in an ambivalent Keats seen through Kristeva’s poststructuralist theory in this thesis might have certain similarities with such deconstructive readings.

Another critical approach to Keats is the school of historicism that focused their attention on the poet in the late 1970s and 1980s. The new approaches that emerged in the 1980s read Keats historically (O’Neill “Introduction” 1). McGann’s essay “Keats and the Historical Method in Literary Criticism” disputed “the largely ahistorical nature of previous critical engagements with Keats’s work” (Sandy “Keats Criticism” 1323-4) and led to a significant series of politically charged and historically governed

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<sup>17</sup> This attention to Keatsian irony informed books such as Stillinger’s *The Hoodwinking of Madeline and Other Essays* (1971), Dickstein’s *Keats and His Poetry* (1971), Sperry’s *Keats the Poet* (1973), and Waldoff’s *Keats and the Silent Working of the Imagination* (1985).

<sup>18</sup> A prominent figure of the Yale School of criticism, Bloom offered his own brand of deconstruction with a psychoanalytic emphasis. According to Bloom, Keats was involved in “a literary form of Oedipal strife with his great predecessors such as Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth” and struggled with the power of these poets who “threatened to overwhelm his own poetic voice” (Strachan 28). Bloom argued in *A Map of Misreading* that Keats, who struggles with the power of the great poets, is concerned rather with “finding fresh imaginative space” for himself (153)<sup>18</sup>. Bloom’s account of the poet’s Oedipal strife could be helpful to understand how Keats holds on to certain paternal poets in order to locate himself in the symbolic domain. In *The Visionary Company*, Bloom contends that *Endymion* is suggestive of “the Romantic hell” which is “neither other people nor oneself but the absence of relationship between the two” (362). This comment is pertinent to the discussion of the Endymionese element in Keats that does not recognise distinctions between self and other. In *Poetry and Repression*, Bloom argues that in *The Fall of Hyperion* Keats reaches “the outer threshold of romance” (142); this point is important in the discussion about the Keatsian engagement with the boundary between romance and epic.

readings of Keats's poetry<sup>19</sup>. New Historical and Cultural Materialist explorations of Keats's poetry "often conceived of the dynamics of power structures in Foucauldian or Marxist terms" (Sandy "Keats Criticism" 1324)<sup>20</sup>. This upsurge of politically charged interpretations of Keats prompted the 1986 special issue of *Studies in Romanticism* on "Keats and Politics"<sup>21</sup>.

Keats has also enjoyed an upsurge of critical interest in terms of gender-based explorations. Reading Keats's poems through the lens of feminism and gender studies has brought about "what is now the most popular and common belief amongst contemporary Keatsian scholars regarding the poet's ambivalence towards the feminine subject matter" (Schulkins 5). Feminist interpretations return to the critical preoccupations of Keats's contemporaries because numerous nineteenth-century critics recurrently addressed the notion of effeminacy by deploying a sexual and gendered language. Contemporary reviewers saw Keats's poetry as "effeminate, juvenile, or puerile"; he was defined as an emasculated Cockney poet, which referred to "an inferior, lower-class Londoner, with connotations of immaturity and effeminacy" (Mellor "Complexities of Gender" 214). Turley also notes that this label contained "a sense of effeminacy" (Turley 11). While Hazlitt and the like-minded

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<sup>19</sup> McGann's essay blames the poet for seeking to escape from historical circumstance. He asserts that Keats's poems "dissolve social and political conflicts in the meditations of art and beauty" and his "To Autumn" is "an attempt to 'escape' the period which provides the poem with its context, and to offer its readers the same opportunity of refreshment" (59).

<sup>20</sup> Goellnicht's *The Poet-Physician* (1984), de Almeida's *Romantic Medicine and John Keats* (1991) and Richardson's *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (2001) established connections between scientific discourse and Romantic imagination of Keats.

<sup>21</sup> Shortly after this issue, adopting "a materialist approach" (Roe "Introduction" 7), Levinson published her *Keats's Life of Allegory*. Levinson announces that the objective of her book is "to read the meaning of a life in the style of a man's writing, and then to read that writing, that style, and that life back into their original social context" (6). In her New Historicist account of Keats, Levinson argues that Keats's lowly social rank and his social resentments crucially determine his poetry; she reads Keats's poetry as "the signature of social marginality" (Roe "A Cockney Schoolroom" 14-5). Similarly, Watkins in *Keats's Poetry and the Politics of the Imagination* proposes a historical criticism of Keats that "would extend many of the more conventional Marxist accounts of Keats and romanticism, particularly those which tend to see Keats's poems as largely private escapist responses to an oppressive industrial capitalist world" (10). In similar fashion, Roe's critical collection on *Keats and History* reassessed "the poet's relation to the sphere of politics, economics and history" (Sandy "Keats Criticism" 1324-5). Roe's monograph *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent* also employed historical methodologies. Likewise, Cox's *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School* re-evaluated the connections between Keats's aesthetic achievement and political orientation. Roe and Cox are more positive (than McGann) in their evaluation and "insist upon Keats's deeply held commitment to liberal politics" (Strachan 30).

regarded Keats's "effeminacy" as a weakness, some feminists of the 1970s such as Rich glorified this aspect of Keats in their gendered account of the notion of negative capability (Strachan 30). Rich associates women's "tremendous powers of intuitive identification and sympathy with other people" with Keats's notion of "negative capability" (115). Similarly, Jong maintains that "feminism means empathy" and adds that "empathy is akin to the quality Keats called 'negative quality' – that unique gift for projecting oneself into other states of consciousness" (in Rich 171-2).

There is a group of contemporary scholars who assert that there is "clear evidence of misogynistic tendencies" in Keats's work (Strachan 31). Ross is one of them. His *The Contours of Masculine Desire* focuses on "the difficult terrain of nineteenth-century gender relations in which masculine and feminine subjectivities operated" (Sandy "Keats Criticism" 1326). In "Beyond the Fragmented Word: Keats at the Limit of Patrilineal Language", Ross argues that Keats's *Hyperion* shows the poet's desire "to assert not just [his] coming into manhood but also his coming into discursive power" and this discursive power defines "poetic maturity in terms of patriarchal culture" (110-31). Like Ross, Richardson claims that the male ego in Romantic poetry is engrossed by "the need to conquer and yet simultaneously incorporate whatever female attributes it wishes to possess" (Schulkins 6).

A similar line of thought is brought forward by Homans. Her article "Keats Reading Women, Women Reading Keats" regards Keats's notion of negative capability as the subjugation of the feminine to masculine authority. Homans argues that Keats "equates his imaginative project [...] not only with male sexual potency but also with the masculine appropriation of the feminine" (344); she accuses the poet of "harnessing women's erotic and literary power to serve his own" (361). Similarly, Swann in "Harassing the Muse" makes the same point. Likewise, Watkins in "History, Self, and Gender in 'Ode to Psyche'" claims that Keats has a "masculinist poetic strategy" (103) and the ode is "a masculine play of authority against a constructed feminine other" (100). Watkins's *Sexual Power in British Poetry* also demonstrates Keats's misogynist tendencies. Schulkins points out that Watkins regards the male figure in Romantic poetry as "being threatened by uncontrollable female energy he desperately tries to restrain" (6).

On the other hand, scholars such as Wolfson and Mellor are more positive in their critical assessment of Keats and his work in terms of gender. Although they do not entirely excuse Keats from the charge of masculinism, they focus on a volatile Keats who embraces the feminine and vacillates between masculinity and femininity. A mercurial Keats appears in this approach like Roe's understanding of Keats as a solar poet in thrall to the lunar pull: "the moon, sun, and their mythical embodiments cooperated to quicken the mists, breezes, clouds, currents and tides of his imagination, as if concerting an interplay of male and female aspects of his own nature" (*Keats* 93-4).

In *Romanticism and Gender*, Mellor reads the empathetic imagination of the negatively capable poet as incorporating the feminine. Mellor argues that the relationship between "masculine" and "feminine" Romanticism is "finally not one of structural opposition but rather of intersection along a fluid continuum" (*Romanticism and Gender* 4). This fluidity allows the ambivalent poet to embrace femininity. Mellor calls Keats an "ideological cross-dresser" due to sexual ambiguity and androgyny in Keats's poetry (*Romanticism and Gender* 171). Although Keats sympathises with the feminine, Mellor notes that the poet also anxiously seeks to preserve a recognizable image of masculinity. Mellor, in "Keats and the Complexities of Gender", proposes that critical studies should focus on "the extremely subtle and complex ways in which Keats challenged the existence of fixed, stable boundaries between the sexes"; she asserts that Keats unsettled these boundaries in two ways: "by occupying the position of a 'woman' in his life and in his writings, and by blurring the distinction between masculinity and femininity" (215). Mellor contends that Keats resists the "masculinist construction of the self: bounded, unitary, stable, complete, and instrumental, an empowered agent"; as opposed to the masculine self with a strong sense of its autonomy and ego boundaries, Keats's "poetical Character" and his "camelion Poet" identifies with the feminine self (Keats *Letters* 194-5), a self that was "thought to be more pliable and yielding, to possess more permeable ego boundaries" ("Complexities of Gender" 215). Mellor suggests that Keats's conception of the self "as fluid, unbounded, decentred, inconsistent" resonates with the notion of the self which is described by "the French psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan and Julia

Kristeva<sup>22</sup> as a self entirely formed within a constantly shifting linguistic universe” (“Complexities of Gender” 216, *Romanticism and Gender* 175). This remark by Mellor actually shows where this thesis contributes to critical studies on Keats.

Wolfson’s “Feminizing Keats” is another essential article that demonstrates how gender is a central issue in Keatsian criticism:

Feminist literary criticism frequently theorizes the “feminine” as the designated “other” in a system in which the position of privilege is “masculine.” Less commonly elaborated are contestations of gender within that masculine center itself, especially in relation to men such as Keats, who are often spoken of as having qualities and attitudes “other” than those normatively deemed masculine. Yet a striking feature of the discourse on Keats – in both the nineteenth century and the twentieth – is the frequency with which his gender is an issue. This is not a matter of biology, of course, but of ideology. Like the systems that cast the feminine as “other,” judgements about Keats appear in the language of gendered opposition and difference, in which decisions about what is not “masculine” – in Keats’s case, variously “effeminate,” “juvenile,” or “puerile” – imply what is (317).

Dealing with the gender issue in Keatsian criticism, Wolfson offers a historical account of gendered readings of Keats and highlights an ambivalent Keats musing about “the ambiguous boundaries between masculine and feminine” (329). Likewise, Wolfson in “Keats and Gender Criticism” traces the ambiguities inherent in the poet’s position: “Keats vexes the question of gender, especially when it is negotiated at unstable boundaries between masculine and feminine”; she adds that Keats’s “overall syntax of gender is more zig-zag than linear, and the total story more indeterminate than definitive (in Strachan 72-3). According to Schulkins, Wolfson views Keats’s “gender syntax as more complex and ambiguous than the general supposition regarding Keats’s patrilineal misogynistic conceptions”; therefore, she is “not quick to accuse Keats of chauvinistic tendencies” (7). Wolfson focuses on “a virtual polymorphism of Keats’s gender” and argues that “Keats shows divided, often contradictory investments – by turns, speculative, anxious, risky – in a variety of masculinities and their proximity to a ‘feminine’ differential” (“Keats and Gender Criticism” 73). She emphasises that the

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<sup>22</sup> Lacan sees subjectivity as divided: “if we ignore the self’s radical ex-centricity to itself with which man is confronted, in other words, the truth discovered by Freud, we shall falsify both the order and methods of psychoanalytic mediation” (Lacan *Écrits* 130). Lacan’s subject is the ex-centric subject structured around a split, a lack. Following Lacan, Kristeva also proposes an account of divided subjectivity, the self always in process and on trial, oscillating between the semiotic and the symbolic.

“erosion of masculine self-possession by feminine forces suggests that the ‘feminine’ in male Romantic writing, though it evokes a politically excluded or subjected ‘other’, may also, and more deeply, refer to sensations within masculine subjectivity itself of its difference from prevailing definitions of masculinity” (“Romanticism and Gender” 391). This study also seeks to focus on another form of masculine subjectivity different from the predominant form of masculinity, open and receptive to what is culturally defined as the feminine.

Turley’s *Keats’s Boyish Imagination* is another response contesting the notions of puerility and infantilism in Keatsian criticism. Turley proposes Keats’s immaturity “as a way of understanding his verse” (Bari xiv). Turley’s book investigates “the ways in which Keats deployed juvenility as a system of interruptions, challenging the mature force of established power over a range of aesthetic and political terrain” (1). Turley contends that “immaturity not only represents an excellent place from which to scrutinize Keats’s political consciousness, but is itself the emphatic site of that consciousness” (3-4). Turley sees boyishness as a position of contestation; he explains why he finds this boyishness disruptive:

It is the present volume’s contention that only by resisting maturational narratives can we bring the true extent of Keats’s challenge to middle-class values, bourgeois ideology, abusive power, exploitative labour exchange, the strictures of rigidly defined gender roles, dominant representations of masculinity, and the pernicious influence of polite aesthetics/aesthetic pleasure – opposition enacted through attention to puerility, gauche displays of petulance, callowness – finally into clear light (7).

Turley argues that Keats’s boyishness unsettles “prevailing early nineteenth-century notions of virility, manliness, manly prowess, female sexuality, and desire” (8).

Whale’s *John Keats* is another book that deals with Keats’s poetry through the perspective of sexuality and gender identity, focusing on “the libidinous energy of Keats’s texts” (Whale ix, x). Whale points out that the feminine is “a category which Keats himself uses to describe one of the states of mind conducive to creativity” (3). Keats notes in his letter of 1819: “In this state of effeminacy the fibres of the brain are relaxed in common with the rest of the body [...] This is the only happiness; and is a rare instance of advantage in the body overpowering the Mind” (*Letters* 269-70). According to Whale, Keats has “a profound belief in the self as a process rather than

fixed or established”, and he champions “the capacity to live with uncertainty” and has “a relish for what seems like an anti-intellectual urge to move beyond or outside rational self-consciousness” (8). Keats experiments with language and poetic form, which “redefines him in relation to the boundaries of the usual masculine domain” (Whale 9). Whale maintains that Keats’s “transgressive avant-gardism” detaches him from the masculine mainstream (9). Keatsian avant-gardism that violates orthodox boundaries evokes “avant-garde” poetics which Kristeva asserts is capable of producing ruptures in the symbolic order (Kristeva *Revolution* 88).

Narayan’s *Real and Imagined Women in British Romanticism* is another study in the gender-focused critical climate. It has a chapter on Keats and specifically examines *Lamia* and “La Belle Dame sans Merci”. Narayan focuses on “gender instability” and “polyvalence” that informs the male Romantic poets’ writing. She argues that the “canonical male writers of Romanticism were able to produce a radical multi-gendered writing subject that allowed them to transcend the stereotypic limitations of gender that their culture imposed upon them” (16). She further asserts that Romanticism “permits the dismantling of a binary [gender] system” (16). According to Narayan, gender polyvalence in Romantic imagination suggests that they regarded gender as “a variable cultural construct rather than as natural inevitability”; therefore, she maintains that her study views gender as “a structural principle organizing texts rather than an immutable corporal sign co-terminus with biological sex” (17-8). She also proposes that the tension between the Kristevan semiotic and symbolic chimes with the uneasiness between the narrative and figurative registers in Keats’s poetry; she does not proceed to elaborate on this slight suggestion.

Another very recently published book that focuses on the issues of gender and sexuality in Keats’s poetry is Schulkins’s *Keats, Modesty and Masturbation*. Schulkins notes that “Keats’s sensual, erotic imagery and the description of masturbation help establish Keats’s sexual-political stance and reveal his criticism regarding the conservative construction of the female as passionless” (2-3). Schulkins regards Keats as a liberal thinker who believes that “sex and sexual freedom have the power to transform society and heal it from malignancy and corruption” (3). The argument of her book is that “through its employment of masturbation and erotic imagery, Keats’s

work can be located in this wider liberal-conservative debate regarding sexual freedom and more specifically female sexuality” (3). She asserts that Keats’s poetry “dismisses the notion that Keats was an outright misogynist” (10). She does not agree with the critics who claim that Keats is trying to subdue and appropriate the feminine in order to establish a masculine poetic self. She believes that Keats’s poetry reveals that “women, like men, are sexual beings” (10).

This review of Keatsian criticism that continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century is fair testament to his contemporaneity with our critical concerns such as gender and sexuality: “In the last decade, Feminism and Gender Studies have become prevalent approaches to understanding Keats’s poetry and his portrayal of female figures” (Schulkins 5). All of these studies from the perspective of gender and sexuality are far from being conclusive. This is the critical avenue where this thesis hopes to contribute by means of reading Keats’s poems in dialogue with Kristevan theory. Although this study does not in any way attempt to absolve Keats from the charge of masculinism, it regards the Keatsian poetic persona as ambivalent (like Mellor and Wolfson) and wavering between femininity and masculinity as representative of the Romantic period which “enjoyed a plethora of contradictory models of sexual difference and gendered identities” and which is “more fruitfully approached as a volatile borderland of competing discourses, which partly account for Romanticism’s signature excesses, ambiguities and experiments” (Cracuin 159). Keats appears to have “forged constantly mutable poetic identities”, writing in an era “defined by cultural transitions and fluid identity in both personal and professional spheres” (Narayan 17). Therefore, this thesis is not primarily interested in the general assumption of a group of feminists (like Homans, Ross) who support the notion that Keats strives to silence the feminine completely and appropriate the creative power of the feminine chauvinistically in order to establish his masculinity. This study is engaged more with the oscillations of the volatile poetic persona of Keats’s poetry. This approach also acknowledges that anxiety about femininity is observed in Keats’s poetry. This study views the masculine and the feminine as cultural constructs and reads them figuratively as the embodiments of the multiple selves of the poetic persona and the embodiments of the poet’s internal states of mind (for example, his muse). This approach is engaged in disclosing what these cultural constructs such as the feminine and the masculine refer to, in discussing

the historical and cultural meanings they have been attributed to. Also, this study discusses the notion of femininity through the poems of a male poet, which is meant to communicate the idea that the feminine is a cultural construction regardless of the biological sex of the poet. The poet's embracing or disregarding femininity is investigated through his confrontation with the feminine as an internal state of mind, figured out as the muse or metaphorised as the maternal. Besides, to associate the feminine receptivity with women and the masculine conquering spirit with men is to perpetuate the association of women with femininity. This thesis strives not to fall into the biological essentialism associating the feminine with the female. This thesis fully acknowledges that the historical and ideological association of the feminine (as a cultural category) with women is misogynistic and misplaced abjection.

As Kristeva is a thinker whose ideas are immersed in psychoanalytical accounts of the subject, psychoanalytical readings of Keats's work are of primary importance in this thesis. Numerous approaches to Keats have benefited from the perspective of psychoanalysis. Ward's *John Keats: The Making of a Poet* is, according to Roe, "the nearest approach we have to a (Freudian) psycho-biography of the poet" (*Culture of Dissent* 3). Similarly, Waldoff in "The Silent Work of Imagination" focuses on the growth of the poet's imagination by means of psychoanalytical approach; he examines "the unconscious dimension of his [Keats's] imagination" (192). He proposes that the Freudian psychology of mourning and melancholia holds important implications to understand the nature of Keats's imagination (197). Likewise, Faflak's *Romantic Psychoanalysis* investigates "how Romanticism constitutes itself as a scene of psychoanalysis" (5) and argues that "Romantic poetry, by confronting the unconscious of philosophy, *invents* psychoanalysis" (7). Faflak asserts that Romantic poetry "confronts psychoanalysis as its own impossibility" and adds that Keats refers to this impossibility as the "Burden of Mystery" (8). In his letter to Reynolds on May 3, 1818, in which Keats likens the human psyche to "a large Mansion of Many Apartments", he mentions the Wordsworthian "burden of the Mystery"; he describes two chambers where the human psyche is housed; the first one is "the infant or thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think"; the second one is "the Chamber of Maiden-Thought" which "becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open, but all dark, all leading to dark passages. We see

not the balance of good and evil. We are in a mist. *We are now in that state. We feel the ‘burden of the Mystery’*” (*Letters* 124). The interminability of the human psyche as a bottomless chasm is how the Romantic confronts the unconscious in Faflak’s understanding. Besides, Faflak notes that the work of Kristeva is central to thinking through the Keatsian psychic interiority (12). In the chapter that focuses on Keats, Faflak refers to Kristeva’s idea of the semiotic *chora* (213), the process of abjection, and Kristevan melancholy in the space of one paragraph for each (215). Faflak’s references to Kristeva offer only brief glimpses of new vistas. This thesis predominantly draws on Kristevan theory and elaborates her concepts, bringing Keats’s poems in contact with her ideas. In addition to Faflak, Pfau also benefits from Kristeva’s concept of melancholy in *Romantic Moods* that primarily investigates melancholy by means of Adorno and Benjamin. In the chapter that focuses on Keats, Pfau refers Kristeva’s *Black Sun* in order to support the view that the melancholic person’s language “bespeaks the subject’s grasp of a permanent insufficiency in the order of the signifier, of the established discursive order”; he suggests that the “oddly constructed” poetic language, also seen in Keats, might be “either expressive of a deep-seated melancholic affect or, alternatively, may owe their overwrought quality to the fact that there is nothing, no inward feeling, to be expressed whatsoever” (323). Besides, O’Rourke’s *Keats’s Odes and Contemporary Criticism* draws on psychoanalytic texts of Freud and Kristeva (x-xi). O’Rourke benefits from Kristeva’s notion of the semiotic to convey the affective valence of poetic language and the material base of words in Keats’s odes. He makes use of Kristevan theory that incorporates “a somatic dimension” to symbolic representations and of the Kristevan semiotic that “values literary language primarily for its motility and its verbal texture” (37).

To conclude, the variety of these approaches and critical perspectives points to “Keatsian inexhaustibility” (Stillinger *Reading* viii). Stillinger argues that this wide range of explorations of Keats’s poetry results from the poet’s “chameleonlike changeability”; the poet’s versatility leads to “the idea of multiple Keatses” (*Reading* 101). Stillinger goes on to offer a list of multiple Keatses, some of which are “Aesthetic Keats”, “Sensuous Keats”, “Philosophic Keats”, “Theoretical Keats”, “Intertextual Keats”, “Political Keats”, “Cockney Keats”, “Vulgar Keats”, “Effeminate Keats” and

so on (*Reading* 102). This thesis primarily focuses on an ambivalent Keats that oscillates between the semiotic and the symbolic, abjection and melancholy. The analyses in this study are not intended to be read in isolation, but rather to complement and extend readings which take alternative critical positions.

### **1.3.2 Keats the Romantic Poet in Tune with Kristeva the Theorist**

Romantic poetry is generally characterised by the yearning to go beyond human limits, towards the infinite in contrast to “the neo-classic stress on the typical, the uniform, the salient, and the familiar as ideals of poetic imitation” (Abrams *The Mirror* 39). The Romantic venture into the unrepresentable and the unsignifiable is indicated by the poets who seek to impress upon the reader “a dim and undetermined sense / Of unknown modes of being (Wordsworth *The Prelude* I. 392-3). These poets explore unsettlingly inexpressible states of consciousness that shatter the established categories of rational judgement, of Enlightenment rationalism which views the human psyche as “a type of inductive associative mechanism” (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 39). Romanticism opposed “Enlightened, classicizing, conformist rationalism in recognition of unstated emotions and unconscious instincts” (Brown 26). Romantic poets probe into “the twilight realms of consciousness” (Abrams *The Mirror* 141) and delve into mysteriously lit caverns that have strange contours and proportions, challenging “Enlightenment reason with obscurity and unfamiliarity” (Bari 111). The Romantic urge to grasp the ungraspable and to represent the unrepresentable is in tune with Keats the Romantic’s “sense of unknown workings in the mind” (Waldoff 183). This Romantic drive to name the unnameable, to gain “knowledge of the terra semi-incognita of things unearthly” (Keats *Letters* 104), to access the tantalisingly inaccessible “tops / Of mountains” (Byron *Manfred* I. 32-3), to manage “[u]nmanageable thoughts” (Wordsworth *The Prelude* I. 139), to go into “caverns measureless to man” (Coleridge *Kubla Khan* 4), to find names for “[t]his deep commotion / And turmoil in me” (Goethe *Faust Part One* 3059-64), to delve into “some untrodden region[s] of my [one’s] mind” (Keats “Ode to Psyche” 51), to describe “undescribed sounds” (Keats *Endymion* I. 285), to roam “the hollow vast” (Keats *Endymion* III. 120) and “the world unknown” (Shelley *Prometheus Unbound* II. i. 190), to unlock “the secrets of the unconscious” (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis*

4), and to voice “experiences often ‘felt’ to be wholly intractable” and “volatile and inscrutable” (Pfau 2) is investigated in this thesis as an encounter with the semiotic. It is also seen as an attempt to symbolise the unsymbolizable in the Kristevan sense, to wander “at the borders of the speakable and visible” (Kristeva *Tales* 339). It is further regarded as an instance of writing the rhythmical body by a poet who has the “high consciousness of the body” (de Almeida *Romantic* 26) and who is steeped in the semiotic dimension of signification beyond the confines of the symbolic.

This investigation will be carried out by deploying certain ideas and concepts developed by Kristeva, whose project from the outset has been described as an attempt to “think the unthinkable” by Moi (“Introduction” vi) and “to name the unnameable” (Smith 107), and whose work renders the unconscious “thinkable, symbolizable, and perhaps explicable” (Lechte *Kristeva* 33). This thesis brings Keats the Romantic poet into close proximity with Kristeva the theorist since they speak to each other; a thinker who seeks to ponder the imponderable should be placed in tune with a poet who desires to delve into the untrodden regions of his psyche.

Analysing Keats’s longer poems within a Kristevan framework leads to a revitalised understanding of those poems. Discussing language and subjectivity through psychoanalysis, Kristeva appears to be interested in unravelling “displaced meanings that lurk behind the apparent meaning of our articulation” and “the hidden, veiled, or unconscious meanings of our language use” (Oliver “Introduction” xiii). Romantic poetry, which “*invents*, rather than merely anticipates, psychoanalysis (Faflak “Romantic Psychoanalysis” 304), invites one to study the urge to articulate the veiled meanings, to unearth the displaced or condensed meanings, to examine “the irreducible tenuousness and volatility” of the Romantic subject (Pfau 17), and thus to think about the unthinkable in the uncanny terrain of poetry and to expand the boundaries of the nameable through Kristevan lens. Kristevan theory that delves into the unrepresentable and the elusive allows one to study Keats’s poetry since Romanticism, Kristeva argues, “puts into words an unheard-of instability in the individual” (*Tales* 339). Therefore, wanderings at the borders of the speakable and signifiable in Keats’s poetry are brought into contact with Kristevan theory in this study.

The unrepresentable, the unnameable and the inexpressible invite “nostalgic signifying jubilation over a fundamental, nutritive nonmeaning” (Kristeva *Black* 101). The romantic urge to plunge into the unsignifiable, the incommunicable and the unfathomable reveals “a chasm in the very subject” in the words of Kristeva; she refers to the “chasm that settles in between subject and signifiable objects” and this resonates with the Romantic chasm between the representable and the unrepresentable, the identifiable and the unidentifiable; because of this chasm, the signifying sequence is “heavily, violently arbitrary” (Kristeva *Black* 51). This Kristevan chasm points to the nourishing abyss of the unsymbolisable – “an intense, extravagant value [...] attributed to the Thing” (Kristeva *Black* 151) - and to the deep yearning to signify this abyss, to master “the primal object” through “a torrent of signs”, to convey the maternal through “an unbelievable effort to master signs in order to have them correspond to primal, unnameable, traumatic experiences” (Kristeva *Black* 67). Therefore, this study argues that this Kristevan chasm of the unnameable resonates with the Romantic abyss of the unsignifiable.

Kristeva further relates this understanding of the chasm between the unnameable Thing and the realm of linguistic signs to the Western metaphysics of “conveyability”:

Certainly the primal object, the “in-itself” that always remains to be conveyed, the ultimate cause of conveyability, exists only for and through discourse and the already constituted subject. Because what is conveyed is already there, the conveyable can be imagined and posited as in excess and incommensurable. Positing the existence of that other language and even of an other of language, indeed of an outside-of-language, is not necessarily setting up a preserve for metaphysics and theology. The postulate corresponds to a psychic requirement that Western metaphysics and theory have had, perhaps, the good luck and audacity to represent (*Black* 66).

This explanation discloses, among other things, that the chasm between the Thing and the symbolic is discursively constructed. Western metaphysics has sought to represent the primal object, the Thing that exists on the other side of the chasm; the abysmal otherness of language (the semiotic) that antecedes symbolisation allows one to ponder the imponderable and to attempt to convey it. Kristeva further notes that this “psychic requirement [that Western theory has had] is certainly not universal” (*Black* 66); thus, she historicises the Western subject and locates “the Western *soul*” (*Tales* 59) unfolding in the gap between the unrepresentable primal object and the symbolic realm

of signs historically and culturally. She contends that the Western subject is a “potential melancholy being, having become a relentless conveyor”; the oscillation between the in conveyable and the conveyable leads to the “posited conveyability” that “ends up with a multiplicity of possible conveyances” (Kristeva *Black* 68). This Kristevan attempt to historicise the Western soul should remind us that the Romantic poet belongs with this historical Western subject. What is regarded as the inconvenyable (in Western theory and the unknown in Romanticism) punctuates what is posited as the conveyable, thereby enlarging the boundary of the discursively constructed symbolic realm, shaking the existing configuration of the symbolic and “keeping the symbolic open to an Other that destabilizes it” (Margaroni “Semiotic Revolution” 22). The other that destabilises the conveyable in Western theory corresponds to the unsignifiable, the incommunicable, the abysmal otherness of language in Romantic poetry.

This notion of conveyability/communicability in Western metaphysics also pertains to the concept of “the traversability of the symbolic”; the symbolic is fragile on account of “its being liminary and not originary” (Beardsworth “Revolt Culture” 49). Simply put, the very existence of the boundary renders it potentially transgressable. Since the thetic establishes “a traversable boundary” (Kristeva *Revolution* 51), that is a boundary which is liminary and therefore open to change and trespassing, the symbolic is precarious; the liminal subject destabilises the symbolic and challenges its claim to being originary. The Romantic venture into the unrepresentable and the untrodden should be seen as an indication of the traversability of the thetic boundary, the transgressibility of the Romantic chasm. Once the Romantic poet delves into the unsignifiable, the symbolic realm of the conveyor of signs and meaning is challenged since the Romantic trespasser discloses the fragility of the symbolic by the very act of trespassing. This Kristevan approach opens up discourses and systems “within their very systematicity in order to manifest the semiotic flow within symbolicity” (Kristeva *Tales* 16). Kristevan understanding of language as a heterogeneous process offers “the sites of linguistic transformation, upheaval and dissolution” (Ainley 59); these sites display the semiotic undercurrent. Thus, this study invites one to view the Romantic poet that rebelled against his predecessors in the Enlightenment Age (Brown 26) as the Kristevan trespasser that sought to unearth the semiotic current within the symbolic

and to venture into the spaces of linguistic unrepresentability, disintegrations and decompositions.

The body in relation to corporeal signification is another point which suggests that Keats's poetry should be brought into contact with Kristeva's theory. The body is what makes it possible to challenge the symbolic; to transgress the thetic boundary, to cross over "the threshold of language" in Kristeva's words (*Revolution* 45) is to get in touch with the corporeal semiotic. Engaging with the issues of desire and the body, French feminism "finds deception at the base of the great, Western intellectual traditions which presume to derive Truth from the mind as separate from the body" (Weil 154). However, Keats subverts this Western tradition; the fusion of the body and the intellect in his poetry unsettles the disembodied subject of Western metaphysics. Weil adds that French feminism demonstrates "the fundamental inseparability and interdependence of concepts of mind and body, reason and emotion, and, ultimately, masculinity and femininity" (154). This thesis intends to make use of this focus on the interdependence of concepts of mind and body to explain the interpenetration of the libidinal and the cerebral self that is in Keats's poetry and the inseparability of reason and emotion to demonstrate the interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic in Keats's *Endymion* and *Hyperion* poems. Susan Stewart also stresses that Romantic poets insist on "yoking conceptual and sensual life" (72). Likewise, Cox points out that Keats "does embrace intellectual and sensual pleasure – the joys of the ironic intellect and of the sensuous body – as the goal of life" ("Eros and 'Romance'" 66). Besides, Richardson notes that Keats's poetry pervasively manifests "embodied, impassioned thought" ("Keats and Romantic Science" 231). Therefore, for Keats the poet, language is not "an abstract, arbitrary system but another locus where mind and body meet, where thought reveals its embodied character"; Keats's words seem to be "shaped by and for the body, most obviously in enunciation, requiring the cooperation of the mind and brain with the lungs, the throat, and the mouth" (Richardson *Science of the Mind* 139). For a poet who treasures "material sublime" (Keats "To J. H. Reynolds" 69), the body is always transfused into language. Keats's deep engagement with the material sublime makes the Kristevan analysis of poetry more conducive to Keats (than to other Romantic poets). This investment in the embodiedness of the subject allows one to study Keats's poems in line with the Kristevan focus on corporeal signification.

In terms of the divide, or its dissolution, between the body and the mind in poetry, D. H. Lawrence argues that “physical consciousness gives a last song in Burns, then is dead. Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, the Brontës, all are post-mortem poets. The essential instinctive-intuitive body is dead, and worshipped in death – all very unhealthy” (*Literary Criticism* 54). Lawrence also adds that Keats forever yearns “for something outside himself” and that he differs from the other Romantics with regards to his fascination with death and longing for total dissolution: “Shelley is pure escape: the body is sublimated into sublime gas. Keats is more difficult – the body can still be felt dissolving in waves of successive death” (54). Walsh sums up Lawrence’s point about Keats:

Two lines, then, according to Lawrence, merge in Keats: on the one hand the post-Elizabethan rupture in human consciousness in which “the mental consciousness [recoils] in violence away from the physical, instinctive-intuitive”; on the other, his yearning for selflessness, for otherness, becomes that extreme form of otherness, a yearning for non-being (29).

The merging of these two lines in Keats’s poetry, this study argues, can be examined within the light of the Kristevan semiotic and symbolic. This thesis downplays Lawrence’s comment that Keats is a post-mortem poet; to proceed with the metaphor, the Keatsian poetic voice is post-partum rather than post-mortem, perhaps a posthumous child, who leads “a posthumous existence” (Keats *Letters* 485). This study intends to elaborate on the body not only dissolving in death but also rising in birth since Keats is only “*half* in love with easeful Death” (“Ode to a Nightingale” 52, my emphasis). The (Kristevan) dialectical oscillation between “the mental consciousness” and “the physical instinctive-intuitive” in Lawrence’s sense is central to this study of Keats, who has been decried as having “bewildering oscillations” (Wasserman 208) in “a state of perpetual *indeterminacy*” (Sperry *Keats* 245 his emphasis).

Kristeva states that “[s]ince the end of the nineteenth century, ‘poetry’ has deliberately maintained the balance between sociality and madness, and we view this as the sign of the new era” (*Revolution* 214-5). For Kristeva, this balance between madness and sociality dates to the end of the nineteenth century; this thesis in a way seeks to enquire whether it is possible to talk about this balance or an attempt at this balance in Keats’s poetry at the beginning of the nineteenth century, presaging Kristeva’s observation.

Thinking through Kristevan lens about another post-romantic Wordsworth rather than a conventional, canonical Wordsworth, Becker-Leckrone points out that Kristeva is silent “on the high romantic poets” (148); she adds that Kristeva’s silence may give the impression that “Wordsworth would be, for her, one of those writers dispiritingly in the thrall of the symbolic order” (148). Becker-Leckrone suggests that Wordsworth would be one of those poets who “continue their long march toward idols and truths of all kinds,” repressing the “nurturing horror that they attend to pushing aside by purifying, systematizing [...] the horror they seize on in order to build themselves up and function” (Kristeva *Powers* 210). Becker-Leckrone offers that another Wordsworth, “a poet strongest when he dwells most precariously in the borderline regions of linguistic dissolution” rather than a conventional poet who seeks to “valorize the poetic mind that survives” those moments of linguistic disintegration (148), leads to a promising critical avenue. Becker-Leckrone proposes that a post-romantic reading might “come to constitute Kristeva’s heralded ‘revolution in poetic language’” (147).

An “eccentric figure whose poetry moves into uncharted discursive spaces” (O’Rourke xiii) and who deviates from the regular course of the symbolic through excursions into the asymbolic, Keats is not utterly in the thrall of the symbolic order; the nurturing horror is neither entirely repressed nor completely systematized; his poetry is immersed in linguistic dissolutions; his poems break down the differentiation between subjects and objects; he knows the darker side of human existence. That Keats deals with the sickly, the repulsive, as shown in the chapter of the abject, indicates that the poet refuses to shirk the whole gamut of human experience. The poetic voice in Keats’s poems neither succumbs to the imposition of the symbolic nor yields to the chaotic flux of the semiotic; the in-betweenness marks his poetry: “Under the richly sensuous surface, we find Keats’s characteristic presentation of all experience as a tangle of inseparable but irreconcilable opposites. He finds melancholy in delight and pleasure in pain; he feels the highest intensity of love as an approximation to death” (Abrams *Anthology* 825). Therefore, a Kristevan reading of Keats, whose poetry dwells “on the liminal” (Creaser 242), opens up the liminal space between sociality and madness, the symbolic and the semiotic.

Keats gives utterance to inarticulate yearnings beyond the threshold of the symbolic; he zealously endeavours to liberate unruly emotions and appetites which do not lend themselves to signification; he probes into the mysterious abyss beyond the confines of the symbolic realm. In Keatsian faery realms where the unsignifiable resists symbolisation, “the boundary between dreaming and wakefulness” is blurred (Sandner 152). In these faery lands, his poetic imagination indulges in figuring out the unknown, the unseen and the unacknowledged modes of being and states of existence; he “overlaps the bounds” in Shelley’s words (*Alastor* 207), in his quest for the immeasurable and the unfathomable. These incommunicable yearnings for the mysterious abyss are investigated in this study as the speechless infant’s desire to relapse into the semiotic *chora* or the maternal abyss.

The clash between the Augustan poets’ valuing of reason and the Romantic promotion of imagination and the Romantic emphasis on “nonvisual, emotional, and unconscious sources of creativity” (Waldoff 186) resonates with the distinction between the symbolic and the semiotic. Romantic poetics privileges elements such as “[i]nvention, fancy and imagination” over “the neoclassical standards of correctness, decorum and convention” (Fermanis 19). In other words, reason is the human faculty that is associated with the Augustan poets that preceded the Romantics who promoted imagination (Haskell 29-30). As a Romantic poet, Keats strongly believed in “the primacy of the imagination in grasping truth” and “sought in poetry an intuitive understanding of life” (Goellnicht “Keats’s Chemical Composition” 145). Keats’s remark that he would prefer to have “a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts!” (*Letters* 54) would attest to this. The Keatsian poetic voice “delight[s] in sensation rather than hunger [...] after Truth” (Keats *Letters* 54). As a poet of sensations, Keats attacked Newtonian rationalism (Brown 26). “For the passionate anti-Newtonian Keats, the cold philosophy of scientific rationalism was like ice to poetry’s warm knowledge of life” (Roe *Keats* 81). Keats is said to agree that Newton “destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to the prismatic colours” (in Richardson “Keats and Romantic Science” 230). Similar to the scientific discourse, the language of “cold philosophy” unweaves “a rainbow” (Keats *Lamia* II. 230-7).

The conflict between the Augustan attack on “the fanatical, extreme, passionate, anarchic and eccentric elements in human nature” (Watts 75) and the Romantic promotion of the imaginary, the fanciful and the ineffable chimes with the tension between the symbolic and the semiotic respectively. The semiotic evokes the Romantic view which sees a human being as “a well, a reservoir full of possibilities” whereas the symbolic seems to suggest the Neo-classical view which views him/her as “a very finite and fixed creature” (Hulme 48). The semiotic stands for the uncurbed imagination fuelled by drive charges and discharges. This “excess for the imagination (towards which it is driven in the apprehension of intuition) is like an abyss in which it fears to lose itself” (Kant 88). The rational understanding fears to lose itself in the Romantic chasm, the Romantic well. In the words of Faflak, “[a]s the imagination reaches beyond conscious empiricism toward the purely psychical or unconscious – understood as the ‘purely’ rational – its ability to represent itself and thus to fulfil the Kantian categorical imperative of rational understanding falters” (*Romantic Psychoanalysis* 47).

The tension between a poet of sensations and a poet of thoughts (Roe *Culture of Dissent* 60) evokes the interplay between the drive-based, affect-laden semiotic and the symbolic domain of neatly categorized thoughts. Keats’ remark that he is a poet of sensations rather than a poet of thoughts is in accord with this tension between (Romantic) imagination and (Neo-classical) reason. In his letter of 22 November 1817 to Benjamin Bailey, Keats declares that he values imagination:

I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart’s affections and the truth of Imagination. What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth – whether it existed before or not – for I have the same Idea of all our Passions as of Love; they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty [...] The Imagination may be compared to Adam’s dream – he awoke and found it truth. I am the more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for truth by consequitive [sic] reasoning – and yet it must be [...] However it may be, O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts! (*Letters* 54).

The Romantics who valued emotion, passion and intuition differ from the poets of the Age of Reason who emphasised “the rational order and harmony of the universe” (Abrams *The Mirror* 17). Keats is said to have abhorred “the Augustan deviation from a true English, Shakespearean line” (Perry “Romantic Literary Criticism” 374). As a

poet of sensations, he sets “sensory experience against the conscious intellectual search for Truth” (Haskell 33). His capacity for sensory experience allows the poet to be completely identified with the thing he observes. In the same letter to Bailey, he announces that “nothing startles me beyond the Moment [...] if a Sparrow come [sic] before my Window, I take part in its existence and pick about the Gravel” (55). This unreflective experience of taking part in the existence of the bird and picking about the gravel like the bird springs from the poet’s empathetic and sensory capability rather than acquired knowledge; the rupture between self and the world is obliterated. Haskell explains that this “perception involves a conjoining of self and the world” (35); the poet’s experience of becoming like the bird is an unreflective experience, but the poet reflectively seeks to embody his perception through poetic diction: “The poetic rendering of that perception requires the use of rhythm, sound patterns and other technical devices to try to embody the texture of sensory experience itself” (Haskell 35). The conjoining of self and the world is reminiscent of the semiotic where the break between self and other is non-existent, as opposed to the symbolic realm marked by “the demarcated space between self and other” (Becker-Leckrone 28). The linguistic rendering of such sensory experience would only be possible through the semiotic dimension of language. Figurative language outweighs the discursive thought in the semiotic modality; poetry is sensuous and has sensuous images; therefore, the corporeal base of language is required to embody such sensory and emphatic experience; imaginative truth is proved upon our impulses by means of adjective-laden, elaborately poetic language which stretches, and simultaneously voids words and bombards them with novel meanings; truth “must come – through sensuous phenomena to the observant and sentient poet” (Harris 42). Consecutively argued truths would be obtrusive to the poet who delights in sensations and who draws on the original libidinal multiplicity in which semantic non-closure prevails; such a slippery language unravels “a pre-symbolic dimension to signification that is bodily and drive-motivated” (Becker-Leckrone 28).

### 1.3.3 Exploring the Semiotic, the Symbolic, Abjection and Melancholy in Keats's Poems

This thesis primarily focuses on *Endymion*, *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*. I have chosen these three longer poems for several reasons. To begin with, this study shares the belief that “the central Keats is the rich poet of *Endymion*” (Ricks 7). This thesis agrees with Ricks’s approach to Keats that asserts that “a particular strength of Keats is the implication that the youthful, the luxuriant, the immature [in *Endymion*], can be, not just excusable errors, but vantage-points” (12). This study considers *Endymion* not as an error but as an errant romance wandering into the semiotic; the errant hero of the romance transforms an error, that is a straying from the accepted symbolic course in the etymological sense of the word, into a renewal of the symbolic, thereby altering and rejuvenating the symbolic. *Endymion* has a primary role in the fashioning of Keats; Keats himself designates it as “a rite of passage” (Swann 20): a “test, a trial of my Powers of Imagination and chiefly of my invention” (Keats *Letters* 42). Keats describes himself in composing *Endymion* as a Kristevan subject in process / on trial. Secondly, *Endymion* is less canonic, less canonised, abjected from the Keatsian canon (as contemporary reviews’s vitriolic attacks, and his own self-castigation revealed in his preface to the poem attest), but other poems have been studied from a multitude of different perspectives. The conservative contemporary reviewers who were obsessed with “the uncleannesses” of Keats’s poetry (in Matthews 73) looked askance at *Endymion* to break through “the *cordon sanitaire* which separates the ‘pure’ from the ‘filthy’, the ‘clean’ from the ‘unclean’” (Aske “Keats” 50). The “volatile images of Keats that emerged in the first reviews, which presented an abject, failed version of the seductively self-enclosed figure” (Swann 25) bring this study into contact with the Kristevan abject. Also, *Endymion* is the material base of Keats’s poetry, the breeding ground of his vital poetic spirit, the pastoral bower where poetry is animated, the foundation of his quest for poesy (the semiotic *chora* in Kristevan terms). His poetic romance is similar to the Kristevan maternal in the sense that it is at the point where the drives become manifest as the material base of language and subjectivity. *Endymion* is the magma of Keats’s poetry; Byron says that “poetry is the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earthquake” (in Ricks 26).; to proceed with this metaphor, *Endymion* erupts into *Hyperion*. From another perspective, *Endymion*

is the marble block out of which *Hyperion* and other poems are hewn. Without it, other poems fall apart (without their relation to, disgust of, detachment from, *Endymion*); other poems define themselves by how far they swerve from this romance considered to immature and puerile. In other words, *Endymion* is “some giant, pulsing underground” like the Kristevan genotext (Keats “The Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds” 40). This image of the Endymionese giant pulsing underground generates a sense of immense forces of upheaval threatening to erupt and destroy the (desired, idealised, attempted) Hyperionesque surface placidity. Besides being a vast underlying and undermining disorder, it can also nourish, animate, energise and propel the poet who departs from the subterranean, the submarine and the sublunary and seeks to soar into the celestial, to journey towards “the pantheon of poets to which he aspires” (Ward “Keats and the Idea of Fame” 11). Another reason why these three poems have been chosen is that the contrast between *Endymion* and *Hyperion* is alluring; this frictional pair of poems is a testament to the Kristevan subject in process / on trial. Keats is preoccupied with this tension between the two as we see in his letters. The entire Keatsian poetics seems to unfold in the gap between the Endymionese<sup>23</sup> and the Hyperionesque. *Endymion* is the mire in which *Hyperion* appears to flounder. Despite the uneasiness between the poetic romance and the epic, *Endymion* and *Hyperion* are uterine siblings, born of the same mother but not having the same father; *Hyperion* strives to belong to the pantheon of the epic paternal poets. In addition to these reasons aforementioned, these are long poems which show the development of the poet’s mind. The extended nature of Keats’s narrative poems provides a larger body of fruitful examples and enables one to see the constitution and deconstitution of the poetic self of the burgeoning poet that is always in process and on trial. These long poems are also representative of the fundamental clash in Keats’s poetry; for instance, *Endymion* is representative of the Keatsian inclination towards romance, while *Hyperion* evinces his tendency to compose an epic. Finally, this study does not extend its consideration to Keats’s odes, “the canonically enshrined” pieces (Cox “The Living Pantheon of Poets” 26) since they have received a disproportionate amount of attention from other scholars. Standing “among the most celebrated in English” (Sheats “Keats and the

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<sup>23</sup> Barnard uses this term to refer to the sensuous, effusive style of *Endymion* (Keats 66) and it will be recurrently used throughout this thesis.

Ode” 86), his canonised odes are considered to be the finest achievement of Keats. I believe that the internal clash of the odes [“the inner division of the dramatic monologue” (Creaser 240) reflected in their structure of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, as well] that incorporate irresolvable conflicts is suggestive of the conflict between *Endymion* and *Hyperion*; the dialectical structure of the odes incorporates “the distinctions blurred” and “the incomprehensible dissolution of opposites” (Curran *Poetic Form* 81-2). The odes in their concentrated form may be seen as the distilled version of this fundamental, foundational Keatsian clash; the “Cockney” Keats that composed *Endymion* and the “canonical” Keats that produced the odes are not discontinuous (Swann 21), so this thesis seeks to unpack the Keats of the odes put (compressed) in a nutshell in order to investigate the Keatsian odyssey dilated into romance, epic forms and lengths. Also, this study does not gravitate towards a reduction of negativity to a teleologically governed third term, that is synthesis which may be seen in the odes; instead this thesis is more interested in the conflictual nature of the process of meaning composed and decomposed.

In addition, this study alludes to Keats’s letters as it sees them as containing literary pieces produced by “the epistolary poet par excellence” (Milnes 66) beyond the communicative language of formal correspondence. His letters, which transgress “the boundary between poetry and prose” (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 284) and which are “tumbling with perceptions that generate ideas, puns that turn into poetry” (White 73) are of crucial importance to understand his poetry since they are “an invaluable supplement to the poetry” (Barnard “Keats’s Letters” 120) and they “discover the leading themes of his personal and artistic experiences” (Walsh 2). His letters, “hardly less remarkable than his poetry, show that Keats felt on his pulses the conflicts he dramatized in his major poems” (Abrams *Anthology* 825); therefore, his correspondence is of utmost importance as it sheds light on his poems. Keats’s letters are also significant because his

critical ideas were formulated in remarkable correspondence with friends and family in which Keats detailed the key literary concepts with which he is associated today: negative capability, the ‘unpoetical’ nature of the greatest poets, a preoccupation with beauty and its proximity to truth, the grand march of intellect, the egotistical sublime, the notion of the poet as a chameleon, and so on. The soil for Keats’s verse was tilled

by his correspondence, and the author achieved greatness as a letter writer before he did so in poetry (Moore and Strachan 153).

Therefore, this study does not hesitate to make use of the poet's correspondence and trace the moving spirit behind the poems of Keats although I do not mean to use biographical scaffolding to support my argument.

This thesis concentrates on Keats's *Endymion*, *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*. However, the body chapters are not designed in this order of poems (so as to avoid repetition); instead, they are built on the Kristevan concepts that this study utilises to analyse these poems. Hence, the second chapter is titled "The Semiotic and the Symbolic", the third chapter is titled "The Subject and Abjection" and the fourth chapter is titled "Melancholy". Each body chapter is composed of separate sections that focus on the poems individually.

The second chapter of this thesis investigates how Keats's poetry oscillates between the semiotic and the symbolic. It asserts that the poet welcomes and is deeply involved in the semiotic in *Endymion*, a poetic romance, while attempts are made to repress this immersion in the epicscape of *Hyperion* and in the allegorical vision of *The Fall of Hyperion*. Nevertheless, the semiotic resurfaces, thereby subverting the resolution to rein in the semiotic.

The first section of the second chapter focuses on the oscillations between the semiotic and the symbolic in *Endymion*. This section on *Endymion* maintains that the semiotic threatens to overwhelm the symbolic in *Endymion*. However, this study does not argue that it is exclusively semiotic since, according to Kristevan theory, the semiotic and the symbolic are interdependent: the speaking subject always oscillates between the semiotic and the symbolic (Kristeva *Revolution* 24). This study views *Endymion* as the poetic embodiment of the semiotic modality of the signifying process because the musical, material side of language is manifested in this poetic romance. First, *Endymion* as a pastoral romance is analysed as "a space in which impulses and drives circulate through the body" (Ramsey 176). The semiotic investment of *Endymion* could be found in several aspects of the poem.

The semiotic immersion in *Endymion* becomes manifest through the poetic language that stresses the corporeal aspect of signification. The Romantic desire to represent the unrepresentable that is observed in *Endymion* is in accord with the tendency to be immersed in the semiotic dimension of language and to inscribe the body as the un-inscribable through the material, bodily base of language. Bodily drives manifest themselves in poetic language through the semiotic instinctuality in this poetic romance. This study intends to show that poetic language in *Endymion* is not cut off from the body; the body signifies corporeally in the semiotic realm and becomes prominent through “the deep, breathing, biological rhythm of Keats’s own poetry” (Walsh 81). Central to the Kristevan exploration of the embodiedness of the subject in Keats’s poetry is the powerful affectivity of “a breathing body whose ‘living hand’ reaches for others and whose ‘wandering’ feet traverse a [phenomenal] world whose substance is variously light, air, vapour and stone” (Bari xiii). The breathing body is related with the breathing rhythmicality of the poem (rhythm is dependent on inhaling and exhaling); similarly, the wandering feet evoke the metricality of verses besides their rhythmical quality. This breathing body refers to “an affectivity struggling with signs, going beyond, threatening, or modifying them” (Kristeva *Black* 24). Hence, this study begins with the breathing body in *Endymion* in the bower of “quiet breathing” (I. 4-5), where “all psychic impulses were located within an undissociated, fusional other” (Kristeva *Black* 63). This breathing body is recurrently seen in *Endymion*. For instance, Endymion’s sister breathes words (I. 712) and “a sister’s sorrow” to soothe the despondent Endymion and her eloquence breathes away the curse (I. 410-12). Another example is Echo who would take Endymion’s vows and “breathe them sighingly among the boughs” (I. 951-2). Another moment that shows the breathing body is when Endymion promises to “breathe thee [the moon goddess] whispers of its [the sky’s] minstrelsy” (II. 812-3). Other instances are Glaucus who wishes to breathe away time “as ’twere all scummy slime” (III. 329-35), and Circe who breathes ambrosia (III. 453). The “wandering feet” of this breathing body roam “this restless world” (III. 714-5); “the mournful wanderer” (IV. 407) travels “in uncertain ways” through “wilderness, and woods” (II. 48-9); he continues his “wanderings” until “into the earth’s deep maw he rushed” (II. 898-9); he wanders in “a den / Beyond the

seeming confines of the space” (IV. 512-4). The breathing body and the wandering feet in *Endymion* point to the semiotic, corporeal aspect of signification.

Another way that the semiotic investment of *Endymion* becomes prominent is its voluptuous poetic diction. This sensuous poetic language is suggestive of the search for infantile plenitude and wholeness in the pre-symbolic realm prior to the divide between self and other. Such poetic language displays a profound investment in all the senses. The deployment of all these senses is important since the semiotic is expressed through “a preverbal semiology – gestural, motor, vocal, olfactory, tactile, auditory” (Kristeva *Black* 62). The sensuous knowledge of the body registered through the semiotic is demonstrative of the bodily base of language; the sensuousness of the poetic diction is suggestive of the semiotic dimension of signification, that is the materiality of language.

The desire to be immersed in the maternal *chora* is another aspect that shows the semiotic investment in *Endymion*. As a result of this desire, Keats’s poetic romance is marked by the urge to attain sheer fullness of being. Therefore, metaphors of fullness permeate *Endymion* and they display the impulse to be engulfed in “completeness” and “oneness” (*Endymion* I. 606, 796) which is, in this study, found to be suggestive of the urge to be immersed in the semiotic *chora*. For instance, bowers represent the semiotic *chora* where bodies and souls are entwined in a prelinguistic space which resists the disjunction between self and other. Besides bowers, the unsignifiable yearning for the mysterious abyss embodied by caves, caverns, dens, mazes and hollow grounds is also investigated as the desire to relapse into the maternal abyss.

Keats’s notion of negative capability is crucial to the discussion of *Endymion* as representative of the semiotic dimension of signification. From a Kristevan point of view, remaining content with half-knowledge and being capable of remaining in uncertainties and doubts correspond to the semiotic modality of language which induces a *jouissance* that is anterior to the thetic phase. Also, the negatively capable poet appears to lose his self in “a total identification with the object he contemplates” (Abrams *Anthology* 825). This ability to identify with other states of being in an aura suggestive of self-oblivion is a concrete manifestation of the fact that Keats’s poetic

diction is immersed in the semiotic base of language since the semiotic points to the space of pre-verbal being which does not recognize the rupture between the subject and the object prior to the thetic phase perceived as a rupture. Keatsian emphatic identification is another aspect of the romance discussed in relation to the semiotic. The poetic voice in *Endymion* enjoys a closeness with the other which is so near that he cannot possess it. The poet that feels his participation in the object that he observes embraces this sense of nearness; such proximity is articulated in the semiotic element of language, by which the rupture between self and other is obliterated as proximity breeds immersion.

The Keatsian poetic voice in *Endymion* distorts language in many ways, which demonstrates how the semiotic unsettles the symbolic aspect of signification. The dislocation of syntax and distortion of words attest to this tendency. This study investigates this quality of Keats's poetry as representative of the semiotic undercurrent that disrupts the symbolic. The Keatsian distortion of language, which threatens to extinguish communicative and denotative language, is evocative of the semiotic disruption of the symbolic, and this is why his contemporary critics found it, especially in *Endymion*, reckless, demoralizing to the ear and equivocal when viewed from an exclusively symbolic point of view.

The second section of the second chapter focuses on the dialectical oscillations between the semiotic and the symbolic in *Hyperion*. *Hyperion* tells the story of an epic struggle, the dethronement of Saturn and the Titans by their children, the Olympians. Differing from the "slipshod" *Endymion* as a poetic romance (*Letters* 193), *Hyperion* is an epic with "a chastened and disciplined style" (Barnard *Keats* 56); the former is suggestive of the semiotic dimension because romance "unfixes the boundaries and clear dividing lines between places" (Parker 115), whereas the symbolic becomes more prominent in the latter since the epic is built on clear dividing lines. Hence, differences in terms of genres are also employed to discuss the distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic with the attending suggestion that the romance allows the semiotic to flourish while the epic seeks to restrain the semiotic and venerate the symbolic. Keats intends to purge *Hyperion* "of the luxuries and excrescences of *Endymion*" (Garrett 28). *Endymion* is attempted to be purged out of *Hyperion*, yet such an attempt

fails. Incomplete, *Hyperion* falls. Hence, *Endymion* hovers on the periphery of *Hyperion*; the poetic romance is a looming presence in the attempted epic.

In *Endymion*, in which the excess of affectivity renders it incommensurable with any form of signification, the semiotic threatens to overwhelm the symbolic. By contrast, *Hyperion* seeks to portray a desemiocized symbolic realm where the materiality of poetic language is intended to be chastened. *Endymion* signifies genotextually whereas *Hyperion* seeks to privilege the phenotext. The former constitutes the material base of the latter.

The breathing body and its wandering feet that are observed in *Endymion* (as manifestations of the semiotic modality) are repressed in *Hyperion*, where the fallen, imprisoned Titans are “pent in regions of laborious breath” (II. 22), and where we only hear “wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies” (I. 208); the rise of Apollo in the third book of the epic resuscitates the body as “a sweet clime was breathed from a land / Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers”, heralding the melody Apollo breathes (III. 263-4); as the breathing body reemerges, the winds of heaven resume breathing melodies (III. 11, 26); the breathing body (in the person of Apollo) wanders forth “in the morning twilight” (III. 33). The breathing body reappears through “this warm scribe my hand” in *The Fall of Hyperion* until this living hand is “in the grave” (I. 18); the poet fears that he will “breathe death” if he becomes a self-indulged poet like the egotistical “large self worshipers” (I. 207-9).

In *Hyperion* Keats strives for “impersonality and objectivity” as opposed to subjective *Endymion* (Barnard Keats 56). Keats draws on Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and thus hopes to create “an objectivity which reached beyond the dangerously solipsistic self-consciousness of the modern poet” (Barnard Keats 62). The desire to attain an objectivity beyond the threatening solipsism of the semiotic realm in *Endymion* suggests the tendency towards the imposition of the symbolic law in *Hyperion*. This tendency accords with the attempt to affiliate oneself with the precursors, that is paternal poets, in order to be located and anchored in the symbolic domain. However, this is a failed attempt. The repressed semiotic of *Endymion* returns to upset *Hyperion*;

this becomes prominent in the description of Apollo's apotheosis in Book III. The Endymionese semiotic destabilises the Hyperionesque symbolic.

Designed to be a symbolic epic, *Hyperion* does not embark on a semiotic quest into the unnameable; therefore, it avoids deviating into the prelinguistic. As a result, the desire to be immersed in the Endymionese bowers and the semiotic *chora* is repudiated in the epic; the fluidity and indistinct profusion of these bowers are expelled. Instead of fluidity, a sense of petrification and congealment pervades *Hyperion*.

As another attempt to restrain the semiotic in the epic, metaphors of fullness and plenty of *Endymion* are replaced by images of evacuation in *Hyperion*. Nonetheless, despite this resolution to resist the Endymionese temptations, there are still *sorties* in *Hyperion* that momentarily lead one into the semiotic realm of the poetic romance.

The attempt to discipline the semiotic tongue characterises the epic project. *Hyperion* is marked by the struggle to restrain the voluptuous poetic language that challenges the symbolic. Saturn's "palsied tongue" (*Hyperion* I. 93) is the central image that represents this attempt. Despite this paralysed tongue, there are also references to the revitalisation of the anaesthetised tongue and these references point to the return of the repressed semiotic.

The arrival of Apollo in third book is seen as a blow that undermines the epic. He is a Dionysian Apollo; therefore, the neat distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic is challenged, for a Dionysian Apollo, known for his Delphic obscurity, emerges as a blurrer of boundaries, a merger of lines and a traverser of thresholds. Eventually Apollo's preverbal shriek causes the symbolic epic to tumble into the realm of asymbolia.

The third section of the second chapter focuses on the oscillations between the semiotic and the symbolic in *The Fall of Hyperion*. As he writes *The Fall*, Keats makes a distinction between the true voice of sensations and feelings and the artifice of the epic genre (*Letters* 345). I find this Keatsian distinction to be similar to the distinction that Kristeva makes between the semiotic and the symbolic. The poet oscillates between the two as he says that he is unable to "make the division properly" between the

genuine voice of feelings and the artificial one (*Letters* 345). In spite of these vacillations, the poet strives to repress the semiotic to locate *The Fall* within the confines of the symbolic. Accordingly, the poet-narrator in *The Fall* makes a distinction between poets and fanatics. Fanatics and their rhythmical utterance evoke the semiotic while “the fine spell of words” that poets master corresponds to the symbolic (*The Fall* I. 6-9). This division is fundamental to the discussion of the poem in the body chapters. In order to suppress the semiotic, the poet-narrator of *The Fall* struggles to chasten the Endymionese style of voluptuous poetic language and indistinct profusion.

The third chapter of this thesis intends to analyse the Keatsian confrontation with the abject. Boundaries threaten to collapse in *Endymion*, which provokes disgust and repulsion in the encounter with the abject. *Hyperion* strives to maintain boundaries against the revolting presence of the abject; likewise, *The Fall of Hyperion* seeks to preserve distinctions in the face of the blurring of boundaries; nonetheless, both *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* are haunted by the abject.

The first section of the third chapter deals with the abject in *Endymion*. The quest into the unrepresentable is associated with the emergence of the abject in *Endymion* because the unsignifiable beyond the boundaries of the symbolic is also threatening and sickening besides being fascinating. The suffocating sensuousness of the Keatsian poetic language causes the abject collapse of boundaries. On the one hand, the poetic voice is fascinated by the unknown abyss; on the other hand, he strives against the annihilation of boundaries in order to fend off the abject.

Circe is an important character with regard to the discussion of the abject in Keats’s poetic romance. She is portrayed as the incarnation of the abject; in the deathly confrontation with her, boundaries between animality and symbolism are utterly broken. Circe’s tortured and disfigured animal shapes are the concrete manifestations of the abject. These deformed figures disgust and terrify Glaucus (enthralled by Circe) since they unsettle the tenuous border between human and beast. These grotesque shapes represent the abject “excessive residue left untapped by symbolic functioning”; the sense of revulsion at these abject deformities shows that abjection is “a reaction to

the recognition of the impossible but necessary transcendence of the subject's corporeality, and the impure, defiling elements of its uncontrollable materiality" (Gross 87-8).

The relationship of sympathy between such mirroring figures as Endymion and Glaucus is also important in the discussion of the abject. This relationship is related with the Kristevan narcissistic structure that enables the infant to thrust aside the maternal body. In addition to this structure, the Kristevan imaginary father constitutes another position that the infant clings to in order that he or she could be disaffiliated from the abject maternal body. The imaginary father allows a space between the maternal body and the infant. In *Endymion*, Neptune is seen as the imaginary father that dissevers the infant from the abject. Separated from the maternal, the "narcissistic subject gravitates toward the third, which is not an object of desire, but rather is a loving pole that pulls the child toward itself" (DeArmitt 185). As Endymion gestures toward the imaginary father, Circe's revelry is renounced in favour of Neptune's regality.

The second section of the third chapter focuses on the abject in *Hyperion*. *Hyperion* views *Endymion* as the manifestation of the abject and therefore attempts to expel the Endymionese effect from the symbolically designated domain of the epic. The abjection of *Endymion* by *Hyperion* demonstrates "the symbolic control over the dispersing impulses of the semiotic drives, which strive to break down and through identity, order, and stability" (Gross 86). Hence, *Hyperion* is designed as negation of that which precedes itself, that is *Endymion*. Keats's epic fragment attempts to demarcate its boundaries through the expulsion of the earlier work, which shows that the exclusion of the abject is a precondition for the symbolic epic to exist. Nevertheless, in spite of the urge to banish the abject *Endymion*, it hovers at the border of *Hyperion*, threatening its apparent unities and stabilities with disruption and dissolution.

Saturn, who falls from grace as he is dethroned, descends into the realm of asymbolia and he therefore embodies the abject for Hyperion who, yet undisgraced, teeters on the brink of the gaping abyss of the abject. The abject "literally means 'cast out,' though

commonly it means downcast in spirits” (Ellman 181). Saturn appears to be both cast out and downcast in spirits since he is portrayed as a corpse, a lifeless abject body that falls beyond the boundaries of the symbolic; he is exiled from the symbolic domain of life. Saturn embodies the abject that points to the revolting collapse of boundaries. His abjection, that is his being thrown as waste, attests to the symbolic imposition of the law which “requires that a border separate or protect the subject from this abyss which beckons and haunts it” (Gross 89). Saturn is found to be the incarnation of the abject since he threatens “the identity of the ‘subject,’ of ‘who I am’ or ‘who we are’” (Ahmed 103). Accordingly, Saturn who asks Thea “where is Saturn?” (*Hyperion* I. 134) is fair testament to his embodiment of the abject.

Hyperion is plagued by the Kristevan powers of horror; he is troubled by the abject that is “what calls into question boundaries” and “what is on the border, undefinable, uncategorisable” (Oliver “Revolt” 85). He fears falling from grace, being deposed and banished from the symbolic domain of distinctions, structures and positions. Therefore, he strives against the abject which is “ambiguous with regard to the self and other, with regard to passivity and activity, and with regard to the boundaries it sets up, which are permeable” (Chanter “Abject Objections” 155). He struggles to maintain and consolidate impermeable boundaries in order to avoid tumbling into the asymbolic realm. For example, Hyperion’s fiery nature is underscored in opposition to Saturn’s lifeless paleness in order to preserve boundaries between the abject and the subject; likewise, the titanic enormity of Hyperion is emphasised in contrast to the “puny essence” of the usurping Olympians (*Hyperion* II. 331). In spite of his attempt to ward off the abject, Hyperion fears that thethetic boundary between self and other will be broken down; as a result of this fear, he is beset by “unsettling, uncanny affects and thoughts” which emerge as the border between the subject and the abject is erased (Keltner *Thresholds* 44). He is engulfed by monstrous forms and demonic spectres which appear since the tenuous borders of the self are threatened on an ambiguous threshold.

The third section of the third chapter concentrates on the abject in *The Fall of Hyperion*. Abjection allows us “to differentiate between clean and unclean, proper and improper, inside and outside” (Smith 49). Accordingly, *The Fall* designates some parts

of *Hyperion* as improper and jettisons them. *The Fall* abjects the Apollo of *Hyperion* and replaces him with a poet-narrator because the Bacchic Apollo of *Hyperion* represents the abject collapse of boundaries for the poet-narrator of *The Fall* who emphasises the significance of distinctions and boundaries, especially the difference between poets and savage fanatics. In addition to this, *The Fall* also excises the depressive beginning of *Hyperion* which portrays a cadaver-like Saturn that embodies the intolerable corpse as it “exists at the very borders of life” (Gross 92). In order to avoid the lethal confrontation with the abject figures of *Hyperion*, *The Fall* begins with the discussion about the differences between poets and fanatics.

Moneta is a central character of *The Fall* around whom the discussion of the abject coheres. The poet-narrator’s relationship with Moneta is essential in this discussion since she simultaneously incorporates the abject and that which expels the abject. Abjection is “the means by which the subject is first impelled towards the possibility of constituting itself as such – in an act of revulsion, of expulsion of that which can no longer be contained” (Burgin 115). In accordance with this explanation, Moneta represents the attempt to expel the abject because she as a mentor and an admonisher guides the poet-narrator to maintain boundaries and preserve distinctions between poets and dreamers who she says are “distinct / Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes” (*The Fall* I. 199-200). Nevertheless, she also emerges as a maternal figure for the poet-narrator; thus, she becomes the abject since “the first object of abjection is the pre-oedipal mother” (Burgin 115). The poet-narrator journeys into Moneta’s “globed” mind that “enwombs” the tragedy of the fallen Titans in order to be able to recount that story (*The Fall* I. 245, 276-7). This journey is seen as a venture into the realm of the maternal body. As a result of this journey, the death-bearing visage of the maternal muse appears (*The Fall* I. 260-1); thus, the poet-narrator confronts the abject in this nocturnal realm where the boundary between the signifier and the signified is erased he descends into the pre-linguistic realm where the abject emerges since “exclusions fail in the sickening collapse of limits” (Ellman 181). This dual nature of Moneta testifies that abjection is “the simultaneous attraction and repulsion for the body that derives from the moment when the child’s symbiosis with the mother is interrupted” (Bov  e 84). The poet-narrator is both fascinated and repelled by the maternal body.

The fourth chapter of this thesis attempts to discuss how the Kristevan melancholy permeates these longer poems. The melancholic Endymion withdraws from the symbolic and retreats into the realm of the unnameable Thing where self and other are undifferentiated. The fallen Titans in *Hyperion* relapse into asymbolic melancholy while the Olympian Apollo, the new god of the black sun, merges with the unrepresentable Thing, obliterating the divide between subject and object. Similarly, the poet-narrator of *The Fall of Hyperion* mingles with the muse Moneta, eradicating the breach between inside and outside.

The first section of the fourth chapter deals with melancholy in *Endymion*. Keats's poetic romance revolves around a melancholic hero. Endymion is a melancholic character who is immersed in a symbiosis with the maternal Thing; as a result, he retreats into the asymbolic realm from the symbolic domain of linguistic signifiers. This discussion of melancholy in *Endymion* coheres around "the old womb of night" (*Endymion* IV. 372) which points to the desire to relapse into the primordial Thing of the maternal realm. This desire for the uterine night is also reflected in Endymion's urge to withdraw into the maternal "Cave of Quietude" (*Endymion* IV. 548) where the speechless infant merges with the maternal Thing. Further, the yearning for the nocturnal womb and the maternal cave is also seen in the image of Endymion who is "cooped up in the [pre-linguistic] den / Of helpless discontent" (*Endymion* I. 928-9). This Keatsian realm is characterised by "unseen light in darkness" (*Endymion* III. 986) which resonates with the Kristevan black sun of melancholy. In this uterine night, Endymion also appears as a Kristevan Narcissus, a melancholy being without an external object. This nocturnal womb provides Narcissan Endymion with a psychic interiority where a specular Narcissus/Endymion turns into a speculating one; the contemplative melancholic is endowed with a space for reflection.

The second section of the fourth chapter aims to analyse melancholy in *Hyperion*. The discussion of melancholy in *Hyperion* focuses on Saturn, Hyperion and Apollo, and their responses to the melancholic disposition. Saturn appears to be a saturnine character beset by the darkness of melancholy; he seems to have been defeated and deflated by impotency, loss of sight, deathly immobility and evacuation of affect and drives. However, Hyperion defies the dark abyss of melancholy and desires to plunge

into the deep night in order to conquer the uterine night of despondency. He rages against the dying of the light and strives to cling to the light as the source of all symbolic representations. In contrast, Apollo embodies the desire to be immersed in the archaic maternal Thing and to be influenced by the immemorial uterine night of melancholy. As a threshold figure between life and death, identity and its dissolution, he emerges as the Kristevan black sun. Eventually, a shrieking Bacchic Apollo merges with the maternal Thing and death.

There is no third section on melancholy in *The Fall of Hyperion* because of three reasons. Firstly, the part where Saturn appears in *The Fall* is slightly different from *Hyperion*; therefore, Saturn as a melancholic character is examined in the second section. Secondly, Apollo is replaced by the poet-narrator and Apollo is not of central importance in the recast work. Thirdly, the Kristevan notions of melancholy and abjection are inextricably enfolded into one character, namely Moneta, around whom the central drama of *The Fall* revolves; these two themes are so interpenetrated in one figure that the section on the abject in *The Fall* already discusses melancholy.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SEMIOTIC AND THE SYMBOLIC

This chapter investigates how Keats's poetry oscillates between the semiotic and the symbolic. It asserts that the poet welcomes and is deeply involved in the semiotic in *Endymion*, a poetic romance, while attempts are made to repress this immersion in the epicscape of *Hyperion* and in the allegorical vision of *The Fall of Hyperion*. Nevertheless, the semiotic resurfaces, thereby subverting the resolution to rein in the semiotic.

#### 2.1 A Semiotic Quest into “the drear abyss of death” in *Endymion*

The unnameable that does not lend itself to signification stands for the semiotic, the unsymbolizable in *Endymion*; it is not signified in the exclusively symbolic realm; the unutterable breaks loose from the constricting symbolic. However, the intimations of the unsymbolizable, as “an experience at the limits of the identifiable” (Kristeva *Tales* 339), emerge in the semiotic modality of language by means of the material base of language. The poetic dimension of language makes it possible to glimpse the unconscious, the unrepresentable in *Endymion* which represents “a headlong plunge into the sea, into the reaches of his [Keats's] own unconsciousness and creativity” (Sperry *Keats* 97): “There lies a den, / Beyond the seeming confines of the space / Made for the soul to wander in” (Keats *Endymion* IV. 513-5). This den which lies beyond the confines of the space corresponds to the Kristevan semiotic *chora* which precedes “spatiality” and “temporality” (Kristeva *Revolution* 26). This semiotic den suggests that the Keatsian poetic voice is attracted towards “that which lies on the other side of language, but which is spoken about, or gestured towards, in the language of poetry” (Watson 71). This Keatsian pull towards the semiotic den of the inexpressible points to a sensitivity to the inadequacies of the symbolic aspect of language. Therefore, the intimations of the unknowable emerge in this semioticised, despatialised den beyond the confines of the symbolic and the symbolizable, which evokes “Romantic poetry's anxiety about articulating a language of the psyche that resists articulation” (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 6). The Romantic violation of

the established categories of rational judgement and communicative language opens up a space for the analysis of the semiotic element in poetic language through which the poetic voice seeks to master an unmasterable interiority and to unearth the unsymbolizable and the ungraspable which resist articulation.

The unrepresentable in *Endymion* is reminiscent of the mother-infant dyad of the speechless semiotic marked by drives, energy charges and discharges, which link the infant's body and orient it to the maternal body through "pre-Oedipal semiotic functions" (Kristeva *Revolution* 27). Nevertheless, it leaks into the symbolic and punctuates it despite resisting articulation as the following quotation from *Endymion* suggests:

Yet it was but a dream: yet such a dream  
That never tongue, although it overteem  
With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring,  
Could figure out and to conception bring  
All I beheld and felt. (I. 574-8)

Since language is claimed not to be able to articulate it, the symbolic cannot conceive of the ungraspable dream; however, the semiotically-charged tongue swarms with mellow utterance that stands for poetic language which "exists on the hither side of representation and (more obviously) the language of communication" (Lechte *Kristeva* 94). The dream describes "a world of fluent harmony"; it expresses "a primitive experience and knowledge that forever seeks yet defies precise articulation or the power of human intelligence to arrest and define" (Sperry *Keats* 103). This archaic experience in the realm of the semiotic challenges the capability of the linguistic signifier to arrest it in the symbolic realm. The tongue teeming with mellow utterance cannot be contained within the strictures of grammar and syntax, which, therefore, challenges the orderliness of the symbolic aspect of signification. The overteeming tongue, which is "anterior to sign and syntax [...] previous and necessary to the acquisition of language, but not identical to language" (Kristeva *Revolution* 29), represents the bodily base of language. Hence, it is metaphorically and semiotically embodied through the very substantial, material image of a cavern spring that bubbles, yet does not speak according to the strictures of the symbolic. The speechless cavern spring seems to be inconceivable to the symbolic frame of mind, yet sounds

perceivable to the semiotic ear, to Keats's "exceptional ear for language" and its subtleties (O'Rourke ix). The bubbling cavern spring does not disregard the bodily encounter, does not suppress the corporeal, but speaks corporeally. What is incommensurable with linguistic representation, the "excess of his [Keats's] verse" (Peck 165) spills over the boundaries as the corporeal and the incorporeal slide through each other, which challenges the capacity of the symbolic register to capture the most intimate recesses of the human being by means of words that are in the throes of being exceeded by themselves.

The Romantic desire to represent the unrepresentable seems to be congruous with a tendency to be immersed in the semiotic dimension of language. In accordance with this desire to signify the unsignifiable, the uninscribable body is inscribed through the material, bodily base of language. Dealing with the problem of the relationship between poetic language and bodily experience, Kristevan theory suggests that

through the semiotic element, bodily drives manifest themselves in language. Instead of lamenting what is lost, absent, or impossible in language, Kristeva marvels at this other realm that makes its way into language. The force of language is living drive force transferred into language. Signification is like a transfusion of the living body into language (Oliver "Introduction" xx).

Kristeva's marvelling at the semiotic element of signification making its way into language resonates with the Romantic yearning to capture what is lost, absent or impossible and with Keats's "intense language drive" (Clark 46), the drive to signify the unsignifiable. Thus, the Keatsian poetic voice in *Endymion* desires to seize hold of one "sigh of real breath - one gentle squeeze" which is "warm with dew at ooze from living blood!" (IV. 665-7); this "real breath" accentuates the bodily base of poetic language in Keats, who is preoccupied with a very physical "world of ooze" (Ricks 138): words are warm with dew at ooze from living blood; the living body/blood is transfused into language.

Hence, *Endymion* is marked by two threads: drives and consciousness. Composed by Keats "the dialectical acrobat" (Milnes 67), this poetic romance oscillates between semiotic drives and consciousness that produces the symbolic animal. The Keatsian dialectical acrobacy speaks to "an ongoing dialectic" between the semiotic and the

symbolic (Margaroni “Semiotic Revolution” 13). These two threads intersect and interweave: “the unity of reason which consciousness sketches out will always be shattered by the rhythm suggested by drives” (Kristeva *Revolution* 148). The rhythmical, bodily base of language seeps in through “prosody”, through words warm with dew at ooze from living blood, which thus prevents “the stasis of One meaning, One myth, One logic” (Kristeva *Revolution* 148). The living blood in language leads the poet to open up a space for new meanings, myths and logic to flourish.

An attempt to detect the semiotic in *Endymion* requires one to figure out the material, bodily base of language, to reclaim the corporeality of subjectivity which is denied in “a culture which wishes to divorce the ‘pure’ subject of Cartesian rationalism from its fleshly corporeality” (Carson 117). This corporeal subjectivity erupts and leaks into the symbolic through “the imaginative powers of an embodied psyche” (Richardson 242-3). Therefore, this chapter focuses on the idea that the semiotic threatens to overwhelm the symbolic in poetic language, the repressed aspect of signification returns to distort the symbolic exclusivity of language, upset the privileging of the symbolic and make meaning through its distortions of the symbolic, through the “characteristically outlandishness of style” and the “roughness of versification [that] effects a transformation in the possibilities of poetic language” (Everest 115), which Kristeva finds revolutionary. Although the Romantic urge to go beyond the boundaries might be seen as an attempt to shed the body, as a desire to be disembodied, as “some strange history, potent to send / A young mind from its bodily tenement” (Keats *Endymion* I. 324-5), this thesis uses the Kristevan perspective to show how Keats’s poetry insists on corporeality through the use of the material base of language. Richardson in his article titled “Keats and Romantic Science: Writing the Body” emphasises the importance of embodied poetry in Keats:

Although Keats can write as fancifully as any poet and at times voices the desire to transcend the limitations of earthly existence, such moments are typically followed by the recognition – at once chastening and unexpectedly heartening – that the end of sense experience would mean an end to imaginative life (234).

In pursuit of the embodiedness of human existence, the Keatsian poetic voice cherishes “material sublime” (Keats “To J. H. Reynolds” 69). Keats expresses “the actuality of

the physical world, its facticity and material presence”; for him, the material sublime is related to “the presence of the somatic” (Oerlemans 4). Likewise, Goellnicht points out that Keatsian poetic creativity is “ultimately rooted in material existence, in sensations perceived from concrete objects” (*Poet-Physician* 64-5). Accordingly, cognizant of the embodiedness of human subjectivity, Keats’s “muscular, physical response to poetry” (Roe *Keats* 105) appears to be a fruitful body of work to delve into the semiotic material from which language emerges.

This study brings Keats’s poetry into contact with the Kristevan materiality of language because Keats was defined as

an intuitive anatomist of language, its closely articulated skeletal structure, its ligaments and fibers, its muscular tensions and release, its rhythmic corridors of breath – while also a genetic specialist in its origins and mutations. With pen rather than stethoscope, he took the phonetic pulse of his every word through the listening ear of script (Stewart 135).

To study poetry without considering bodily sensations is to anaesthetise it, to deny the living, material dynamism of poetry in a Kristevan universe. Kristeva warns us against this denial of the material, bodily base of poetic language: “In a calculated critical performance, the metaphorical shock of Kristeva’s ‘Prolegomenon’ revives formalism’s patient etherized upon a table, by arguing that the ‘speaking subject’ emphatically involves, in fact, a *body* that speaks language” (Becker-Leckrone 7). “Ether(eal)” is a portmanteau word in *Endymion* (I.131, I. 298, I. 361, II 437, II. 671-2, III. 25, IV. 420); the poetic voice in *Endymion* may be etherialized, but not etherized; the poetic voice in *Endymion* accentuates the body that speaks, the body that breathes, the body that versifies, the body that rhymes and the body that “pluralizes, pulverizes, ‘musicates’” what is stagnant or dormant (Kristeva *Revolution* 233). The materiality of language is so underlined that “the body is seldom if ever left behind” in Keats’s poetry (Kay 566). In other words, Keats’s poetic language is not cut off from the body, for words in Keats embody “a world interfused with affect” (Stewart 140). As a consequence of this world mixed with affect, the Keatsian poetic voice materialises experiences “in the throbbing life of muscles, nerves, arteries, bone and blood” (Roe *Keats* 80). Therefore, it invites one to examine the semiotic element in *Endymion* because the semiotic registers the organization of drives in language and it

is connected with rhythms and tones which do not signify anything in the symbolic realm. The rhythm that does not lend itself to symbolic signification marks “the return of repressed libidinal drives in language” through the Kristevan semiotic (Cook 8); this semiotic rhythm characterises Keats’s poetry that has “a strongly libidinal basis” (Grob 296).

Although this section on *Endymion* attempts to examine the semiotic element through which bodily drives are discharged, this study does not disregard the fact that the symbolic element is of vital importance in the construction of a poem since the symbolic is the component of the signifying process that sets up the structures which enable the symbols to operate. Hence, in accordance with the interplay between these two modalities, *Endymion*, besides being “seemingly diffuse, mawkish and formless” (Steinhoff vii), “exposes the complete anatomy of a great mythical structure and is our fullest revelation of the reach and power of Keats’s poetic mind” (Bloom *Visionary* 360). On the one hand, *Endymion* might be dispersed and lacking conciseness and it might be considered to be overemotional with an excess of sentiment; it emerges from “one bare but illimitable circumstance capable of swelling to 4,000 lines, a figure capable of engulfing its ground” (Swann 30); it is “a single, prolonged textual embellishment” (Aske *Keats* 56). On the other hand, it follows a poetic tradition, abides by a literary structure and observes its rules. From a Kristevan perspective, its mawkishness and formlessness point to its semiotic potentiality and disruptiveness whereas its having a recognizable structure accentuates its symbolic investment. The analyses of *Endymion* in this study attempt to concentrate on the dialectical interplay between the semiotic and the symbolic; evidently, they do not view poetry as incomprehensible gibberish or chaotic flux. In fact, a Kristevan understanding of language and signification does not prioritise the semiotic over the symbolic; rather, it reveals the interdependence between the semiotic and the symbolic, and it shows that the interconnection between the two “guarantees a relationship between body (soma) and soul (psyche)” (Oliver “Introduction” xvi). Similarly, the Keatsian poetic voice “points to the psychosomatic body of poetry” (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 200). Keats’s poetry exhibits a sense of interconnectedness between the viscera and the mind, mingles “thought and passion, soma and psyche” (Richardson *Science of the Mind* 130-31).

The semiotic element of signification reveals the material base of all signification while the symbolic dimension of signification detaches the infant from the speechless mother-child dyad. Morris points out that “[w]ithout this initial ordering of the continuous flux of physical sensation and libidinal drives washing over the child and the resultant simultaneous beginnings of separate identity, language would be impossible” (144). Accordingly, *Endymion* oscillates between the diffuse, formless continual flux of drive energies that challenges “the organizing power of words” (Stewart 135) and the ordering of this flux in a recognizable mythical structure. It is impossible to utterly curtail the flow of the inner drives and the energy stemming from the semiotic *chora*; the symbolic does not stem this flow, rather, it organizes and stabilizes it. Kristevan understanding of the signifying process demonstrates that these two modes of signification are interrelated and cross-fertilize one another.

In accordance with the Kristevan oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic, *Endymion* is a romance in which the semiotic intrudes upon the symbolic while the symbolic still establishes the structures by means of which symbols function. Although the semiotic erupts into the symbolic in this romance, this study’s main concern is the fluctuation between the two. A Kristevan understanding of poetry is based upon a “dialectic oscillation” between the semiotic and the symbolic:

A complete overthrow of the Symbolic would be anarchy. It would be the abolition of human life. On the other hand, a complete repression of the semiotic leads to the tyranny of Symbolic law. Kristeva wants to avoid both of these extremes. This is why she proposes a dialectic oscillation between transgression and Law that can lead to changes in the socioeconomic structure (Oliver *Kristeva* 11).

This Kristevan dialectical oscillation chimes with the Keatsian poetic voice vacillating between semiotic drives and symbolic structures.

*Endymion* draws on the classical myth of a mortal beloved by the goddess of the moon, Cynthia, Selene, Diana (Graves 1: 210-11); it speaks of Endymion’s long search for an immortal goddess whom he has seen in several visions. Keats gives a brief account of the story in his letter to his sister on September 10, 1817:

Many Years ago there was a young handsome Shepherd who fed his flocks on a Mountain’s side called Latmus. He was a very contemplative sort of a Person and lived

solitary among the trees and plains little thinking that such a beautiful Creature as the Moon was growing mad in Love with him. However, so it was, and when he was asleep on the Grass she used to come down from heaven and admire him excessively for a long time, and at last could not refrain from carrying him away in her arms to the top of that high Mountain Latmus while he was a-dreaming (*Letters* 32).

Fascinated by this tale, Keats rewrites it and composes a poetic romance of four thousand lines about it. In this poetic romance, in the course of his wanderings Endymion comes upon an Indian maid who has been abandoned by the followers of Bacchus and, to his utter despair, succumbs to a sensual passion for her; thus, he betrays his love for his celestial ideal. In the resolution, the Indian maid reveals that she is herself Diana, goddess of the moon, the celestial subject of his visions; therefore, the Indian maid decelestializes the goddess of the moon. The materialization of Cynthia through the Indian maid is suggestive of the dialectical oscillation between two modalities, between the threads of consciousness and drives, which is of central importance in this romance; the corporeal Indian maid and the cerebral Cynthia coalesce into one another. With regards to this interplay between the spiritual and the corporeal, Steinhoff postulates that “Endymion, like Raphael, is ‘likening spiritual to corporeal forms’ (*Paradise Lost* V. 573)”, adding that “In Keats, as in Milton, the spiritual realm is not without senses, it simply has more, and of greater intensity” (184), which suggests that the spiritual and the corporeal interweave in this poetic romance.

This section handles *Endymion* as a concrete manifestation of how the semiotic threatens to disrupt the symbolic and how the symbolic confronts the semiotic insurgence. Keats’s remarks in his preface to the poem is testament to this confrontation. In this preface Keats regretfully announces that *Endymion* is “a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished” (505). In other words, he feels that it is incomplete although Steinhoff in the preface to his critical edition points out that it is “the only poem of epic intent Keats managed to complete” (vii). Keats claims that “a year’s castigation” will not do it any good since he thinks that “the foundations are too sandy” (505). It seems that Keats proclaims that *Endymion* displays a frenetic excitement, “the Promethean spark” (Byron *Manfred* I. 154), and is characterised by a

wild and uncontrolled energy<sup>24</sup>, so it should be punished or disciplined or chastened as it fails to observe the limits of what is permitted or appropriate. This Keatsian uneasiness results from the fact that the poet ventures beyond what is signifiable in the symbolic domain.

Keats's own remarks about his poem are reflected in a review written by Patmore in 1820:

It [*Endymion*] is an ecstatic dream of poetry – a flush – a fever – a burning light – an involuntary out-pouring of the spirit of poetry – that will not controuled [sic]. Its movements are the starts and boundings of the young horse before it has felt the bitt – the first flights of the young bird, feeling and exulting in the powers with which it is gifted, but not yet acquainted with their use or their extent. It is the wanderings of the butterfly in the first hour of its birth; not as yet knowing one flower from another, but only that all *are* flowers. Its similitudes come crowding upon us from all delightful things. It is the May-day of poetry – the flush of blossoms and weeds that start up at the first voice of spring. It is the sky-lark's hymn to the day-break, involuntarily gushing forth as he mounts upward to look for the fountain of that light which has awakened him (in Matthews 136).

Patmore's enthusiastic appraisal correlates with Keats's own thoughts. His review points to the immaturity, infancy and puerility of the poetic voice. This "rather more effusive than effective" review (Natarajan 266) points to the semiotic undercurrent in the symbolic domain of language through its references to "an involuntary out-pouring", "the starts and boundings of the young horse" and the lark's hymn "involuntarily gushing forth".

Keats's anxiety reflected in his own preface corresponds to the tension between the semiotic modality and the symbolic disposition. The semiotic aspect of signification which "lacks the defining structure, coherence, and spatial fixity" (Becker-Leckrone 28) opens up a space where the feverish incomplete poem signifies genotextually, as it were, without its being a deed accomplished, finalised and posited, with "no identifiable skeleton or spine, nor firm organizing principle around which the text's embellishments might wreath themselves" (Aske *Keats* 69). However, the symbolic aspect of signification regards this feverish attempt as a threat and seeks to castigate

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<sup>24</sup> This energy evokes the Dionysian impulse, which will be explained and dwelled on later on in this thesis.

it. This chapter argues that *Endymion* is a poem of such tension, and it investigates how in *Endymion* the semiotic leaks into the symbolic. It does this by means of studying the semiotic investment in the Romantic idea of imagination, the voluptuous poetic diction, the impropriety of language, Keatsian emphatic identification and notion of negative capability in relation to the semiotic negativity, the quest for psychic wholeness and infantile plenitude, the maternal bowers in connection with the semiotic *chora*.

### 2.1.1 Keats's Sensuously Informed Platonism and the Affectivity of the Semiotic

Keats's "sensual Platonism" (Barnard *Keats* 46)<sup>25</sup> implies a symbolised semiotic or a semioticised symbolic. In Plato's thought, the "divinely inspired poet" suspends his rationality "in order to create" (Faflak *Romanticism* 120). This suspension of rationality roughly corresponds to Keats's poetry unsettling the rigid rational categories of the symbolic and its being open to the drive-based, affect-laden semiotic. The Keatsian poetic persona is not representative of the "feathered Platonic soul" that is disembodied and soars "on a winged flight toward the supreme Good" (Kristeva *Tales* 59). The Keatsian poetic voice is "a true voluptuary" who does not "exalt into immateriality the *physique*, the physicality, of our pleasures" (Ricks 143-44). Keats's sensual Platonism that is immersed in embodied thinking would not allow the immaterial to subordinate the material. Barnard proposes that in Keats's "sensual Platonism", "love and poetry are linked manifestations of the same power which both give access to immortal truth" (*Keats* 46). Keats's sensual Platonism is predicated upon "a personal concept adopted by Keats that the world of the senses *is* also and at the same time an eternal realm beyond the senses" (White 87). Keats's own version of Platonism disregards a world of disembodied human happiness; it seeks to reclaim "the absent psychosomatic body of [Cartesian] reason" (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 50), to go beyond the Cartesian abjection of the fleshy corporeality of

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<sup>25</sup> Such older critics as Sidney Colvin and Ernest de Selincourt regard *Endymion* as "a deliberate allegory, conceived more or less upon Platonic lines, of the poet's longing for and eventual union with the spirit of ideal beauty (Sperry *Keats* 91). However, the Keatsian sensual Platonism departs from this traditional view in that it does not provide a disembodied vision of ideal love. Keats's poetry reflects the Romantic appropriation of the Platonic Idea, which is, in the words of Abrams, "translocated from its changeless domicile beyond the moon into the tumultuous milieu of human passions, or even, into the strange depths of the unconscious abyss of the mind" (*The Mirror* 44).

human beings, or beyond what Butler calls the “disembodiment of the abstract masculine epistemological subject” (*Gender Trouble* 11). *Endymion* shows that sensation and intense human passion do not deny a transcendent world. For example, Keats’s poetic lines are fleshed out in a very corporeal manner when the immortal moon goddess describes their future heavenly life; poetry and sensual love coalesce into one another in the following lines:

Now a soft kiss –  
Ay, by that kiss, I vow an endless bliss,  
An immortality of passion’s thine.  
Ere long I will exalt thee to the shine  
Of heaven ambrosial ...  
And I will tell thee stories of the sky,  
And breathe thee whispers of its minstrelsy.  
My happy love will overwing all bounds!  
O let me melt into thee; let the sounds  
Of our close voices marry at their birth;  
Let us entwine hoveringly – O dearth  
Of human words! Roughness of mortal speech!  
Lispings empyrean will I sometime teach  
Thine honeyed tongue – lute-breathings, which I gasp  
To have thee understand, now while I clasp  
Thee thus, and weep for fondness - (*Endymion* II. 806-21)

The neo-Platonic ascent of the soul is challenged by the very corporeality of the description. The material base of language shatters the transcendental ego’s progression to godhead; the psyche is no longer the winged Platonic soul soaring towards the supralunar world. The etherealised world of happiness is embodied through the semiotic modality of language, through “the material plenitude of Keats’s language of flowers” (Aske *Keats* 61), through the Keatsian acknowledgement of “the full weight of an embodied existence” (Richardson *Science of the Mind* 135). This Keatsian tendency towards embodied thinking resonates with the Kristevan embodied subject that “retrieves the body that has been confiscated from it” – by the disembodied transcendental ego (Margaroni “Semiotic Revolution” 23). The dearth of human words, that is linguistic signifiers, is suggestive of the inadequacy of an expression uttered through the symbolic modality; thus, the dearth of human words implies the death of the linguistic sign; this expression hovers between the semiotic and the symbolic, for these words are in the throes of being exceeded and thus unsettled by themselves. The mortal’s quest for immortality could be seen as a structure of the

symbolic register, yet this quest is energized by the semiotic undercurrent. Heavenly lisps and whispers of minstrelsy of the heavens refer to the semiotic component of the signifying process, the musical side of language. Heavenly lisps could be considered as defective speech according to the strictures of the symbolic order of language; nonetheless, the minstrels whispering, gasping or lisping could signify something in the semiotic dimension of language. The transcendental journey into the empyrean realm is embodied by means of the metaphors of the body; this quest is marked by a “thoroughly embodied mind” unlike “the transcendent mind or spirit, which tenants the body but remains immaterial” (Richardson *Science of the Mind* 141-2). The corporeal imagery does not desecrate the quest for the immortal realm of gods and goddesses; the immaterial is incorporated into the material by means of mingling sexuality and poetry. Therefore, love, from the Kristevan perspective, is “the embodiment of both the symbolic *and* the semiotic, language *and* affect, knowledge *and* joy” (Lechte *Kristeva* 170). Accordingly, a poetic romance about love oscillates between these two threads, consciousness and drives, which is suggestive of the Keatsian “fissured subjectivity” (Narayan 130).

To continue with the analysis of the quote from *Endymion* above, the Romantic urge to grasp the immortal, the immaterial, the unknown realm which is “[f]ull alchemized and free of space” (Keats *Endymion* I.780) suggests a hankering after the semiotic fullness of being, the smooth infantile plenitude which the roughness of mortal speech does not suffice to describe. This divine realm which human words fail to articulate seems to be in tune with the very embodied realm of the semiotic which human words (read linguistic signifiers) are always short of describing. Sensation and intense human passion prefiguring a transcendent world hereafter show that the body signifies in the semiotic dimension of language and makes the transcendental quest intelligible whereas the human words of the symbolic dimension of language are found wanting. Keats’s poetic diction in its sensuality offers an anti-language which produces meaning, makes sense of the unknown beyond what is signifiable within the symbolic domain.

This corporeal modality of the signifying process is vitalized by the internalization of sensations; Barnard explains the central importance of the senses in Keats’s poetry:

The desire ‘for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts’ most obviously relates to a recurrent wish to lose the self in being. ‘Sensation’, however, is more than self-indulgence. It is central to a belief in the veracity of concrete experience. At one extreme it is quite literally the information of our senses. As Keats was to write in April 1819, ‘suppose a rose to have sensation, it blooms on a beautiful morning it enjoys itself – but there comes a cold wind, a hot sun – it can not escape it, it cannot destroy its annoyances’ (*Letters*, ii. 101). This gives the basis for the characteristic tactile, visual and auditory effects in the poetry, and the preference for metaphors of fullness, of a selfhood bursting with its own identity. Sensation is then linked with Keatsian empathy. Being taken up into sensation, into something deeply other to the self, takes Keats a long way from simple sense experience. For him, sensations are internal as well as external (Barnard *Keats* 52-3).

Barnard notes that Keats is a poet of sensations who thinks through images; the Keatsian poetic voice believes that “all charms fly / At the mere touch of cold Philosophy” (Keats *Lamia* II. 229-30). For the Keatsian poetic voice that is “exhilaratingly in touch with the feel of life” and “tinglingly alive in the mid-stream of sensation” (Roe *Keats* 34), metaphors of fullness such as the moon goddess desiring to melt into Endymion and to entwine with him are suggestive of the desire to be taken up into sensation, into something deeply distinct from the self. Barnard demonstrates that, for Keats, sensations are not merely centred around physical self-gratification, but they enable the sentient poet to sympathise with and reach out to otherness. Trilling also points out

Keats is Platonic, but his Platonism is not doctrinal or systematic: it was by the natural impulse of his temperament that his mind moved up the ladder of love [...] But the movement is of a special kind [...] it is his characteristic mode of thought all through his life to begin with sense and to move thence to what he calls ‘abstraction,’ but never to leave sense behind. Sense cannot be left behind, for of itself it generates the idea and remains continuous with it (14).

The symbolic pure abstraction dovetails with the semiotic sensation, an interpenetrated state prefiguring Keats’s poetry. A sensuous Keats does not exclude a thoughtful Keats; the Keatsian poetic voice expresses a “thoughtfully felt life, where feeling pertains to a cognitive act arising out of the engagement of a sensible and sensitive subject with the object of its attention, sometimes even with itself” (Bari xvii). An oscillating Keats hovers “between an exquisite sense of the luxurious and a love for Philosophy” (Keats *Letters* 117); sometimes he leans towards the former; at other times, he tends towards the latter. This oscillation does not mean that they are mutually

negating and cancel one another out. Sensations and thoughts “criss-cross and entwine” in Keats’s verse (O’Neill “Keats’s Poetry” 107); in similar fashion, Harris argues that “the sensuous media become penetrated by real thought” (47). The same letter in which he expresses his desire for a life of sensations, Keats also notes that “a complex Mind” is “one that is imaginative and at the same time careful of its fruits, who would exist partly on sensation, partly on thought, to whom it is necessary that years should bring the philosophic Mind” (Keats *Letters* 55). What is important for the purpose of this thesis’s argument is that the sensually luxuriant is interrelated with the cerebrally philosophic and that they inform each other through “the passionate, affective aspects of the mind” (Richardson 243).

### **2.1.2 *Endymion* as a Greek Myth: Ancient Mythical Greece Imagined as a Semiotic Space**

Keats’s drawing on Greek mythology in recreating *Endymion*’s lost pagan world is yet another feature which accounts for the resurgence of the semiotic in his poetic romance, for Kristeva believes that myths are “semiotic practices” like art and poetry (*Desire* 207). In his preface to *Endymion*, Keats notes that “I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness” (505). Keats fears that he might have tarnished the lustre of the ancient Greek myths. The Keatsian imaginative appropriation of ancient Greece shows that the mythology of ancient Greece is invested with vitality, opulence and plenitude. Colvin points out that the poet of *Endymion* “resembles the Greeks, as we have seen, in his vivid sense of the joyous and multitudinous life of nature” (*Keats* 96). For Keats, ancient Greece is associated with “mythological self-indulgence” and “intimations of joy” (Webb “Romantic Hellenism” 154). Similarly, Roe points out that Keats’s use of Greek mythology is encouraged by his admiration of Wordsworthian employment of Greek myths in *The Excursion* as “creations of an intuitive, imaginative response to nature” (*Culture of Dissent* 76). In *Keats and Hellenism*, Aske also regards antiquity as “a supreme fiction, that is, an ideal space of possibility” (1). In similar fashion, Motion, as a poet who writes on Keats, claims that Keats, despite his attempts to curb the excess of his luxuriant poetic language, remains “resolutely ‘pagan’” as the voluptuousness of his poems demonstrates (320). Motion’s remarks suggest that the pagan mythical

world is associated with voluptuousness and poetic surplus in Keats's semiotised mind. The classical world is where the poet is allowed to think beyond the thinkable, the possible. The Keatsian resort to classical mythology is informed by the poet's appeal to "the fiction of melodious Apollo in his endeavour to rewrite the vanished discourse of antiquity and so restore the authentic language of Poesy itself" (Aske *Keats* 39). This lost realm of ancient times is imagined as a semiotic space where an otherness of language can be reclaimed through the musical, melodious side of language and the authentic language of poetry is envisaged as the semiotic aspect of language un(der)written in the disembodied discourses of the Western history; the genuine language of poesy is imagined as a natural, organic language uncultivated by the symbolic structures of the human civilisation.<sup>26</sup> The poet seeks to reclaim the mythic language that disappeared into "the abyss of history" (Aske *Keats* 40). Myths reintroduce rhythm into language, the rhythmical semiotic that comes back from the abyss; Kristeva argues that pagan mythology "hammered in sonorous thrusts within and against the system of language – that is, rhythm"; she adds that myths as "rhythm become substantive" embodies "this *other* of the linguistic and/or social contract, this ultimate and primordial leash holding the body close to the mother before it can become a social speaking subject" (*Desire* 30).

The wish to rewrite the semiotic language of Hellenic myths is also marked by "an element of nostalgic desire" (Aske *Keats* 41). It corresponds to the desire to achieve a fullness of being prior to thethetic division. Classical Greece is imagined as "a dream of plenitude" in which the symbiotic mother-infant relationship is fully realised (Aske *Keats* 61). The poet's deployment of the luxuriant, voluptuous language signifies "a desire to *materialize* a return to the beautiful mythology of Greece" (Aske *Keats* 61); this desire to materialise such a return opens up a space where the materiality of language is displayed. In similar fashion, Watkins points out that Keats's attachment to "the mythic past, peopled with characters of extraordinary beauty, sensitivity, and integrity" is, among other things, "a sign of nostalgia for a fuller life" (*Keats's Poetry* 38). Likewise, Walsh notes that the references to the vanished classical world are made

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<sup>26</sup> This understanding of the ancient myths as a presymbolic reservoir will be revived in the discussion of the distinctions between the savage and the poet in the section that focuses on *The Fall of Hyperion*.

“with nostalgic tenderness as though they were memories of a happy childhood” (17). All these comments support the view that the mythical world of ancient Greece could be considered to be a poetic space where the poet is allowed to be immersed in the semiotic foundations of the human psyche and language.

Keats celebrates the mythical, pagan Greece’s “contemporary associations with political and sexual freedom” in the benign natural religion of “Hymn to Pan” in *Endymion* (Roe Keats 196). This hymn shows that Greek myths impressed Keats for their “sensual delight” and “imaginative vitality” (Kandl 9). Myths that spring from the unconscious of the ancient Greeks that are, according to Kristeva, “the most lucid parents of history” (*Desire* 272-3) could be seen as a repository where the semiotic foundations of the Western history could be traced back to. This Keatsian impulse to imagine ancient myths and to be immersed in their sensuality brings to mind the Heraclitan “cyclical time and also space where the Greek thinker happened to see the poet at play – the poet who alone maintains the discourse of a child giving birth (to a father?)” (Kristeva *Desire* 275). To continue with Kristeva’s metaphor, Keats may be the poet who, instead of being fixed in a linear understanding of Western history, indulges in a cyclical time and space where he ventures beyond the symbolic into the semiotic realm in which he seeks to give birth to a mother and thus reclaim the dyadic mother-infant relationship that antecedes the symbolic imposition of the law.

Myths, which establish “a kind of proto-history of western subjectivity” (Lechte *Kristeva* 170), could be regarded as primordial texts in which bodily drives manifest themselves. Likewise, Freud sees myths as “distorted vestiges of the wishful phantasies of whole nations, the secular dreams of youthful humanity” (“Day-dreaming” 46). Cixous also regards mythical discourse as an entrance to the imaginary where all differences are annulled since myths are archaic texts which are on the fringe of the symbolic order. She equates history with the dominance of phallogentrism and logocentrism and believes that history needs to be retold by “a feminine voice, linked to the body and the pre-symbolic union between mother and the child prior to the Law’s intention” (Sellers 49).

The (imagined) simple sensuous beauty of pagan mythology would be alluring for a poet whose poetic vision is registered in the semiotic since mythical allusions could be considered to invoke “the endless pleasure of the polymorphously perverse child” as Moi believes Cixous’s allusions to myths evoke (*Sexual/Textual* 115). Barnard explains *Endymion*’s investment in the ancient Greek mythology:

The first part of Book I offers sustained passages recreating *Endymion*’s lost pagan world. The early morning gathering of the forest population round Pan’s altar (lines 89-231) and the ensuing stanzaic hymn to Pan (lines 232-306) evoke the simplicity and physical beauty of the pagan world with an animist sense of awe. The pastoral world created has a physical actuality touched by a sense of poignancy at its irrevocable loss (*Keats* 38).

The sensuousness of the ancient Greek pastoral world could be deemed as a vital source of sumptuous and luxurious stories by means of which the semiotic punctuates the symbolic register. Discussing Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn”, Cleanth Brooks says that the “word ‘pastoral’ suggests warmth, spontaneity, the natural and the informal as well as the idyllic, the simple, and the informally charming” (433). The voluptuousness of the ancient myths results from pagan animism, “in its narrower sense, the doctrine of souls, and, in its wider sense, the doctrine of spiritual beings in general” (Freud *Totem and Taboo* 75). The sense of animism could be considered to be consonant with the semiotic, the material base of language, the corporeality of the symbolic animal.

### **2.1.3 The Voluptuous Poetic Diction in *Endymion***

The sensuous poetic diction in *Endymion* is marked by a “kind of cornucopian rhetoric” which “pours itself forth and clearly luxuriates in the sense of its own excess” (Aske *Keats* 57). Therefore, Keats’s poetic language is characterised by the intemperately luxuriant and profuse. As a result of this fecundity and lavishness in language, Keats “substitutes lush sensuality” for “clearness” in language (Elfenbein 92). This language of plenitude and luxurious sensuality swells and engulps itself. The voluptuous poetic diction revealed in *Endymion*’s “lexical and descriptive abundance, from a poet who tends, anyway, to be ‘overlanguaged’” (Bennett 72) is indicative of the poetic persona’s search for infantile plenitude and wholeness prior to the divide between self and other, and his hankering after a spacious poetic space where the child

perceives no separation between itself and the world before the aforementioned rupture.

The Keatsian poetic voice invested in the instinctual, rhythmical semiotic and the Keatsian imagination that is “acutely sensitive to the subtler rhythms” of the natural world such as “a gnat’s dance, minnows darting, [and] swallows gathering” (Roe *Keats* 22) gains access to the maternal body through highly sensuous poetic diction, especially in his descriptions, which displays “a concreteness [...] in which all the senses – tactile, gustatory, kinetic, visceral as well as visual and auditory – combine to give the total apprehension of an experience” (Abrams *Anthology* 825). The sensuousness of his poetic language is an emblem of infantile plenitude as the intimacy and immediacy of the mother-child pre-Oedipal phase whose knowledge and experience are first and foremost based on the sense of touch among others. For Keats, touch “has a memory” (Keats “What Can I Do to Drive Away” 4). His fluid language is evocative of the maternal fluidity; his voluptuous diction, pregnant with images of touch, smell, sound and gaze, is akin to the infant’s relationship with the maternal body in the presymbolic realm of indistinct profusion. With regards to such a semiotic relationship established between the infant and the maternal body, Becker-Leckrone remarks that “[b]odily interdependence, shared smiles, crying, and the abstract rhythms, sounds, and touches of the symbiotic mother-child interaction set up and intimate a space, without exterior or interior” (28). The rupture between the external and the internal is obliterated in this semiotic realm where the infant is a bodily extension of the maternal.

In accordance with such a symbiotic mother-child interaction, the predilection for tactile qualities, and craving for touch that are found in *Endymion*, in which for instance the romance hero faints “at the charmed touch” of his beloved goddess in his dream (Keats *Endymion* I. 637), are manifestations of the semiotic attachment between the infant and the maternal body realized in the poetic language, which is exclusively emotive, thus deferring denotation, rather than referential. The sense of touching is reminiscent of the lost semiotic realm of the maternal body, the pre-symbolic dimension that is drive-motivated and resists symbolization.

An association of language with voice is relevant to the predilection for tactile qualities and other bodily sensations in *Endymion*. Morris states that Cixous gives importance to the relationship between language and senses:

Both Freud and Lacan's theories of sexuality depend heavily on the sense of sight for the registering of lack [...] In linking language to voice Cixous is moving back beyond the Oedipal stage to the pre-Oedipal relation between mother and child, a time dominated by the tactile and by sound and rhythm far more than by the visual. It is a phase of imaginary abundance, when there seems no end to bodily extension or pleasures, no division of self and m/other so that a child is able 'to love herself and in return love the body that was "born" to her. Touch me, caress me, you the living no-name, give me myself as myself'. This for Cixous is the 'song' of the unconscious, giving access to desire, to a repressed memory of first sensuous knowledge of the body as erotic delight, to language as rhythm, sound pattern and intimate presence (122).

For Cixous, writing "consists first of all in hearing language speak itself to our ears, as if it were the first time" (*Preface* xix). The primacy of the sense of sight is undermined and the sense of hearing is given prominence. Cixous believes that writing "[s]ings the most carnal of my flesh. From the time when the soul still speaks flesh" ("Breaths" 50). For her, writing is testament to the embodied existence of the speaking subject. Her language resounds with "the rhythms of her earth tongues" (Cixous "The (Feminine)" 59). The sensuous knowledge of the body flows through the rhythmical qualities of poetic language. Her "earth tongues" refer to the prelinguistic aspect of signification that is reflected in the intensely voluptuous poetic language. An urge to be immersed in the tactile such as this section finds in *Endymion* is a manifestation of the pre-linguistic attachment between the infant and the mother, a space of plenitude marked by the primordial knot between the mother and the infant. The sensuous knowledge of the body is demonstrative of the material/bodily base of language; hence, the sensuousness of the poetic diction is suggestive of the semiotic dimension of signification:

The semiotic disposition that makes its way into language is the rhythm, intonation, and echolalias of the mother-child symbiosis [...] The semiotic disposition is based on the primal mother-child relationship. It is the rhythms and sounds of their bodies together fused into one. For Kristeva, this is not merely an imaginary union. Rather, at this point, it is also a real union. The child is physically dependent on its union with the mother. Their bodies psychically "signal" to each other before the onset of language proper, before the mirror stage. Their semiotic relation sets up the onset of language proper (Oliver *Kristeva* 34).

The infant's intense pre-Oedipal attachment to the maternal body is imprinted on the poetic language which opens up a space in which the speechless infant<sup>27</sup> experiences no sense of a separate self. It is a poetic space where the poetic voice seeks to track the libidinal pulse of repressed desire, a poetic space in which rhythm and sound patterns convey a sensuous tactile immediacy of the semiotic rather than the rational mastery of what is other and separate. A sensuous tactile immediacy is suggestive of the semiotic realm because the semiotic points to an evocation of feelings, energy charges and discharges. This semiotic phase of abundance cannot be completely registered by the symbolic, which depends on language as a sign system together with its grammar and syntax. The pre-Oedipal realm where there seems no bodily separation and no division of self and other is registered by the semiotic element of signification which is not subject to regular rules of grammar and syntax.

With regard to the Keatsian attachment to and affinity with the maternal body, Hazlitt's verdict on Keats' poetry in the essay "On Effeminacy of Character" is thought-provoking:

I cannot help thinking that the fault of Mr. Keats' poems was a deficiency in masculine energy of style. He had beauty, tenderness, delicacy, in an uncommon degree, but there was a want of strength, and substance. His *Endymion* is a very delightful description of the illusions of a youthful imagination, given up to airy dreams – we have flowers, clouds, rainbows, moonlight, all sweet sounds and smells, and Oreads and Dryads flitting by – but there is nothing tangible in it, nothing marked or palpable – we have none of the hardy spirit or rigid forms of antiquity [...] There is a want of action, or character, and so far, of imagination, but there is exquisite fancy. All is soft and fleshy, without bone or muscle. We see in him the youth, without the manhood of poetry (in Matthews 248).

What the Kristevan perspective regards as the poetic inscription of the archaic relation to the maternal body in language is considered to be flawed, as Hazlitt argues that *Endymion* lacks masculine vigour. According to him, *Endymion* is not tangible, rigid, palpable, hardy or substantial. Hazlitt's Aristotelian<sup>28</sup> understanding of rigid forms of

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<sup>27</sup> The word "infant" means "speechless" (Eagleton 188).

<sup>28</sup> Hazlitt's association of style with a gendered imagination is based on classical discussions. Aristotle talks about form and matter in gendered terms, male and female respectively, in *Politics* and *Animal Regeneration*. This Aristotelean approach is based on "one-sex/two-gender model in which the male sex was synonymous with the universally human, and 'woman' was an inferior, inverted version of the male" (Craciun 157).

antiquity excludes the semiotic dimension of poetic language. Hazlitt thinks that *Endymion* is uncommonly delicate, tender and intangible; therefore, it is indicative of effeminacy, as he puts it. Hazlitt wants to valorize masculinity as the fullness of phallic possession and power; his phallogocentric understanding of effeminacy shows his dislike of something intangible, insubstantial and not solid, perhaps not muscular, and he resents the lack of masculine prowess in *Endymion*.

As Irigaray tells us, the relationship between form and matter is explained in Aristotle by means of an analogy with the relationship between male and female (*This Sex* 174). Irigaray also explores how femininity is associated with the fluids and masculinity is associated with the solids (*Moi Sexual/Textual* 141). In accordance with Aristotle's gendered understanding of form and matter, Hazlitt asks the poet to follow the forms of ancient times and make his diction more solid. The fluids, smells or sounds in poetic diction amount to incomprehensible chatter for the traditional literary critic, but in response to Hazlitt's disavowal of the poetic diction in *Endymion*, Irigaray's explanation of women's language could be put forward. She claims that women's language

is continuous, compressible, dilatable, viscous, conductible, diffusible, ... That it is unending, potent and impotent owing to its resistance to the countable; that it enjoys and suffers from a greater sensitivity to pressures; that it changes – in volume or in force, for example - according to the degree of heat; that it is, in its physical reality, determined by friction between two infinitely neighbouring entities – dynamics of the near and not [dynamics] of the proper (*This Sex* 111).

Irigaray's understanding of *écriture féminine* accords well with Kristeva's understanding of the semiotic dimension of language. The friction between a dynamics of proximity and a dynamics of property could be mapped onto the tension between the semiotic and the symbolic respectively: a dynamics of proximity is manifested in the search for oneness and fullness in *Endymion*. In accordance with the Kristevan semiotic, the poetic diction in *Endymion* is simultaneously compressible and dilatable for it might be squeezed into a smaller place through profuse condensation of imagery which leads to multiple suggestions. Keats's poetic language both compressible and dilatable at once evokes his speculation about "the alternate contraction and dilatation

of the soul” (in Bate *Stylistic* 5<sup>29</sup>). A subtitle for *Endymion* is “[t]he stretched metre of an antique song”, which suggests that the poem is configured by a limited permeability; it is stretched, so it is permeable; simultaneously, it is an antique song, therefore, it is limited by an established form. It is spacious and expansive like deep caves and caverns, which are “symbol[s] of immensity” (*Endymion* I. 299); it is “a teeming galaxy of ‘Poetry’” (O’Neill “Romantic Period” 314); it might be concentrated and condensed “like some backward corner of the brain” (*Endymion* II. 11), but it could be dispersed and unlocalizable at the same time like “one continuous murmur [which] breeds / Along the pebbled shore of memory” (*Endymion* II. 16-7). It also moves between solid and liquid like “some snow-light cadences / Melting to silence” (*Endymion* II. 79-80); it is cohesive and adhesive; it is glutinous and mucous like “a bunch of blooming plums / Ready to melt between an infant’s gums” (*Endymion* II. 450-1). Unsurprisingly, Hazlitt cannot find within it the hardy spirit or rigid forms of antiquity, and concludes that it is wanting in masculine energy and flawed; something profusely sticky is a sign of effeminacy according to a critic who disregards a piece of literature which violates the gendered strictures of decorum firmly established by the symbolic, in which speaking subjects seek to use language with as little ambiguity as possible.

Such poetic diction allows the poet to be immersed in a semiotic realm where distinctions of gender are shattered and the infant becomes one with the world, being lulled by the breeze. Such poetic language is so adhesive and cohesive that words do not cohere around a fixed identity, but they are dispersed, endlessly expanding and perpetually condensing at once. Thus, the semiotic dimension of language leads the poet to be engulfed in a sort of anti-language where bodily drives are discharged through rhythms and tones, “vocal and kinetic rhythm” (Kristeva *Revolution* 26). In response to the exclusively symbolic language which focuses on “figuration and thus specularization” (Kristeva *Revolution* 26) and the phallogocentric language of Hazlitt founded on the visibility, fullness of something palpable, hardy and rigid, one could

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<sup>29</sup> Keats makes this speculation as he reads the chapter on *King Lear* in Hazlitt’s *Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays* and writes it down in the margin.

think of Irigaray's metaphor of the speculum that undermines "the *phallogomorphic* sexual metaphors" (Irigaray *Speculum* 47):

In opposition to language as the mirror of masculine presence, Irigaray associates the metaphor of a speculum with a feminine form of representation. Its curved surface produces a deforming image which reverses the narcissistic reflections of phallogocentric discourse. Perhaps then 'the specular surface which sustains discourse {will be} found not the void of nothingness but the dazzle of multifaceted speleology {literally the study of caves; here of interiors, concavities}. A scintillating and incandescent concavity.' Moreover, this curved shape of the speculum accords with the inner specificity of the female body, figuring a mode of a self-representation founded on the intimacy of touch, not a distancing projected mirror image (Morris 128).

Irigaray's metaphor of the speculum as a feminine form of representation seems to accord with Kristeva's understanding of the semiotic dimension of language in that the semiotic refers to the element of language which focuses on the intimacy of touch. The perspective which considers language to be the mirror of masculine presence and fullness fails to see the semiotic potentiality of tenderness and delicacy of the nymphs of trees, groves and woods and the tactile immediacy of sweet sounds and smells. Such a poetic diction immersed in the sensation of "frightful eddies" (*Endymion* I. 648) would be both a deformed and deforming image of manhood to Hazlitt and the like-minded; "[h]uge dens and caverns in a mountain side" and their "hollow sounds" (*Endymion* I. 650-1) would be incongruous and perplexing for purely rational subjectivity disrobed of its corporeal potential. The dazzle of multifaceted caves, interiors and concavities would be found deficient and improper according to the strictures of the symbolic since the symbolic element could be thought of as "meaning proper" which establishes the structures by means of which symbols function, and which disregards any impropriety of language, the usage of linguistic elements such as syntax in an improper, ambiguous, unclear way (Oliver "Introduction" xiv).

Hazlitt the critic's utterly symbolic understanding of poetry in tandem with what he admires as the rigid forms of antiquity could be interpreted as an instance of the privileging of sight and action. As Irigaray argues, the phallogocentric point of view pays attention to the visibility of difference as the ultimate reference for the difference between femininity and masculinity (*Speculum* 47). Such phallogocentric understanding of sexual difference is suggestive of the Freudian understanding of sexual difference

which is established around either the presence or the absence of the male genital organ. Hazlitt wants the poet to bolster up the male psyche or the male ego and to affirm an image of the fullness and presence of masculine identity through “the manhood of poetry”.

However, the Keatsian poetic voice does not privilege the sense of sight; rather, the intimacy of touch is more prevalent. Keats’ poetic language is revolutionary in the Kristevan sense in the sense that he writes the maternal body, its intangible sounds and insubstantial smells; *Endymion* is immersed in the asymbolic dimension of language which recognises no distinctions of gender. Due to his traditional understanding of masculinity and effeminacy, Hazlitt fails to see that *Endymion* is composed by a poetic persona who inhabits a realm beyond the constructed distinctions of gender. Keats’ poems give utterance to inarticulate yearnings which are open to the anarchic force of desire; they zealously endeavour to liberate unruly emotions and appetites and probe into the mysterious abyss which resists semantic closure, rather than clearly-demarcated symbolic spaces. Keats’ poetic imagination indulges in figuring out the unknown, unseen and unacknowledged modes of being and states of existence; it embarks on the quest for the immeasurable and the unfathomable, for “a wide outlet, fathomless and dim” (Keats *Endymion* II. 272). Poetic imagination allows one to journey into the unsymbolisable and the unsignifiable since the poetic “challenges and transgresses the present ‘bounds of sense’ with its open-ended deferral of meaning and its refusal to congeal into a symbolic identity” (Gross 99).

One of the distinctive qualities of Keats’s work, the deployment of all the senses to maximum effect – tactile, gustatory, olfactory, kinetic, visual and auditory – is representative of the affect-laden semiotic component of the signifying process. For instance, the moment just before the chorus starts singing a hymn commemorating Pan, a cosmic divinity that personifies universal nature (Ryan 265), illustrates such a commingling of all senses:

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap’d a spire  
Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;  
Anon he stain’d the thick and spongy sod  
With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.  
Now while the earth was drinking it, and while

Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,  
And gummy frankincense was sparking bright  
'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light  
Spread greyly eastward, thus a chorus sang: (*Endymion* I. 223-31)

Such a profusion of senses brings about an abundance of meaning that the symbolic charge of orderly linguistic structures and rules fall short of rendering. Such a bounty of sense impressions resonates with the infantile plenitude as well as the idyllic plenty exclusive to pastoral communities; this sense of fullness is represented through “a lush pastoral bower, a cool retreat for imaginative reverie” (Curran *Poetic Form* 114). The image of the porous, absorbent and hence swelling turf that drinks “the sheer liquidity of the wine” (Ricks 139) activates the visual sense and stimulates a strong sense of gustativeness; so does a spire of teeming sweets and smothering parsley. Similarly, the wine-absorbing soil makes meaning through its gustatory effect, as does the spire of teeming sweets. Likewise, the crackling bay leaves signify by means of the auditory effect that is deployed by a poet who “repeatedly takes up the sound of language” (Stewart 136). In the same manner, the fragrant pile triggers multiple connotations by virtue of its olfactory investment, and by the same token, viscous frankincense evokes through both olfactory and tactile senses. Also, the motion of a hazy light spreading eastward evokes emotions and memories through kinetic effect. Such a condensation of sense impressions, the “unifying interplay of sense-impressions” (Bate “Keats’s Style” 416), kindles powerful feelings on a visceral level in the poetry of Keats, who might be called, according to Richardson, “the most visceral of the English poets” (*Science of the Mind* 129). The cerebral self is outweighed by such a sensory profusion, yet the sensual is deeply stimulated by the poet who seeks to “refine one [his] sensual vision into a sort of north star” that is to guide him (Keats *Letters* 131); the visceral effect stirs up emotional engagement. All these sensory perceptions are registered through the asymbolic perceptiveness of the semiotic disposition; bodily senses make sense through the material base of language. Focusing on the “material dimensions” of Keats’s poetry, M. H. Abrams points out that the Keatsian poetic voice brings the “kinetic and tactile as well as auditory physicality” of poetic language in contact with its semantic freight (“Keats’s Poems” 321).

Similarly, such an interfusion of sensory perceptions arouses a sense of infantile plenitude in Peona's bower where Endymion is engrossed by maternal affection:

So she was gently glad to see him laid  
Under her favourite bower's quite shade,  
On her own couch, new made of flowers leaves,  
Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves  
When last the sun his autumn tresses shook,  
And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls took.  
Soon was he quieted to slumberous rest:  
But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest  
Peona's busy hand against his lips,  
And still, a sleeping, held her finger-tips  
In tender pressure. And a willow keeps  
A patient watch over the stream that creeps  
Winding by it, so the quiet maid  
Held her in peace: so that a whispering blade  
Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling  
Down in the bluebells, or a wren light rustling  
Among sere leaves and twigs, might all be heard. (*Endymion* I. 436-52)

This bower scene is sensuously invested; it evokes emotions and memories by means of sense impressions: the olfactory effect of flower leaves dried in the sun, the tactile effect of Peona's hand pressed against Endymion's lips and the tender pressure of her finger tips, the visual effect of the stream that creeps windingly and the auditory effect of the whispering blade of grass, the wailful gnat, the bustling bee, the rustling wren, the cracking dry leaves and twigs. All these sense perceptions cohere around Endymion to build a sense of closeness suggesting infantile proximity between the maternal body and the speechless infant. The material base of language indicates that the semiotic signifies corporeally "by bonds of subtle suggestion" beyond the symbolic confines, "beyond the threshold of waking life" (Yeats 32), prior to the thetic phase, anterior to "the threshold of language" (Kristeva *Revolution* 45).

The profusion of all senses, which challenges the priority of the sense of sight, also becomes more prominent as Endymion tells Peona of his fusion with the goddess of the moon:

Ah, desperate mortal! I ev'n dar'd to press  
Her very cheek against my crowned lip,  
And, at that moment, felt my body dip  
Into a warmer air: a moment more,  
Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store

Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes  
 A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,  
 Loiter'd around us, then of honey cells,  
 Made delicate from all white-flower bells;  
 And once, above the edges of our nest,  
 An arch face peep'd, - an Oread as I guess'd. (*Endymion* I. 661-71)

This moment of rapture is expressed by a myriad of sensory perceptions. For instance, the predilection for the sense of touch is manifested in the pulsional pressure of her cheek against his lip and the feeling of the body dipping into a warmer air. Also, the tactile sense is intermingled with the olfactory sense by means of the scent of violets and blossoming limes; the olfactory sense is interknit with the gustatory effect of honey cells. Bate points out that Keats tends to “ally his other sensory images more closely with the sense of touch and consequently render them stronger and more concrete” (*Stylistic* 3). The interlacing of all these sense impressions grows (luxuriantly or lushly to use a Keatsian adverb) into the semiotic aspect of signification through an evacuation of drive energy.

The appetite for the tactile concretises the sense of proximity and immediacy pertaining to the semiotic infantile plenitude in *Endymion*. In the idyllic land of the Latmians “the moist earth” feeds “[s]o plenteously all weed-hidden roots” (I; 64-5); “cold springs” flow “[t]o warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass” (I. 102-3); in the “swelling downs” “prickly furze / Buds lavish gold” (I. 201-3); Niobe’s “caressing tongue / Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip” (I. 340-1); “feathery sails” sweep through almond vales (I. 379-80); “the balmiest leaves” are bound to their temples (I. 382); the goddess of the moon “press’d me [Endymion] by the hand” (I. 636). This predilection for the sense of touch makes the semiotic more prominent.

The proclivity for the olfactory effect similarly intensifies the immersion of the poetic voice in the semiotic disposition in the world of Keats’s romance. The olfactory sense transports one to “that archaic universe, preceding sight” (Kristeva *Tales* 334): “rain-scent’d eglantine / Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing sun” (I. 100-1); the priest holds a basket “full / Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull: / Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still / Than Leda’s love, and cresses from the rill” (I. 155-8); “morning incense from the fields of May” (I. 470) is one of myriad scents of nature. Aromatic plants such as thyme, pungent leaves of cresses, fragrant flowers of

eglantines and the heady perfume of morning incense provide stimuli for the sense of smell.

The penchant for the gustatory effect also consolidates the bodily base of language in the pastoral realm of *Endymion*, a romance that shows “how wide, deep, and true was his [Keats’s] sense of taste” (Ricks 120). With regard to this primacy of eating in Keats, Trilling also notes that “the ingestive imagery is pervasive and extreme” in Keats’s works (17). Therefore, extensive references to eating and drinking pervade *Endymion*. Trilling explains the significance of the primacy of the gustatory sense in Keats’s poetry:

The ingestive appetite is the most primitive of our appetites, the sole appetite of our infant state, and a preoccupation with it, an excessive emphasis upon it, is felt – and not without some reason – to imply the passivity and self-reference of the infantile condition [...] But Keats’s did not share our culture’s fear of the temptation to the passive self-reference of infancy. He did not repress the infantile wish; he confronted it, recognized it, and delighted in it (17-18).

Trilling’s association of this gustativeness with the infantile state shows that the study of the senses in and the sensuousness of Keats’s poetry is of paramount importance in the discussion of his work in relation to the Kristevan semiotic. References to the gustatory sense permeate the romance: the pastoral year “grows lush in juicy stalks” (I. 45-6); Endymion “taste[s] a drop of manna-dew, / Full palatable” (I. 766-7); Endymion says that “the unsating food” is so delicious (I. 816); the “breathless honey-feel of bliss / Alone preserved me [Endymion] from the dear abyss / Of death” (I. 903-5); “pain / Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth / On the deer’s tender haunches” (I. 906-8). Succulent and moist stems of herbaceous plants, palatable food like the de-celestialised manna-dew and soft animal meat stimulate the sense of taste.

The propensity for the visual effect, likewise, solidifies the material base of language in the prelinguistic space of *Endymion*, composed by a poet who says that he “live[s] in the eye” (Keats *Letters* 134). Strikingly visual images are employed: “light-hung leaves” (I. 119), “copse-clad vallies” (I. 120) to visualise an image of profusion, “a poll of ivy in the teeth / Of winter hoar” (I. 160-1) to conjure up an image of old age, Endymion’s “nervy knees” (I. 174), “A lurking trouble in his [Endymion’s] lip” (I. 179) to embody melancholy through a corporeal image, “Udderless lambs” (I. 210) to

call to mind a fleshy image of infancy, “Night-swollen mushrooms” (I. 215) to evoke a sense of lushness and fullness, “meeting hazels” (I. 237) to picture a sense of unity, completeness and bodily interdependence, the “frantic gape of lonely Niobe” (I. 338) to express the grief of loss, and the “bluely-veined” feet of the goddess of the moon (I. 624-5) to demonstrate proximity of observation. All these visual images reiterate that the poetic voice in *Endymion* is immersed in the bodily base of language.

In accordance with the semiotic disposition which “musicates” signification (Kristeva *Revolution* 233), the sense of hearing employed by a poet who is described as listening “in to the shape of words, wringing overtones” (Stewart 136 his emphasis) makes the poem rhythmical, especially the first book of halcyon days: trees whisper in the pastoral world of *Endymion* (I.26-7); bees “hum about globes of clover” (I. 52); lambs are “bleating with content” (I. 71); the “surgy murmurs of the lonely sea” (I. 121) are audible throughout the poem; “mellow reeds are touch’d with sounds forlorn / By the dim echoes of old Triton’s horn” (I. 205-6); Pan is called a “Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds” (I. 285); rain is sobbing; the shaft is whizzing; the bowstring is twanging (I. 331-4); Apollo’s horses are “snorting” (I.552); waters run “[g]urgling in beds of coral” (I.639-40); “hollow sounds” of dens and caves arouse the hero (I. 650-1); the hero, “reaching back to boy-hood”, reminiscences the times “I’d bubble up the water through a reed” (I. 880-1); the hero “sinks down a solitary glen, / Where there was never sound of mortal men, / Saving, perhaps, some snow-light cadences / Melting to silence” (II. 77-80); “a noisy nothing rings” upon the hero’s ear (II. 321). This voluptuous immersion in the sense of hearing accentuates the material base of language; the sounds of words signify onomatopoeically by themselves through “a musicalization of language” which leads to “an infinitization of meaning” (Lechte *Kristeva* 207). Language is musicalized by a poet who “never stopped associating poetry with music” (Minahan vii)<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Chandler and McLane’s reference to Adorno on Keats and Shelley further emphasises the poets’s musicality: “noting the relative impoverishment of English music in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Theodor Adorno mordantly suggested that Keats and Shelley – with their lyric virtuosities and ostentatious musicality – might be seen as the ‘*locum tenentes* of non-existent great English composers’” (2).

In relation to the auditory effect that “a listener as acute as Keats” (Beer 59) utilises in the poem, a natural affinity with music demonstrates that *Endymion* reverberates to a semiotic beat. The narrating voice who traces the story of Endymion says that the “very music of the name has gone / Into my being” (I. 35-7); the name of the hero sounds melodious and tuneful. The very musicality of the word divorced from its signified meaning deeply influences the narrating voice, which suggests that the material sounds of language signify corporeally beyond the symbolic element of signification. By the same token, the following lines are laced with a rhythmical effect:

nor had they [children] waited  
For many moments, ere their ears were sated  
With a faint breath of music, which ev'n then  
Fill'd out its voice, and died away again.  
Within a little space again it gave  
Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,  
To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes breaking  
Through copse-clad vallies, - ere their death, o'ertaking  
The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea. (*Endymion* I. 113-21)

The movement of the musical notes throughout these lines produces a euphonious rhythmical effect which acknowledges incommunicable intimacies, “inarticulable instinctuality” (Kristeva *Revolution* 148). Initially, music breathes faintly, then fills out its voice, thereby reaching a high pitch and ultimately dies away; music swells ethereally, flows with a mellifluous wave, dances with leaves hanging in light, breaks in rhythmical echoes and dissolves through woods; it is eventually overtaken by the melodious sound of the “eternal whisperings” of the sea which rises and falls eternally (Keats “On the Sea”), thus triggering another cyclical musical journey that ripples ceaselessly. The rise and the fall of the sound evokes infantile cadences, the inflection and modulation of the maternal voice, which discloses the semiotic modality of the signifying process that, “through drive investment, is organized into prosody or rhythmic timbres” (Kristeva *Revolution* 163). Likewise, children’s ears, which are attuned to infantile cadences, are satisfied with this music that ebbs and flows recurrently. Such alertness to cadences and sounds indicates that the material base of language evokes powerful emotions, memories and “tunes forgotten – out of memory” (*Endymion* I.316) that the symbolic is unable to pin down in neat linguistic categories. An immersion in cadences is suggestive of the maternal body and the semiotic *chora*:

The mother's body becomes the focus of the semiotic as the 'pre-symbolic' - a manifestation – especially in art, of what could be called the 'materiality' of the symbolic: the voice as rhythm and timbre, the body as movement, gesture, and rhythm. Prosody, word-plays, and especially laughter fall within the ambit of the semiotic (Lechte *Kristeva* 129).

Similarly, music as the maternal voice also presides over Peona's bower where Endymion is soothed by his sister's maternal care. The boat that takes Endymion and his sister to the bower "lightly dipt, and rose, and sank, / And dipt again, with the young couple's weight" (I. 425-6); the movement of the boat is suggestive of the rhythmical effect of verse and music. Also, Peona's bower evokes "minstrel memories of times gone by" (I. 435); music echoes through time and brings back memories:

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,  
Shut her pure sorrow drops with glad exclaim,  
And took a lute, from which there pulsing came  
A lively prelude, fashioning the way  
In which her voice should wander. 'Twas a lay  
More subtle cadenced, more forest wild  
Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child;  
And nothing since has floated in the air  
So mournful strange. Surely some influence rare  
Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand;  
For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd  
The quick invisible strings, even though she saw  
Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw  
Before the deep intoxication. (*Endymion* I. 489-502)

Music is said to have "a profound affinity with poetry" (Abrams *The Mirror* 50); music and poetry combine to give a sense of the embodiedness of the semiotic aspect of language. In a Keatsian semantic flourish, Peona's heartbeat, the pulse of the instrument and the musical beat are enmeshed. The pulse of Peona's lute accompanies the musical lines of verse; the musical beat corresponds to the rhythm of poetry. Furthermore, the pulse of the lute shakes through Endymion's body; the pulse of the beat is in tune with the bodily pulse, a rhythmical throbbing of the arteries as blood is propelled through them. Each successive throb of the heart evokes powerful emotions and memories; it is suggestive of the maternal voice that lulls the infant, but this is "more forest wild", more primordial, more instinctive, and it is also "more subtle cadenced", perhaps evoking the primeval separation of the infant from the maternal body and the subtle timbre of the maternal voice heard in "the old womb of night"

(*Endymion* IV. 372). This lay is subtly cadenced, so too elusive, therefore complex for the symbolic to register; it is “forest wild”, so too undomesticated for the symbolic to cultivate and make it a part of the symbolic. This untamed, feral, obscure song intoxicates Endymion; he dissolves and disperses; he is enraptured; he is relapsing into the maternal, into the semiotic *chora*, being enthralled by the pulsational rhythm of the lute, the semiotic beat of the musical body. Yet, Peona recovers herself and her voice that “wanders”: “soon she came, with sudden burst, upon / Her self-possession – swung the lute aside” (I. 503-4), which could be regarded as a symbolic interference materialised in the person of Peona, who warns her brother “against deceiving fantasies” and pleads with him to “return to the world of action from the life of solitary contemplation” (Sperry *Keats* 99). The vibration that the vocal cords and the strings of the lute produce resonates with the body and the bodily base of language fleshed out in poetic diction.

Similarly, the semiotic beat of the musical body accompanies Endymion as he departs from the maternal bowers of Book I, which substitute what Kristeva calls an “oceanic void” (*Black* 29), and journeys into the bowels of the earth in Book II: “his bosom beats / As plainly in his ear, as the faint charm / Of which the throbs were born. This still alarm, / This sleepy music, forc’d him walk tiptoe” (*Endymion* II. 355-8). This acute sense of hearing evinces that these lines pulsate in tandem with the body.

A material, corporeal sense of words allows *Endymion* to establish a rapport with the semiotic aspect of signification. Keats’s diction is not cut off from living matter; it is animate, derived from a breathing body which speaks and composes poetry. The Keatsian organically felt participation also points to a harmonious relationship between the elements of a whole. Bate speaks of “Keats’s ability to bring into focus several diverse sense-impressions of an object, and – in transmuting them into a single image or series of images – present a more valid, rounded, and fully realized apperception” (“Keats’s Style” 416). This quality of the unifying interplay of sense-impressions rising out of an organically felt participation in a moment he experiences or an object he beholds indicates that Keats’s poetry rests upon a fullness of being revealed in his poetic diction, which is emotive rather than referential, and which thus destabilizes the relationship between the signifier and the signified. This sheer fullness

of being realised through a voluptuous diction is suggestive of the semiotic dimension of signification; such sheer fullness of being points to a poetic space where a primordial sense of cohesion is achieved, a space in which bodies are interdependent and all difference has been abolished.

#### **2.1.4 Infantile Plenitude and Oneness: the Semiotic *Chora* and the Bowers in *Endymion***

*Endymion* is about a mortal's quest for an ideal feminine counterpart. Questing for an ideal feminine counterpart means searching for wholeness; the poetic voice is fascinated by "that moment [in which] have we [they] stept / Into a sort of oneness" (*Endymion* I. 795-6). The poem expresses through conjugal metaphors this desire to attain sheer fullness of being, "ecstatic self-annihilation in sympathetic feeling" (Sperry *Keats* 114); the poetic voice is tempted to be immersed in "ontological fullness" (Watts 74). By means of being entangled in the beloved, the lover spurns the fragmented existence of human beings. The lover and the beloved melt into the radiance of love, they "blend" and "mingle" and their souls become "interknit" (*Endymion* I. 810-3). The poetic persona's profound relationship and identification with the feminine is seen as a poetic confrontation with the maternal body in the semiotic.

Metaphors of fullness and teeming space display the desire to be immersed in fullness as suggestive of the urge to be involved in the semiotic *chora*, which "constitutes the heterogeneous, disruptive dimension of language, that which can never be caught up in the closure of traditional linguistic theory" (Moi "Introduction" 13). Regarded as "the enclosed, sheltered nook, the place of nestling green" (Dickstein 30), bowers represent the semiotic *chora* where bodies and souls are entwined in a psychic space which resists disjunction. The romance begins with the description of such a bower:

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing. (*Endymion* I. 1-5)

This healing power of the bower is reminiscent of the semiotic relationship between the maternal body and the infant who is quietly breathing. Perhaps it is uncertain who breathes quietly; it is a bower of quiet breathing, a space of un-differentiation; it is a realm where “the voiced breath” “fastens us to an undifferentiated mother” (Kristeva *Desire* 195). Bodies that are quietly breathing to each other are intermingled through the mellow music of quiet breathing, which evinces that the semiotic is a realm where subject and object distinction does not prevail. It is desired that the loveliness of the bower last forever and increase; therefore, the second line ends with “never” and the third line begins with “pass” so that the permanence of the joy may remain unspoiled and untainted; these two words are disjoined so as to ease the pain of separation which always looms over the sense of oneness. The stillness of the quiet bower that is beyond or outside time is evocative of the semiotic disruption of the temporal symbolic providing that time, a clearly demarcated unit of timelessness, is regarded as a symbolic structure.

This bower in *Endymion* offers “a shady boon” (I.14) and “a cooling covert” (I.17); this bower of plenitude “bind[s] us to the earth” and fastens us to an undifferentiated mother despite “the inhuman dearth” (I. 7-8); things of beauty such as the sun, the moon and trees are “bound to us so fast” (I.31). The image of binding, being bound and fastened is suggestive of the bonding, unity and oneness of the pre-linguistic relationship between the maternal body and the speechless infant, between the mother and “he who does not speak (*in-fans*)” (Kristeva *Desire* 272); it creates a sense of symbiosis. Likewise, the use of “such” in the following lines strengthens the feeling of unity and oneness, similarity and condensation:

Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,  
Trees old, and young sprouting a shady boon  
For simple sheep; and such are daffodils  
With the green world they live in; (*Endymion* I. 12-16)

The sun moves away the pall; the moon moves away the pall, too; trees move away the pall, as well; daffodils also move away the pall; thanks to this condensation, a sense of interfusion is achieved. Likewise, the use of “so” in the lines above empowers the feeling of commingling: “so does the moon, / The passion poesy, glories infinite, /

Haunt us till they become a cheering light / Unto our souls” (*Endymion* I. 28-31). The trees, the moon, poetry, infinite glories are imbricated and become one; thus, a sense of cohesion is accomplished. “So” is a symbolic grammar structure, yet it makes meaning semiotically in these lines since the singular auxiliary “does” for the moon also modifies the plural subject “glories”; incorrect grammar, “hovering grammar” in Stewart’s words (141), makes sense in the semiotic realm. Even the feel of the word “bower” resonates with the feeling of the embowered happiness and perfection in the etymological sense of the word *perfection*; the smoothness, roundness and volubility of the sound achieved due to the bilabial “b” and “w” add to the sense of completion hankered after in this romance. A bower, where the use of *so* and *such* amass, by incorrect grammar, the expanding landscape of the green world, dilates space, which in turn embowers the hero that desires to be immersed in the sheer fullness of being and totality of presence; this “dilated spatiality” (Bari 89) contributes to the sense of completion and plenitude.

This sense of fullness is sought after throughout the romance. The story of Endymion is told “with full happiness” (I. 34-5); dairy buckets “[b]ring home increase of milk” and “the year / Grows lush in juicy stalks” (I. 44-6) as the story of Endymion is being narrated. As for “the green world” of the poem (I. 16), Bloom states that it is an “enclosed world, frequently likened to a bower and covert”; it resembles “a natural temple, dominated by the moon, which is scarcely differentiated from the poetry made by its celebrants” (*Visionary* 359). In this semiotic cocoon, one is scarcely differentiated from another due to bodily interdependence. The enclosed world of Latmos is surrounded by “a mighty forest” which “[u]pon the sides of Latmos was outspread” (I. 63-4); the word “outspread” connotes outspread wings (Steinhoff 164). The outspread wings under which the Latmians are huddled together preside over this enclosed world. The “daisies that hide “in deep herbage” (I. 50-1), “all weed-hidden roots” (I. 65) and “gloomy shades, sequestered deep” (I. 67) contribute to the sense of being enclosed. The soil that feeds “[s]o plenteously all weed-hidden roots” (I. 64-5), the thriving “palmy fern” (I. 80), “[s]tems thronging all around” (I. 83) and the swelling “turf” (I. 84-5) could be taken to be metaphors of fullness which cohere around the idea of oneness, fullness, interfusion and interpenetration. The story begins “[f]ull in the middle of this pleasantness” (I. 89). The images of young damsels

carrying “wicker[s] over brimm’d / With April’s tender younglings” (I. 135-8) and the priest holding “a basket full / Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could cull” (I. 155-6) also accentuate the sense of plenitude, wholeness, and infantile tenderness. Besides, the huntsmen’s “plenteous stores of happiness” (I. 389-90), “plenteous showers” (I. 899) and so many other images of fullness achieve a sense of infantile plenitude and completion in this romance composed by a poet who has insights into and an “affinity with the infantile” (Ricks 12).

Peona’s bower of sisterly affection is another concrete manifestation of an impulse to be immersed in the semiotic *chora*, where an “infant’s tactile relation with its mother’s body provides an orientation for the infant’s drives” (McAfee 19):

Who whispers him so pantingly and close?  
 Peona, his sweet sister: of all those,  
 His friends, the dearest. Hushing signs she made,  
 And breath’d a sister’s sorrow to persuade  
 A yielding up, a cradling on her care.  
 Her eloquence did breathe away the curse:  
 She led him, like some midnight spirit nurse  
 Of happy changes in emphatic dreams,  
 Along a path between two little streams,  
 Guarding his forehead, with her round elbow,  
 From low-grown branches, and his footsteps slow  
 From stumbling over stumps and hillocks small; (*Endymion* I. 407-18)

The image of Peona whispering to him “so pantingly and close” evokes a sense of immediacy, closeness and nearness; she does not speak the symbolic language at a distance, but she gets in touch with him through the semiotic whisper. This sense of proximity is suggestive of the semiotic bond between the maternal body, Peona being a substitute, and the infant. The repetition of the letter *s* and its sibilant sound onomatopoeically contribute to this sense of gentleness, closeness and fluidity. Blackstone thinks that Peona “incarnates the maternal, the limited, the unspeculative” and represents the “‘homely nurse’ of Wordsworth’s great Ode” (124). Peona soothes Endymion who walks along a liminal path between two little streams as if he oscillates between the semiotic and the symbolic, and nurses him back to health by means of embodied hushing signs of the corporeal semiotic rather than the linguistic signs of the symbolic. She pants, sighs and breathes away sorrow, which is indicative of the bodily base of signification. She cradles him, rocks him to sleep and he yields to her. Such a

sense of proximity is a concrete manifestation of the tactile immediacy of the relationship between the maternal body and the infant in the semiotic *chora*; it is immediate because there is no mediator, no third party – “father, form, schema” - between the two (Kristeva *Black* 23). Similarly, Peona’s “bowery island” as suggestive of the primordial oneness between the maternal body and the speechless infant is marked by “a shady, fresh, and ripply cove, / Where nested was an arbour, overwove / By many a summer’s silent fingering” (I. 428-31). This “cool bosom” is characterised by ripples that encircle one another, an image of interdependent bodies suggestive of the maternal body which encloses an other, an interwoven arbour which interweaves or interlaces self and other as the image of “needle broidery” (*Endymion* I. 434) also suggests a sense of interlacement. This indistinct profusion demonstrates that the poetic voice relapses into the maternal semiotic where “streamlets fall, / With mingled bubblings and a gentle rush, / Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush / With crystal mocking of the trees and sky” (*Endymion* I. 419-22). In this poetic space, infantile streamlets flow into a maternal, brimful river, “a mother who is oceanic” (Kristeva *Revolution* 153), and they are intermingled; their “mingled [infantile] bubblings” and “gentle rush” are connotative of the bodily base of language. This semiotised embowered space is marked by “crystal mocking of the trees and sky” that metaphorically represents the mirroring images of the maternal body and the infant as the “crystal eye” of the well mirrors the sky (*Endymion* I. 870-2).

Frye believes that Peona represents the “youthful and presexual aspect of life” (130); therefore, Peona’s bower stands for desexualised tactile proximity. Her eloquence is suggestive of maternal mellow utterance, perhaps even a lullaby; he is lulled by a guiding spirit; the image of her round elbow connotes the roundness of the feminine-identified bow; such an image of roundness suggestive of an enclosed maternal space saves the infantile hero from stumbling. Steinhoff notes, “[a]s the representative of an idyllic society, or the sisterly intimate familiarity of nature,” Peona attempts “to revive the hero from the pains of experience, placing him in a comfortable bower so he can tell his story, but one he must escape from if he is to finish his quest” (179). The questing hero becomes capable of telling his story and placing it in the reflective symbolic where he is clad in “the linguistic armor” (Kristeva *Black* 65) once he is soothed and rejuvenated by the healing power of the un-speculative material semiotic.

Thus, the bodily base of signification renders the symbolic possible, which shows that the semiotic is the precondition for the symbolic to exist.

The un-contemplative semiotic bower corresponds to Keats's "infant or thoughtless Chamber":

Well, I compare human life to a large Mansion of Many Apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me. The first we step into we call the infant or thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think. We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second Chamber remain wide open showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it, but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle within us. We no sooner get into the second Chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders and think of delaying there forever in delight. However, among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of Man, of convincing one's nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression, whereby This Chamber of Maiden-Thought becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open, but all dark, all leading to dark passages. We see not the balance of good and evil. We are in a Mist. We are now in that state (*Letters* 124).

Endymion relapses into the infant chamber; Peona as a mother substitute protects Endymion by guarding his forehead overburdened by the chamber of the maiden-thought. She "shades his flushing forehead from the heat of poetic fancy and teeming thought" (Steinhoff 179); the drive-based, pulsional, unreflective semiotic bower resuscitates the symbolic, thereby making it possible for the symbolic to continue to signify and make meaning. This shows Kristeva's notion of the semiotic "both as negativity and as the indispensable precondition of the symbolic realm – the realm of meaning, judgement, and representation" (Lechte *Kristeva* 73).

Endymion's vision of the moon goddess stands for an attempt at achieving fullness. He tells Peona about the first time he has seen the vision of the moon goddess in terms suggestive of the semiotic investment of the poem:

Thus on I thought,  
Until my head was dizzy and distraught.  
Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole  
A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul;  
And shaping visions all about my sight  
Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light;

The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,  
And then were gulph'd in a tumultuous swim:  
And then I fell asleep. (*Endymion* I. 564-72)

Endymion is enchanted out of the symbolic domain; he is sucked in by the semiotic dizziness as the sound of being “gulph’d” suggests. He also swims tumultuously beyond the ken of the symbolic; the dazzling myriad visions of colours, wings and “bursts of spangly light” burst the transparent membrane of the symbolic dimension of signification, for his imagination is “brought / Beyond its proper bound” and cannot “refer to any standard law” (Keats “Dear Reynolds” 78-81). The poetic voice is disconnected from “the regulating laws that make the world rationally comprehensible” (Waldoff 191). Disaffiliated from the symbolic domain of the organising principles, Endymion is lulled by the dancing poppies which transport him to the semiotic terrain of indistinct profusion as though he is listening to a lullaby.

Regarding the notion of wholeness, the moon goddess could be taken as the feminine counterpart the questing hero seeks; he is “in that airy trance” (*Endymion* I. 585). He is intoxicated; he is ecstatic; he stands outside himself as the Greek etymology of *ecstasy* suggests (OED). His “dazzled soul / Commingling with her argent spheres” (*Endymion* I. 594-5) is suggestive of the urge to attain spherical wholeness. Likewise, he desires to “commune with those orbs” (*Endymion* I. 600), which indicates his hankering after fullness and circularity suggested in the word “orb”. Also, he wants to be intermingled with “the lidless-eyed train / Of planets” (*Endymion* I. 598-9); that the unblinking eyes of these celestial bodies are not lidded points to the fact that he desires to directly flow and rush into these specular orifices to achieve profusion without being detained by a closure. In addition, the line ending with “train” runs on to the next line beginning with “of”, a preposition which indicates an association between two entities, typically one of belonging. The union with the goddess of the moon represents an urge to be immersed in the semiotic fullness: “Whence that completed form of all completeness? / Whence came that high perfection of all sweetness?” (*Endymion* I. 606-7); the moon goddess stands for the infantile plenitude and abundance. She stands for the perfection and completeness for which the hero quests. He wants to be blended in such completeness; the image of her bright locks of hair which “were simply

gordian'd up and braided" (*Endymion* I. 614) also evokes this sense of fullness the hero seeks to achieve by being entangled and enthralled with the female deity.

### **2.1.5 Venturing into the Asymbolic Abyss of the Bizarre**

The inarticulate yearning for the mysterious abyss, embodied by caves, caverns, dens, grottos, mazes, wilderness and hollow grounds is considered as the desire to relapse into the maternal abyss. There seems to be a conjunction between the wandering thought of the questing romance hero and the unexplored, uncharted terrain of the romance world; hence, as *Endymion* wanders into the unknown, the romance ventures into the semiotic. References to the abyss of the bizarre are dispersed throughout *Endymion*: a desire to see "the early budders" which "run in mazes of the youngest hue" (I. 41-2) which the symbolic fails to register; an impulse to send one's "herald thought into a wilderness" (I. 59) beyond the confines of the symbolic demarcations; an urge to enter through "the mysterious doors" opened by Pan, who is called "[s]trange ministrant of undescribed sounds" (I. 285-9); an attempt to recall "tunes forgotten – out of memory", and thus to remember the drive-based, pulsational tunes of the semiotic (I. 316); a passion to spread "imaginary pinions", wings to fly to the unknown (I. 586); a longing to dive "three fathoms where the waters run / Gurgling in beds of coral" (I. 639-40); a yearning for "[f]ountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled caves, / Echoing grottos, full of tumbling waves / And moonlight" (I. 458-60); an itch to wander "in uncertain ways" (II.48) in order to wonder at strange things "with wide eye" (II.62-3); an appetite to "dive into the deepest" (II. 221); an intention to "[s]piral through ruggedest loopholes", to stretch "across a void" and over "[e]normous chasms, where, all foam and roar, / Streams subterranean tease their granite beds" (II. 599-602); hankering after "known Unknown" (II. 739); an instinct to journey into "the old womb of night", to embark upon a semiotic journey beyond the ken of the symbolic register (IV. 372); a decision to contemplate a "pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink" (I. 975-77). All of these references point to the desire to venture into the incommunicable abyss of the bizarre.

The poetic configurations of hollow and abysmal places correspond to the semiotic potential of the poetic language. They represent the material base of language: "mazes

of the youngest hue” (*Endymion* I. 42) cannot be described without the bodily sense of sight; it cannot be articulated without being willing to be traversed by the amazing, labyrinthine semiotic modality, the Keatsian perplexing, bewildering “labyrinths” (Jeffrey in Strachan 38). Similarly, one needs to be immersed in the bodily rhythm of the semiotic disposition to recollect the tunes consigned to oblivion by means of the material presence of aural experiences that depend on “the conches of the versed ear” (Stewart 142). A purely rational, sovereign, disembodied subject divorced from his or her fleshly corporeality cannot roam “the old womb of night” (*Endymion* IV. 372). Hankering after unknown caves, grotesque caverns, mysterious doors, unfathomable depths, unimaginable lodges might be regarded as ways of putting the unknown into discourse, symbolising the unsymbolizable in the Kristevan sense with the attending suggestion that the symbolic will always remain short of the unsymbolizable. Therefore, the unknown will always challenge the symbolic, punctuate its boundaries, thereby expanding it, rendering it more inclusive, allowing the discourse to “be changed by affective rhythm” (Kristeva *Black* 65). The semiotic grotesque, which is found incongruous, distorted and unthinkable by the symbolic meaning-making structures, will thus rupture the symbolic dimension of signification.

The repetition of the unknown, the invisible, the unimaginable, the unfathomable throughout *Endymion* consolidates the sense of two simultaneously existing realms separated by “the fragile bar / That keeps us from our homes ethereal” (*Endymion* I. 360-1). This fragile bar might express the bar between the mortal realm and the immortal one. However, the tenuous bar could also be interpreted as the fragile bar between the signifier and the signified; it is pertinent to “the arbitrariness of the Saussurian sign” (Kristeva *Tales* 23). The representational relation between the signifier and the signified is torn apart by the semiotic pluralisation of meaning which challenges the insistence of the signified, in opposition to the Saussurean model which maintains that “the signifier is indivisibly wedded to the signified like the two sides of a piece of paper” (Sharman 89). The bar between the signifier and the signified is tenuous in *Endymion* because of “Keats’s ability to entertain an exceptionally fluid sense of the relation between signifiers and their assigned signifieds” (O’Rourke 41). The chasm between the signifier and the signified becomes larger as a result of the fact that the semiotic pulverises the symbolic as the poetic voice “spiral[s] through

ruggedest loopholes, and thence / Stretching across a void, the guiding o'er / Enormous chasms" (*Endymion* II. 599-601); the signified slides under the signifier as the semiotic splits open the symbolic. The semiotic poetic language, which "is not localizable in words, or unities of words" (Lechte *Kristeva* 111), bends the symbolic rules of decorum and finds loopholes by means of which the former spirals out of and thus interrupts the latter. The semiotically charged subject put in process/on trial can hear the gurgling waters in the unfathomable depths:

I do think the bars  
That kept my spirit in are burst – that I  
Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky!  
How beautiful thou art! The world how deep!  
How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep  
Around their axle! (*Endymion* II. 185-90)

The bars that divide the subject and the object in the symbolic realm are burst open; as a result, self and other are undifferentiated; therefore, the sky is dizzy and the world is deep. Endymion's experience through the dizzy sky resonates with Kristeva's account of the sublime:

When the starry sky, a vista of open seas or a stained glass window shedding purple beams fascinate me, there is a cluster of meaning, of colours, of words, of caresses, there are light touches, scents, sighs, cadences that arise, shroud me, carry me away, and sweep me beyond the things that I see, hear, or think. The 'sublime' object dissolves in the raptures of a bottomless memory (*Powers* 12).

Like the fragile bar that separates us from our ethereal homes (*Endymion* I. 360-1), the bars that keep his spirit in (the symbolic) stand for the thetic break which splits the semiotic continuum and produces signification: "This splitting of the semiotic *chora* is the thetic phase, enabling the subject to attribute differences and thus signification to what was the ceaseless heterogeneity of the *chora*" (Moi "Introduction" 13). The thetic phase refers to the cleavage which "produces the positing of signification" (Kristeva *Revolution* 43). Once the bars that keep the spirit in are burst (the thetic break is derailed), threatening Endymion's identification with the signifier that is necessary for the taking up of positions in the signifying realm, he relapses into the semiotic *chora*, where he gets in limbic contact with the maternal body and becomes giddy due to the ceaseless heterogeneity of this unsymbolizable space. As a result, the world

comes to be dazzlingly tremulous and ceaselessly heterogeneous; this world evokes the unrepresentable uterine/nocturnal *chora* of the night sky, the maternal receptacle, where the infant is literally dazzled in that s/he is deprived of sight.

The penchant for the mysterious abyss springs from an investment in the semiotic and is realized through the bodily base of language. The semiotic dimension of language allows one to express inarticulate yearnings of the living body, the mazes and eddies of the speaking body. Hazlitt, who, as we have seen, admires the so-called rigid forms of antiquity articulated through the symbolic dimension of language and its structures, finds *Endymion* to be insubstantial and intangible (248). In contrast, *Endymion*'s airy dreams are articulated through the corporeal side of language as Keats's poetic diction is fleshed out through a transfusion of the living body into language. This transfusion of the living body into language is suggestive of Keats's "instinctive working towards the tangible particular" (Bate *Stylistic* 3). The Romantic penchant for the airy dreams and the illusions of the youthful imagination, which might well stand for the realm of the spirit or the abode of the mind from a different point of view, is energised by the poetic voice immersed in the material realm of the body, and the material base of language. Here, the inscription of the primeval attachment to the maternal body allows the poetic voice to explore the uncharted territories of the human psyche, beyond "rigid forms of antiquity", which are already charted and well-trodden (Hazlitt 248).

The semiotic side of language leads the poet to explore and dream in the unsignifiable abyss as the poetic voice is marked by a polyvalent play of the multiple possibilities of self in contrast to the symbolic structure of a rigid and limited identity. The poetic voice with asymbolic perceptiveness realized through the bodily base of language explodes all firmly established forms, ideas and concepts of antiquity. The so-called formlessness of *Endymion* reflects the formlessness of the potentially polymorphous matter and concomitantly the material base of language.

#### **2.1.6 Keatsian Emphatic Identification and Notion of Negative Capability**

Irigaray discusses the difference between masculine libidinal economy and feminine libidinal economy; from her point of view, and predictably given the preceding

discussion, the former is based upon the idea of property whilst the latter rests upon the idea of proximity:

Ownership and property [property and propriety in Moi *Sexual/Textual* 143] are quite foreign to the feminine. At least sexually. But not *nearness*. Nearness so pronounced that it makes all discrimination of identity, and thus all forms of property, impossible. Woman derives pleasure from what is *so near that she cannot have it, nor have herself*. She herself enters into a ceaseless exchange of herself with the other without any possibility of identifying either (*This Sex* 31).

In the face of the traditional assumption of masculine property and propriety, the Keatsian impropriety of language and the poetic voice's expropriation of some assets of conventional masculinity might be understood by means of this dynamics of proximity. The poet in *Endymion* enjoys a closeness with the other which is so near that he cannot possess it. The poet's "organically felt participation" (Bate "Keats's Style" 416) in the object that he observes resonates with this idea of nearness; such proximity would be fully realized by and in the semiotic element of language, by which the rupture between self and other is obliterated. The Keatsian poetic voice organically participates as "the trees / That whisper round a temple become soon / Dear as the temple's self" (*Endymion* I. 26-28). This sense of conjoining self and the world is an instance of Keatsian empathic identification which is built on an emotional mode that fuses "the solidity of the temple and the insubstantiality of the breeze in trees" (White 82).

Once the divide between subject and object vanishes, language becomes improper according to the symbolic strictures of grammar, the normal rules of syntax and semantics. This improper (poetic) language as opposed to language proper does not grant a privilege to the sense of sight; on the contrary, it traces language back to "its source, which is among other things *tactile*" (Irigaray *This Sex* 79). Looking for something palpable and solid to see privileges the gaze, but the sweet smells, sounds and scintillating "mazes of the youngest hue" (*Endymion* I. 42) are reminiscent of the intimacy of the senses of touching, hearing and dazzled sight. Keats's highly tactile poetic diction is thence also a manifestation of the semiotic element of signification by means of which the body is poetically inscribed and its impulses are discharged into the language of fluidity, proximity and simultaneity.

As the poet of the semiotic, Keats is delighted by “the sheer existence of things outside himself” and he seems to lose his identity in “a total identification with the object he contemplates” (Abrams *Anthology* 825). The Keatsian experience of this sort of self-annihilation is related with “the expansionist urge to move outside the self, to unite with that which is the not-self” (Clubbe and Lovell 135). This ability to identify with other states of being in an aura suggestive of self-oblivion is a concrete manifestation of the fact that Keats’s poetic diction is immersed in the semiotic base of language since the semiotic points to the space of being which does not recognize the rupture between the subject and the object prior to the thetic phase perceived as a rupture and facilitating “the emergent subject’s separation from the semiotic *chora*” (Margaroni “Semiotic Revolution” 14).

Similarly, Bate speaks of “the romantic theory of sympathetic identification, in which the poet takes on, through participation, the qualities and character of his object” (“Keats’s Style” 415). The interiorization of the exterior is a sign of one’s being absorbed in the semiotic realm. Also, Walsh explains this Keatsian capacity:

In Keats’s nature there was developed to the point of extremity what exists in us all to some degree – a capacity to be aware of the existence of things, the force with which objects occupy their particular pool of vacancy. In Keats this instinct was a passion. He felt the weight and pressure of things, the intensities of existence, as though things did not simply stand on their own but leaned on him. For him, therefore, the senses serving immediacy, the sense of taste, the sense of touch, had a peculiar importance. He could be tinglingly alive to sense-experience and simultaneously drown in it. It was both life and death to him (71).

The ability to annihilate the self and reach out to the other in search of infantile plenitude is closely linked with his “power of emphatic projection, of physical enactment through words” (Barnard *Keats* 15). Keats’s letters also show his ability to identify with other states of being. In the letter to Reynolds on April 27, 1818, Keats remarks that “I lay awake last night – listening to the Rain with a sense of being drown’d and rotted like a grain of wheat” (*Letters* 118-9). Keats is said to claim that “he could enter into a billiard ball, taking a ‘sense of delight from its own roundness, smoothness and very volubility. & the rapidity of its motions’” (in Barnard *Keats* 15). Barnard argues that these remarks indicate “Keats’s persistent effort to make the self reach out to otherness through poetry” (*Keats* 15). Yet, at this point, the self and the

other are not perceived as distinct categories in this presymbolic realm anterior to the splitting of the semiotic continuum; the exterior is interiorized, challenging the thetic break.

Barnard's interpretation perfectly accords with Kristeva's understanding of the revolutionary in poetic language, the semiotic potentiality of poetry. The sensation of entering into a ball and assuming its shape and other features is a concrete manifestation of the fact that poetic language is immersed in the material base of language, the poetic voice erupting against the symbolic indictments. This corporeal image shows that the semiotic threatens to disrupt the symbolic in Keats's poetic diction; it may be taken to be a metaphor of non-speech that linguistic communication does not account for, and that indicates the prelinguistic rhythm of the genotext and points to "a trans<sup>31</sup>-symbolic realm that sends the signifying body back to biological a-signifiante" (Kristeva *Revolution* 160). The relationship between sensation and imagery is essential in Keats's poetry: "discursive thought ('consequitive [sic.] reasoning') disturbed poetry, which ought to intuit meaning through sensation and imagery [...] a sudden coalescence of sensation and association leads to intimations, momentary recognitions, of another order of truth" (Barnard *Keats* 33). The Keatsian refusal of "consequitive reasoning" (Keats *Letters* 54) glorifies "that purity of sensation, close, end-stopped, unalloyed with any distorting conception, and totally free of anything intellectually *a priori* or consequential" (Walsh 20). This Keatsian order of truth does not correspond to the symbolic; the coalescence of sensation and meaning is the eruption of the semiotic in the symbolic; the intuitive side of poetic sensibility is suggestive of asymbolic perceptiveness; the semiotic outburst intrudes upon the symbolic; the semiotic dimension revitalizes the de-sensorialized order of the symbolic.

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<sup>31</sup> Kristeva mostly uses the prefix "pre-" in her earlier works but later on prefers to use the prefix "trans-" to differentiate the semiotic from the symbolic (e.g. "translinguistic" instead of "prelinguistic") since she wishes to stress that the semiotic and the symbolic do not follow each other in a linear understanding of time with the latter being prioritised over the former, but that they are intertwined in an ongoing process without the primacy of either one. They are used interchangeably in this thesis without any difference in meaning.

The Keatsian capacity for stepping out of the self and uniting with that which is outside of himself brings to mind his notion of negative capability which is also crucial to the discussion of *Endymion* as representative of the semiotic dimension of signification:

I had not a dispute but a disquisition with Dilke on various subjects; several things dovetailed in my mind, and at once it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously – I mean *Negative Capability*, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason. Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetrarium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge (Keats *Letters* 60).

Thanks to this ability “to leave the private self in abeyance and allow the imagination to drift free of all personal and moral moorings” (Garrett 9), the poet is happy to pursue a vision of artistic beauty even if it leads him into intellectual confusion and uncertainty; being negatively capable allows the poet to “live with the truth of contradiction” (Haskell 38). He demands that the poet be sentient and receptive rather than search for fact or reason since “all ascertaining means bringing to consciousness”, and with regard to moods, emotional states, “all making conscious means destroying, altering in each case” (Heidegger 65). This Keatsian notion of negative capability indicates an “awareness of mysterious workings, known only approximately, and by surmise and by analogy” (Waldoff 185). In other words, negative capability refers to “the capacity to resist the urge to systematise”; it points to “a freedom from metaphysical prepossessions allowing the poet to contemplate reality without trying to reconcile its contradictory aspects”; it also corresponds to “a willingness to receive the isolated insights of the poetic experience as tentative 'speculations' which do not require demonstration, and which lose nothing from their inability to be fitted into a closed, rational system” (Sallé 187-88).

From a Kristevan point of view, remaining content with half-knowledge and being capable of being in uncertainties and doubts would definitely correspond to the semiotic modality of language; accordingly, reaching after fact and reason and verisimilitude would point to the symbolic order which intervenes as order, unity and identity. Kristeva’s writing subverts “theories that rely on unified, fixed, stagnant theories of subjectivity; she insists on semiotic negativity, which produces a dynamic

subjectivity” (Oliver “Introduction” xvi). Being in uncertainties disconcerts a unified, ossified subjectivity; remaining content with half-knowledge leads to a dynamic subjectivity. Accordingly, Kristeva postulates that subjectivity is always in process and on trial:

Kristeva puts no faith in the unified, autonomous, sovereign, rational, conscious subject who strives onward and upward toward idealist perfection. Her work persistently upholds the unsettling premise that subjectivity, developed in response to an “inaugural loss [at] the foundation of its own being,” is already divided, negative (Becker-Leckrone 23)

Keats’s notion of negative capability dovetails with Kristeva’s semiotic negativity. As a poet of sensations and empathic projection, “probably more widely and subtly gifted with powers of empathy than any other English poet” (Ricks 24), Keats avoids being in pursuit of a clearly demarcated truth; as the boundaries between the subject and the object are blurred in the poet’s observation, verisimilitude becomes meaningless for him. The Keatsian poetic voice steps out of the self to be mingled with the other. Keats is entirely aware of this quality in his poetry, and knows that his poetic character differs from Wordsworth’s “egotistical sublime”, his “intolerable self-centredness” (Walsh 9), which he strongly criticises and rejects (Lau *Romantic Poets* 25). In his letter to Richard Woodhouse on October 21 1818, Keats explains his notion of unegotistical chameleonlike poet:

As for the poetical Character itself (I mean that sort of which, if I am anything, I am a member; that sort distinguished from the wordsworthian [sic.] or egotistical sublime, which is a thing per se and stands alone), it is not itself – it has no self – it is everything and nothing – It has no character – it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated. It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher, delights the camelion poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things any more than from its taste for the bright one; because they both end in speculation. A Poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence because he has no Identity; he is continually in for and filling some other Body (*Letters* 194-5).

Keats imagines a poet to be in flux, undetermined by any fixed characteristics, like the Kristevan “subject of flows and energy charges, of jouissance and death” (Lechte *Kristeva* 124). Such a negatively capable poet, “the least egotistical of all the Romantic poets” (Stillinger “Introduction” xxvi), could eliminate his personality in order to

imaginatively enter into that of another person, another animal or another object. This flexibility allows the poetic voice to “efface the self through sympathetic identification with others” (Kucich “Keats” 193). If a poet has no predetermined self, he can enjoy light and shade, the tension between light and shade, and the uncertainty of being both light and shade simultaneously, that is the ambiguity of being in a twilight zone. The Keatsian chameleon poet is characterised by a “porous impressionability” (White 62), which allows the poet to be traversed by what is heterogenous to his identity. The poet’s having no fixed identity runs counter to the determinacy of an identity whose boundaries are exclusively delineated by the firm strictures of the symbolic order. The chameleon poet is a protean poet, recalling Proteus, who “responds to the world by assuming innumerable forms, thus remaining elusive to capture” (Chandler and McLane 6).

The fluidity and mobility of the chameleon poet’s having no self or no identity resonates with the motility of the Kristevan semiotic *chora* (*Revolution* 26). The indeterminacy of the chameleon poet suggests that “poetic language in fact heralds the dissolution of the subject as identical with itself” (Lechte *Kristeva* 114). Such dissolution of the self allows the poet to be mingled with the other. Keats’s chameleon poet could be associated with Kristeva’s interpretation of the French poet Lautrémon, in whose work, marked by “an incessant permutation of shifters”, “the ‘I’ [...] due to shifterization and permutation, ceases to be a fixed and localizable point and becomes multipliable” (in Lechte <sup>32</sup>*Kristeva* 145). The chameleon poet could shift into a billiard ball, for instance. The fissure between the subject and the object is eliminated as a result of the poet’s negative capability. Barnard dwells on this issue in the following passage:

Negative capability, with dependence on sensation and emphatic projection, defines a Romantic polarity opposed to the practice of Wordsworth and Coleridge. All Romantic artists shared the problem of relating the subjective and the objective. As John Bayley says, ‘the premises on which any romantic poem is written are an acute consciousness of the isolated creating self on the one hand, and of a world unrelated, and possibly indifferent and hostile, on the other; and the wish somehow to achieve a harmonious synthesis of the two’. Coleridge’s response to this problem was analytical and metaphysical, marked by a fascination with his own mental and creative processes. Keats, who believed that the poet’s ego should go out into the thing perceived, thought

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<sup>32</sup> Lechte again quotes from the untranslated portion of Kristeva’s *Revolution in Poetic Language*.

Coleridge, like Wordsworth, guilty of forcing himself upon both the material and the reader, and of allowing the self to obtrude upon the impersonality of great poetry (*Keats* 53).

The Keatsian poetic voice seeks to go beyond the problem of positing oneself in relation to the division between the subjective and the objective; thanks to his predilection for sensation and his ability of emphatic projection, the distinction between the poet as the agency and the object he observes is not imposed on his poetry, which makes his work impersonal. The loss of this distinction, or the “experience of the one life within us and abroad”, in the words of Abrams, “cancels the division between animate and inanimate, between subject and object – ultimately, even between object and object” (*The Mirror* 66). The poet who enjoys the Keatsian notion of negative capability is similar to the shifting subject invested in the Kristevan semiotic which antecedes the division between signifier and signified since it precedes the divide between such positions as subject and object. For such a negatively capable poet who “relishes paradoxical states of feeling” (Sandy “Tragic Realisation 116) and whose poetic voice bursts the transparent membrane of the symbolic dimension of language through the semiotic rhythms and intonations, poetic language is a *sortie* in the sense Cixous uses the word, an opening up and an access to the libidinal economy that springs from uncharted excessive writing. Cixous in “The Newly Born Woman” asserts that

Writing is the passageway, the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other in me, - the other that I am and am not, that I don’t know how to be, but that I feel passing, that makes me alive - that tears me apart, disturbs me, changes me, who? – a feminine one, a masculine one, some? – several, some unknown, which is indeed what gives me the desire to know and from which all life soars (42).

A *sortie* is breaking up which unyokes the subject settled into the comforting closure of the symbolic fixity and coherence. Negative capability allows the poet to venture into the asymbolic realm where self and other are conflated.

### **2.1.7 Perversion of Language Proper in the Semiotic Realm of *Endymion***

As indicated in the paragraphs above, there are several different ways of explaining how Keats’s luxuriant language resonates with the semiotic dimension of language.

The Keatsian poetic voice writes the body through the materiality of language at the expense of being dislocated out of the symbolic, or of being judged as such. The Keatsian poetic voice penetrates “the deepest recesses of language” (Stewart 138) and thus is sonorously enveloped by the sensual poetic diction which evokes the maternal body. The sumptuous poetic diction facilitates the disruption of denotative, communicative language:

What may most fundamentally be identified as the ‘character’ of Keats’s poetry involves the uncontainable intensities of an inundation of figures, such as oxymoron, enjambment, neologism, and an adjectival distortion and syntactical dislocation, by which ‘thought’ [...] is apparently subsumed within the suffocating sensuousness of ‘language’ (Bennett 1).

An overabundance of figures of speech that “load every rift [...] with ore” (Keats *Letters* 464) suggests that language as registered by the symbolic has limits and won’t suffice to express the unbridled intensities of the semiotic disposition. Accordingly, Bennett speaks of Keats’ impropriety of language, which he identifies as a violation of the rules of grammar or syntax, and as distortions of and within language:

Poetry, specifically the poetry of Keats, is grounded in solecism [a grammatical mistake in speech or writing (OED n. 1)] because of its distortions of and within language. For poetry, the decorum of grammar is violated, conventions are disrupted, language itself is ‘tortured’: words must be stretched, misplaced, collided incongruously with other words, dissected into etymology, fragmented into paronomasia [a play on words, a pun (OED n.)], semantically voided, and then bombarded with meaning (2).

The Keatsian poetic voice, through “acts of linguistic alchemy” (O’Neill “Keats’s Poetry” 103), distorts language in many ways. The Keatsian poetic language twists the symbolic decorum of denotative aspect of language. Stewart also elaborates on how the Keatsian poetic voice penetrates into the crevasses of poetic language:

Metaphor and its sliding approximations, syntactic inversion and suspension, internal rhyme, phonetic drift, etymological irony, strategic coinage, metrical eccentricity, run-on endings, double-pronged grammar: these are only some of the ways Keats, grasping the very poetry of verbal articulation, nerves his verses for their widest work (140).

As a poet deeply invested in the semiotic, Keats disrupts the symbolic aspect of signification in several ways.

Neologism is one of these ways that show the Keatsian “characteristic verbal germination” (Ricks 35). Neologism is one of Keats’s “most resourceful verbal moves, tweaking the lexicon to bring forth unexpected shades of inference” (Stewart 139-40). Keatsian coinages disclose the inadequacy of the symbolic language to render the semiotic conundrums; invented words attest to the pressure of the unrepresentable that forces language into a frenzy of neologisms. In *Endymion*, defined by Aske as “a landscape of language” (*Keats* 62), Keats coins new words such as “budders” (I. 41), “eye-earnestly” (I. 380), “silverly” (I. 540), and “taperness” (I. 782). In this landscape (to continue with Aske’s metaphor), buds are stretched into “budders”; to look with earnest eyes is compressed into “eye-earnestly”; the river that is silvered by the moon runs “silverly” as it flows scintillatingly; a rose leaf is folded around the tapering finger’s “taperness”.

In addition to neologisms, word forms are twisted by a poet who is “preternaturally alive to verbal wizardry” (Stewart 136), which demonstrates how Keats distorts the symbolic. For instance, *Endymion* “sends / My [his] herald thought into a wilderness” (I. 58-9); “herald” is both a noun and a verb, but in this line used as an adjective that modifies “thought”. Similarly, Peona and her playmates speak of “minstrel memories” in her bower (I. 434-5); “minstrel” is deployed as an adjective that modifies “memories” although it is a noun. Likewise, “turtles / Passion their voices” (I. 247-8); “passion” is used as a verb. In the same manner, the reins would slip through *Endymion*’s “forgotten hands” (I. 180-1); “forgotten” is collided incongruously with “hands”. Sleep is called “comfortable bird” (I. 453); “comfortable” and “bird” are ill-matched. In similar fashion, adjective forms are used instead of adverbs: in honour of Pan “every faun and satyr” “tread breathless round the frothy main” (I. 263-70); “High genitors, unconscious did they cull / Time’s sweet first-fruits” (I. 320-1); *Endymion* “lifelike spake” (I. 768). These examples show that the adverb “breathlessly” is reduced to the adjectival form “breathless”, “unconsciously” is changed to “unconscious”, and “in a manner that is full of life” is shortened to “lifelike”.

Another way the Keatsian poetic voice distorts language is that the present participle form is replaced by the past participle. For example, *Endymion* faints “at the charmed touch” (I. 637); the charming touch is changed into the charmed touch. In addition,

examples of aphaeresis, the loss of a sound or sounds at the beginning of a word (OED n. 1), indicate how language is disrupted: “High genitors, unconscious did they cull / Time’s sweet first-fruits” (I. 320-1): the initial “pro” is lost by aphaeresis, so “progenitors” are reduced to “genitors”. Similarly, love, “Thrown in our eyes, genders a novel sense” (I. 807-8): the prefix “en” is excised, so the verb “engender” morphs into “gender”. All these examples demonstrate that language is perverted in *Endymion*. Colvin finds Keats to be

reckless in turning verbs into nouns (a “complain,” an “exclaim,” etc.), and nouns into verbs (to “throe,” to “passion,” etc.); in using at his convenience active verbs as passive and passive verbs as active; and in not only reviving archaic participle forms (“dight,” “pight,” “raft,” etc.), but in giving currency to participles of the class Coleridge denounced as demoralizing to the ear, and as hybrids equivocally generated of noun substantives (“emblem’d,” “gordian’d,” etc.) (*John Keats* 213).

The Keatsian distortion of language, which threatens to eradicate communicative language, is evocative of the semiotic disruption of the symbolic, and this is why it was found to be reckless, demoralizing to the ear and equivocal when viewed from an exclusively symbolic point of view. This perverted language was considered by the contemporary critics to be foul, gross, impure, vulgar, filthy and was associated with malady, mania, infection, absurdity (in Matthews 93-99).

The use of anachronistic words and forms is another indication of the disruptiveness of the semiotic in poetic language. For instance, the narrator invokes the muse to help him “[i]n telling of this goodly company” (I. 128-9); the priest addresses the Latmians “whose precious charge / Nibble their fill at ocean’s very marge” (I. 203-4); fauns and satyrs “tread breathless round the frothy main” (I. 270); Pan is called “[h]earkener to the loud clapping shears” (I. 279). Such word as “goodly”, “marge”, “main” and “hearken” are archaic words charged with echoes of another time. The use of archaisms could be interpreted in two ways; first, the signifier is divorced from the signified once an archaic word is revived in a period when it may be interpreted as somehow unintelligible although it may remain intelligible by definition by means of a form of “double perception” by which an archaic word is “perceived and identified as belonging to that time, while simultaneously its historical disguise is recognised and allowed to affect our responses” (Sönmez “Archaisms” 28); thus, the archaic sense

makes meaning through another complex signification process which is different from that in operation in current language. The exotic-feeling and almost foreign-sounding sound of the known-unknown, perhaps uncanny word signifies in a semiotic way as the gap between the signifier and the signified dilates. Second, archaisms could give a nostalgic aura suggesting the desire to rejuvenate an assumed idyllic lost golden age similar to the evocation of the longing for the lost maternal bowers of infantile plenitude and oneness, “an idyllic dual relationship (mother-child)” (Kristeva *Powers* 59). The Greek etymology of nostalgia (*nostos* means “return home” (OED)) attests to this desire to reclaim fullness in the semiotic maternal *chora*. Archaisms seem to point to a truer truth, a more authentic experience in an endless search for origins; archaisms can thus be seen as the receptacles or archives of a lost or almost-lost truth with regards to “the authenticity of origins” (Sönmez “Non-Standard Speech” 661).

The overuse of adjectival past participles is yet another peculiarity of Keatsian poetic language that is a manifestation of the semiotic investment in *Endymion*. Adjectival past participles are both adjectives and verbs, and neither adjectives nor verbs; they occupy a liminal space between the two, which is indicative of grammatical plenitude and impropriety of language, with them both being fully verbal and fully adjectival. This liminal space between the verbal and the adjectival resonates with the threshold between the semiotic and the symbolic, the poetic voice oscillating between the two. The adjectival past participial form permeates *Endymion*: “rain-scented eglantine” (I. 100), “light-hung leaves” (I. 119), “copse-clad vallies” (I. 120), “ebon-tipped flutes” (I. 147), “Night-swollen mushrooms” (I. 215), “bedded reeds” (I. 239), “Broad leaved fig trees” (I. 252), “yellow girted bees” (I. 253), “fire-tailed exhalations” (I. 367), “bespangled caves” (I. 458), “speckled thrushes” (I. 485), “lidless-eyed train” (I. 598), “Blush-tinted cheeks” (I. 619), “Dew-dabbled” poppies (I. 682-3), “sigh-shrilled adieus” (I. 690), “enclouded tombs” (I. 787), “bedded pebbles” (I. 932) and “lush-leav’d rill” (II. 52). The use of the participial form is regarded as an attempt at compression of imagery and meaning; “the drive-based operation” of condensation, a semantic semiotic device, pluralizes meaning (Lechte *Kristeva* 144) and shows that meanings emerge on “phonic levels of signification” (Stewart 137). Kucich also points out that such “condensed compounds and participle-epithets” as “rain-scented” and “lidless-eyed” could encapsulate “in a single phrase a labyrinth of complexities”

(“Keats” 193). In addition, it could be considered as a proclivity toward agglutination and fusion against a tendency toward isolation and separation, which accords with the notion of indistinct profusion prominent in bower scenes as suggestive of the semiotic bodily interdependence. The employment of adjectival past participles could also be seen as a tendency to freeze the movement, to suspend the flow of empirical time and to stem the flow in order to preserve the sense of completion, perfection, condensation and unity and save it from disintegration; especially the regular ones ending in *-ed* may be seen as an attempt to produce meaning through sound as if there were a fugitive phonic element to be captured. Also, tonic syllables (of the adjectival past participles) in “[d]ew-dabbled” and “[b]lush-tinted” seem to stem and capture the potential fluidity and vagrancy of the preceding noun by means of conflating two words with the help of a hyphen into an inspired third.

Another distortion of the symbolic component of language in *Endymion* is the deployment of *y*-ending adjectives (Bate “Keats’s Style” 413). These adjectival contortions mark the Keatsian poetic voice in *Endymion* which is profusely adjectival, especially laden with adjectives ending in *y*: “fleecy lamb” (I. 74), “palmy fern” (I. 80), “ivy banks” (I. 81), “airy swellings” (I. 118), “surgy murmurs” (I. 121), “shrilly mellow sound” (I. 146), “breezy sky” (I. 221), “spongy sod” (I. 225), “hazy light” (I. 230), “dreary melody” (I. 239), “silvery oak apples” (I. 276), “ripply cove” (I. 430), “mazy world” (I. 460), “bowery nest” (I.539), “flowery spell” (I. 557) and “vapoury tent” (I. 597). The overuse of *y*-ending adjectives is regarded as another indication of a proclivity toward agglutination and fusion as these adjectives ending in *y* merge phonologically with the words that follow them and thus sustain the syllabic momentum of poetic language. The Keatsian poetic voice “revels in the sonorous splendour of vagrancy and slippage” (Stewart 138); the adjective wanders (out from the settled, fixed meaning that the signifier houses) and slides over on the noun thanks to the sound of the letter *-y*. The vagrant words embody the vagaries of the poetic mind through the verbal topography that draws on the common etymology of the words *vagrant* and *vagaries*, as both words derive from the Latin verb which means “wander” (OED)). Furthermore, this adjectival diction points to an adjacent sense; this phonological merging resonates with the fluid, indeterminate world of semiotic bowers where adjoining things intermingle, dissolve and melt into other things without taking

on definite, inflexible existence. Also, the overcharge of y-ending adjectives evokes a slimy sense of tackiness caused by indistinct profusion (which will be discussed in the chapter dealing with the abject).

The symbolic fixity of language is further subverted by means of “the unfortunate predilection for adverbs made from participles (‘lingeringly,’ ‘dyingly,’ ‘cooingly’)” (Bate “Keats’s Style” 413). This subversion of language forces “poetic license” to slip into “poetic laxity” (Stewart 146). These adverbs engendered from present participles pervade *Endymion*: people “feelingly could scan / A lurking trouble in his [Endymion’s] lip” (I. 178-9); Peona whispers to Endymion “pantingly” (I. 407); the stream creeps “windingly” (I. 447-8); vows would be breathed “sighingly among the boughs” (I. 951-2); misery “most drowningly doth sing / In lone Endymion’s ear” (II. 281-2); a soft blending of instruments comes “charmingly” (III. 941-2). Similarly, the tendency to use present participles as plural nouns (gerunds) could be regarded as a violation of decorum, another phonetic semiotic device by which the present moment is dilated into a totality of presence, a plenitude of being. The use of these unusually longer forms of these plurals is an attempt to make more of the thing, more of the word in the texture of his poetry, and they enable the poetic voice to linger over the feeling of the beautiful and to prolong it since “A thing of beauty is a joy forever” (I. 1): Pan provides “the unimaginable lodge for solitary thinkings” (I. 293-4); Endymion believes that a disguised demon “entice[s] / My [his] stumblings upon some monstrous precipice” (I. 701-3); Endymion sees “things / More dead than Morpheus’ imaginings” (III. 119-22); “Groanings swell’d” in a dark valley (III. 490); Glaucus utters “some mumblings funeral” (III. 748).

The use of the present participle is pitted against the use of the past participle in the world of *Endymion* as the former evokes a sense of protean progression and temporality while the latter suggests a sense of unmitigated totality and permanence. Accordingly, Perkins speaks of Keats’s “pronounced reliance on the present participle” which vitalizes and dramatises “the sense of process, taking place, re-enacting it, so to speak, in the texture of his poetry” (198). On the other hand, the deployment of the past participle form connotes a desire to arrest time, to recapture the pleasure of “quiet breathing” of a maternal bower (*Endymion* I. 5). This tension

between the two also connects with the discrepancy between an urge to stretch adjectives by adding *-y* and a tendency to contract adverbs through avoiding the adverbial *-ily* ending that is replaced by the uninflected adverb that looks like an adjective. This oscillation between sprawling adjectives ending in *-y* and truncated adverbs is fundamental to the fluctuation between isolation (non-inflective) and agglutination (inflective) at the heart of the poem.

The conflict between the present participle and the past participle could be mapped unto the perpetual tension between “description and narrative” (Bennett 62). An urge to describe luxuriantly could be considered to be working against an inclination to narrate a story that progresses linearly, to “trace the story of Endymion” (I. 35) with a beginning (I.39), a middle (I. 53) and an ending (I. 57). The tension between the present participle and the past participle could also be seen as the dialectical fluctuation between the semiotic modality and the symbolic register:

The dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic is what makes signification possible. Without the symbolic element of signification, we have only sounds or delirious babble. But without the semiotic element of signification, signification would be empty and we would not speak; for the semiotic provides the motivation for engaging in signifying processes [...] Both elements are essential to signification. And it is the tension between them that makes signification dynamic. The semiotic both motivates signification and threatens the symbolic element. The semiotic provides the movement or negativity, and the symbolic provides the stasis or stability that keeps signification both dynamic and structured (Oliver “Introduction” xv).

The semiotic present participle seems to provide the movement, motility while the symbolic past participle could be thought to provide the stasis or stability.

Dislocation of “ordinary syntactic conventions” (Bari 98) in *Endymion* is another example of perverted poetic diction and of the workings of the semiotic genotext. Word order is dropped as in the case of “alway his eye / Stedfast upon the matted turf he kept” (I. 1501). In the same way, syntax is arranged differently in the following lines: “Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread / A mighty forest” (I. 63-4). Similarly, word order is distorted as the Keatsian poetic voice opts for an unusually loose, appositional syntax which strings together words and phrases that come from different angles and that are charged with different sense impressions:

and if from shepherd's keep  
A lamb strayed far a-down those inmost glens,  
Never again saw he the happy pens  
Whither his brethren, bleating with content,  
Over the hills at every nightfall went. (*Endymion* I. 68-72)

Syntax is dislocated as the subject "his brethren" is not followed by the predicate "went" that comes at the very end of the sentence or line in this case. The appositional word order strings together the sound of the lambs "bleating with content", the visual spatial image of "hills" and the temporal reminder of "nightfall"; these words are thus tied up right before the predicate and achieve a sense of cohesion, which consolidates the misfortune that befalls the inauspicious lamb who strays from the homely, "happy pens". The adhesive effect of the appositional word order accentuates the separation which the straying lamb experiences. This sense of cohesiveness fashioned by the appositional word order is an indication of the violation of the thetic break in the domain of poetic language since syntax "registers the thetic break as an opposition of discrete and permutable elements" (Kristeva *Revolution* 55). Hence, the apposition of words runs counter to the discreteness of the linguistic sign. Also, the deviating syntax dovetails with the wandering lamb. This distortion of syntax evinces that the meaning of words varies when syntax is misarranged; beneath the sensuous surface grinds the invisible machinery of a dislocated poetic syntax which signifies beyond the symbolic confines of the inflexible decorum which fails to render the uncontainable intensities and interlocking energies of words loosely fastened together.

Enjambment is another figure, this time a conventional one, a graphic and phonetic semiotic device, utilised by the Keatsian poetic voice in the deliberate violation of syntactic boundaries: "Where the neat measure of a line marks [for Keats's contemporary critics such as Croker] the orderly boundary of a coherent semantic unit, Keats's serial *enjambement* presents a model of excess" (Bari 92). By means of enjambment, phrases and clauses splay and crawl across lines, which achieves a sense of lyrical flow:

Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I  
Will trace the story of Endymion.  
The very music of the name has gone  
Into my being, and each pleasant scene  
Is growing fresh before me as the green

Of our own vallies: (*Endymion* I. 34-9)

The use of enjambment allows the poetic voice to achieve a sense of profusion and dispersal which runs over from one poetic line to the next without terminal punctuation. In opposition to the end-stopped lines, enjambment does not heighten closure but delays it; the sense of commingling, which is essential to the core of *Endymion*, is attained by means of “the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another” (Milton 1817). The penchant for enjambment is compatible with the proclivity towards agglutination whereas the end-stopped lines highlight the tendency towards isolation. The preposition “Into” that starts the line 37 expresses a movement with the result that something becomes enclosed or surrounded by something else and something makes physical contact with something else; the music of the name goes into the being of the poetic voice; the sense of being enclosed or surrounded resonates with the semiotic oneness which does not recognize a distinction of self and other. Similarly, the preposition “Of” which begins the line 39 expresses a relationship or an association; this sense of connection corresponds to the semiotic modality of bodily interdependence as enjambed lines read like it may cause an increase in pulmonary pressure. Enjambed lines beginning with the preposition *of* permeate *Endymion*: “a basket full / Of all sweet herbs” (I. 155-6); “another crowd / Of shepherds” (I. 161-2); “each cheek / Of virgin bloom” (I. 188-9) and “dying rolls / Of abrupt thunder” (I. 309-10). Likewise, the copula *is*, which starts the line 38, accentuates the sense of interrelatedness by serving to link the subject and predicate as a form of identification, a sort of linguistic copulation. Hence, the figure of enjambment becomes more prominent especially when run-on lines start with prepositions such as *into* and *of*, and the copula. Meaning is delayed, yet overflows as the lines progress and they are interwoven; enjambment allows the poetic voice to express the untrammelled intensities of the semiotic disposition.

The Keatsian “transgressive dissolutions of the decorum of language” (Bennett 2) are also indicated in the formation of “new verbs by the process of cutting off their natural tails, the adverbs, and affixing them to their foreheads”, which was criticized by Croker (in Matthews 114). Croker’s attack published in the *Quarterly* in 1818 demonstrates that the Keatsian impropriety of language was found to be unnatural for some of his

contemporaries. For example, he comments on the creation of new verbs by means of turning adverbs such as out, up and over into suffixes that precede the verbs, which shows the Keatsian “torsions of language” (Bennett 2): “mingled wine” out-sparkles “generous light” (I. 154); a crowd of shepherds was “Up-followed by a multitude” (I.164); huntsmen “out-told / Their fond imaginations” (I. 392-3); “matron Night uptook / Her ebon urn” (I. 561-2); the tongue of the dreamer “overt deem[s] / With mellow utterance” (I.575-6). This impropriety calls up the subvocal, the semiotic conundrum that cannot be vocalised in the symbolic signifier.

The Keatsian coinages of new words by means of prefixes such as *inter-*, *em-*, *en-*, *im-* and *con-* indicate that Keats twists poetic language so that unfettered intensities can be articulated. Keats in his September 1819 letter to the George Keatses says that “Men who live together have a silent moulding and influencing power over each other. They interassimilate” (*Letters* 376). This sense of interpenetration distilled in the portmanteau verb “interassimilate” pervades *Endymion*: souls interknit, they mingle, blend (I. 810-2); green tendrils intertwine (II. 410-1); arms entwine (III. 270); streams interlace (II. 613); things intermingle with other things in the world of *Endymion*, suggesting the semiotic interfusion. Similarly, this sense of mixing together is also indicated by another prefix *com-* and *con-* : Endymion’s “dazzled soul” commingles with the argent, silvery spheres of the Moon (I. 594-5); Endymion communes with the celestial bodies (I. 600); passionate breaths commingle (I.833); souls combine (I. 812-3); “mighty consummation” is desired (III. 828); things interconnect with other things; lines converge with one another; flowers are interwoven (I. 955); things coalesce into one connected whole in this semiotic realm. Likewise, *em-*, *en-* or *im-* is prefixed to a noun so that it could morph into a word loaded with the uncontainable intensities of the semiotic disposition: “enmossed realms” of Pan (I. 251); “old songs waken from enclouded tombs” (I. 787); “gold sand impearl’d / With lily shells” (III. 103-4); “Ensky’d” Endymion (IV. 72). Thus, language is tortured, “tortured with renewed life” (I. 819) in order to accommodate meanings which are not articulated by the symbolic dimension of signification; the prefix *in-* and its variants express the situation of something that is enclosed or surrounded by something else; hence, the sense of togetherness evoked by the semiotic indistinct profusion is emphasised by linguistic interfusion.

This Keatsian impropriety of language disengages the poetic voice from the fixed language of the symbolic. The invention of the y-ending adjectives evinces that the poetic voice in *Endymion* does not have a tendency towards isolation, but a proclivity towards agglutination which brings about a deformation of the symbolic and by means of which language returns to its origin in the semiotic, poetic dimension of the signifying process. The poetic voice ventures beyond boundaries as Endymion “would o’erleap / His destiny” (II. 333-4); the poet does not shy away from perverting language. Keats’s “perverse poetics” (Keach “Cockney Couplets” 184) deviates from the beaten track of symbolic conventions and rules of composition. Semantic non-closure facilitated by the semiotic leads to the nonsensical disorganization of syntax and the perversion of grammar. Once stripped of the symbolic modality, the poetic diction heralds a deep affinity with the semiotic dimension of language; poetic language rejuvenates the pre-linguistic states of childhood where the speechless infant babbles the sounds s/he hears. Keats’s poetic diction exemplifies Kristeva’s understanding of the revolution in poetic language; he distorts language with unintelligible “poetical concentrations”; “the oddity of Keats’s diction” makes the poetic persona an outcast in the symbolic (Barnard *Keats* 16). This outsider recognises “the limitations of [the symbolic aspect of] language” and resists them “inventively and deliberately” (Webb “Cutting Figures” 169).

The so-called impropriety of language indicates that the poetic voice in *Endymion* seems to have no fear of expropriation; a capacity to use language properly is rejected; he is willing to be dispossessed of a linguistic property. Endymion acts like the child who is immersed in the semiotic *chora*, who expresses itself through sounds and gestures, and who inhabits a translinguistic space where it does not yet realize that an utterance can signify something since the meaning which the semiotic element of language makes possible is “translinguistic” or “non-linguistic” (Kristeva *Maladies* 31-3). His dizzying, enticing, mazy, bewildering, luxuriant diction in *Endymion*, a poem which is “labyrinthine and overgrown, a little wilderness amid whose tangles one can wander happily but at the risk of becoming lost” (Sperry 90), is evocative of the maternal abyss and the uterine night, “the old womb of night” (*Endymion* IV. 372). The semiotically invested poet welcomes “the dear abyss / Of death” (*Endymion* I. 904-5). Such poetic diction is suggestive of the semiotic *chora*, the space where the

meaning that is produced is semiotic; all these distortions of the linguistic sign evoke the echolalias, glossolalias, rhythms and intonations of an infant who does not yet know how to use language properly. Keats's impropriety of language and its semiotic elements, which are irreducible to the symbolic modality of language, is suggestive of the repetition of speech by an infant learning to talk or the phenomenon of speaking in an unknown language; such odd "poetical concentrations" (Barnard *Keats* 16) might be comparable to the infant's glossolalic utterance in opposition to intelligible speech registered in the symbolic.

Keats's poetic diction that is evocative of the realm of the maternal punctuates and interrupts the symbolic dimension of language because "poetic language cannot be contained within the strictures such as grammar, syntax, and logic because it is inseparable from language's materiality" (Lechte *Kristeva* 94). Such poetic diction does not discern contours; it splits open the comforting closure of the binary oppositions such as self and other and revels in the pleasures of the sense of open-endedness; it points to a body without appendage, a narrative without closure; it dares to make vertiginous crossings into the other; it never ceases to hear the resonance of "fore-language" as Cixous puts it ("Medusa" 344-5). Such Keatsian relish for the materiality of language is seen in the poet's love for "Spenserian vowels that elope with ease" ("To Charles Cowden Clarke" 56) and his enjoyment of "labyrinths of sweet utterance" (To G. A. W. 4). The materiality of language accrues significance for a poet who is described as being up "to his ears in language": "Vowels are for Keats a passion, consonants an ecstasy, syntax a life force" (Stewart 135).

Writing without being restrained by contours allows the poetic voice to be impregnated with identificatory embraces with the other; the body in the pre-Oedipal dimension of signification is willing to be traversed by the other. The so-called impropriety of language springs from the material pores of the language. Corporeal signification enables the poetic voice to signify with the body; once one signifies through the body, the decorum of grammar is violated and the soothing closure of such binary oppositions as the self and the other is subverted; the speechless infant merges oceanically with the world. In such a phase of imaginary abundance when the speechless infant is willing to be traversed by the other, the semiotic disrupts the

symbolic. As the more “ravenous mode of signifying” (McAfee 39), the semiotic throws the symbolic into disarray; when the semiotic oozes out in signification through the material base of language, it causes turmoil in the symbolic since it disrupts the more clearly, symbolic attempt at communication. The voracious semiotic mode of signifying leaks into the symbolic and upsets the subject’s sense of coherence by means of evoking a lost territory of infantile plenitude and unsettling the borders of an always tenuous subject in process and on trial, “a poetic character that is not fixed, not formed, but always in the process of becoming” (Townsend 171). In his preface to the romance, Keats reminds his readers that *Endymion* is produced by a poetic consciousness of an always tenuous subject in process; the poetic romance “replicates the Romantic commonplace of an indeterminate or unfixed selfhood” (Bari 98). This Keatsian Romantic selfhood that is not “pre-given but rather emerges from situations of conflict and difficulty” (Watkins “History, Self, and Gender” 96) is similar to the Kristevan subject in process/on trial characterised by “the fluidity of subjectivity” (Schippers 36). The indeterminacy of this Kristevan subject connects with Keats’s “sense of life as a precarious state of nature” (Newey “Keats, History, and the Poets” 182). In his preface to *Endymion*, Keats says that

[t]he imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages (505).

Despite the fact that Keats the poet sounds apologetic, this reminder points to the fact that *Endymion*, composed by what we now call “the adolescent” stationed between the boy and the mature man (Ricks 10), is a concrete manifestation of a dynamic subjectivity in fermentation, a poetic consciousness which is “yeasty, ardent and diffuse” (Barnard *Keats* 35). This Keatsian subject in ferment chimes with the Kristevan adolescent; Kristeva views the adolescent as “an open psychic structure”; the adolescent maintains “a renewable identity” and this causes frontiers to be traversed (“The Adolescent Novel” 8-9). *Endymion* is “in a ferment” and “yeasty”, so it rises, overflows, is sticky, permeable and unlocalizable:

Be still the unimaginable lodge

For solitary thinkings; such as dodge  
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,  
Then leave the naked brain: be still the leaven,  
That spreading in this dull and clodded earth  
Gives it a touch ethereal – a new birth (*Endymion* I. 293-8)

The Keatsian yeast of poetic diction rises and overflows beyond the imaginable lodge, which is suggestive of “the semantic swelling constituted by metaphor” (Kristeva *Tales* 278). The poetic leaven permeates these lines, transforms conception; the poetic voice is fermented; thus, it swells and ventures into the teeming lines of verse, as “swell” (I. 201, 215, 836, II. 59, 202, 340, 513, 665, 679-80, 914-5, III. 313, 365, 490, 799, 840, IV. 652-3, 789-90) and “teem” (I.224, 575, II. 667-8, III. 927, IV. 338, 661, 789-90), two of Keats’s favourite verbs, recurrently suggest throughout the poem.

To conclude this section on *Endymion*, the use of oxymoron in *Endymion* evinces that the semiotic and the symbolic elements cohabit in the world of poetry; it also shows that the positive and negative sides of the semiotic coexist. That contradictory terms appear in conjunction demonstrates the dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic as two aspects of signification. The oxymoronic poetic voice feels that melancholy is sweet; opposites flow into one another; boundaries are confused. The oxymoronic *Endymion* is a subject in process / on trial, a subject of flux and energy charges. *Endymion* is “a statement of the difficulty of a situated, fixed or grounded identity”; it “exposes identity as volatile (Bari 97-8). He fluctuates between attachment and detachment; a tendency towards integration alternates with a tendency towards disintegration.

## **2.2 The Confrontation between Saturn’s “palsied tongue” and the Dionysian Shriek of a Delphic Apollo in *Hyperion***

This section of the current chapter focuses on *Hyperion* in two aspects: how the semiotic is repressed and therefore the Endymionese semiotic style of writing is suppressed in this epic and how it returns and leaks into the epicscape (epic landscape), particularly in the description of Apollo’s apotheosis. The dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic in *Hyperion* is investigated by means of studying it as a symbolic epic in contrast to *Endymion* as a semiotic romance, analysing the epic resistance against the abyss of the unutterable, the “lawless drift of fancy that

Keats encouraged in himself” (Bromwich 242), investigating the tension between the voluptuous language of the semiotic “melodizing” “golden-tongued” romance (Keats “On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again” 1-3) and the disciplined diction of the symbolic epic, reflecting on the figure of a Dionysian Apollo immersed in Delphic obscurity, and scrutinising the epic resolution to resist the semiotic bowers and to refuse to be immersed in the semiotic *chora*. This investigation gravitates toward an explanation as to why the epic remains incomplete, ceasing at line 135 of the third book.

### 2.2.1 Epic Ambitions: *Hyperion* as a Symbolic Epic

The dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic becomes apparent as the distinction between *Endymion* as a semiotic poetic romance defined by “journeying, questing, errancy” (Bari 87) and *Hyperion* as a symbolic epic marked by a resolution to keep positions and structures intact. *Endymion* (1818) chronologically precedes *Hyperion* (1820) in a way similar to the semiotic that “logically and chronologically precedes the establishment of the symbolic” (Kristeva *Revolution* 41), but they are interpenetrated (like the Kristevan semiotic and symbolic) since Keatsian poetic voice vacillates between the Endymionese romance and the Hyperionesque epic throughout all his poems, for Keats’s poetry is marked by “a continuing struggle with [romance] that becomes the very condition of his work” (Kern 69). “Epic ambitions are dear to the poetical self” remarks Newey (“Keats’s Epic Ambitions” 69). Keats too aspires to write an epic poem; he wishes to abandon the realm of romance and to embark on an epic journey (Kandl 15; Loreck 48; Cox “Eros and ‘Romance’” 53; Newey “Keats’s Epic Ambitions” 69; O’Rourke xii; Sperry *Keats* 156; Curran *Poetic Form* 114). This divide between romance and epic is evident in his *Sleep and Poetry*, which is marked by “two contrasting ‘realms’ of poetry” (Roe *Keats* 120); therefore, this poem is important to understand the Keatsian oscillation. *Sleep and Poetry* shows “the successive stages through which the poet must pass” (Bate *Stylistic* 2). Accordingly, Keats the poet intends to visit first the realm “Of Flora, and old Pan: sleep in the grass, / Feed upon apples red, and strawberries, / And choose each pleasure that my fancy sees”; then he is resolved to “bid these joys farewell” and “pass them for a nobler life, / Where I may find the agonies, the strife / Of human hearts” and to

acquire the vision of “the charioteer” who “Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear” (Keats *Sleep and Poetry* 101-4; 122-5; 127-8). Richard Woodhouse, a friend of Keats, considers that the vision of the charioteer is the “Personification of the Epic poet” (Ulmer 55). However, Newey notes that “the charioteer’s sight of shapes of “delight” as well as “mystery” (138) and the narrowing of this array to a “lovely wreath of girls” (149) point to a devotion that Keats, for all his commitment to “nobler life,” never casts off, and it involves his inability to finish the *Hyperion* project (“Keats’s Epic Ambitions” 69-70). The outline Keats sets up for himself in *Sleep and Poetry*, which is “a prelude to poetic destiny” (J. S. Hill 11), points to the productive tension between the “pastoral seclusion” (Kern 73) of “pure fountains” and “shady places”, the bucolic poetry of red apples, strawberries, “white-handed nymphs,” tame doves, green robes, “almond blossoms and rich cinnamon,” “a leafy world,” and pearly shells (101-121) that Keats seems to cherish and to be unable to discard, and the high seriousness of the epic, “the king of poetry” (Abrams *The Mirror* 15) that he aspires to. Basically this is the unease between *Endymion* and *Hyperion*. The clash between the former as a poetic romance and the latter as an epic attempt reflects the oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic respectively.

The previous section investigated *Endymion* as the embodiment of the semiotic modality. This section examines *Hyperion* that seeks to portray a desemiotized symbolic realm where the materiality of poetic language, which is embodied in the excess of *Endymion*, is blotted out. Hunt, an admirer and mentor of Keats, points to the Keatsian tendency to suppress the Endymionese effect in *Hyperion*: “The author’s versification is now perfected, the exuberances of his imagination restrained, and a calm power, the surest and loftiest of all power, takes place of the impatient workings of the younger god within him” (in Strachan 40). Hunt’s observation is similar to the Keatsian “wish to restrain the headlong impetuosity of my Muse” as he composes “La Belle Dame sans Merci” (Keats *Letters* 285). However, the young god of poetry is resurrected in the figure of Apollo and thus unsettles the calm, lofty power of the epic.

*Hyperion* is here read through *Endymion* insofar as the epic landscape is invested with the presence of *Endymion*’s absence and in order to reveal how the poetic persona strives to repress the semiotic of the earlier work. Hence, “the solar [*Hyperion*] and

lunar [*Endymion*] motifs that illuminate much of Keats's poetry" (Roe *Keats* 51) are central to the discussion of the dialectical oscillation between the symbolic and the semiotic in Keats's poetry. Reading *Hyperion* through *Endymion* stresses the absence and the (attempted) annihilation of the fluid Endymionese in the epic. Therefore, this section first focuses on what is absent or kept in bay in the epic world of *Hyperion*. Before moving on to discuss what *Hyperion* is, this section emphasises what *Hyperion* is not, which is an attempt to disclose the repression of the Endymionese effect of the semiotic in *Hyperion*.

Unlike *Endymion*, a poetic romance defined as a "meandering" narrative and a "centreless structure" (Aske *Keats* 67), marked by "dynamic mobility" and "restless journeying" (Bari 87), *Hyperion* tells the story of an epic struggle told by means of "a far simpler, more direct, and less wandering narration" (Bennett 145): the dethronement of Saturn and the Titans by their children, the Olympians. Keats's *Hyperion*

begins in mid-action, after the Titans' first defeat. Its central action was to have been the displacement of the Titan sun-god, Hyperion, as yet undefeated, by his successor Apollo. Hyperion's downfall is seen as a tragic consequence of an inevitable historical progress towards higher forms of being. The largest, and most powerful, part of the fragment is devoted to the Titans' suffering (Books I-II): the incomplete Book III describes Apollo's initiation as a god (Barnard *Keats* 56).

Differing from *Endymion*, a poetic romance about a mortal Endymion who falls in love with the goddess of the Moon, *Hyperion* is about the immortal gods of ancient Greece. As opposed to *Endymion* whose "meandering course opposes the static" (Bari 112), *Hyperion* seeks to maintain the static boundaries of the state, that is the unchanging status of the Titanic dynasty. There is an attempt to discard Keats's understanding of romance as "beckoning toward new thresholds, barely apprehended but valuable intimations" (O'Neill "Romantic Period" 313); the epic is marked by the resolution to consolidate and perpetuate the existing structures rather than envisage new ones; therefore, those novel thresholds that are faintly indicated are not welcome in the epicscape.

Keats seems to be aware of the contrast between *Endymion* and *Hyperion*. On January 23, 1818, he writes to Haydon:

In *Endymion* I think you may have many bits of the deep and sentimental cast. The nature of *Hyperion* will lead me to treat it in a more naked and grecian Manner [sic], and the march of passion and endeavour will be undeviating. And one great contrast between them will be that the Hero of the written tale [*Endymion*] being mortal is led on, like Buonaparte, by circumstance, whereas the Apollo in *Hyperion* being a fore-seeing God will shape his actions like one (*Letters* 72-3).

In contrast to the “slipshod” *Endymion* as a luxuriant pastoral romance in which there are digressions as the narrative meanders and deviates (Keats *Letters* 193), *Hyperion* is an epic intended to have “a chastened and disciplined style” (Barnard *Keats* 56). The narrative of *Hyperion* is intended to “refuse to succumb to the error and errancy of [Endymionese] arabesque, opting instead for the straight purposiveness of rectilinear narrative” (Aske *Keats* 73-4). We can understand what Keats means by “grecian Manner” by means of Colvin who explains how Keats differs from the Greeks (as the poet who composes *Endymion*). Colvin says that the Greek genius is “to select and simplify, rejecting all beauties but the vital and essential, and paring away their material to the quick that the main masses might stand out unconfused, in just proportions and with outlines rigorously clear” (*Keats* 96). Thus, *Hyperion* seems to have been designed to reflect the Greek virtues of being selective and producing “just proportions” and clear outlines. Keats’s “grecian Manner” is meant to trim *Hyperion* by cutting away the outer edges of *Endymion*. Therefore, one can argue that *Endymion* is suggestive of the semiotic dimension whereas the symbolic becomes more prominent *Hyperion*; the attempted disciplined style of *Hyperion* attests to the resolution “to avoid foundering in an ‘unsayable’ without limits” (Kristeva *Revolution* 65). Likewise, Garrett points out that Keats “intended to exercise rigorous control over its material, purging it [*Hyperion*] of the luxuries and excrescences of *Endymion*, so that it would advance in a clear narrative line” (28). *Endymion* is purged out of *Hyperion*, yet such an attempt fails. Incomplete, *Hyperion*/*Hyperion* falls. Therefore, the irruption of the Endymionese in *Hyperion* is regarded as the return of the instinctual semiotic, as “a negativity introduced into the symbolic order, and as the transgression of that order” (Kristeva *Revolution* 69).

In terms of literary history, English poetry is said to develop from “external, objective Miltonic modes to more internal and subjective Wordsworthian ones” (Fermanis 46). Keats’s *oeuvre* seems to show the reverse progression; his subjective romance

precedes his objective epic chronologically. In *Hyperion* Keats strives for “impersonality and objectivity” (Barnard *Keats* 56) although the subjective romance intrudes upon the epic. Barnard notes that the Miltonic objectivity “would, Keats hoped, enable him to create an objectivity which reached beyond the dangerously solipsistic self-consciousness of the modern poet” (*Keats* 62). An urge to attain objectivity beyond the threatening solipsism of the Endymionese semiotic realm suggests the tendency towards the imposition of the symbolic in *Hyperion*. However, Barnard also points out that such an “escape from modern self-consciousness was illusory” (*Keats* 62). The repressed semiotic of *Endymion* returns to upset *Hyperion*; this becomes prominent in the description of Apollo’s apotheosis in the third book. The poetic language employed in the scene of Apollo’s transformation regresses to the Endymionese style (Aske *Keats* 95; Levinson 203; Sperry *Keats* 193; Fermanis 88; Newey “Keats’s Epic Ambitions” 78). The Endymionese semiotic distorts the Hyperionesque symbolic.

The Miltonic *Hyperion* is suggestive of the symbolic whereas the Wordsworthian *Endymion* is reminiscent of the semiotic. In the case of a solar epic as a fixed symbolic structure, an ordering intervenes, a law organises the thinkable within the confines of what is signifiable. Therefore, the epic seeks not to relinquish the thetic; it struggles to maintain the symbolic function “under the assault of [semiotic] negativity” and “prevent it [semiotic negativity] from sweeping away the symbolic position” (Kristeva *Revolution* 69-70). By contrast, *Endymion* is “wholly within the liminal” (Curran *Poetic Form* 151); therefore, the lunar romance as more welcoming of the semiotic subtleties and obscurities of the nocturnal and the moonlit realm seems to be more open to the unthinkable, the uncharted, the nebulous and the liminal.

The poetic journey that the poet embarks upon in *Sleep and Poetry* reveals the trajectory that Keats himself follows: “Keats was preparing himself for the great task that lay ahead, which, he thought, must be the production, like his great precursors Spenser and Milton, of a long heroic poem, since ‘epic was of all the king’” (Garrett 3). These precursors seem to provide Keats with clear outlines and an undeviating path which he attempts to cling to; these predecessors help him to locate himself within the boundaries of the symbolic by means of embedding him in the tradition of poetry

(a historical line of poets symbolically established). Thus, the poetic persona seeks to drift free of the semiotic lush effusiveness of *Endymion* before he sets out to write an epic anchored by a desemiocised symbolic structure: “By the time he was writing ‘The Fall of Hyperion’ the resolution to resist the temptation to wallow in luxurious imagery had been firmly taken” (Garrett 70). Every poem partakes of both the semiotic and the symbolic; yet this study claims that the semiotic threatens to outweigh the symbolic in *Endymion* while the attempt to compose a full-fledged epic poem in the Miltonic manner and the failure to do so points to the fact that the semiotic becomes less pronounced, more repressed, but definitely returns to unsettle the symbolic.

### **2.2.2 Resisting the Semiotic Endymionese Temptation in the Epicscape of *Hyperion***

Having contrasted the two poems in terms of the genres they belong to, this section now discusses their predilection for the unknown, the unseen and the inexpressible, their desire for “a passage to the outer *boundaries* of the subject and society” (Kristeva *Revolution* 17) as an indication of an investment in either the semiotic or the symbolic. Unlike *Endymion*, marked by a den which lies “[b]eyond the seeming confines of the space / Made for the soul to wander in” (*Endymion* IV. 513-5), an unknown realm which is “[f]ull alchemized and free of space” (*Endymion* I. 780), the Hyperionesque “den” where the weeping Titans mourn is not cherished as a space for the soul to wander in (*Hyperion* II. 5). The unnameable, the unrepresentable and the incommunicable do not characterise *Hyperion*; the epic tends to discipline the signifier which is set free in the romance. That which cannot be expressed through the symbolic structures of language is mainly articulated through the semiotic aspect of signification, but the unrepresentable, the unfathomable and the immeasurable do not emerge primarily in *Hyperion* because the epic landscape of the poem is not intended to refer to an invisible, presymbolic realm beyond or prior to language. The symbolic setting of the poem is “a vale” where a dethroned Saturn, “a figure of fragments” (Aske *Keats* 89), recalling “the colossal fragments of a great broken statue” (Groom 47), is seen in the first line of the epic (*Hyperion* I. 1); then it moves to the “palace bright” of Hyperion, who is not unseated yet (*Hyperion* I. 176). The second book of the epic begins with the “nest of woe” where the fallen Titans, “bleak shadows of a former

magnitude” (de Almeida *Romantic* 125-6), despair at the thought of being dislodged from power (*Hyperion* II. 14). Hyperion’s palace as a symbolic setting represents Hyperion’s struggle to maintain his position as the god of the sun; the palace is a vestige of his power and his symbolic identity demarcated through the rule of the Titanic dynasty which is predicated on a symbolic positionality. *Hyperion* does not feature the unsymbolizable because it is not interested in the asymbolic, in the extra-verbal or “the trans-linguistic” (Kristeva *Revolution* 189); therefore, it is not marked by the Endymionese poetic act “inherently and unavoidably constituting a [romance] world elsewhere” (Kern 70). The symbolic presides over the epic so the semiotic inexpressibility of the unimaginable longings does not appear predominantly as the epic voice refuses to imagine a journey into a world elsewhere which displaces the Titans. However, despite the epic resolution to resist “the vagaries of *Endymion*” (Aske *Keats* 84), the meandering semiotic that disrupts the rectilinear narrative leaks into the epicscape.

As stated above, the poetic voice of *Hyperion* does not appreciate the unknown and the unidentifiable, unwilling to embark upon a journey into the uncharted, the unexplored world “experienced intensively as the terrain of a romance quest” (Bari 95-6). The synaesthetically described “unseen leaves of sounds divine” (*Endymion* III. 800) do not lure the poet of *Hyperion* into a realm symbolically unrepresentable. Despite the unfathomable and the inexpressible repeated time and again in the poetic romance, the poetic voice of the epic does not engage with them. The frequency of such words as inexpressible, unseen and unheard drastically decreases in *Hyperion*; we see them rarely. For instance, the “eagle’s wings, / Unseen before by Gods or wondering men” and “neighing steeds” “Not heard before by Gods or wondering men” (*Hyperion* I. 182-5) are only mentioned in the description of Hyperion’s abode but the unseen or the unheard does not open up an extra-verbal space where the structures of an exclusively symbolic language are disrupted and novel ways of seeing and hearing emerge. Saturn’s “realmless eyes” do not signify an untrodden terrain beyond the known land, but they portray a despondent Saturn who is seen as sitting upon “the sodden ground” rather than journeying into the submarine or the subterranean (*Hyperion* I. 17-9), a deposed god “whose wasted figure cowers with the grief of the fallen Titans, now divested of their dominion by newly ascendant Olympian gods”

(Bari 118). The lure of the unknown and the unseen in a poetic romance is replaced by “the monstrous truth”, that is the harsh reality of their dethronement (*Hyperion* I. 65). The fallen Titans do not venture into a territory unheard of before; they assemble on a rocky, craggy slope, sit upon “hard flint” instead of thrones (*Hyperion* II. 1-17).

*Hyperion* fears to be tossed into the Kantian abyss of imagination, the abysmal pit of the unknown and the unfathomable. It fears to lose itself in the Romantic chasm; it dreads to be devoured by the Romantic well; therefore, it does not reach the deep abyss of ecstasy and darkness, except for in the lines describing Apollo’s apotheosis. In contrast to this abysmal darkness, *Hyperion* is meant to feature the eponymous Hyperion whose “splendour” pervades “every gulf, and every chasm old” (*Hyperion* II. 357-60) rather than a deposed Saturn who is “frozen” (*Hyperion* I. 87) in a realm defined as a “barren void” (*Hyperion* I. 119). Yet, the abyss beckons like a black hole, threatening the resolution to write an epic in “a more naked and grecian Manner” (Keats *Letters* 72-3). The poet stumbles as he describes the Dionysian shriek that accompanies Apollo’s apotheosis as he is standing on the verge of a bottomless chasm. Since the poet seeks to keep away from the chasm, the realm of the unknown, the unseen, the unfathomable, the immeasurable and the unmanageable are not desired to appear in *Hyperion*. The epic landscape does not register flights of fancy or fits of longing, picturing a different world, inventing a world beyond that is unseen, unheard and untrodden, but instead it concentrates on the current world where the Titans struggle to maintain the symbolic structures by which symbols appear and positions are fixed. In the current world of the fallen Titans, some of them are “chained in torture”, “pent in regions of laborious breath” with “all their limbs” locked up “like veins of metal” (*Hyperion* II. 18-25).

The desire to relapse into the maternal abyss, seen as the aforementioned Kantian abyss of uncurbed imagination, is concretised through caves, caverns, dens, grottos, mazes, wilderness, womb and hollow grounds in *Endymion*, while in *Hyperion* the poetic voice seeks to steer clear of them. The abyss which opens up a space for the unknown and the undescribed in the poetic romance is not meant to allure the poetic voice in the epic landscape of *Hyperion*. In other words, the poetic voice attempts not to be allured

by such an abyss; it resists the temptation, which nevertheless leaks into the “naked and grecian” fabric of the poem (Keats *Letters* 72-3).

### **2.2.3 The Epic Repudiation of the Endymionese Bowers and the Semiotic *Chora***

Unlike *Endymion*, the desire to be immersed in the semiotic *chora* does not predominantly characterise *Hyperion* as an epic project. A sense of merging articulated in the poetic romance through such verbs as “blend” (*Endymion* I. 617, I. 810, III.162, III. 940, III. 963) “mingle” (*Endymion* I. 154, I. 420, I. 811, II. 223, III. 359, III. 974, IV. 83), “interknit” (*Endymion* I. 812, III. 379, III. 963) and “combine” (*Endymion* I.813) does not emerge in the epic landscape of *Hyperion*, and is particularly absent in the persons of the eponymous Hyperion and of Enceladus. In the poetic romance, things coalesce into other things, voices are fused with other voices, and bodies commingle with other bodies. This fluidity, however, is replaced in the epic by a sense of congealment; things solidify and bodies petrify in a state of dormancy and stagnancy. In accordance with the dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic, *Hyperion* resists the immersion in the semiotic *chora*, which nevertheless emerges.

In opposition to the Endymionese immersion in the semiotic *chora*, a sense of congealment, “stony insensibility” (Bari 118) is apparent in the description of the dethroned Saturn, with whom the epic begins. Saturn is “quiet as a stone” (*Hyperion* I. 4); the air is not stirring (*Hyperion* I. 7); trees are charmed “by the earnest [steadfast, unwavering] stars”, dreaming “all night without a stir” on a still summer night (*Hyperion* I. 72-5). Likewise, Saturn the “frozen God” and Thea “were postured motionless / Like natural sculpture” (*Hyperion* I. 85-7). In this state of immobility, bodies are sculpted, things are not flowing into other things unlike the Endymionese bodies melting into each other, the semiotic sounds of “close voices” marrying at their birth (*Endymion* I. 501, II. 815-6).

Despite the tendency to resist the Endymionese world of interdependent bodies and interpenetrated voices, enwreathed smells and interlaced hues, Saturn’s relationship with Thea evokes the semiotic *chora*, resonating with the one between Endymion and his sister Peona. In this relationship resides “a semiotic potentiality related to the

mother's body" (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 219). The deposed Saturn retreats into his den; he is buried deep in the shady vale; he is sunken far from the breath of morn (read as infancy and childhood), from the fiery noon (youth and adulthood) and from the eve's one star (old age); he seems to be cut off from the life cycle, being an infant yet unborn (*Hyperion* I. 1-5). In this prenatal state of dormancy, stillness and motionlessness, Saturn sleeps on the womb-like "sodden ground", with his lifeless "nerveless" hands and his "realmless" eyes closed (*Hyperion* I. 17-9). With his "bowed head", he seems to be "listening to the earth, / His ancient mother, for some comfort yet" (*Hyperion* I. 20-1). Right after this urge to commune with the mother earth, Thea appears as "a goddess of the infant world" (*Hyperion* I. 26). Thea touches his shoulders "with a kindred hand" (*Hyperion* I. 23-4). Despite her "tremendous physical magnitude", Thea is also depicted by "a ministration of unexpected gentleness" (Bari 118). Saturn's relationship with a gentle Thea evokes a mother-infant dyad, a relationship with his kindred, his own flesh and blood; it is a relationship that is built on (innate and genetic) likeness and similarity, as the Indo-European root of *kin* means "giving birth to" and it is shared by Greek *genos* and *Latin* *genus* for race (OED).

In this semiotic symbiosis with the ancient mother of the primeval world, Thea appears like a phallic mother:

She was a goddess of the infant world,  
 By her in stature the tall Amazon  
 Had stood a pigmy's height; she would have ta'en  
 Achilles by the hair and bent his neck,  
 Or with a finger stayed Ixion's wheel.  
 Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,  
 Pedestalled haply in a palace court,  
 When sages looked to Egypt for their lore. (*Hyperion* I. 26-33)

As a Titan herself, Thea has an imposing height; her lofty eminence would dwarf Achilles. Her towering magnificence hinted at in these lines seems to overshadow Saturn. The poem begins with the image of a weak god followed by the image of a strong female deity looming over the enfeebled Saturn as she bends "low" to touch his shoulders (*Hyperion* I. 24), which is suggestive of the dependent infant and the omnipotent mother, of the mother-child dyad of the infant world prior to the symbolic law.

Thea, the ancient mother, is strong enough to stop Ixion's wheel and ease his toil. To explain this image, Allott gives a quotation from Lemprière: "The father of the gods, displeased with the insolence of Ixion, banished him from heaven ... and ordered Mercury to tie him to a wheel in hell. The wheel was perpetually in motion, and ... the punishment ... was eternal" (398). The ancient mother of the primordial world helps the son exiled from heaven, which conveys the idea that Thea as a comforting ancient mother soothes the dethroned Saturn, the father banished by his son this time; she comforts the diminished Saturn who looks like a banished child punished by the usurping father. This reference to Ixion is therefore suggestive of the pre-symbolic mother-infant relationship.

Thea is described as a powerful and merciful goddess who respects Saturn: "But oh, how unlike marble was that face! / How beautiful, if sorrow had not made / Sorrow more beautiful than beauty's self" (*Hyperion* I. 34-6). Differing from the frozen Saturn who is quiet as a stone, Thea's face is unlike marble, impressed by sorrow. In this deadened world of petrified bodies and solidified things, Thea's face marked by grief is a sign of feeling; her relationship with Saturn is informed by an emotive response. Resonating with the tactile immediacy of Endymion's attachment to Peona in her maternal bower, Thea's relation with a kindred soul is marked by the sense of touch:

One hand she pressed upon that aching spot  
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,  
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain;  
The other upon Saturn's bended neck  
She laid, and to the level of his ear  
Leaning with parted lips some words she spake (*Hyperion* I. 42-7)

This intimacy of the two bodies, with Thea inclining towards Saturn, with her hands feeling the seat of emotion and pain, touching his bended neck evokes the proximity of the relationship between a dependent infant and a caring mother; Thea 'fluent weeping erodes the rigidity of Saturn's sculptural form' (Bari 122). This nearness of one strong body tending another feeble body evokes the symbiosis with the phallic mother: "the ego – never precisely identified – will never separate from her" and "no symbol is strong enough to sever this dependence" (Kristeva *Revolution* 65). Thea uttering mourning words through her parted lips to the level of his ear recalls the maternal bowers of "quite breathing" of the poetic romance (*Endymion* I. 5). Saturn's

bended neck and Thea's inclining body suggest the soothing and healing closeness of bodies leaning on each other; her hand feeling Saturn's "aching spot"- which corresponds to the human throbbing heart - likens the frozen, lifeless god to an animate body with a pulsating heart, even though he is immortal; Thea's "touch seeks to rouse Saturn from his self-anaesthetisation" (Bari 126). When Saturn wakes up and sees the kneeling Thea who is weeping for their fallen house, he says to her with "a palsied tongue": "Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face" (*Hyperion* I. 93-6). These two bodies are immersed in an intimacy based on feeling; her feeling hands echo his body sensing her presence; the adjacency of these bodies feeling each other precedes the sense of sight, which suggests a non-visual, intrauterine feeling of oneness, an inter-embodied state. This space of feeling before seeing evokes the maternal, nourishing semiotic *chora* which precedes "specularization" (Kristeva *Revolution* 26).

This dynamics of proximity that characterises an infantile Saturn's relationship with a maternal figure stands in stark contrast with the resolution to write an exclusively symbolic epic cut off from the semiotic Endymionese. The nearness of bodies feeling each other recalls the Endymionese immersion in the dynamics of proximity. In contrast, the symbolic epic universe of *Hyperion* emphasises the dynamics of property through the figures of Hyperion, who struggles to hold on to the property, the throne in this case, to maintain his proper self, that is his position as the god of the sun.

Despite this Endymionese image of these two bodies communicating in a non-verbal way, the sheer fullness of being and metaphors of fullness in *Endymion* are mostly replaced by metaphors of emptiness and evacuation in *Hyperion*, which displays that the epic vacillates between the semiotic and the symbolic. The epic poem starts with a keen sense of loss and separation. Thea's words to Saturn accentuate this sense of loss in a section replete with caesuras, a poetic device that graphically embodies divisions:

Saturn, look up! – though wherefore, poor old King?  
I have no comfort for thee, no not one:  
I cannot say, "Oh, wherefore sleepest thou?"  
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth  
Knows thee not, thus afflicted for a God;  
And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,  
Has from thy sceptre passed; and all the air  
Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.  
Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,

Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;  
And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands  
Scorches and burns our once serene domain. (*Hyperion* I. 52-63)

Thea's mournful remarks are marked by a sense of separation (heaven is parted from Saturn), loss of recognition (the earth does not know Saturn any more), a sense of evacuation and depletion (the air is emptied of Saturn's majesty); an image of deflation is presented as opposed to the inflated, pompous selfhood. A sense of absence, abandonment and desertion features these lines: Saturn's thunder is conscious of the new commander; a sense of bereavement pervades the lines. Unlike *Endymion*, a poem of immersion, unification, indistinct profusion, *Hyperion* is a poem of separation, dissociation; the language of *Hyperion* is accordingly suggestive of divorce and splitting. Unlike *Endymion*, a poem of affiliation, Saturn is afflicted in a poem of conflict; he is troubled, knocked down and weakened. He is also afflicted in another sense of the verb; as a celestial body in a stressful aspect with another celestial body (*OED* v. 1.1), Saturn is afflicted by the Olympian "rebel" and "conquering" Jove (*Hyperion* I. 249, II. 48).

Like the Endymionese metaphors of fullness replaced by the metaphors of evacuation in the epic poem, the semiotic bowers of bliss seen in the poetic romance do not predominantly characterise *Hyperion*. The bower of plenitude is contrasted with Saturn's suffocating lair, "[f]ar sunken from the healthy breath of morn" (*Hyperion* I. 2-5), like a place where not a god but a wild animal lives. Saturn's lair "in the inhospitable and unhappy landscape" of *Hyperion* (Bari 119) recalls the "den" where "no insulting light / Could glimmer on their tears", where "the bruised Titans" mourn and groan (*Hyperion* II. 4-6). Unlike the "cooling covert" of the poetic romance (*Endymion* I. 17), the "covert" in *Hyperion* (I. 152) where the "fierce" Titans are "self hid, or prison-bound" (I. 161) is like a thicket in which game can hide (*OED* n. 1). The Titans are hidden in a "covert drear" (*Hyperion* II.32):

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. (*Hyperion* II. 33-8)

The Endymionese cool covert is contrasted with the forlorn moor, lifeless, “lorn of light” (*Hyperion* I. 118). The comforting, soothing bowers of bliss are supplanted by the dull coverts devoid of vitality; their “nest of woe” is described as follows:

Crag jutting forth to crag, and rock that seemed  
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,  
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns;  
And thus in thousand hugest fantasies  
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe. (*Hyperion* II. 10-14)

Unlike the smoothness, roundness and volubility of the Endymionese bowers that are achieved on the phonetic level by the bilabial “b” and “w” sounds, the Titans’ nest of woe presented as “a psychological landscape of the Titans’ psychic state” (de Almeida *Romantic* 280) is marked by crags, rocks and horns in lines which have a stuttering rhythm. In contrast to the “bowery nest” of the poetic romance (*Endymion* I. 539), the Titans’ jagged “nest of pain” (*Hyperion* II. 90) is marked by ruggedness, roughness, unevenness, steepness, sharpness and spikiness. The smooth, dulcet and resonant tone of the bowery nest is contrasted with the raucous noise of “the solid roar / Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse, / Pouring constant bulk, uncertain where” (*Hyperion* II. 7-9). The harsh, raucous sound of the epic world of *Hyperion* stands for the “masculine energy of style” which the poetic romance lacks according to Hazlitt (in Matthews 248). The symbolic universe of the epic attempts to exclude the semiotic bowers.

In conformity with the dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic, the Endymionese bowers are repressed, but they appear. The Endymionese bowers are mentioned in the epic landscape in only two ways: the domain of *Hyperion* and the realm of Apollo.

First, the domain of the not-yet-dethroned *Hyperion* is marked by the prelapsarian “bowers of fragrant and enwreathèd light” and “diamond-pavèd lustrous long arcades” (*Hyperion* I. 219-20). These bowers of fragrance are pictured as some assets that *Hyperion* is soon to be dispossessed of. The description of *Hyperion*’s symbolic domain of positions is characterised by the Endymionese idiom. In this bower he tastes “the spicy wreaths / Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills”; the voluptuous poetic diction marked by his “ample palate” which is to taste “poisonous brass and metal

sick” when he falls is suggestive of the sensual language used in the poetic romance (*Hyperion* I. 186-9). Before he is dispossessed of his bright palace “glowing gold” and glaring “a blood-red” with its “fiery galleries” and “its curtains of aurorian clouds” (*Hyperion* I. 176-81), Hyperion, the lord of the sun, enjoys “the full completion of fair day”, “harboured in the sleepy west”, lying “upon exalted couch” and slumbering “in the arms of melody”, pacing away “the pleasant hours of ease”, with his “wingèd minions” standing “in close clusters” within each “deep recess” (*Hyperion* I. 190-7). His bright palace in his “lucent empire” is described as “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. 235-9). This soft clime evokes the “golden clime” of *Endymion* (III. 455); similarly, the crystalline pavilions recall the Endymionese rivers’ “crystal mocking of the trees and sky” (*Endymion* I. 421-2), the “crystal eye” of the well (*Endymion* I.870-1), the “crystal wall” and “crystal vines” Endymion encounters in his subterranean quest (*Endymion* II. 595, II. 615), the “crystal pool” (*Endymion* III. 331), the “crystal-smooth” feeling of the ocean (*Endymion* III. 383), “a fabric crystalline” (*Endymion* III. 628), the “crystal place” (*Endymion* III. 735) and the “crystal bower” (*Endymion* III. 1018). All these strongly resonate with the luscious world of the poetic romance. The doors of Hyperion’s bright palace fly open

In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,  
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet  
And wandering sounds, slow-breathèd melodies –  
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,  
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,  
That inlet to severe magnificence  
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in. (*Hyperion* I. 205-12)

Hyperion’s palace is described through a highly sensuous language with sibilants creating a whispering-like music. Senses are merging into each other; soft fragrance and fragrant softness are given through the fusion of the senses of touch and smell; a visual image said to cool eyes is adumbrated through the coalescence of the ocular and the tactile; silence is smooth and sounds are wandering. Wandering sounds are evocative of the “sounds forlorn” of *Endymion* (*Endymion* I. 205); smoothest silence resonates with the “smoothest echoes” of the poetic romance (*Endymion* I. 119).

Second, the realm of Apollo strongly evokes the Endymionese presymbolic bowers. His enchanting golden melody is heard from “a bowery strand” of “an island of the sea” (*Hyperion* II. 274-6); Delos, where Apollo is born, is described as the “Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades” (*Hyperion* III. 23). This embowered island is marked by green olives and poplars, “lawn-shading palms”, Zephyr-breathed songs, “dark-stemmed” thick hazels “beneath the shade” (*Hyperion* III. 24-7). The use of these hyphenated phrases implies proximity, continuity and contact of the semiotic bowers rather than distance and discontinuity. Also, his fair mother and twin-sister are pictured as sleeping “in their bower” (*Hyperion* III. 31-2). Like a wandering romance hero on a quest, Apollo wanders in the morning twilight

Beside the osiers of a rivulet,  
 Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.  
 The nightingale had ceased, and a few stars  
 Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush  
 Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle  
 There was no covert, no retirèd cave,  
 Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves,  
 Though scarcely heard in many a green recess. (*Hyperion* III. 33-41).

Apollo’s embowered isle recalls the Endymionese world of romance; it is “a return to the sensuous Endymion’s bowers of bliss” (Fermanis 89). The “osiers of a rivulet” bring to mind the willow keeping “[a] patient watch over the stream” (*Endymion* I. 446-7); the calm-throated thrush echoes “the speckled thrushes” of the poetic romance (*Endymion* I. 485); the green recess is reminiscent of “the green world” of *Endymion* (I. 16). Despite the resolution to purge *Endymion* out of *Hyperion*, there are many echoes between the poetic romance and the epic. *Hyperion* is not only an epic of boundaries but also a “narrative of transitions” (Kucich “Keats’s Literary Tradition” 253); The existence of boundaries paradoxically gives way to transitions, transgressions; boundaries forge that which threatens them. A Hyperionesque epic transitions into an Endymionese romance in the lines above.

#### **2.2.4 An Epic Attempt to Castigate and Anaesthetise the Semiotic Tongue**

*Hyperion* is also marked by a firm decision to eschew an intensely sensuous poetic diction in order not to breach the thetic. *Hyperion* is marked by “a certain repression of ‘sensuous’ language and a reduced concentration on sensuous perception” (Bennett

145). The poetic persona is resolved to leave behind the voluptuous poetic diction of *Endymion*, where the tactile, gustatory, kinetic, visceral, visual and aural senses are extremely intensely used. Nonetheless, the poetic voice seems to be unable to resist the temptation of the sensuous language.

The intensely sensuous poetic diction of *Endymion* is disciplined in *Hyperion* in order to prevent the semiotic from dismantling the symbolic in poetry. References to the tongue throughout the poem suggest that a preoccupation with language and signification marks *Hyperion*. The semiotically-charged tongue which “overtteem[s] / With mellow utterance, like a cavern spring” (*Endymion* I. 575-6) is castigated in the epic; the speechless cavern spring, which bubbles in a way that antecedes sign and syntax, is chastened and turned into a frozen, unmoving “cathedral cavern” (*Hyperion* I. 86). The Endymionese cavern that signifies genotextually is mentioned only once in *Hyperion*, changed into a cathedral, deracinated and formed according to the rational knowledge of architecture, the laws of a discipline. The fact that the Endymionese cavern spring morphs into the Hyperionesque cathedral cavern is indicative of the imposition of the “*social organism* [cathedral as a social/religious institution] that sustains and fosters this sealing off of instinctual rhythm” (Kristeva *Revolution* 96). As opposed to the Endymionese bubbling streams that signify semiotically, streams go “voiceless by” in *Hyperion* (I. 11). These descriptions are marked by Keats’s “evocation of windlessness and voicelessness” (O’Neill “Writing and History” 154). Unlike the “mellow reeds” which are “touch’d with sounds forlorn” of *Endymion* (I. 205), the water nymphs are mute in the cold world of *Hyperion*: “the Naiad ‘mid her reeds / Press’d her cold finger closer to her lips” (I. 13-4). The Endymionese Naiad (*Endymion* I. 272; II. 129, 620; IV. 709), “an intruder from *Endymion*’s pastoral world” (Barnard *Keats* 57), is rendered voiceless in the vast still setting of the epic. Bennett argues that the Naiad’s “deadened hand at the start of the poem interdicts speech, language, poetry and prefigures the dead hand of Saturn four lines later” (150).

Similar to caverns and reeds that are mute in the epic landscape, the “honeyed tongue” striving against “[r]oughness of mortal speech” in *Endymion* (II. 818-20) is enfeebled in *Hyperion*. The tongue that speaks corporeally and bares the bodily base of language in the poetic romance is subdued: Thea’s “mourning words” to Saturn “in our feeble

tongue / Would come in these like accents; O how frail / To that large utterance of the early Gods!” of “the infant world” (*Hyperion* I. 49-51, I. 26). Following this, Thea’s words are given in a “naked” and “disciplined” language which is stripped of the semiotic effusiveness and drops the romance embroidery of *Endymion*. The poet’s “feeble tongue” that renders the “large utterance” of the primordial gods in intelligible terms communicates the idea that there is another language, another aspect of signification that is untranslatable or partially translatable at the expense of “that large utterance” being restricted, truncated, dwarfed or shrunken, being watered down to an understandable frame of reference which makes meaning in the symbolic realm of neat structures and strictures. Thea’s words are transliterated into our feeble tongue. Thea is the first deity who speaks in *Hyperion*, whose voice and enunciation we hear as the epic opens with the voiceless Saturn. The enunciation of the primeval gods of the infant world (which we do not hear in the original form) is suggestive of the fore-language of an infant registered through the semiotic aspect of signification which the epic poet is resolved not to let take hold but to poorly translate. This absence of the asymbolic fore-language hinted at in the articulation of poetic inadequacy points to the presence of “an anterior disnarrated” (Bennett 149), in other words, the semiotic *Endymion* “disnarrated”, jettisoned out of *Hyperion*. The pressure of the absence (of what has been denied) deep within the “naked” (Keats *Letters* 72) language of *Hyperion* disrupts the epic project with an overwhelming sense of an alternative language, an otherness of language that lies deep “within the uncluttered syntax of the verse” (Bennett 149).

Thea is associated with music: she speaks in “solemn tenour and deep organ tone” (*Hyperion* I. 48); her words are accompanied by the musical side of language, the material base of language; this line foregrounds “the materiality of voice” (Bennett 148). However, her musical language is unheard, but only adumbrated in weak, poor translation in the soundscape of *Hyperion*; the semiotic, musical, material side of language is lost in translation or under-translated. The acoustic environment of *Hyperion* does not register the unheard primal language of the infant presymbolic world. The deep urge to struggle against the “[r]oughness of mortal speech” and the “dearth / Of human words” (*Endymion* II. 817-8) does not characterise the poetic voice of *Hyperion*. Instead, human words (linguistic signifiers) are intended to suffice to

make meaning, to produce proper signification in the symbolic realm. Thea's "mourning words" do not revitalise the voiceless unreceptive nature even though they break the silence only temporarily:

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,  
Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,  
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,  
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,  
Save from one gradual solitary gust  
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,  
As if the ebbing air had but one wave;  
So came these words and went (*Hyperion* I. 72-9)

Thea's utterance comes like a solitary gust; the semiotic recedes like one ebbing wave of air; summer night is entranced, trees are charmed and dream but they are motionless. The semiotically charged "silvery," "mossed" and "crisped" oaks of *Endymion* (I. 276; II. 49; IV. 295) here appear as gigantic, powerful "senators", a word which implies law, law-making, order and hence the symbolic. Unlike the vocal, throbbing responsive nature that beats to the rhythm of the human tongue in *Endymion*, nature and its rendition in *Hyperion* is mute and ineffective; it does not speak corporeally; it is not invested in the semiotic musical sounds that distort the symbolic aspect of signification.

Similarly, Saturn's "palsied tongue" (*Hyperion* I. 93) does not highlight the bodily base of language; he speaks "with a palsied tongue, and while his beard / Shook horrid with such aspen-malady" (*Hyperion* I. 93-4). This is the first time that the dethroned monarch speaks but it is with a palsied tongue, a desemioticised tongue which does not articulate one's sensorial investment, an anaesthetised tongue that could be read "as a negation of the fecund wordiness of *Endymion*" (Bennett 146). The semiotic side of language is palsied, so melody becomes malady; the lush poetic language of the poetic romance is palsied in the de-sensorialised world of Saturn. The palsied tongue metaphorically represents the chastened, disciplined language that the epic poet aspires to deploy. The embodied, instinctual tongue of *Endymion*, the bodily base of language of the poetic romance is palsied in *Hyperion*; the body does not signify the way it does in the bucolic world of *Endymion*; it is numb, incapacitated and insensible; the living body is not transfused into language.

The poetic voice admits that the Titans' sorrow is "[t]oo huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe" (*Hyperion* I. 160), which shows the poet is aware that the gods' woe is beyond words, something indescribable, inexpressible, yet he does not allow the semiotic modality to articulate what is unutterable within the confines of the symbolic realm. Nevertheless, the repressed semiotic returns; Hyperion speaks to the fallen Titans: "He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat / Held struggle with his throat but came not forth" (*Hyperion* I. 251-2). Similarly, the Titans "[g]ave from their hollow throats the name of 'Saturn!'" (*Hyperion* II. 390-1); likewise, Apollo's "white, melodious throat / Throbb'd with the syllables" (*Hyperion* III. 81-2). These lines indicate the bodily base of poetic language through the semiotic modality of signification; the sounds that struggle to issue from Hyperion's throat and the words that bubble in the hollow or melodious throats evince that the medium of language is the human body. The material of language is the sounds which emerge from their throats; these embodied words stress the material base of language which becomes more manifest in the semiotic potentiality of poetic language; the unreleased, unarticulated, perhaps stillborn sounds which do not come forth from Hyperion's throat into the mouth where they are transformed into signifying differentials, distinct, intelligible words, where they are "shaped into signifying sounds" (Pinsky 8) make meaning genotextually through the somatic and rhythmic impulses of the semiotic discharged into the symbolic and also allow "the speaking animal to sense the rhythm of the body" (Kristeva *Desire* 34), make the speaking subject or the "noble animal Man" in Keats's words signify with "the same instinctiveness [...] the same animal eagerness as the Hawk" (*Letters* 270). Hyperion "spake, and cease'd"; he is unable to speak any longer as he is seized by too much affect which causes words-to-be to remain as impulsive sounds not sculpted into an intelligible utterance, not cast in tones of reason; the rhythm of the body seizes the speaking animal, takes hold of his linguistic capability. Likewise, the rhythm of nature distilled in the alliterative line of "the solid roar / Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse" (*Hyperion* II. 7-8) makes the groaning Titans unheard.

Saturn's dead tongue is revitalised, which shows that the semiotic leaks into the symbolic universe of *Hyperion*. Saturn's "palsied tongue" is revitalised as it warms up

once Enceladus's "mightiness" comes "like an inspiration" to him (*Hyperion* II. 107-9):

There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines  
When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise  
Among immortals when a God gives sign,  
With hushing finger, how he means to load  
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought,  
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:  
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines;  
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,  
No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,  
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom  
Grew up like organ, that begins anew  
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,  
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly. (*Hyperion* II. 116-28)

The fallen Saturn seeks to charge his "palsied tongue" with "the full weight of utterless thought". Crushed beneath the pressure of the inexpressible, he means to rejuvenate his tongue with thunder, music and pomp, in other words with majesty, stateliness and grandeur. His tongue is paralysed by that which is not put into words, ineffable, "unutterable" or inexpressible, beyond words, which are or would be recognised as linguistic signifiers (Allott 423). The weight of the unutterable is so palpable that it presses upon him, enforces him to express it semiotically by loading his tongue with music, assuming the vital voice of the living nature, "the roar of bleak-grown pines". The repressed semiotic surges up when Saturn's voice, imbued with new life and vitality, grows up like organ and hence symbolically organises and semiotically "musicates" language simultaneously (Kristeva *Revolution* 233), resonating with the unheard presymbolic language of Thea, colouring the lines with the Endymionese silver vibrations, harmonies stopped short, the elemental asymbolic roar of the primordial bleak-grown pines. In accordance with the semiotic modality, the lines above embody, in a sense, pure music in terms of the way sonorous "o" sounds in almost each line; words retreat by the foregrounding sounds. Also, the onomatopoeia as in the words "roar" and "pomp" is a transverbal semiotic element that contributes to the creation of a palpable discourse based on sounds rather than content words.

Saturn's reinvigorated tongue is followed by Oceanus's "first-endeavouring tongue"; his tongue also demonstrates that the preverbal semiotic leaks into the symbolic realm of the epic:

So ended Saturn; and the God of the Sea,  
Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,  
But cogitation in his watery shades,  
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,  
In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue  
Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands. (*Hyperion* II. 167-172)

The idea of an infant's "first-endeavouring tongue" recalls the weight of the extra-verbal unutterable which could only be expressed through the semiotic modality. The language introducing the sophist Oceanus is only temporarily eclipsed by the Endymionese semiotic apparent in the alliterative line describing "the God of the Sea, / Sophist and sage" and the adjectival description of his "watery shades" and "locks not oozy". The Endymionese adjectival diction - in *Endymion* adjectives far outnumber verbs (Bate *Stylistic* 32) - reappears here although "[a]djectives are cut in favour of verbs" in *Hyperion* (Minahan 124). The rhythmical murmurs his endeavouring tongue catches "from the far-foamed sands" resonate with "[t]he surgy murmurs of the lonely sea" (*Endymion* I. 121); the obscurity of the compressed "far-foamed sands" that semiotically signifies through what may be called "a verbal penumbra" (Stewart 143) could only make meaning by means of the speechless infant's pre-symbolic twist of language. Too much of the murmurs of the infant's endeavouring tongue threatens to devour the symbolic language. All of these are conducive to such a semiotic tongue.

Oceanus's faith in the priority of beauty contributes to the partial and temporary resurgence of the Endymionese effect in *Hyperion*. His belief in the pre-eminence of beauty in the "evolutionary struggle between lower and higher kinds of good" (Barnard *Keats* 58) recalls Keats's poetic romance which begins with the line "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever" (*Endymion* I. 1). Oceanus utters "the eternal law": "That first in beauty should be first in might. / Yea, by that law, another race may drive / Our conquerors to mourn as we do now" (*Hyperion* II. 228-31). His belief in the superiority of beauty suggests a connection with *Endymion*: "The optimistic belief in an evolutionary progress governed by the ultimate primacy and might of beauty provides a link between the kind of thinking in *Endymion* and Keats's epic" (Barnard *Keats* 63).

This veneration of beauty provides a *sortie* into the Endymionese realm from the Hyperionesque epicscape.

However, the poem oscillates between the semiotic and the symbolic; despite this semiotic intrusion, the symbolic seems to dominate the semiotic in the words of Oceanus, who believes in the law of progress, “a universal pattern of decline and renewal”, and who expresses the need for “order in the face of chaos” through “the manifest philosophic side” of *Hyperion* (Newey “Keats, History, and the Poets” 180). Oceanus, whose speech depicts “an inevitable development towards greater perfection” (Barnard *Keats* 62), explains to the fallen Titans the “course of Nature’s law” (*Hyperion* II. 181). The language of Oceanus as a “[s]ophist and sage” and as a philosopher-king “traditionally revered for his wisdom by his fellow-deities” (Allott 425), is informed by the symbolic because the symbolic implies “meaning proper” designated by the discourse of philosophers (Oliver “Introduction” xiv). The impropriety of the trans-linguistic murmurs the infant’s first-endeavouring tongue catches from the ineffably compressed far-foamed sands is kept at bay. As in Plato’s thought, the “divinely inspired poet” who suspends his rationality “in order to create” (Faflak “Critical Responses” 120) is forestalled by the philosophic mind of Oceanus, who bears “all naked truths” unsullied by semiotic polyvalence and utters the unembellished truth he believes to have envisaged in a naked manner (*Hyperion* II. 203). Accordingly, Plato thinks that poets’s frenzy “would be useful to the state only after having been evaluated, sorted out, and purified in its turn by wise men” (Kristeva *Powers* 28). As representative of the Platonic wise man, Oceanus sorts out the poetic frenzy by means of accentuating the lines, boundaries, and categorisations that a linear understanding of historical progression requires.

The sophist and sage Oceanus is not an “Athenian” philosopher exclusively invested in the symbolic aspect of signification (*Hyperion* II. 168), but he contemplates “in his watery shades”, a realm induced with a submarine Endymionese semiotic suggestiveness and fluidity. Hence, the epic swings back and forth between the semiotic and the symbolic in Oceanus’s speech, for the Oceanus passage has a rationalising, philosophising “cerebral detachment” but also “outreaches” it (Newey “Keats, History, and the Poets 181). The speech of Oceanus who seems to believe in

the progressive line of history is undercut by the vestiges of the Endymionese semiotic, for the Keatsian poetic voice appears to embrace “the broader, intersecting movements of progress and regression” (Kucich “Keats’s Literary Tradition” 250).

The philosophically-minded Oceanus, who ponders “high and deep” and cogitates “in his watery shades” (*Hyperion* II. 164-9) and speaks with an endeavouring tongue, is followed by Clymene, a sea nymph who, speaking with a “too indulged tongue” (*Hyperion* II. 298), describes her experience and her enchanting encounter with the “new blissful golden melody” of Apollo (*Hyperion* II. 280), “the Father of all verse” (*Hyperion* III. 13). The philosopher’s symbolic lines are undercut by the poet’s figural domain of the semiotic “golden melody”.

Clymene recounts her encounter in words reminiscent of the Endymionese register. In the presence of the fallen Titans and particularly the furious Enceladus, who will be disturbed by the semiotic blurring of boundaries and therefore wants to continue to see the Olympians as nothing but as their foes, Clymene speaks with “hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild, / Thus wording timidly among the fierce” (*Hyperion* II. 250-1). The semiotic is indicated faintly through Clymene, who speaks timidly and looks up mildly in Keats’s words, a sea nymph of watery shades described by means of the Endymionese diction which dissolves the decorum of language through cutting off the preposition (“up”) of a phrasal verb and placing it before the verb like a prefix (“up-looking”). Though timid and apologetic in tone lest she aggravate the fallen Titans, she starts relating her encounter with the golden melody of Apollo:

I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,  
Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land  
Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.  
Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;  
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;  
So that I felt a movement in my heart  
To chide, and to reproach that solitude  
With songs of misery, music of our woes;  
And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell  
And murmur’d into it, and made melody – (*Hyperion* II. 262-71)

Clymene seems to be “momentarily suspended between her resistance to loss and her joy in irresistibly seductive beauty” (Keach “Rethinking Romantic Poetry” 233). Even though she says she is grieving, perhaps not to aggravate the Titans, her enthusiastic

description of her experience in highly emotive and affect-laden language reveals her allegiance to the semiotic music of Apollo, which is, for instance, apparent in the consonance of end syllables of “fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers”. With feverish lips, a visual image that recalls the bodily base of language and its material sounds, Clymene recounts her experience which takes place in an Endymionese realm: a pleasant shore, a sweet clime, a land of fragrance, quietness, trees and flowers; a realm described by a sensuous poetic diction, which is emotive and moves the heart, not working cerebrally. Her “soft delicious warmth” evokes “[d]elicious symphonies” of the poetic romance (*Endymion* III. 798); the olfactory sense is interlaced with the aural one which is in its turn enwreathed with the visual one which is also succeeded by the gustatory effect through synaesthesia. Such soft delicious warmth moves her heart, yet she feels she needs to chide that emotion, a move that sounds similar to the resolution to chasten and discipline the Endymionese effect and also affect in *Hyperion*. Differing from the three male characters of the epic (the voiceless and motionless Saturn, the aggressive, fiery Hyperion and the enraged Enceladus), Clymene sings of their woes; her music foreshadows the golden melody of Apollo, only in a fainter mode. The mouthed shell she murmurs into recalls the bodily base of poetic language employed by a poet “rapt by the syllables of English verse” (Stewart 135), and it exhibits how poetic diction draws on the material sounds of language before they are shaped into signifying sounds.

Clymene quits singing once she hears the golden melody of Apollo:

O melody no more! for while I sang,  
 And with poor skill let pass into the breeze  
 The dull shell’s echo, from a bowery strand  
 Just opposite, an island of the sea,  
 There came enchantment with the shifting wind,  
 That did both drown and keep alive my ears.  
 I threw my shell away upon the sand,  
 And a wave fill’d it, as my sense was fill’d  
 With that new blissful golden melody. (*Hyperion* II. 272-80)

The mouthed shell she murmurs into turns out to be a dull shell when it is compared with the more refined, “new blissful golden melody” of Apollo. The golden melody of the father of all verse highlights the reversion to the Endymionese. Apollo’s golden melody is characterised by a bowery island and the enchantment of the shifting wind

and the morphing words. *Hyperion* is embowered by *Endymion*. This diction evokes the Endymionese “bowery nest”, “flowery spell” and “the eddying wind” (*Endymion* I. 539, I. 557, II. 846). Despite the resolution to resist the temptation of the sloppy *Endymion*, a sweet clime is breathed from the land of *Endymion* into *Hyperion*. As Clymene’s sense is infused with the golden melody of Apollo, the epic becomes semioticised. The “unruly”, “wayward” and “intemperate” *Endymion* (Bari 93) casts a shadow on *Hyperion*. In Kristeva’s words, language

thus tends to be drawn out of its symbolic function (sign-syntax) and is opened out within a semiotic articulation; with a material support such as the voice [the golden melody of Apollo in this case], this semiotic network gives “music” to literature (*Revolution* 63).

In the description of Clymene’s experience, the semiotic intrudes upon the symbolic. The Dionysian effect of the semiotic realm enraptures Clymene:

A living death was in each gush of sounds,  
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,  
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,  
Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string:  
And then another, then another strain,  
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,  
With music wing’d instead of silent plumes,  
To hover round my head, and make me sick  
Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,  
And I was stopping up my frantic ears,  
When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,  
A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,  
And still it cried, ‘Apollo! young Apollo!  
The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!’  
I fled, it follow’d me, and cried ‘Apollo!’  
O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt  
Those pains of mine; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,  
Ye would not call this too indulged tongue  
Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard. (*Hyperion* II. 281-99)

Clymene’s ecstatic encounter with the golden melody of Apollo evokes the experience of *jouissance*; she is enraptured by musical notes even as she attempts to escape them; she is in a flux, transported to the realm of doves winged with music where the gush of sounds blurs the boundary between life and death. She is dissolved like the pearl beads dropping suddenly from their string; her Titanese self disintegrates and makes “vertiginous crossings into the other”, in this case, into the realm of the Olympians

(Cixous “Medusa” 344-5); she feels that her selfhood is dissolving. Accordingly, Kristeva argues that “[v]ertigo of identity” is accompanied by “vertigo of words” (*Tales* 3). As the dove winged with rapturous musical notes hovers round her head, the boundary between joy and grief becomes hazy. She feels both fascinated and threatened; she is not only overjoyed by the blissful melody, but she is also grieving as the mouthed shell’s music of her Titanese self is suppressed; she tries to cover her frenzied ears with her hands, yet Apollo’s music is all too powerful. As she recounts her ecstatic experience, she seems to agree with Oceanus, who believes that the Titans should give in to the Olympians who are gaining strength and taking over since the latter have “thousand other signs of purer life” and “a fresh perfection treads” on the heels of the Titans (*Hyperion* II. 211-2). She knows that in the presence of the vengeful dethroned Titans, her tongue appears to be “too indulged”, “[p]resumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard”; the “dull shell’s echo” (*Hyperion* II. 274) cannot register the uncontainable intensities of the semiotic; her indulged tongue wallows in the semiotic *jouissance*; it does not observe the limits of the symbolic decorum of language. Through her over-indulged tongue, the semiotic returns and ventures to be heard; through her body enraptured by *jouissance*, the semiotic is embodied, transfusing the bodily drives into language.

In accordance with the dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic, Clymene’s ecstatic encounter with the golden melody of Apollo is chastised by Enceladus, the enraged Titan, who, “advocating a counter-revolution” (Newey “Keats’s Epic Ambitions” 74), does not abandon himself to the lure of the Olympian boundary-blurring *jouissance*:

So far her voice flow’d on, like timorous brook  
That, lingering along a pebbled coast,  
Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,  
And shudder’d; for the overwhelming voice  
Of huge Enceladus swallow’d it in wrath:  
The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves  
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,  
Came booming thus, while still upon his arm  
He lean’d; not rising, from supreme contempt. (*Hyperion* II. 300-8)

Clymene’s voice flows like a timorous brook, as in wording timidly, apparently in contrast with her hectic lips and frantic ears; the pulsating body is suppressed. This

timorous brook is meandering along a pebbled coast like “one continuous murmur [which] breeds / Along the pebbled shore of memory” (*Endymion* II. 16-7). This brook represents the pulsating body on the coast/shore/threshold to plunge into the ocean that stands for the presymbolic and transverbal that inundates the human memory that has been (symbolically) trained to set structures, establish outlines and maintain boundaries when it looks at the past retrospectively. Stones and pebbles produce sounds with the ebb and flow of waves, sounds not shaped into signifying sounds, sounds that signify genotextually. The timorous brook fears to meet the sea as Clymene fears to confront Enceladus; her timorous voice is overwhelmed by Enceladus’s booming voice. Clymene’s “baby words” (*Hyperion* II. 314) are swallowed by Enceladus’s “ponderous syllables”; his “ponderous syllables”, which internally echo the “ponderous iron mace” of another enraged Titan (*Hyperion* II. 41), bulldoze Clymene’s enraptured words. The semiotic resurgence is temporarily averted, yet it cannot be entirely suppressed while even the lines describing Enceladus’s anger is coloured by the Endymionese diction as the phonetic density of “the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks” indicates.

Through the feeble tongue that poorly translates Thea’s words, to the palsied tongue of Saturn, from the infant’s first-endeavouring tongue of Oceanus to the over-indulged tongue of Clymene, the extra-verbal, trans-linguistic “pulsional *pressure*” of the semiotic (Moi “Introduction” 13) writhes underneath and undermines the foundational resolution of the epic poet to resist the Endymionese “a-signifying, indeed pre-linguistic, crucible” (Kristeva *Revolution* 147) and to chastise and discipline the drive-based materiality of poetic language. The philosopher Oceanus heralds the appearance of an Endymionese Apollo in a diction which mostly observes the decorum of language and remains within the confines of the symbolic structures although partially coloured by the Endymionese while Clymene, fascinated by Apollo’s golden melody, recounts her ecstatic experience through a language highly saturated with the Endymionese idiom. These dual accounts indicate that *Hyperion* oscillates between the semiotic and the symbolic, as argued and demonstrated throughout this section.

### 2.2.5 The Symbolic Epic Shattered by the Bacchic Shriek of Apollo

The semiotic seems to outweigh the symbolic with the arrival of Apollo in the third book. The semiotic dove winged with music in Clymene's account appears full-fledged in the description of Apollo in the third book. The "living death", which inhabits "each gush of sounds" and rapturous musical notes in Clymene's ecstatic encounter, comes resounding back in the apotheosis of Apollo who dies "into life" (*Hyperion* III. 130). Clymene's experience of "joy and grief at once" (*Hyperion* II. 289) prefigures Apollo's golden lyre the whole universe listens to "in pain and pleasure" (*Hyperion* III. 63-6). The oxymoronic Keatsian poetic voice that enjoys both shade and light opens up a space for the semiotic Endymionese, linking Clymene's experience with Apollo's appearance in the poem.

The description of Apollo's initiation as a god in the third book of the epic has been seen as an indication of the poetic voice relapsing into the semiotic Endymionese "excessive obscurity" (Jeffrey in Strachan 38). The language that Keats uses in this description is "reminiscent of *Endymion*" (Motion 330). The description of Apollo's apotheosis

suffers from both the obscurity and the self-excitement of *Endymion*. The idea is that the world should flush with pleasure at the rise of the sun-god Apollo, 'the Father of all verse'. The poeticisms ('soft warble', 'vermeil hue') and the luxuriating adjectives ('voluptuous fleeces', 'faint-lipped shells', 'warm kiss'), like the violent oxymoron of red wine boiling yet remaining cold, mark Keats's reversion to a poetry of 'sensation'. As the blushing 'maid' indicates, this is the world of *Endymion*. The limits of Keats's own knowledge have been reached: Apollo's apotheosis can be no more than a promissory gesture. Keats has no style, other than a reversion to Endymionese, to deal with Apollo's experience (Barnard *Keats* 66).

The description of Apollo's apotheosis indicates how the semiotic returns to the epic landscape and causes the poetic voice who aspires to write a naked epic to cease at line 135 of the third book. The poetic voice in *Hyperion* invokes the Muse to sing of Apollo, Endymion's<sup>33</sup> "lute-voiced brother" (*Endymion* IV. 774):

Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,  
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe  
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;

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<sup>33</sup> Apollo is Diana's brother and therefore also Endymion's.

For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse.  
 Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,  
 Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,  
 And let the clouds of even and of morn  
 Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;  
 Let the red wine within the goblet boil,  
 Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,  
 On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn  
 Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid  
 Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd. (*Hyperion* III. 10-22)

With the appearance of Apollo in the third book, the epic is eclipsed by the Delphic; the resolution to compose a naked epic in the Grecian manner is sidetracked by the Delphic obscurity, which corresponds to the insight of T. S. Eliot's blind Tiresias who is "throbbing between two lives" (*The Waste Land* III. 218). This is suggestive of what Barnard called "the obscurity" of *Endymion* (Keats 66), as the adjective *Delphic* means "obscure" and "ambiguous" (OED adj. 1.1). The Delphic harp evokes the musical side of poetic language, the sounds of the human tongue not yet shaped into differential signifiers. The Delphic harp "musicates" the poetic language which the resolution to create a naked epic aspires to disambiguate (Kristeva *Revolution* 233). The winds of heaven breathe (and thus literally inspire<sup>34</sup>) "soft warble from the Dorian flute"; the Delphic wavering harmonies and the harp's "eerie modulations" (Abrams "Correspondent Breeze" 38) are seamlessly interfused with the Dorian bird singing softly with a succession of constantly changing notes, in honour of "the Father of all verse". The Delphic strings played by plucking with fingers evoke tactility alongside the aural experience while the proximity of breathing creates an indistinct profusion between the inspiring winds of heaven and the human breath of the Dorian flute. Through these poetical concentrations, words are heard as sounds divorced from meaning; hence, the sounds of the human tongue, not shaped into signifying words, are intermingled with musical notes, which displays that the semiotic unsettles the symbolic universe of the epic poem. A musicalised language sets the signifier in motion, thereby breaching the thetic break.

Such an indistinct profusion in *Hyperion* recalls the Endymionese effect. The realm of the things that in this poem flush with the vermeil hue resonates with the domain of

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<sup>34</sup> The poet makes use of the related meanings of the Latin *spiritus* which signifies "wind and breath, as well as soul" (Abrams "Correspondent Breeze" 44).

“the early budders” which “run in mazes of the youngest hue” (*Endymion* I. 41-2). The Delphic ambiguity registers subtle shades and tones of colours rather than the dominant colours. Allott explains that the word “vermeil” is “used earlier by Keats only in *Endymion*” (435), so the vermeil hue reverts to the Endymionese. Similarly, the “luxuriating adjectives” such as the clouds floating in “voluptuous fleeces” (*Hyperion* III. 16-7) – the only use of this adjective in the poem – evoke the “voluptuous thought” of *Endymion* (IV. 759). The sensual world of the cold bubbling well echoes the Endymionese realm of the “chilliest bubbles” of “cold springs” (*Endymion* I. 102-3). The baroque image of the faint-lipped shells of the great depths, which turn vermilion through all their labyrinths, calls up the mazy, labyrinthine diction of Keats’s poetic romance. The word “flush” as in the universe flushing at the rise of Apollo and its lexical chord “blush” as in the maid blushing keenly also bring back the Endymionese of the “[b]lush-tinted cheeks” (*Endymion* I. 619). All these examples indicate that the third book of *Hyperion* “retreat[s] from linear, masculine song into ‘soft warble’, ‘sad-sweet melody’” (Levinson 208) and thus reverts to the poetry of sensation fully embodied in *Endymion*, in which the finely attuned antennae of the negatively capable poet hear and feel “the subtle modulations of all in existence” (Sandy “Tragic Realisation” 123).

Despite the firmly taken decision to compose a monumental epic that is not choked by the fecund verbosity of *Endymion*, the voice of the poet whose genius is “rooted in the nature of sensation” and whose “conception of verse is founded on the primacy of sense experience” (Sperry *Keats* 9) comes back and intensifies in the third book of *Hyperion*. Aske notes that the “first two books of *Hyperion* are erected as the foundations for the structure of Keats’s projected epic, but the deviant third book breaks the frame, fragments the edifice” (*Keats* 96). The solid foundations of the epic are intended to remain unchallenged by the foundations of *Endymion* which Keats in his preface to the poem finds to be “too sandy” (505). The elaborately over-ornate, figurative language of *Endymion* is overshadowed by the resolution to predicate the epic on discursive thought in *Hyperion*. The epic does not intend to prove its truth on our impulses through adjective-laden poetic language; however, the poet of sensations seems to return in the description of Apollo’s apotheosis; truth, “knowledge

enormous”, comes through sensuous, ecstatic phenomena to the sentient poet who utters a Dionysian shriek:

Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.  
Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events, rebellions,  
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,  
Creations and destroyings, all at once  
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,  
And deify me, as if some blithe wine  
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,  
And so become immortal.” – Thus the God,  
While his enkindled eyes, with level glance  
Beneath his white soft temples, stedfast kept  
Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.  
Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush  
All the immortal fairness of his limbs;  
Most like the struggle at the gate of death;  
Or liker still to one who should take leave  
Of pale immortal death, and with a pang  
As hot as death’s is chill, with fierce convulse  
Die into life: so young Apollo anguish’d;  
His very hair, his golden tresses famed  
Kept undulation round his eager neck.  
During the pain Mnemosyne upheld  
Her arms as one who prophesied. – At length  
Apollo shriek’d; - and lo! From all his limbs  
Celestial... (*Hyperion* III. 113-36)

The diction that describes Apollo, who has drunk “some blithe wine / Or bright elixir peerless” indicates that the Endymionese semiotic eclipses the symbolic epic; “‘blithe wine’ and ‘bright elixir peerless’ belong to *Endymion*” (Barnard *Keats* 66). The symbolic realm of the epic landscape, where structures are set, positions are taken up and clearly demarcated judgements are made, is distorted by the pre-symbolic, semiotic dimension to signification. The Keatsian poetic voice never leaves sensations behind even if it aims to move to abstraction in the epic landscape because sensation genotextually generates the idea and forms an unbroken whole with it on the phenotextual level of the poem.

The desire-driven excess in the lines describing Apollo’s initiation as a god, especially Apollo’s “Bacchic” shriek (Whale 46-7), spills over the boundaries between the symbolic and the semiotic (*Hyperion* III. 135). Kristeva argues the Dionysian impulse “so inundates the symbolic order that it portends” the dissolution of the symbolic “in a dancing, singing, and poetic animality” (*Revolution* 79). Apollo is overwhelmed by

a Dionysian flow; this merging apotheosis is unspeakable on account of the “deluge of the signifier” (Kristeva *Revolution* 79). The Bacchic shriek of Apollo resonates with the image of “a lunar poet of enchanted night” that coexists with “the radiant masculinity of Apollonian Keats” (Roe *Keats* xx). In the figure of this Bacchic Apollo, “the light of the Apollonian mode” is intermingled with “the darkness of the Dionysian” (Sandy “Tragic Realisation” 116). Apollo’s Dionysian shriek distorts the “naked and grecian Manner” of epic, its proposed formal lucidity: the semiotic returns and shrieks; the “instinctual *chora*” which transgresses representation and the sign screams in the face of repression (Kristeva *Revolution* 102). This Bacchic shriek presents a sensuous Apollo who “takes on some of the characteristics attributed [...] to primitive speech such as intuition, pre-linguistic sounds and expressive gestures” (Fermanis 89). The shrieking Apollo hearkens back to the Romantic conception of “the origin of poetry in the passionate outcries of savages” (Abrams *The Mirror* 145). This voluptuous and gesturing Apollo of asymbolic sounds is a manifestation of the semiotic instinctuality.

Keats’s Apollo of *Hyperion* embodies the merging of the Apollonian and the Dionysian impulses; the Apollonian merges with “Dionysian heterogeneity”, which leads to “a radical loss of identity that submerges the subject within a more archaic web of experience” (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 70-1). This Keatsian Apollo seems to have “no desire to explicate causality, and instead gives in to the emotions of bewilderment, awe and wonder” (Fermanis 88). He is a Bacchic Apollo, an Apollo enraptured by the Dionysian, an Apollo mystified by Dionysian intoxication, who has drunk “some blithe wine / Or bright elixir peerless” (*Hyperion* III. 118-9); he is ecstatic with “his enkindled eyes” (*Hyperion* III. 121); as the etymology of *ecstasy* suggests “standing outside oneself” (OED), Apollo stands outside himself through “wild commotions [that] shook him” (*Hyperion* III. 124) and “fierce” convulsions (*Hyperion* III. 129). The Keatsian Apollo is one who experiences the Dionysian transgression of limits and “the dissolution of boundaries” (Geuss xi). A Bacchic/Dionysian “liminal” Apollo (Levinson 211) ecstatically experiences the dissolving of boundaries between life and death since he passes through “a liminal state” (Newey “Keats, History, and the Poets” 182; Sandy “Tragic Realisation” 127) as he dies into life (*Hyperion* III. 130) through an “unaccountable, almost orgasmic transfiguration” (Sperry *Keats* 312). The

“violent oxymoron[s]” in Barnard’s words, such as “immortal death” (*Hyperion* III. 128), keeping his glance “steadfast” and “[t]rembling with light” (*Hyperion* III. 121-3), and “a pang / As hot as death’s is chill” (*Hyperion* 128-9) indicate this Bacchic breaking up of boundaries.

The Dionysian music of the Delphic harp undermines the Apollonian world of self-disciplined epic where distinct boundaries are drawn and respected. The influx of drives that informs the transformation of Apollo violates the thetic. In Kristeva’s words, the “enunciation of this hollowing out of drives constitutes a drifting of the signifier within the boundaries of the symbolic”; the drifting of the signifier “unbridles” the subject and “makes him deplore his fixed position” (*Revolution* 98). The Kristevan subject oscillates between “material discontinuity” and “social imbrication” (Kristeva *Revolution* 98). However, in the case of Apollo who is beset by deep commotions and convulsions, material discontinuity takes over social imbrication at a moment of disjunction; drives and their energy discharges that pour into the hollows of his brain dominate the linguistic sign; as a result, the signifier drifts free, floats out of the symbolic domain. The Keatsian subject that vacillates between the semiotic and the symbolic now descends into the realm of asymbolia, which causes the epic poem to cease and remain incomplete.

As stated above, Apollo’s Bacchic shriek, “the primal cry” of birth (Watson 80), is an indication of a reversion to the semiotic Endymionese. The birth of a Bacchic Apollo suggests that the poetic spirit that composes this poem is like the maternal body that embodies “the concept of otherness as intrinsic to subjectivity” and the pregnant body that “contains alterity within it” (Lloyd 143). This Bacchic Apollo is testament to the notion of otherness as intrinsic to human subjectivity; the Dionysian Apollo contains alterity within him. This birthing imagery also suggests that Apollo’s ecstatic shriek is a bodily drive that manifests itself in language through the semiotic element and that upsets the Apollonian realm of culture and civilisation, “cathedral cavern” (*Hyperion* I. 86); it is the shriek of the primordial cavern, like the speechless asymbolic bubble of the cavern spring in *Endymion* (I. 576) that echoes in the cathedral. The Bacchic shriek makes its way into language; since signification is like a transfusion of the living body into language, a fleshly corporeality erupts through a libidinal Apollo; the body

is incorporated into the poetic language. Through an emotive, affect-laden language, Apollo's Bacchic shriek signifies genotextually and disrupts the phenotextual epic of entrenched formal limits, clear outlines and categorisations, and thus unsettles *Hyperion's* "severe virility" (Levinson 195); the texture of sensory experience is embodied through the Bacchic shriek.

To sum up this subsection on the transformation of Apollo, at line 135 where Apollo shrieks in an ecstatic metamorphosis and his "dying into life precipitates the poem's silence" (Aske *Keats* 89), the Endymionese effect becomes the Endymionese affect; it is no longer an effect which is uncannily ever-present, and gradually resurges and intimates its presence, but it turns out to be an affect, an intense emotion or desire (OED n. 3). The semiotic takes over the symbolic as Apollo utters a Bacchic shriek; the poetic voice no longer speaks but shrieks; the visceral self presides over the cerebral self. The poem ceases with Apollo's "limbs / Celestial" (*Hyperion* III. 135-6); all his body is disorganised into his limbs, atomised in an utmost degree of dissolution: a body swept away, present in its limbs through a delightful absence of a firmly located identity. Atomically disassembled, Apollo celestially becomes one with the universal, the elemental and the primordial; his disjointed limbs, with a celestial intelligence of their own, not articulating (in both senses of having joints and speaking coherently) with the cerebral self in this moment of ecstatic metamorphosis, stand for the end of linguistic articulacy. Such falling into pieces, within a Kristevan perspective, draws attention to "the human being's tendency toward fragmentation and disintegration as an expression of the death drive" (Kristeva *Black* 18-9). For Kristeva, the death drive is related with the end of linguistic articulacy. The Bacchic Apollo stands for the disarticulated human body; Kristeva elaborates on it as follows:

Caught within this dynamic [between material discontinuity and symbolic imbrication], the human body is also a process. It is not a unity but a plural totality with separate members that have no identity but constitute the place where drives are applied. This dismembered body cannot fit together again, set itself in motion, or function biologically or psychologically, unless it is included within a practice that encompasses the signifying process (*Revolution* 101).

*Hyperion* ceases at line 135 since the signifying process fails to encompass what is unrepresentable in Apollo's Dionysian shriek<sup>35</sup>. Therefore, the poem ends on a Delphic note, with utter obscurity and ambiguity. The Delphic obscurity remains unknown, unintelligible and unsignifiable, closing in upon itself, adumbrated only by the negatively capable poet through the semiotic or by the oxymoronic, paradoxically Dionysian god of poetry who is the god of the sun as well, perhaps the Kristevan god of the black sun<sup>36</sup> who knows only too well of both light and dark and who cherishes both and knows that "on the shores of darkness there is light" and there is "a budding morrow in midnight" (Keats "To Homer" 9-11).

To conclude this section, *Hyperion* vacillates between the semiotic and the symbolic. In spite of the firm decision to purge the epic of the Endymionese, the semiotic resurfaces in the epic landscape as "a fire of tongues, an exit from representation" (Kristeva *Tales* 253). *Hyperion* is intended to be severed from the generic features of the poetic romance, but as a projected epic, it fails. The epic universe of *Hyperion* is designed to withstand the abyss of the inexpressible, yet it is threatened by what it seeks to exclude. The tension between the luxuriant language of the semiotic poetic romance and the chastened diction of the symbolic epic suggests that *Hyperion* swings back and forth between the two. On the one hand, the semiotic bowers of plenitude and oneness are discarded; on the other hand, an immersion in the semiotic *chora* undercuts this attempt. Finally, a Dionysian Apollo that conflates the symbolic with the semiotic brings the epic to a halt; the fragment refuses closure. Even though *Hyperion* is designed as "an allegory of historical progress", the fragment as it stands is paralysed, for linear progression is sidetracked by oscillations (Trott 268).

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<sup>35</sup> *The Fall of Hyperion* is yet another (failed) attempt to include it within a practice that encompasses the signifying process. This will be discussed in the third section of this chapter, focusing primarily on *The Fall of Hyperion*.

<sup>36</sup> This Kristevan concept of the black sun will be explored in the chapter which concentrates on melancholy.

### 2.3 The Encounter between “fresh feathers and wings” and “a pair of patient sublunary legs” in *The Fall of Hyperion*

Keats abandons *Hyperion* in April 1819 (Barnard *Complete Poems* 609). In mid-July 1819 he takes up the theme again under the title of *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* only to abandon the latter at the sixty-first line of the second canto on September 21, 1819 (Barnard *Complete Poems* 676). The first 280 lines of *The Fall of Hyperion* are new; the remainder is a recast of the first *Hyperion* (Muir 219-20). On September 21, 1819, he writes to Reynolds:

I have given up *Hyperion* [*The Fall of 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 × to the false beauty proceeding from art, and one || to the true voice of feeling. Upon my soul 'twas imagination - I cannot make the distinction - Every now and then there is a Miltonic intonation - But I cannot make the division properly (*Letters* 345).

This inability to make distinctions and divisions properly points to the presence of oscillations in Keats's poetry. Struggling to make “the distinction” and “the division properly”, to generate categories against the collapse of boundaries while composing *Hyperion* poems, Keats the poet wishes to abandon what he considers the artfulness of the Miltonic style; therefore, Miltonic inversions and “rhetorical peculiarities” of the original *Hyperion* are drastically excised in *The Fall of Hyperion* (Bate *Stylistic* 174-5). He wants to return to a perceived “true voice of feeling” and “other sensations,” for he writes “in an age in which the high artifice of the epic matter and style had ceased to be the natural voice of the poet” (Abrams *Anthology* 875). The clash between perceived artifice and perceived naturalness (both of which are, of course, conventional responses to linguistic constructs) is central to Romantic poetics, and is based upon the Rousseauian emphasis on “the primacy of instinct and feeling” (Abrams *The Mirror* 81) and conviction that “[t]he refinements of civilization are ruinous to the vigorous natural energies of untamed imagination and true feeling” (Perry 371). A divide between the high artifice of the epic and “the true voice of feeling” is, in this study, seen as the relationship between the symbolic that pertains to “referential signs and their syntactic articulation” and the semiotic that is related to

“libidinal charges toward displacement and condensation” (Kristeva *Tales* 16), which might produce an answer to the question of why Keats abandoned *Hyperion* and *The Fall*. The Keatsian distinction between the “true voice of feeling” and instinctuality and the high artifice corresponds to the Kristevan division between the semiotic and the symbolic respectively; the poetic voice seems to oscillate since he cannot make the division properly.

At the same time, writing a Miltonic epic seems to have been a challenge the poet desired to take up so as to prove his poetic capability: “Keats’s struggle with epic can be read as an attempt to transfer analytical authority onto Milton as the paternal figure who guarantees Keats’s Symbolic epic competency (Faflak “Romantic Psychoanalysis” 312). Writing an epic poem in the manner of Milton as a father poet may be seen as an indication of an allegiance to the symbolic and of an attempt to locate oneself within the symbolic. However, Keats abandons the poem when he finds that Milton encroaches upon him; Keats believes that he is “uncommonly susceptible to poetic influences” and regards this as “a threat to his individuality” (Abrams *Anthology* 824); we should remember that he wants to “make the division properly”, this time between himself and his precursors (*Letters* 345). On October 8, 1818 Keats writes to Hessey:

I will write independently. I have written independently without Judgement. I may independently and with judgement hereafter. The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man: It cannot be matured by law and precept, but by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself (*Letters* 193).

The decision to abandon *The Fall* is seen as a rejection of the imposition of the Miltonic paternal authority, the symbolic legacy of the father poet. Keats also shifts from epic to allegory in order to restrain the Miltonic influence (Sperry *Keats* 313). This influence is dismissed by the poetic voice that wishes to write independently and assert its individual voice. The *Hyperion* poems indicate both an allegiance to the symbolic and a refusal of it, “a displacement of Milton’s large utterance” (Levinson 211) and this once again points to Keatsian oscillations. This section of the current chapter investigates how *The Fall* oscillates between the semiotic and the symbolic in spite of the fact that the poet attempts to repress the semiotic and to firmly locate the

poem in the realm of the symbolic where he can “make the distinction” in his own words (*Letters* 345).

The opening of *The Fall* indicates a deep engagement with language, a “preoccupation with writing” (Levinson 213). The first canto starts by making a distinction between poets and fanatics:

Fanatics have their dreams, wherewith they weave  
A paradise for a sect; the savage too  
From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep  
Guesses at Heaven; pity these have not  
Trac'd upon vellum or wild Indian leaf  
The shadows of melodious utterance.  
But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die;  
For Poesy alone can tell her dreams,  
With the fine spell of words alone can save  
Imagination from the sable charm  
And dumb enchantment. Who alive can say,  
'Thou art no Poet may'st not tell thy dreams?'  
Since every man whose soul is not a clod  
Hath visions, and would speak, if he had loved  
And been well nurtured in his mother tongue.  
Whether the dream now purpos'd to rehearse  
Be poet's or fanatic's will be known  
When this warm scribe my hand is in the grave. (*The Fall* I. 1-18)

Fanatics are filled with excessive zeal, an obsessive enthusiasm, which would prevent them from practicing the art of poetry; the poet-narrator of *The Fall* attempts to free himself from the uncontrolled energy of the uncultivated savage. Fanatics do not write down their dreams; their visions are not marked on vellum or wild leaves. Since they do not write down the shadows of their melodious utterance which stand for “the extraverbal yearnings of the words” (Stewart 149) that resist signification, and compose poems out of this material, they are not laurelled, not recognised as poets, not symbolically positioned; they cannot be, for their dreams are not rendered in linguistic representation; this refers to “a danger that the resort to vision [steeped in semiotic conundrums] may cut the visionary off from the [symbolically organised] human community” (Dawson 73). On the other hand, true poets who are well-versed in the art of composing poetry tell their dreams by creating a composition to express and explain their visions in the symbolic realm of narratives and thus progress beyond their “own self-referential visions” (Fermanis 121). The fine spell of words (we recall

that a spell is a form of enchantment that specifically rests upon verbalisation) in poesy saves human beings and their imagination from the sable charm and dumb enchantment of the inarticulate fanatic or the asymbolic savage; “poetic language’s battle with the ‘sable charm’ of death [that is the demise of the enunciating subject]” haunts *The Fall of Hyperion* (Haskell 36). To be utterly immersed in the semiotic realm of the savage is equated with the death of the linguistic subject who makes meaning by means of grammar, structure and decorum of language. Poetic language relieves this fear of death, of being speechless in the asymbolic realm by turning melodious utterances to lines of poesy:

Inflected by pun, syntactic ambiguity, buried metaphor, muted phonetic echo – the most overt to the most delicate of effects – the verse line is often a life-line to a keenness of utterance that alone begins to salvage the mind from its death drift (Stewart 141-2).

The nonverbal shadows of the prelinguistic “melodious utterance” of the presymbolic fanatic are articulated through the spell of words, through the semiotic component of language.

The deployment of the word “spell” discloses the oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic by means of its twofold meaning. The word “spell” refers to the symbolic aspect of signification since it points to the act of writing or naming the letters that form or make up in correct sequence (OED v. 1). It also refers to a form of words used as a magical charm or incantation (OED n. 1) and a state of enchantment caused by a magic spell (OED n. 1. 1.). The former meaning of the word “spell” as in writing or naming letters corresponds to the symbolic attempt to write precisely and lucidly and signify in the linguistic universe, whereas the latter meaning as in converting words to enchantment and magic chimes with the semiotic negativity to obscure and dismantle the linguistic signifier. Both happen in the terrain of poetry since, as Kristeva argues, poetic form “decomposes and recomposes signs” at once (*Black* 14).

The “melodious utterance” of the savage refers to the notion prevalent in the Romantic period that the “conjectured origin” of poetry resides in “the passionate, and therefore, naturally rhythmical and figurative, outcries of primitive men” (Abrams *The Mirror* 78). This idea points to the semiotic origin and the material base of language. Abrams

notes that Rousseau “insisted that since man began not by reasoning, but by feeling, the first words were cries extorted by passion, and the first languages were song-like, passionate, figurative, and therefore the language of poets, not of geometers” (*The Mirror* 81-2). The Rousseauian understanding of the origin of language resonates with the Kristevan semiotic. However, *The Fall* presents the poet as the one who is able to render the outcries of primordial human in linguistic representation. O’Neill notes that “Keats’s ‘fine spell of words’ sees words as agents of illusory enchantment yet asserts their [symbolic] power” (“Writing and History” 150). The latter meaning is related with the symbolic aspect of signification while the former unearths the semiotic foundation of language, the musical and material base of language, “the materiality of Keats’s general linguistic conception” (Levinson 213). The agency of the symbolic letter indicated by “this warm scribe my hand” (*The Fall* I. 18) saves the wordless fanatic from a black charm and dumb amazement. The speechless savage is like an animal that is unable to speak and regarded as helpless; therefore, the inarticulate savage represents the speechless infant who has not yet entered the symbolic. Poetry vacillates between the speechless, wordless, and the highly articulate, verbose; the former threatens to utterly destroy language while the latter, if taken to extremity, turns language into a disembodied practice rigidly defined, deracinated, devoid of the instinctual material base, cut off from the poet’s warm hand that scribes/writes poetic lines.

As a softer and less explosive sound than that of *poetry*, the word *poesy* mingles these two aspects; poets articulate the shadows of the rhythmical utterance of the savage by means of the musical aspect of language, yet their melodious utterance is not completely rendered in poetry, not clearly defined and fully explained, but their melodious utterance is adumbrated in poetry; *poesy* is poetry marked by the shadows of melodious utterance and primordial incantations. Thus, poetry saves the speechless pre-linguistic fanatic from dumb enchantment by means of the enchanting power of words and the agency of linguistic signifiers. Everyone who is not a clod of earth speaks their dreams, and poets should be well nurtured in their mother tongue in order to articulate their visions. Poetry oscillates between the paternal language of symbolic positions, distinctions and structures, and the maternal tongue of semiotic motility, instinctuality and heterogeneity.

The poet-narrator of *The Fall* seeks not to succumb to the Circean call of dumb enchantment; therefore, he attempts to repress the Endymionese effect by means of employing a stylistic discipline. The Keatsian poetic spirit that moves behind *The Fall* believes that “the poet should renounce the luxurious and the exquisite as being phantasmal, and that he must not remain indifferent to the cares and miseries of his fellow men” (Bate *Stylistic* 172). He also believes that “suffering is necessary for the self-realization of the poet” (Barnard *Keats* 129). Similar to his resolution to compose an epic liberated from Endymionese sensuousness, Keats the poet strives to write *The Fall* as an allegory untainted by the voluptuousness of romance. In his letter to Reynolds of July 11, 1819, Keats says that he has “of late been moulting: not for fresh feathers & wings: they are gone, and in their stead I hope to have a pair of patient sublunary legs” (*Letters* 314). The image of the doves winged with music that represents the loftiness of Apollo’s golden melody (*Hyperion* III. 281-7) is repudiated in *The Fall*. Also, the poet-narrator of *The Fall* seeks to reject the poetic intensity of Endymion who wants to tell the “stories of the sky” and believes that his “happy love will overwing all bounds” (*Endymion* II. 811-13). Likewise, in his letter to his brother in September 1819, Keats notes that “[s]ome think I have lost that poetic ardour and fire ’t is said I once had – the fact is perhaps I have: but instead of that I hope I shall substitute a more thoughtful and quiet power” (*Letters* 376). He wants to have a chastened and disciplined style, and this seems to be connected with his struggles not to be an egotistical poet, one of those “self-worshippers” (*The Fall* I. 207) who, unwearied by the agony of their fellow beings, soar on the sublime wings of poetry for their own delights. He aspires to be a down-to-earth poet with sublunary legs that fasten him to the solid ground of his new poetry, as opposed to the sandy “foundations” of *Endymion* (Keats 505). Hence, *The Fall* is characterised by this desire for “artistic and personal self-discipline” (Sheats “Stylistic” 233). This is an important reason why Keats decided to give up on the Endymionese intensity in *The Fall*. Similarly, Barnard argues that *The Fall* “rejects Keats’s earlier dreams of Beauty as luxuriant and self-indulgent, taking him back to the fundamental questions about the role of poetry” (*Keats* 129).

In spite of being no longer feathered like a dove or winged like Pegasus, “the emblem of soaring inspiration” (Wolfson “Late Lyrics” 105), the poet-narrator of *The Fall* still

corresponds in his role to Apollo of the third book of *Hyperion*. Apollo shrieks at line 135 of Book III and the poem comes to a standstill in the next line. However, the poet-narrator of *The Fall* shrieks at line 126 of the first canto, but strives “hard to escape / The numbness” (*The Fall* I. 127-8) and thus struggles to continue the poem. The difference between the two figures is also clearly indicated by the prologue that introduces the poet-narrator in *The Fall* being stylistically different from the third book of *Hyperion* that concentrates on Apollo. The poet-narrator of *The Fall*, who hopes to have “a patient pair of sublunary legs” (Keats *Letters* 314), differs from the negatively capable poet that Bacchic Apollo stands for. The deification of Apollo, which becomes “irrelevant” to the concern of *The Fall* (Garrett 43), is converted into “an allegorical representation of the first phase in the development of a poet” (Sheats “Stylistic” 235). Apollo’s “orgasmic transformation” in *Hyperion* is recast in *The Fall* as “a human poet’s entry into a new order of perception, taking him upwards from the earthly to the divine plane” (Newey “Keats’s Epic Ambitions” 80). *The Fall* attempts to disembody an orgasmic Apollo who utters the Bacchic shriek; this is an attempt to restrain the instinctual semiotic. In accordance with this attempt, the sensuous richness and the abundance of luxurious sensation seen in the apotheosis of Apollo in *Hyperion* is disciplined in the prologue in *The Fall*:

Methought I stood where trees of every clime,  
 Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech,  
 With plantain, and spice blossoms, made a screen;  
 In neighbourhood of fountains, by the noise  
 Soft showering in my ears, and, by the touch  
 Of scent, not far from roses. Turning round  
 I saw an arbour with a drooping roof  
 Of trellis vines, and bells, and larger blooms,  
 Like floral censers swinging light in air;  
 Before its wreathed doorway, on a mound  
 Of moss, was spread a feast of summer fruits,  
 Which, nearer seen, seem’d refuse of a meal  
 By angel tasted or our Mother Eve;  
 For empty shells were scattered on the grass,  
 And grape stalks but half bare, and remnants more,  
 Sweet smelling, whose pure kinds I could not know. (*The Fall* I. 19-34)

Several particulars such as “palm” and “beech” remain the same when compared to the third book of *Hyperion*. Trees, roses, blossoms, blooms and scents evoke the voluptuousness of the lines describing Apollo and the isle of Delos where he was born.

This section that describes the dreamer who wakes in a mysterious arbour, “a lush landscape” where he sees “a sumptuous feast” (Thomas 30) seems to regress to the luxuriant and self-indulged poetry of *Endymion*. This mysterious Endymionese arbour is germane to Keats’s “usual smotheringly sensually-loaded settings” (Harris 49), which exhibits that *The Fall* begins in “a romance setting” (Cox 53). This dream-landscape is “an appropriately luxurious setting” for the dreamer’s “overwhelming self-absorption” and “his life of licentious and unthinking pleasure” (Fermanis 136). In support of this, as Barnard points out, the bower’s “trellis vines” and “floral censers” and the “feast of the summer fruits” symbolise “the luxurious pleasures of Fancy”, which *Endymion* represents (*Keats* 130). The list of these particular things recalls Keats’s preference for “a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts” (*Letters* 54). Also, the landscape corresponds closely to the “the Chamber of Maiden Thought” of the Keatsian allegory of human life (Muir 220).

However, this opening section reminiscent of the semiotic instinctuality of *Endymion* is “a nostalgic but firm repudiation of Keats’s earlier work” (Barnard *Keats* 130). This Endymionese arbour of sensuous beauty and instinctual intensity is renounced because the “profusion of sensual delights [‘trees of every clime, / Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech, / With plantain, and spice blossoms’] operates as a barrier [‘made a screen’]” (Garrett 41-2). In order to explain the repudiation of the Endymionese voluptuousness, Sheats points out that “the character of the imagery is drastically changed” (“Stylistic” 235). These particulars are marked by an instinctive intensity of sensation in the third book that focuses on the initiation of Apollo in *Hyperion* while they are truncated in *The Fall*. Sheats goes on to explain how the Endymionese instinctive intensity of the semiotic register is chastened:

This rapid call of unqualified specific names prevents the ‘intense’ contemplation of concrete particulars, and serves instead to exemplify logically the unnatural variety of this allegorical garden. Fixed at a uniform distance, the setting functions to ‘screen’ and conceal rather than to surrender itself to the imagination of the beholder (“Stylistic” 235).

In *Hyperion*, palms are “lawn-shading”, hazels are “thick, dark-stemm’d”, the Zephyr “breathes the loudest song” in these trees; the thrush sings “calm-throated” on the “embowered” isle of Apollo; caves are haunted by “the murmurous noise of waves”;

Apollo wanders besides “the osiers of a rivulet, / Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale” (*Hyperion* III. 24-40). However, the adjectival poetic diction is repressed in *The Fall*; patterned vowels and consonants (such as “dark-stemm’d” and “calm-throated”) that communicate the instinctual intensity of sensations are jettisoned; such epithets ending in *ed* as “embossed”, “palsied” and “globed” (*The Fall* I. 83, 122, 245) are “found but represent something of a decrease from *Hyperion*” (Bate *Stylistic* 176).

A stylistic discipline is imposed on imagery, as well. Keats the poet “represses any manifestation of an instinctive ‘intensity’, and emphasises instead the logical, thematic or moral significance of concrete particulars” (Sheats “Stylistic” 235). The Endymionese densely clustered and synaesthetic images are not used in *The Fall*. Unlike *Endymion*’s semiotic bowers, the arbour in *The Fall* is not primarily marked by sensuous richness. Sheats explains how the depiction of the external world in the prologue is indicative of a fundamental break with the Endymionese:

Although the garden and sanctuary contain objects that promise sensuous luxury to and evoke an intense response from the Dreamer, the style itself remains detached, and neither displays nor encourages imaginative entanglements with physical things. Objects that promise intensity of sensation are half-concealed from the reader by a veil of generalised diction, which parts to reveal images that frequently discourage or repel imaginative approach (“Stylistic” 237).

The arbour is characterised by trellis vines, blooms, floral censers, and a wreathed doorway. These objects, with which the Endymionese poet is imaginatively entangled in the presymbolic realm of the poetic romance, promise voluptuous richness and therefore are at first sight suggestive of Endymionese bowers, but they are detached and disentangled - things are not flowing into other things, and they are not interlaced as in the preverbal bowers of Keats’s poetic romance.

The arbour is marked by the feast of summer fruits which looks like “refuse of a meal” tasted by “our Mother Eve” (*The Fall* I. 29-31). It is not a feast predominantly defined by delightful sensuous imagery of a prelapsarian plenitude; in contrast, in this “post-lapsarian ‘arbour’” (O’Neill “Writing and History” 154), the fruits are seen as “refuse,” as matter thrown away or rejected as worthless. This is in stark contrast to *Endymion*’s sensuously described “bunch of blooming plums / Ready to melt between an infant’s gums” (*Endymion* II. 450-1). *The Fall*’s descriptions of the summer fruits are not

informed by the abundance of tactile, olfactory and gustatory senses as found in the earlier poem. In fact, *The Fall* chastens the tactual profusion of the Endymionese bowers. Therefore, the particular objects of the summer feast “discourage the involvement of taste and touch, and emphasise privation rather than abundance” (Sheats “Stylistic” 237). Differing from *Endymion*’s bowers of plenitude and profusion, *The Fall*’s feast scene is characterised by deprivation and leftovers: the shells are empty and the grape stalks are half-bare.

A starker and less luscious treatment is found in the mention of Eve, too, for this suggests “the consequences of the Dreamer’s ‘appetite’” (Sheats “Stylistic” 236): “And appetite / More yearning than on earth I ever felt / Growing within, I ate deliciously” (*The Fall* I. 38-40). The poet-dreamer’s appetite corresponds to the poetic ardour and fire that Keats says he has lost. Sperry argues that Keats associates Eve’s appetite with the poet-dreamer’s yearning for the intensity of the instinctual sensuousness: “*The Fall* was an allegory of poetic sin and expiation through intensity of suffering” (Keats 316). To relapse into the Endymionese realm of poetic ardour and fiery voluptuousness is thus to commit original sin in poetry. The poet-narrator seeks to avoid falling into the domain of the semiotic romance of sensuous richness and luxurious sensation. However, the dreamer-poet eats the fruit, finds it delicious, and then quenches his thirst:

And, after not long, thirsted, for thereby  
Stood a cool vessel of transparent juice  
Sipp’d by the wander’d bee, the which I took,  
And, pledging all the mortals of the world,  
And all the dead whose names are in our lips,  
Drank. That full draught is parent of my theme.  
No Asian poppy nor elixir fine  
Of the soon fading jealous Caliphat,  
No poison gender’d in close monkish cell  
To thin the scarlet conclave of old men,  
Could so have rapt unwilling life away.  
Among the fragrant husks and berries crush’d,  
Upon the grass I struggled hard against  
The domineering potion; but in vain:  
The cloudy swoon came on, and down I sunk  
Like a Silenus on an antique vase. (*The Fall* I. 41-56)

The draught that he drinks from a mysterious vessel is expected in a romance setting to transpose the dreamer into a mythic realm where he escapes from the world which

is “full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness, oppression” (Keats *Letters* 124). However, in *The Fall* the poet-dreamer finds himself in an old sanctuary, the Temple of Saturn, where he confronts the misery of the fallen Titans (*The Fall* I. 62). The draught carries the poet-persona “from the Earthly Paradise of the opening scene to the barer landscape of Moneta’s shrine” (Parker 120), from the garden marked by pastoral simplicity and beauty to “the grim solemnity of the ancient sanctuary” (Sperry *Keats* 321). The poet-narrator’s struggle against the “domineering potion” indicates the dreamer’s unwillingness to go into “dark passages” of the prelinguistic realm (Keats *Letters* 124). *The Fall* describes “a prolonged rite of passage, initiating the self-conscious poet into painful maturity” (Barnard *Keats* 130). This rite of passage corresponds to the passage from the semiotic to the symbolic; this Keatsian rite of passage evokes the Kristevan thetic.

Since the dreamer needs suffering in order to attain “the self-realisation of the poet” (Barnard *Keats* 129), the potion and the swoon are not rendered in a style reminiscent of a poetic romance. Sheats points out that the potion does not offer a passage to the Endymionese realm of the luxuriant and the self-indulgent: “The potency of this drink is not manifested stylistically, by clustered and synaesthetic imagery, but by a spare statement of its dramatic effect: ‘the cloudy swoon came on, and down I sunk’” (“Stylistic” 238). When the dreamer wakes in the old sanctuary, he says he “started up / As if with wings” (*The Fall* I. 58-9). To be borne on “the viewless wings of Poesy” (Keats “Ode to a Nightingale” 33) would be incongruous with the intention of the poet who hopes to have sublunary legs. Therefore, the rise with wings is checked by “as if” in order to discipline the poetic ardour and fire. The poet who dreams of soaring to dizzying heights also feels overshadowed by the “Cliff of Poesy” that “Towers above me [him]” (Keats *Letters* 22). Also, when he wakes up in the sanctuary, he realises that “the fair trees were gone / The mossy mound and arbour were no more” (*The Fall* I. 59-60). Keats disciplines the power of imagery to evoke sensuous richness and instinctual intensity of the semiotic realm. The poet-narrator, who needs suffering in order to mature, repudiates the Endymionese luxuriant bowers of interwreathed senses and complete gratification. Therefore, the proper division that the poet-narrator wants to make corresponds to the thetic division between the semiotic and the symbolic within the Kristevan universe; this trial of passage evokes the Kristevan subject who is in

process and on trial, that is the perpetually divided subject who oscillates between the semiotic realm of indistinct profusion and the symbolic domain of boundaries, categories, positions and distinctions.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE ABJECT AND ABJECTION

This chapter intends to analyse the Keatsian confrontation with the abject. Boundaries threaten to collapse in *Endymion*, which provokes disgust and repulsion in the encounter with the abject. *Hyperion* strives to maintain boundaries against the revolting presence of the abject; likewise, *The Fall of Hyperion* seeks to preserve distinctions in the face of the blurring of boundaries; nonetheless, both *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* are haunted by the abject.

#### **3.1 The Struggle against “the burr / Of smothering fancies”: The Abject and Abjection in *Endymion***

The “richest juice” in *Endymion*’s “spring-bowers” comes “in poison-flowers” (Keats *Isabella* 103-4). The second chapter deals with this luxuriant juice of poetic language, while the third chapter discusses its poisonous, dark underside. The Keatsian “verbal germination” (Ricks *Keats* 35) is central to the discussion in the previous chapter in the sense that his poetic language puts forth shoots, develops and takes roots (in the semiotic base); however, this current chapter reminds us that verbal germs infect language in poetry. Therefore, the soul “lost in pleasant smotherings” in the preceding chapter (Keats “I Stood Tip-Toe” 132) now confronts “the burr / Of smothering fancies” in this present chapter (Keats *Endymion* II. 138-9). The previous chapter regards the Romantic persistent hankering after the unknowable and the unnameable as a quest into the semiotic realm, as an Endymionese wandering into the unconscious and the unsignifiable. Nevertheless, this chapter focusing on the abject and abjection views the unrepresentable and the unnameable as not only enticing, but also repulsive and paralyzing. Kristeva’s notion of abjection helps us understand how the tireless search for the uncommunicable and the unidentifiable in *Endymion* is rendered as repellent besides being alluring:

There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire, which,

nevertheless, does not let itself be seduced. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects. A certainty protects it from the shameful – a certainty of which it is proud holds on to it. But simultaneously, just the same, that impetus, that spasm, that leap is drawn toward an elsewhere as tempting as it is condemned. Unflaggingly, like an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion places the one haunted by it literally beside himself (Kristeva *Powers* 1).

What lies beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable and the thinkable seems to be threatening for the subject in process/on trial. The impossible, the intolerable and the unthinkable tempts and haunts the subject, drawing him or her toward an elsewhere, yet the unassimilable is also revolting and sickening.

### **3.1.1 Endymion Cheated “into a swamp”: The Hero Striving to Deliver Himself from “this rapacious deep” of the Object**

The semiotic, “ravenous” component of signification (McAfee 39) and the infectious associations of words and sounds in *Endymion* signifies well beyond the scope of the thinkable and the signifiable, beyond the ken of the symbolic order. Bari argues that *Endymion*’s “recurrent resistance to any stable situation presents a kind of poetic-motion sickness that continually disrupts its fluid reading” (98). This Keatsian poetic-motion sickness results from the venture (a rough crossing) into the unidentifiable which is found revolting. This venture into the unidentifiable, accompanied by restlessness and turbulence, is related with the “yeasty, ardent and diffuse” feature of *Endymion* (Barnard *Keats* 35) which is indicative of its being ejected beyond the possible, the tolerable. The Keatsian (overflowing, effusive) yeastiness that marks poetic diction in *Endymion* written in the unhealthy “space of life” between the healthy imagination of a boy and the healthy imagination of a man (Keats *Preface* 505) not only expands the boundaries of meaning, but also spoils language, intoxicates diction as it both enraptures and poisons in the archaic sense of the word *intoxicate* (OED); it is both ecstatic and corrupt. In fact, it is ecstatic because it is corrupt; it makes the subject stand outside himself, placing him beside himself. In this unhealthy space of life defined as the period of adolescence by Ricks, boundaries are blurred; therefore, “embarrassed by *Endymion*”, Keats the poet seeks to find “a reassuring line of demarcation” between the imagination of a boy and that of a man (Ricks 10-11). However, “the soul [that] is in a ferment” (Keats *Preface* 505) in this period of life

makes the poetic leaven in *Endymion* spread “in this dull and clodded earth” and covers everything (*Endymion* I. 296-7) despite the “contemptuous rejection of the adolescent” and the abjection of his sickly imagination (Ricks 10). Thus, extreme yeastiness of a “[s]ickly imagination” (Keats “On Visiting the Tomb of Burns” 11) decomposes language; it stirs up disorder and ferments fear as language sours and rots; therefore, it becomes abject and it instils horror.

Fascinated by the abject, the poet “imagines its logic, projects himself into it, introjects it, and as a consequence perverts language – style and content” (Kristeva Powers 16). As a result of this perversion of language, poetic diction and fancy wander off in untrodden ways; fearful and baffled, Endymion, the wanderer, holds his forehead “to keep off the burr / Of smothering fancies” (*Endymion* II. 137-9); hazy indistinct profusion aroused by the semiotic modality of language and cherished by poetic fancy as it breaks open a new ground and discharges deep emotions turns out to be the fearful nebulous burr of smothering fancies which recalls the abject as the divide between self and other is blurred or annihilated. In other words, semiotic interfusion leads to “semantic fuzziness” (Kristeva Powers 191), a highly dense, baroque swirl of words and images; words are no longer distinguished from one another as in “a baroque mass” (Kristeva *Tales* 11).

Defined as the “in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (Kristeva Powers 4), the abject becomes manifest through the suffocating sensuousness of the Keatsian poetic language which defies boundaries in *Endymion*, described by John Jones as an “airless, eventless, self-caressing thing” (142). This description of *Endymion*, for instance, evokes the description of Latmos, the homeland of the romance hero, as an enclosed space which illustrates the suffocating voluptuousness of poetic diction: the moist earth feeds “(s)o plenteously all weed-hidden roots / Into o’er-hanging boughs, and precious fruits” and the mighty forest has “gloomy shades, sequestered deep, / Where no man went” (*Endymion* I. 63-68). The moist soil nourishes roots hidden by weeds and the moisture reaches overhanging boughs and fruits; in the bowels of the primeval woods where no one goes, beyond the scope of the possible, the ponderable, there are untamed and unspoiled shady boons cut off from the symbolic culture that human beings produce. There are many paths “[w]inding through palmy fern, and rushes

fenny, / And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly / To a wide lawn, whence one could only see / Stems thronging all around between the swell / Of turf and slanting branches” (*Endymion* I. 79-84). These winding paths, boggy rushes, ivy banks, swarming stems, tumescent turf and sloping branches in an uncultivated land are indicative of the choking quality of the poetic language which threatens to erase the borders of the symbolic human world. In this wilderness, “the mass / Of nature’s lives and wonders puls’d tenfold”, which lies outside the realm of the thinkable (*Endymion* I. 104-5). In this pastoral clime everything is interspersed, things are not spare; slimy rushes and swampy damp clay are concrete manifestations of the devouring wilderness. Such smothering sensuousness which does not allow for a differentiation between subject and object discloses the abject, “the threat of unassimilable non-unity: that is, ambiguity” (Lechte *Kristeva* 160).

In the face of this threatening undifferentiation of the voracious wilderness, the poetic voice jettisons some of the weight that crushes him in order to demarcate “a space out of which signs and objects arise” (Kristeva *Powers* 10). For example, the poetic voice heralds “[t]he freshness of the space of heaven above” in response to the smothering materiality (*Endymion* I. 85). The terrestrial maternal *chora* is rejected (only for a short while though) with the help of the freshness of the celestial space. The narrator in *Endymion* wants to “speed / Easily onward” (*Endymion* I. 61-2), seeks to “smoothly steer / My [his] little boat” without being devoured by the lushly growing juicy stalks (*Endymion* I. 46-7). Therefore, he invokes the muse to inspire him and use language effectively so that his “weak tongue” would not falter and “stammer where old Chaucer used to sing” (*Endymion* I. 128-34). He once again wishes to be affiliated with a precursor so as to locate himself within the confines of the symbolic culture. He implores the muse to endow him with inspiration lest he could be swallowed by the smothering (maternal) matter. Through using language effectively, he seeks to keep the abject under control. Kristeva states that “[a]n unshakable adherence to Prohibition and Law is necessary” if abjection is to be “thrust aside” (*Powers* 16). Chaucer represents the symbolic Law for the poet. Hence, Chaucer as a father-poet is either seen as a paternal figure sought after as an anchoring point which promises stability and order in the face of the suffocating sensuousness of poetic diction or feared as the infantile poetic voice stutters and fails to articulate within the intelligible boundaries

of the symbolic language. As indicated by the explanation in these paragraphs, abjection has both a negative and positive meaning:

The term “abjection” signals both a state of crisis (in which the borders between self and other break down in the confrontation with the abject), as well as a constitutive process of rejection (in which the borders between self and other are rudimentarily constituted through the exclusion of the abject) (Keltner *Thresholds* 45).

The subject is both disrupted and constituted in this process. The devouring wilderness signals a state of crisis whereas the freshness of the space and the invocation to the muse gesture toward a constitutive process of rejection.

In order to thrust the abject aside, the poetic voice calls on the muse to “let a portion of ethereal dew / Fall on my head, and presently unmew / My soul” (*Endymion* I. 133). First of all, he feels his mind (the hawk kept in a mew) is confined and seeks to be unrestrained by means of being inspired by celestial dew expected to work as an antidote to the intoxicating poetic yeastiness which threatens to choke the inebriated poet. Also, the image of being mewed suggests that he is caged like a moulting bird; a bird shedding its feathers may suggest a juvenile image of an infant who falters as he tries to speak. Moreover, another connotation of the verb “mew” suggests that the poetic voice does not want to mew like a cat or a gull which makes a high-pitched crying noise like a bawling human infant. The desire to unmew one’s soul might be taken as a tendency to be set free from the stifling sensuousness of poetic diction and to be able to express one’s thoughts and feelings within the order of the symbolic strictures. In response to an infantilized image of a bird moulting its plumage, a phallic symbol of virility is employed to represent Endymion: “between / His nervy knees there lay a boar-spear keen” (*Endymion* I. 173-4). Thus, the image of a moulting bird is rejected while a virile image is established; in the words of Kristeva, he abjects himself within the same motion through which he claims to establish himself (*Powers* 3).

The suffocating sensuousness of poetic diction is also evident in the description of the sacred fire that the Latmian priest kindles in honour of Pan:

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap’d a spire  
Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;

Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod  
With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.  
Now while the earth was drinking it, and while  
Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant pile,  
And gummy frankincense was sparkling bright  
'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy light  
Spread greyly eastward, thus a chorus sang: (*Endymion* I. 223-31)

The spire congested with sweets, the porous, absorbent turf, the viscous resin of the frankincense and the smothering parsley are suggestive of the suffocating voluptuousness of poetic diction. Similarly, the chorus that celebrates Pan, a symbol that signifies an ineffable “immensity that cannot be captured in language” (Ryan 266), sings of “desolate places, where dank moisture breeds / The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth”, “enmossed realms”, “low creeping strawberries” and “pent up butterflies” (*Endymion* I. 240-58). The image of uninhabited places covered with moss and reeking of mustiness and the grotesque pipy hemlock, a poisonous plant, which overgrows and smothers other herbs, evoke a sense of suffocation. Likewise, strawberries with their extending stems creeping along and smothering the ground and confined butterflies also contribute to the stifling sense of invasion and being gulped in back by the abject which “doesn’t respect borders” and “threatens identity” (Oliver *Kristeva* 56). The language deployed in the hymn to Pan evokes the threatening abject because Pan represents the collapse of boundaries, the obliteration of limits and borders. Hamilton argues that Pan as the “element filling the space between” (*Endymion* I. 302) represents “the idea of a yeasty consistency behind differences” (38). His yeastiness fills the space between differences, which causes distinctions and borders between things to vanish. Pan is “inscrutable, something ‘unimaginable,’ precisely because he is too diverse and inexhaustible [...] the symbol of a source of speculation that can have no limit, that can never be finally grasped or formulated” (Sperry *Keats* 98). The hemlock’s “strange overgrowth” in the hymn to Pan incites fear as it represents the undefinable realm of the bizarre and the grotesque beyond the imaginable, describable confines of the symbolic.

This sense of being smothered and swallowed is also manifest in the scene where Endymion falls asleep and sees the goddess of the moon. The feeling of suffocation arises once things reshape themselves into other things as Morpheus, the god of dreams, shakes “his owlet pinions” (*Endymion* I. 559-60):

And shaping visions all about my sight  
Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light;  
The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,  
And then were gulph'd in a tumultuous swim:  
And then I fell asleep. (*Endymion* I. 568-72)

Mental images smother his inner sight and they become bizarre like the herbs that strangely overgrow before they are tempestuously choked back. This “braided, woven, ambivalent” and “heterogenous flux” of visions does not allow the subject to mark out a territory where identity, order, system is not disturbed but clearly defined, and borders are respected (Kristeva *Powers* 10). Likewise, Cynthia has “locks bright enough to make me [him] mad; / And they were simply gordian'd up and braided” (*Endymion* I. 612-14); the intricately tied locks of hair suggest imprisonment from which the subject wishes to be “unmewed”. Endymion’s “smothered sight” (*Endymion* I. 901) is another concrete manifestation of the semiotic fuzziness which threatens to unsettle all distinctions and structures and stir up fear and disorder; his smothered sight causes “[d]iscomfort, unease, dizziness stemming from an ambiguity” (Kristeva *Powers* 10).

The allusions to the slimy, boggy substances in *Endymion* point to the abject; their stickiness refers to the abject since it annihilates differences; therefore, abjection is “a ceaseless defence against nondifferentiation” (Keltner *Thresholds* 46). The menacing sliminess is found to be repulsive and rejected by the ones who “wipe away all slime / Left by men-slugs and human serpentry” (*Endymion* I. 817-21): a terrestrial mollusc which secretes a film of mucus and a creeping (as the Latin etymology of *serpent* suggests (OED)), slithery snake could be regarded as images of repulsion. The repellent slime and the monstrous image of a human serpent arouse intense disgust and disrespect the boundaries between human and animal. Kristeva states that the abject confronts us “with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of animal” (*Powers* 12). Men-slugs, molluscan creatures and serpent (sub)humans of *Endymion* point to this revolting collapse of the borders; the abject refers to “the fragility of those borders” that the symbolic tries to maintain (Oliver *Kristeva* 56).

Ricks points out that what Sartre says about the slimy in *Being and Nothingness* helps us to better understand the slimy in Keats’s *Endymion*. Sartre says that a slimy

substance is “an aberrant fluid”; at first, the slimy “manifests to us a being which is everywhere fleeing and yet everywhere similar to itself”; however, “immediately the slimy reveals itself as essentially ambiguous because its fluidity exists in slow motion; there is a sticky thickness in its liquidity”; he adds that the softness of the slimy is “leech-like”; the slimy “sticks to me, it draws me, it sucks at me”; the slimy appears to possess whoever holds it. The slimy becomes threatening as it “lives obscurely under my fingers, and I sense it like a dizziness; it draws me to it as the bottom of a precipice might draw me. There is something like a tactile fascination in the slimy”. Sartre notes the dual nature of the slimy as repelling and fascinating, which resonates with the twofold nature of the abject as revolting and enthralling. Sartre notes that the slimy ensnares the person because it is “a fluidity which holds me and which compromises me”; the slime is presented as “a liquid seen in a nightmare, where all its properties are animated by a sort of life and turn back against me”. Interestingly, like the Keatsian poetic voice that associates the abject slime with Circe, Sartre links it with “a moist and feminine sucking” and a “sickly-sweet, feminine revenge”. Nevertheless, he also declares that “at the same time the slimy is *myself*, by the very fact that I outline an appropriation of the slimy substance. That sucking of the slimy which I feel on my hands outlines a kind of continuity of the slimy substance in myself” (in Ricks 139-42). Similarly, this thesis argues that for Glaucus/Endymion, the slimy Circean is part of himself that he abjects or seeks to do so; this will be discussed later on in the subsection that deals with Circe.

Similar to the suffocating, slimy sensuousness that has been discussed above, intimidating wilderness, strange, uncanny visions beyond the scope of the possible, the thinkable, winding paths, trembling mazes and frightful eddies in *Endymion* generate a stifling atmosphere which threatens to “gulph” and suck one in (*Endymion* I. 571), which evokes the abject that “beckons to us and ends up engulfing us” (Kristeva *Powers* 4). This fear of being devoured stems from the “dizzying geographic and spatial maze, which forms the circuitous structure of *Endymion*, ‘Circled a million times with the space’ (I. 752)” (Sandy “Tragic Realisation” 118). Similarly, the paths of Latmos “winding through palmy fern, and rushes fenny, / And ivy banks” (*Endymion* I. 79-81) suggest a labyrinthine sense of being lost. There are many other images of this dizzying space and maze. For instance, fearing that she could be raped,

Syrinx runs “the trembling mazes” (*Endymion* I. 245) in order to flee from the amorous Pan who pursues her. As another example, Endymion, as he falls asleep, lies watching the zenith, “travelling my [his] eye, until the doors / Of heaven appear’d to open for my flight, / I became loth and fearful to alight / From such high soaring by a downward glance” (*Endymion* I. 578-84); descent frightens him. Endymion’s flight is “vertiginous and endangering”; this Keatsian “experience of a form of astral projection, or out-of-body experience” dislocates the “secure boundaries of sky, stars and horizon”; this Keatsian reverie “dangerously destabilises the world” (Bari 94-5). In similar fashion, Endymion and Cynthia swoop “into frightful eddies” (*Endymion* I. 648); swirling through the air scares Endymion. As a further example of the dizzying space, a deep hollow that Endymion visits has “ragged brows” and “moulder’d steps”; there he picks up flowers “from the gaps and slits / In a mossy stone” (*Endymion* I. 864-77); the rough surface of jagged rocks, decaying steps and slimy stones all suggest a threatening sense of perplexing irregularity, disintegration and putrefaction. Likewise, standing upon “a misty, jutting head of land” (*Endymion* II. 160-1), Endymion is frightened since “the wide-gaping air / will gulph me [him]” (*Endymion* II. 194-5). The engulfing void of abjection scares him; the subject is threatened with sinking into the void since the void indicates “a challenge to symbolization” (Kristeva *Powers* 51). This fear of being smothered by the wide-gaping air is described through poetic language marked by “infantile semiotizations”, “pre-signifying articulations” (Kristeva *Powers* 51). For instance, the onomatopoeic use of the verb “gulph” attests to the tendency to semiotise language. His stare is maddened; his lips are trembling; the yawning void intimidates him; he is horrified of being devoured by the abject which pulverizes the subject.

Endymion flees into “the fearful deep” (*Endymion* II. 216-7); his descent into the (maternal) bowels of the earth is marked by horror since the abject is “a deep well of memory that is unapproachable and intimate” (Kristeva *Powers* 6). The bottomless chasm stirs up a feeling of bewilderment and a sense of being gorged:

Aye, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,  
 Along whose track the prince quick footsteps told,  
 With all its lines abrupt and angular:  
 Out-shooting sometimes, like a meteor-star,  
 Through a vast antre; then the metal woof,

Like Vulcan's rainbow, with some monstrous roof  
Curves hugely: now, fair in the deep abyss,  
It seems an angry lightning, and doth hiss  
Fancy into belief: anon it leads  
Through winding passages, where sameness breeds  
Vexing conceptions of some sudden change; (*Endymion* II. 224-36)

Sparkling gems, precipitous and sharp-cornered lines, interwoven threads or veins of rocks and ores which bend over a monstrous roof, winding passages of the deep abyss cause feelings of anxiety and perplexity; this grotesque vision stirs up fear. The abject strikes as sameness breeds perplexing conceptions. The abject “continuously violates one's own borders” (McAfee 47); it does not respect boundaries as sameness obliterates the divide between self and other:

And long he travers'd to and fro, to acquaint  
Himself with every mystery, and awe;  
Till, weary, he sat down before the maw  
Of a wide outlet, fathomless and dim,  
To wild uncertainty and shadows grim.  
There, when new wonders ceas'd to float before,  
And thoughts of self came on, how crude and sore  
The journey homeward to habitual self!  
A mad-pursuing of the fog-horn elf,  
Whose flitting lantern, through rude nettle-briar,  
Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,  
Into the bosom of a hated thing. (*Endymion* II. 269-80)

The yearning to acquaint oneself with every mystery results in being swallowed by uncertainty and weariness, and by the voraciously gaping maw of a bottomless, unfathomable mouth of a river. The desire to make the unknown knowable or to name the unnameable as the etymology of the verb “acquaint” suggests (OED) propels the subject into the dizzying void of the unrepresentable that lies beyond the thinkable and the signifiable. Thoughts of self predominate new wonders; the journey homeward to habitual self is crude and painful because it stifles one and obliterates the divide between subject and object like sameness that breeds vexing conceptions. Once the divide between self and other is annihilated, Endymion is cheated into a swamp and into the bosom of a hated thing; the slimy swamp of the journey homeward to habitual self is suggestive of the abject, “intermixture, erasing of differences, threat to identity” (Kristeva Powers 101).

Such a self-bound journey sucks one in; misery sings “drowningly” in “lone Endymion’s ear” (*Endymion* II. 281-2); the fire of the journey homeward to habitual self chokes him; within “his breast there lives a choking flame” (*Endymion* II. 317). The abject causes pulmonary congestion as it is “death infecting life” (Kristeva *Powers* 4). Endymion is so much asphyxiated by the slimy swamp that he yearns to be disentangled and disgorged:

O let me cool it [the choking flame] the zephyr-boughs among!  
 A homeward fever parches up my tongue-  
 O let me slake it at the running springs!  
 Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings-  
 O let me once more hear the linnet’s note!  
 Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float-  
 O let me ‘noint them with the heaven’s light!  
 Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white?  
 O think how sweet to me the freshening sluice!  
 Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-juice?  
 O think how this dry palate would rejoice!  
 If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,  
 O think how I should love a bed of flowers!-  
 Young goddess! let me see my native bowers!  
 Deliver me from this rapacious deep! (*Endymion* II. 318-32)

In this invocation marked by the recurrence of the phrase “O let me”, the homeward fever that parches up his tongue resonates with the homeward journey to habitual self; this homeward journey is accompanied by a condition of incapacity and helplessness. His parched tongue is paralysed by the stroke of the abject; the organ that articulates speech is deliquified, hence dehumanised; he is incapacitated; his capacity to articulate in the symbolic realm of boundaries and positions is threatened. In addition, the noisy nothing of the impossible, the imponderable, the intolerable rings upon his ear; his eyes film over and his vision is enclosed, he does not see the lush, juicy stalks of the semiotic bowers. He also longs to be delivered from the rapacious deep, the fearful deep which strangulates him; he yearns for his native bowers. Taking the Latin etymology of the word “native” into consideration (OED), one might say that his wish to be delivered from the rapacious deep could be seen as his desire to be born out of the voracious uterine night, “the old womb of night” (*Endymion* IV. 372), the abject maternal body of “matron Night” (*Endymion* I. 561). The rapacious deep represents the maternal body that is to be expelled; “the child’s own origin” is to be abjected

(McAfee 48). The rapacious deep refers to the nocturnal maternal body where the linguistic sign vanishes. Kristeva's words attest to this:

Abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be – maintaining that night in which the outline of the signified thing vanishes and where only the imponderable affect is carried out (Kristeva *Powers* 10).

In the nocturnal realm of the maternal body, the imponderable affect parches up the human tongue, the very organ which enables the infant to enter the symbolic language; the unthinkable affect changes the linnet's note to the noisy nothing that is un-inscribable. His eyes that film over refers to the archaism of the preobjectal mother-child dyad. To be delivered from the rapacious deep is marked by the immemorial violence.

The fear of being choked and consumed by the abject maternal body pervades the following lines, too:

O did he ever live, that lonely man,  
Who lov'd – music slew not? 'Tis the pest  
Of love, that fairest joys give most unrest;  
That things of delicate and tenderest worth  
Are swallow'd all, and made a seared dearth,  
By one consuming flame: it doth immerse  
And suffocate true blessings in a curse.  
Half-happy, by comparison of bliss,  
Is miserable. 'Twas even so with this  
Dew-dropping melody, in the Carian's ear;  
First heaven, then hell, and then forgotten clear,  
Vanish'd in elemental passion. (*Endymion* II. 364-75)

The fear to be suffocated and swallowed causes a feeling of unrest and burning insufficiency; this is the catastrophic consequence of the pest of self-love; horror arises from the fact that the divide between self and other is obliterated; therefore, the abject strikes Endymion. The heavenly plenitude of the semiotic bowers (as discussed in the previous chapter) changes into the infernal abject of the hell. The dew-dropping melody of the external objective world vanishes in the elemental passion of inward-looking primordial matter; the self which cannot reach out to the other is swallowed by “swart abysm”, the “winding alleys” and “a thousand mazes” (*Endymion* II. 376, 384, 387) of the self which closes in upon itself.

In the face of the suffocating infernal pits of the earth Endymion struggles to find his way and to thrust aside the abject:

So, with unusual gladness, on he hies,  
Through caves, and palaces of mottled ore,  
Gold dome, and crystal wall, and turquoise floor,  
Black polish'd porticos of awful shade,  
And, at the last, a diamond balustrade,  
Leading afar past wild magnificence,  
Spiral through ruggedest loopholes, and thence  
Stretching across a void, then guiding o'er  
Enormous chasms, where, all foam and roar,  
Streams subterranean tease their granite beds,  
Then heighten'd just above the silvery heads  
Of a thousand fountains, so that he could dash  
The waters with his spear; (*Endymion* II. 593-605)

Endymion strives to hie on, “speed / Easily onward”; “on he hastes”; “Onward he goes” (*Endymion* I. 61-2, II. 351, II. 355). He struggles to progress through dense matter lest he could be trapped and trip over. He seeks to dash the waters of the earth that threaten to devour him with his spear, a phallic image of virility that appears repeatedly. Rugged loopholes, the void, enormous chasms, and foaming and roaring subterranean streams are concrete manifestations of the abject, which instil fear and ferment disorder. He is engrossed by interlacing streams, covered “with crystal vines” which look “like delicatest lattices” and surrounded by “weeping trees” which morph “into shapes of curtain'd canopies” (*Endymion* II. 613-18), all of which threaten to unsettle the subject which recognizes the boundary between self and other. Endymion senses he must depart from this realm as he feels horror creeps upon him: “He bade a loth farewell / To these founts Protean, passing gulph, and dell, / And torrent, and ten thousand jutting shapes, / Half seen through deepest gloom, and grisly gapes, / Blackening on every side” (*Endymion* II. 626-30). These incessantly shape-shifting visions are gloomy and gruesome as they are of the fearful deep; the protean founts induce fear in him and cause a swampy perplexity:

Aye, all so huge and strange,  
The solitary felt a hurried change  
Working within him into something dreary, -  
Vex'd like a morning eagle, lost, and weary,  
And purblind amid foggy, midnight wolds.  
But he revives at once: for who beholds  
New sudden things, nor casts his mental slough? (*Endymion* II. 632-8)

Endymion is dwarfed by the hugeness, and overwhelmed by the strangeness of the protean ghastly shapes. He feels that a change works within his breast and turns into something dreary. This moment could be taken to be the turning point at which his semiotic delight transforms into horror. Endymion is like the child who “is in a double-bind: a longing for narcissistic union with its first love and a need to renounce this union in order to become a subject. It must renounce a part of itself – insofar as it is still one with the mother – in order to become a self” (McAfee 48). He is both fascinated and repelled. Shifting shapes vex him like “[v]exing conceptions” which sameness breeds (*Endymion* II. 235-6) and defect his vision, dim his mind; he is lost in “midnight wolds”; the dark uncultivated moors and mental swamp communicate the idea that he is stuck in suffocating wilderness beyond the ken of the symbolic boundary, which causes him to feel perplexed and horrified.

This is where the negative and positive aspects of the deep semiotic investment meet; on the one hand, he is captured by fear as “[h]orror rushes / Too palpable before me [him]” (*Endymion* II. 789-90). On the other hand, he is delighted by new things which he will not behold if he casts his mental slough and unless he rushes “into the earth’s deep maw” (*Endymion* II. 899). He suffers from his “quenchless burnings” the flames of which parch up his tongue, but also these burnings are “made fiercer by a fear lest any part / Should be engulfed in the eddying wind” (*Endymion* II. 844-46). He is both scared of these chaotic insatiable desires of “the gusty deep”, “distemper’d longings” (*Endymion* II. 853, III. 375) and of losing them, which is indicative of the interpenetratedness of the positive and negative sides of the dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic. Abjection “lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated”; it is “as tempting as it is condemned” (Kristeva *Powers* 1). Abject haunts Endymion; he oscillates between “a longing to fall back into the maternal *chora*” and “a deep anxiety over the possibility of losing one’s subjectivity” (McAfee 49).

The suffocating sensuousness of poetic language and the swallowing quality of the labyrinthine caves, mazes and winding streams that the questing hero comes across during his “mazy voyage” (Sandy “Tragic Realisation” 119) have been discussed as manifestations of the abject since they stir up fear and disorder as the distinction

between self and other is threatened, the rupture between subject and object is challenged and the arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified is deferred. Frye suggests that the “orbed diamond” (*Endymion* II. 245) is an image fundamental to the world of Book II, where subject and object are mutually enclosed (138). The intimations of this solipsistic, enclosed world are given in the first book where Endymion is deeply immersed in his subjective dream; as he is recounting his dream vision of Cynthia to Peona, he says that “my spirit clings / And plays about its fancy, till the stings / Of human neighbourhood envenom all” (*Endymion* I. 620-22); the objects of the external world are regarded as the poisonous stings of human neighbourhood; the self-contained world of his inward-looking fancy does not recognise the existence of an object except for the hazy, elusive ideal of his imagination, “the fog-horn elf” that he madly pursues (*Endymion* II. 277).

### **3.1.2 Circe as the Pelican Mother: The Subject Maternal Body in *Endymion***

In contrast to timid female figures such as the meek women of Latmos who “[b]eckon’d their sons to silence” (*Endymion* I. 187-8), and Cynthia, the “meekest dove / Of heaven”, who “sits most meek and most alone; / As if she had not pomp subservient” (*Endymion* II. 169-70, III. 46-7), powerful women are portrayed as ensnaring and devouring. There are allusions to the stories where powerful female figures ensnare their lovers. For instance, the story of Venus and Adonis is referred to: “the sea-born goddess pin’d / For a mortal youth, and how she strove to bind / Him all in all unto her doting self. / Who would not be prison’d?” (*Endymion* II. 458-61). Venus is portrayed as a possessive goddess, whose “lips and eyes / Were clos’d in sullen moisture, and quick sighs / Came vex’d and pettish through her nostrils small” (*Endymion* II. 468-70). This description of the goddess evokes “the deeply passionate nature and almost animal physicality of Shakespeare’s Venus” (Steinhoff 208-9). Ricks also pays attention to the “physicality” of her nostrils “at once disturbing and magnetic” (110). Such physicality highlights the image of the goddess overpowering Adonis, the sexual overtones of whose death “suggest a maiden’s loss of virginity” (Steinhoff 209) as “the boar tusk’d him” (*Endymion* II. 474); Adonis is disrobed of a traditional masculine prowess and reduced to an inexperienced maiden.

Besides powerful female lovers, the image of being “nurtured like a pelican brood” (*Endymion* I. 815) and its animal physicality could be seen as a reference to the overpowering maternal body and explained as the confrontation with the abject maternal body. Steinhoff explains the meaning of pelican brood: “The Medieval bestiary served up pelicans as an allegory of the Eucharistic meal. Mother pelicans were said to kill their young and restore them after three days with the blood from a self-inflicted wound” (192). Dickstein thinks that this Keatsian image suggests “a return of experience to its own vital sources, a breakdown of encrusted layers of selfhood”; the maternal body is the vital source, yet such a breakdown of encrusted layers of selfhood to return to the maternal origin incites fear; Dickstein adds that “in seeking to return not simply to the mother but to that ultimate and self-limiting mother who nourishes with her blood”, the poet of *Endymion* also expresses “a wish to destroy the mother, a wish that he will begin to realize in his portrait of the malicious Circe” (95-6). The malicious Circe of *Endymion*, “[c]ruel enchantress” (*Endymion* III. 413), embodies the animal physicality of the abject maternal body. The abject maternal body confronts us with the tenuous borders of selfhood where the self wanders off into “the territories of *animal*” (Kristeva *Powers* 12).

Keats’s representation of Circe as the “arbitrary queen of sense” (*Endymion* III. 459) is discussed in the light of Kristeva’s idea of the abject. Circe stands for the fragile border where “identities (subject/object, etc.) do not exist or only barely so – double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject” (Kristeva *Powers* 207). The image of the devouring woman is of crucial importance in the pastoral world of *Endymion*; the Circe of Book III is a concrete manifestation of the abject in terms of the expulsion of the emasculating woman. The first book of *Endymion* presents “passion as a ‘chief intensity’, an ideal essence” and the third book explores “its poisonous counterpart in Glaucus’s enthrallment by Circe, enchantress and ‘arbitrary queen of sense’” (Roe *Keats* 181). Glaucus, enthralled by Circe, expresses his captivity through the feelings of suffocation, disgust and repulsion:

Long years of misery have told me so.  
Aye, thus it was one thousand years ago.  
One thousand years! – Is it then possible  
To look so plainly through them? To dispel  
A thousand years with backward glance sublime?

To breathe away as 'twere all scummy slime  
 From off crystal pool, to see its deep,  
 And one's own image from the bottom peep?  
 Yes: now I am no longer wretched thrall,  
 My long captivity and moanings all  
 Are but a slime, a thin pervading scum,  
 The which I breathe away, and thronging come  
 Like thinks of yesterday my youthful pleasures (*Endymion* III. 325-37)

Kristeva puts forward that “an item of food, a piece of filth, waste, or dung”, “defilement, sewage, and muck” and “that skin on the surface of milk” all point to abjection (*Powers* 2). Therefore, Glaucus wishes to breathe away the scummy slime which suffocates him. Unpleasantly thick and slippery liquid substances and layers of dirt on the surface of a liquid such as slime and scum respectively are concrete manifestations of the abject. Glaucus is so engrossed by Circe that he cannot see his individual image on the slimy surface of the pool. Encrusted layers of his selfhood break down and the vital source of the maternal body reassumes the infant, which causes fear and disgust since he is devoured by the abject maternal body. Such imprisoning captivity obliterates the divide between subject and object as the pelican mother reclaims its young, but does not restore it to life after three days - (Neptune, the pelican father, will do this).

The abject exists through Glaucus. Before he confronted Circe and was challenged by the abject, he was “a fisherman who had “[n]o housing from the storm and tempests mad, / But hollow rocks, - and they were palaces / Of silent happiness, of slumberous ease”; he was “a lonely youth on desert shores”; all his life “was utmost quietude” (*Endymion* III. 321-4, 339, 353). He was “keeping in wait whole days for Neptune’s voice”, but he was “not contended”; he began to feel “distemper’d longings: to desire / The utmost privilege [the ultimate signifier, the phallus] that ocean’s sire / Could grant in benediction: to be free / Of his kingdom” (*Endymion* III. 355, 372, 375-8). Longing for “passionate joys beyond his reach” (Sperry *Keats* 106), he plunged into the ocean “for life or death” as he desired to “interknit / One’s [his] senses with so dense a breathing stuff”; it felt “crystal-smooth” and “buoyant round my [his] limbs” (*Endymion* III.380-4). At first he was “[f]orgetful utterly of self-intent”; he gave in to the power of the ocean as he was “[m]oving but with the mighty ebb and flow” (*Endymion* III. 386-7). He was happy to be free:

Then, like a new fledg'd bird that first doth shew  
His spreaded feathers to the morrow chill,  
I tried in fear the pinions of my will.  
'Twas freedom! and at once I visited  
The ceaseless wonders of this ocean-bed. (*Endymion* III. 388-92)

An infantile image represents Glaucus; he is a new-fledged bird, open to experience. He might be excited by the possibility of new experience, yet it turns out to be an imprisoning, sickening self-caressing subjectivity. Accordingly, Frye thinks that “[I]ike Milton’s Satan after he separates himself from the community of God, Glaucus finds the new feeling of individuality exhilarating at first” and he adds that “of course it quickly becomes, as with Satan, an imprisonment which reduces him to the narrowest of all prisons, the one he carries around with him as his own subjectivity” (140). Glaucus encounters Circe, who represents the abject maternal body; however, it must be pointed out that Circe is a concrete manifestation of his imprisoning subjectivity since Circe is “[o]ne half of the witch in me [him]” (*Endymion* III. 644). Circe is not a power outside his inner consciousness; like Cynthia, a celestial fair form which exists in his mind, Circe is another but material foul form that emerges out of his psyche. Therefore, the abject does not point to a physical, empirical woman<sup>37</sup> outside him; the abject refers to the emergence of a principle in his subjectivity which is embodied as Circe (and which has been historically associated with the feminine); Circe is the abject incarnate, the jettisoned, undesired other that the self tries to suppress.

The new-fledged bird, the infantilised Glaucus as seen in the quotation above is ensnared by Circe who is defined as:

Cruel enchantress! So above the water  
I rear'd my head, and look'd for Phoebus' daughter.  
Aeaea's isle was wondering at the moon: -  
It seem'd to whirl around me, and a swoon  
Left me dead-drifting to that fatal power. (*Endymion* III. 413-7)

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<sup>37</sup> Seeing Circe as an empirical woman in this interpretation would be abjection misplaced on women as Kelly Oliver points out; the maternal function as a metaphor, a theoretical construct must be separated from women (*Kristeva* 6). Kristeva time and again emphasises that what is designated as “feminine” is “far from being a primeval essence” and “will be seen as an ‘other’ without a name” (*Powers* 58).

Glaucus is bewitched by eddies of his mind; he is possessed by the fatal power of Circe. He also seems to be incapable of exercising his free will as he is mesmerised and drifting to the magnetic power of Circe, who weaves “[a] net whose thraldom was more bliss than all / The range of flower’d Elysium” (*Endymion* III. 426-8). Glaucus is a fisher “caught in his own net”, the net of subjectivity (Steinhoff 226). He is tongue-tied and spellbound by Circe, who “link’d / Her charming syllables, till indistinct / Their music came to my [his] o’ersweeten’d soul” (*Endymion* III. 443-5). Like the indistinct “burr / Of smothering fancies” (*Endymion* II. 138-9) that imprisons Endymion, Glaucus is enthralled by the burr of Circean charming syllables, her “rich speech” (*Endymion* III. 429). Glaucus is reduced to a speechless infant in Circe’s bower:

Who could resist? Who in this universe?  
 She did so breath ambrosia; so immerse  
 My fine existence in a golden clime.  
 She took me like a child of suckling time,  
 And cradled me in roses. Thus condemn’d,  
 The current of my former life was stemm’d,  
 And to this arbitrary queen of sense  
 I bow’d a tranced vassal: (*Endymion* III. 453-60)

The tyrannical queen of sense enchanted Glaucus, who in a half-conscious state became enslaved in a deceptive bower described as “specious heaven” (*Endymion* III. 476). Glaucus now recounts to Endymion what befell him in the company of Circe:

Now let me borrow,  
 For moments few, a temperament as stern  
 As Pluto’s sceptre, that my words not burn  
 These uttering lips, while in calm speech tell  
 How specious heaven was changed to real hell. (*Endymion* III. 473-6)

Glaucus strives to be released from the fatal power of the despotic queen of sense and animal physicality so that he could relate his experience in a stern temperament and in calm speech untainted by semiotic fuzziness and disorderliness. He struggles to hold on to Pluto’s sceptre, perhaps a phallic object invested with masculine authority in order to be empowered by the calmness of philosophy, to be able to utter, speak, signify within the confines of the symbolic without being choked by the flames of being entirely immersed in the abject state and without being tortured by “[m]y [his] fever’d parchings up, my scathing dread”, without being seized by “palsy”, and

without being incapacitated as “soon these limbs became / Gaunt, wither’d, sapless, feeble, cramp’d, and lame” (*Endymion* III. 636-8). The false paradise where he is suckled like a child devitalises him and reduces him to an infant that is incapable of using his limbs. Circe’s deceptive bower debilitates him and his vigour is drained. Therefore, Frye regards Circe as a Jungian “terrible mother” (140); she keeps “her victim in a state of foetal dependency” (Steinhoff 226-7). The Circean illusory bower, called “specious heaven” (*Endymion* III. 476), is interpreted by Frye as “pure subjective consciousness” (140). The abject strikes Glaucus since the symbolic divide between self and other is utterly lost in this Circean realm of his mind. Glaucus feels a strong urge to abject Circe; rejection of Circean materiality “causes the human animal to give way to the speaking being” (Oliver *Kristeva* 46).

The abject violator of boundaries between human beings and animals, Circe is also seen as a Satan figure, another violator of boundaries between human beings and deities; she speaks to Glaucus:

If thou art ripe to taste a long love dream;  
If smiles, if dimples, tongues for ardour mute,  
Hang in thy vision like a tempting fruit,  
O let me pluck it for thee. (*Endymion* III. 440-3)

Circe is portrayed as a temptress; these lines refer to the “archetypal temptation scene with Circe playing the role of Satan, wishing to pluck the sensuous fruit of desire for the innocent Glaucus” (Steinhoff 226).

Circe’s rout of tormented animal shapes evokes a strong sense of disgust, loathing and fear as what is abjected hovers at the periphery of one’s selfhood, constantly challenging the fragile border between self and other:

Damp awe assail’d me; for there ‘gan to boom  
A sound of moan, an agony of sound,  
Sepulchral from the distance all around.  
Then came a conquering earth-thunder, and rumbled  
That fierce complain to silence: while I stumbled  
Down a precipitous path, as if impell’d.  
I came to a dark valley. – Groanings swell’d  
Poisonous about my ears, and louder grew,  
The nearer I approach’d a flame’s gaunt blue,  
That glar’d before me through a thorny brake.  
This fire, like the eye of gordian snake,

Bewitch'd me towards (*Endymion* III 484-95)

Glaucus is horrified by the disorderly and tumultuous crowd of misshapen beings and their dreadful sounds and inhuman moans and groans of pain. Their inarticulate sounds beyond the scope of the thinkable and the signifiable cause extreme fear as these sepulchral sounds evoke death and decomposing corpses; death infects life in this state of ambiguity; a corpse “puts death in intolerable proximity to the subject” (Becker-Leckrone 34).

Malicious groans intimidate Glaucus. Fire and snake are associated with Circe the sorceress, who is, as we have seen, also associated with the serpentine figure, Satan. Circe transfigures men into monstrous shapes:

A sight too fearful for the feel of fear:  
In thicket hid I curs'd the haggard scene –  
The banquet of my arms, my arbour queen,  
Seated upon an uptorn forest root;  
An all around her shapes, wizard and brute,  
Laughing, and wailing, grovelling, serpentine,  
Shewing tooth, tusk, and venom-bag, and sting!  
O such deformities! (*Endymion* III. 496-503)

The “tyrannizing” queen of sense (*Endymion* III. 507) disfigures human beings; they are transformed into deformities; they are grotesque, repulsively ugly; these monstrous shapes terrify Glaucus. The abject strikes him because these distorted images blur the boundary between human and beast; they are on “the frontier between animality and symbol formation” (Kristeva *Black* 22). These malformed shapes which are howling and crawling abjectly on the ground are the waste dejected from the symbolic; therefore, Glaucus finds them repulsive. They devour voraciously like wild animals as they raven clusters of grapes; they have “a hungry lick / About their shaggy jaws”; they are despicable with their hairy look; their malformed bodies “bloat / And puff from the tail's end to stifled throat”; they writhe in a whirlwind “like one huge Python” (*Endymion* III. 511-30); this serpentine image refers to their debased state.

These deformities are found to be repulsive since they confuse the boundaries. The borders between the maternal body and the infant are muddled; they are not separated from the pre-Oedipal mother, “the archaic holder of my possible identity” (Kristeva *Tales* 371), which causes the dissolution of the psychic space. They are dehumanised,

almost animal, “serpentine” as they are deprived of a psychic space: “a clear separation from the mother” entails a psychic space (Lechte *Kristeva* 183). Since they are closed off from an other in the space where the maternal body and the speechless infant are undifferentiated, their psychic space is not constituted; they are not opening up to an other in the extreme state of Circean carnality which does not include symbolic idealizations as it points to a conception of the subject fundamentally in a world of its own prior to the distinction between self and other.

In the Circean revelry, “waggish fauns, and nymphs, and satyrs stark” and “centaurs” dance and bow before “the fierce witch”; these debauched beings worship their “[p]otent goddess” (*Endymion* III. 534-9). This dissolute foul crowd ask “nought so heavenward” (*Endymion* III. 549) in contrast to the “fair living forms [that] swam heavenly / To tunes forgotten – out of memory” (*Endymion* I. 315-6):

Only I pray, as fairest boon, to die,  
Or be deliver'd from this cumbrous flesh,  
From this gross, detestable, filthy mesh,  
And merely given to the cold bleak air.  
Have mercy, Goddess! Circe, feel my prayer! (*Endymion* III. 550-4)

They want to be delivered from this state of carnality; the body is cumbersome; the state of corporeality is abominable; the body is regarded as unclean, disgustingly dirty; they loath their animal physicality. They could only be purified by means of a relocation into the symbolic realm of language, grammar, structures, logos, identity, positions: “Purification is something only the Logos is capable of” (Kristeva *Powers* 27). However, in this state of animality, the imponderable affect represses the linguistic sign. They do not glorify the sensuous pleasures of the flesh; the physical body is renounced as it is seen as repulsive. This extreme state of detested corporeality is associated with Circe, who stands for the engrossing maternal body which upsets the establishment of the child’s tentative bodily boundaries, and which does not notify the subject of “the limits of the human universe” (Kristeva *Powers* 11).

Glaucus experiences an unmatched primordial horror as abjection “threatens the integrity of the subject’s corporeal boundaries” (Schipper 50), the fragile border between the clean and the unclean, the proper and the improper:

That curst magician's name fell icy numb  
 Upon my wild conjecturing: truth had come  
 Naked and sabre-like against my heart.  
 I saw a fury whetting a death-dart;  
 And slain my spirit, overwrought with fright,  
 Fainted away in that dark lair of night.  
 Think, my deliverer, how desolate  
 My waking must have been! Disgust, and hate,  
 And terrors manifold divided me  
 A spoil amongst them. I prepar'd to flee  
 Into the dungeon core of that wild wood:  
 I fled three days – when lo! O Dis, even now,  
 A clammy dew is beading on my brow,  
 At mere remembering her pale laugh, and curse. (*Endymion* III. 555-69)

Filth and defilement threaten the subject and the tenuous borders of selfhood; his mind is so frosted that he feels near death. His spirit is distraught by fear; he feels disgust and hate; violent anger surges within him; slimy dewes of sweat in his brow suggest repulsion. Circe is dreaded and abhorred like Medusa, a Gorgon figure suggested by the reference to Circe's laugh and curse. Circe's laugh causes "icy numb / Upon my [his] wild conjecturing" as Medusa turns anyone who looks into her eyes into stone, her gaze "arrests men into mere forms, stony paralyses of themselves" (Wolfson "Late Lyrics" 105). For Glaucus, through whom the abject exists, Circe represents "the daze that has petrified him before the untouchable, impossible, absent body of the mother" (Kristeva *Powers* 6). Medusa's venomous snakes in place of her hair excite fear and disgust in the mind of the onlooker as Circean snake imagery incites repulsion and terror; the "sight of Medusa's head makes the spectator stiff with terror, turns him into stone" (Freud "Medusa's Head" 273).

Circe, the enchantress of false paradise, mocks Glaucus and his predilection for infantile bowers of tenderness and softness:

Ha! ha! Sir Dainty! there must be a nurse  
 Made of rose leaves and thistledown, express,  
 To cradle thee, my sweet, and lull thee: yes,  
 I am too flinty-hard for thy nice touch:  
 My tenderest squeeze is but a giant's clutch.  
 So, fairy-thing, it shall have lullabies  
 Unheard of yet; and it shall still its cries  
 Upon some breast more lily-feminine. (*Endymion* III. 570-77)

Circe derides Glaucus, reducing him to an infant who needs to be nursed, suckled, cradled, lulled, soothed and sung lullabies to. By emphasising his tenderness, delicacy, she incapacitates him. She defines her touch as a giant's clutch, thereby portraying herself as a potent goddess who dwarfs Glaucus and looms over an infantilized man; she highlights that she is "flinty-hard" and does not offer some "lily-feminine" breast to Glaucus.

Circe evokes death for Glaucus. She represents "fatal power"; she chases "[e]ternally away from thee [Glaucus] all bloom / Of youth, and destine thee [him] towards a tomb" (*Endymion* III. 417, 590-2). She castrates Glaucus: "Disabled age shall seize thee; and even then / Thou shalt not go the way of aged men; / But live and wither, cripple and still breathe" (*Endymion* III. 595-7); she devitalizes him. She emasculates him by means of crippling; being crippled could be suggestive of castration as the Oedipus the "Swollen Foot" recalls to mind (Lévi-Strauss 215-7). Likewise, Circe, a Medusa figure, is like "a fury whetting a death-dart" and slays his spirit; truth comes "sabre-like against my [his] heart" (*Endymion* III. 556-58). This phallic image of a sword also contributes to the idea of castration. Glaucus feels "[s]tung / And poisoned was my spirit" (*Endymion* III. 601-2); the venomous snakes of a Circean Medusa deprive him of power and vigour.

Birthing imagery marks Glaucus's expulsion from Circean false paradise and the abject maternal body:

A hand was at my shoulder to compel  
My sullen steps; another 'fore my eyes  
Moved on with pointed finger. In this guise  
Enforced, at the last by ocean's foam  
I found me; by my fresh, my native home.  
Its tempering coolness, to my life akin,  
Came salutary as I waded in;  
And, with a blind voluptuous rage, I gave  
Battle to the swollen billow-ridge, and drave  
Large froth before me, while yet there remain'd  
Hale strength, nor from my bones all marrow drain'd. (*Endymion* III. 604-14)

Glaucus, banished from Circe's island, seeks to revive himself. Disentangled from the Circean web of enthrallment, he finds himself by "my native home", the ocean's foam. He gives birth to himself; this reference to nativity contributes to the image of birthing,

perhaps in a reverse form. He enters into the life-giving womb of the ocean as he wades in; the coolness of the ocean is akin to his nature as they descend from a common ancestor; the coolness of the ocean is salubrious as opposed to the fire which bewitched him (*Endymion* III.494-5). Through being wallowed in cleansing water, he undergoes an abjection process, a purification; the Circean element in him is repelled. He is rejuvenated as he fights against the large sea waves and drives away the froth; he is revitalised as “from my bones all marrow” (*Endymion* III. 613) is not drained. He hails strength, vigour, manliness as he as a follower of Neptune merges with the ocean; he is reinvigorated as he feels imbued with the vitality of the marrow in his bones; he realizes that “[l]ife’s self is nourish’d by its proper pith” (*Endymion* I. 814); proper spinal marrow reanimates him whereas unclean Circean scummy slime devitalizes him.

The third book of *Endymion* appears to be obsessed with ‘arbitrary sense’, ‘cumbrous flesh’, ‘fever’d parchings’ and ‘poisonous’ effects of passion (*Endymion* III. 459, 551, 636, 491). Barnard finds that

Circe’s rout of tormented animal shapes, who wish to ‘be delivered from this cumbrous flesh, ... this gross, detestable, filthy mesh’ (III. 551-2), are clearly images of revulsion in the aftermath of sexual gratification. Circe is the principle of female sexuality as destroyer (*Keats* 50).

The description of the flesh as cumbrous is opposed to the positive account of the body as life-affirming and joy-infusing which characterises the bowers of infantile plenitude. On the one hand, the semiotic realm is considered to be a necessary precondition for the symbolic realm, “the abysm-birth of elements” (*Endymion* III. 28), the primordial material base, the semiotic *chora*; this is the positive side of the dialectic between the semiotic and the symbolic. On the other hand, the negative side of the dialectic is that the semiotic seems to threaten the symbolic realm (McAfee 45). The negative side of this dialectic should be discussed together with the notion of the abject; the image of ‘cumbrous flesh’ could be defined as a manifestation of an extreme state of introspective subjectivity which causes the borders of the self and other to break down radically. In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva states that “it is not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order.

What does not respect borders, positions, rules” (4). Circe as the abject unsettles Glaucus’s selfhood because she does not respect boundaries; the arbitrary boundary between human and beast is violated as humans metamorphose into deformities.

### 3.1.3 Endymion as Narcissus “coop’d up in the den / Of helpless discontent”

Kristeva points out that Narcissus is “essential as a source of western subjectivism” in *Tales of Love* which grants Narcissus an important part “in the history of western subjectivity”; she notes that “that lover of himself is strangely close to us in his everyday childishness”, and she adds that Narcissus also “makes us uncomfortable, giving off a subtle uneasiness, a cold, sticky discomfort” (*Tales* 115). The allusion to the legend of Narcissus, who “will not accept a real other to replace the image” of himself (Lechte *Kristeva* 171-2), is relevant to the discussion of Endymion who is cooped up in his self-enclosed world:

Upon a day, while thus I watch’d, by flew  
A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver;  
So plainly character’d, no breeze would shiver  
The happy chance: so happy, I was fain  
To follow it upon the open plain,  
And, therefore, was just going; when, behold!  
A wonder, fair as any I have told-  
The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,  
Smiling in the clear well. My heart did leap  
Through the cool depth. - It moved as if to flee-  
I started up, when lo! refreshfully,  
There came upon my face, in plenteous showers,  
Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and flowers,  
Wrapping all objects from my smothered sight,  
Bathing my spirit in a new delight.  
Aye, such a breathless honey-feel bliss  
Alone preserved me from the dear abyss  
Of death, for the fair form had gone again. (*Endymion* I. 888-905)

Like Narcissus, who is “not located in the objectal or sexual dimension” (Kristeva *Tales* 116), Endymion’s sight is smothered with his own self, with his image he beholds in the mirroring well; all objects of the external world are wrapped from his sight in the “mirage-world of narcissism” (O’Neill “Romantic Period” 315). His subjective, inward-looking vision, his “own voluptuous inwardness” (Levinson 3), his internality “in the dank, swampy, wastelands of human experience” (Kristeva *Tales* 115) does not behold an object other than himself. This narcissistic state refers to “the

unleashing of drive [...] without object, threatening all identity, including that of the subject itself” (Kristeva *Powers* 44). The fair form he sees in his dream is replaced by the vision of his own self; the fair form, Cynthia whom he visually discerns in his mind is a form composed by his psyche. As his “second self” (*Endymion* I. 659), Cynthia represents “the unknown form he embraces who seems almost a part of his own unconscious being, the source of feelings that cannot be readily expressed in words” (Sperry *Keats* 102). Endymion’s communion with the vital (Cynthian) springs of his own imagination cannot be articulated within the boundaries of the symbolic aspect of language. Existing as “a mere abstraction” (Sperry *Keats* 102), this celestial orbed form does not correspond to the terrestrial Indian maid that represents matter; therefore, Endymion is indulged in his introspective vision. Endymion’s sight smothered with his own image “appears as a regression to a position set back from the other, a return to a self-contemplative, conservative, self-sufficient haven” (Kristeva *Powers* 14). Endymion says that the same bright face he sees in the well preserves him from the abyss of death; in contrast, this solipsistic dream smothers him as sameness breeds vexing conceptions which stir up fear and ferment chaos. Owing to his archaic relation to the maternal body, Narcissan Endymion is “marked by the uncertainty of his borders and of his affective valency as well” (Kristeva *Powers* 63).

The “moulder’d steps” leading to the “deep hollow” (I. 869, 864) in *Endymion* are suggestive of the decaying world of the narcissistic self imprisoned in his internal vision, the Narcissan subject of the “fear of being rotten, drained, or blocked” (Kristeva *Powers* 63). Immersed in the “murky waters” of Narcissus (Kristeva *Powers* 59), Endymion is “coop’d up in the den / Of helpless discontent” (*Endymion* I. 928-9). A sense of disintegration permeates this cavern where he is wrapped up in himself. Narcissism and its discontents characterise the den of self-absorption “in the chasm of the maternal cave” (Kristeva *Powers* 24). The Keatsian den evokes the Kristevan cave. Likewise, “the cell of Echo” (*Endymion* I. 947) contributes to the self-centred world of solipsism:

Or ‘tis the cell of Echo, where she sits  
 And babbles thorough silence, till her wits  
 Are gone in tender madness, and anon,  
 Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone  
 Of sadness. (*Endymion* I. 947-51)

The previous vision associated with Narcissus is complemented with the cell of Echo; “the dangerous and self-destructive subjectivity of dream” is suggested in the lines above (Steinhoff 196). The narcissistic self which does not recognise the divide between self and other is reduced to Echo, “[e]choing grottos” of “labyrinthine hair”, where the “brain-sick shepherd prince” (*Endymion* I. 459, I. 969, II. 43) does not speak the symbolic but babbles the semiotic madness, the echolalia of an infant, the meaningless repetition of what has been heard, suggestive of the rhythmical mother-child symbiosis. Kristeva argues that Narcissus loads his language with “the jubilatory latencies of an archaic, maternal tongue. Echolalic, vocalizing, liling, gestural, muscular, rhythmical” (*Tales* 126). She further says that Narcissus “opens up the space of thought to the labyrinthian and muddy canals of an undecidable sailing, of game-playing with fleeting meanings and appearances, with images” (*Tales* 136).

Self-destructive solipsistic subjectivity threatens to dehumanise Endymion:

What misery most drowningly doth sing  
 In lone Endymion’s ear, now he has raught  
 The goal of consciousness? Ah, ‘tis the thought,  
 The deadly feel of solitude: for lo!  
 He cannot see the heavens, nor the flow  
 Of rivers, nor hill-flowers running wild  
 In pink and purple chequer, no, up-pil’d,  
 The cloudy rack slow journeying in the west,  
 Like herded elephants; nor felt, nor prest  
 Cool grass, nor tasted the fresh slumberous air;  
 But far from such companionship to wear  
 An unknown time, surcharg’d with grief, away,  
 Was now his lot. (*Endymion* II. 281-93)

Misery drowns Endymion, “a borderline case” like Narcissus (Kristeva *Tales* 115). The deadly feel of solitude overwhelms him since the self-absorbed consciousness does not predicate upon the rupture between self and other, subject and object. Endymion is similar to Narcissus, who “has nothing (no object) to fill the psychic space” (Lechte *Kristeva* 172). He is cut off from sensory contact: he cannot see the flow of the rivers; he cannot touch and feel cool grass; neither can he taste the fresh air; he is anesthetised as if “he had been froze [sic] to senseless stone”, also evoking Pygmalion (*Endymion* II. 200). His perception is desensorialised as “the sounds again / Went noiseless” in the “swart abysm” (*Endymion* II. 376-80); rushing into “the

earth's deep maw", he is "in jeopardy / Of blank amazements that amaze no more" (*Endymion* II. 899-903). The deadly feel of solitude does not let him step out of himself and reach out to an other. He is far from companionship as he is disconnected from the symbolic realm where the self can relate to an other, where desire "ex-patriates the *ego* toward an *other* subject" (Kristeva *Powers* 14).

Even in his encounter with Cynthia, the celestial form of his psyche, therefore an autoerotic encounter marked by the absence of "the prohibition placed on the maternal body" (Kristeva *Powers* 14), Endymion is without an object. Since there isn't "a third party within narcissism", he is like an autoerotic person who is "undifferentiated, set within the shattered territories of his parcelled body" (Kristeva *Tales* 35). He is far from companionship as he faints:

Revive, dear youth, or I shall faint and die;  
Revive, or these soft hours will hurry by  
In tranced dullness; speak, and let that spell  
Affright this lethargy! (*Endymion* II. 766-9)

Endymion faints as a result of the "deadly feel of solitude" (*Endymion* II. 285), "death-bringing solitude of Narcissus" (Kristeva *Tales* 118). He is entranced; Cynthia seeks to revive him; he is muted and she tells him to speak and fend off lethargy. Endymion faints as he swoons into himself, he is disengaged from the symbolic realm where he could reach out to someone outside himself. Self-destructive subjectivity produces lethargy; speaking, a capacity to use the symbolic language, will help him revive and be freed from the frozen state of a senseless stone, from the daze that petrifies him, "a daze that has cut off his impulses from their objects, that is, from their representations" (Kristeva *Powers* 6). Endymion is enchanted by himself if it is assumed that Cynthia is a celestial form of his inner mind rather than a terrestrial other outside of his psyche; the "Enchantress" is himself (*Endymion* II. 756); Cynthia is self-begotten as he is bemused by himself.

An autoerotic Endymion suffers from "*novitas furores*", Ovidian insanity which "comes from the absence of object" (Kristeva *Tales* 115-6). He is immersed in an unknown time, an uncannily "known Unknown" (*Endymion* II. 739), which is different from the symbolic time; he feels like "[a]n exil'd mortal" (*Endymion* II. 316); he is

exiled from the symbolic realm. Like Narcissus, Endymion remains at “the passive, pre-objectal stage”, which thwarts “the formation of an adequate social being” (Lechte *Kristeva* 172). He is over-indulged in the narcissistic realm where his eyes film over like those of an infant, where “[b]efore mine eyes thick films and shadows float” (*Endymion* II. 323); he is confined in himself. Endymion cannot step out of himself:

Where soil is men grow,  
Whether to weeds or flowers; but for me,  
There is no depth to strike in: I can see  
Nought earthly worth my compassing; so stand  
Upon a misty, jutting head of land –  
Alone? (*Endymion* II. 159-64)

He feels he is uprooted; he stands alone upon a promontory like Byron’s *Manfred*, who has “no sympathy with breathing flesh” (*Manfred* II. 57), as he finds nothing material to cling to. He is so disconnected from the realm of the symbolic register that he cannot see a place to strike roots into as his (inner) sight is clouded by “smothering fancies” (*Endymion* II. 139). Endymion sounds like one who cannot find more as he does not settle for less (the lack upon which human subjectivity is founded), like one who, rejecting the subject-object divide for the sake of semiotic oneness, cannot acquire symbolic wholeness. Steinhoff notes that the image above has “phallic associations” (201); Endymion cannot strike roots into an immaterial image of another being which rises out of his mind and appears in the celestial form of Cynthia; he needs a terrestrial Indian maid by means of whom he can find a depth to strike in. Without a material being that exists outside of his psyche, Endymion is fated to be a “sullenly drifting” boat (*Endymion* I. 774):

Peona! ever have I long’d to slake  
My thirst for the world’s praises: nothing base,  
No merely slumberous phantasm, could unlace  
The stubborn canvas for my voyage prepar’d –  
Though now ‘tis tatter’d; leaving my bark bar’d  
And sullenly drifting: yet my higher hope  
Is oft too wide, too rainbow-large a scope,  
To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks. (*Endymion* I. 769-76)

In the first book of the romance, where we might imagine an innocent and inexperienced Endymion to be immaturely ahead of himself, he believes that “[n]o merely slumberous phantasm” could make him embark on a journey of life despite the

fact that Cynthia, the celestial form emerging out of his mind, is similar to a slumberous phantasm. He feels that the scope of his imagination is beyond earthly boundaries; he is yet to experience that he needs a material depth to strike roots into, a symbolic position, an anchoring point from which he is to act. Without a material depth and base, he sullenly drifts out of the symbolic realm; there is no symbolic structure to hold onto, but his tattered canvas. "Fellowship divine" (*Endymion* I. 778) seems to be a symbolic structure which Endymion seeks to cling to:

Wherein lies happiness? In that which beck  
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,  
A fellowship with essence; till we shine,  
Full alchemiz'd, and free of space. Behold  
The clear religion of heaven! Fold  
A rose leaf round thy finger's taperness,  
And soothe thy lips: hush, when the airy stress  
Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,  
And with a sympathetic touch unbinds  
Eolian magic from their lucid wombs:  
Then old songs waken from enclouded tombs;  
Old ditties sigh above their father's grave;  
Ghosts of melodious prophecyings rave  
Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot (*Endymion* I. 777-90)

A divine fellowship with a celestial being one imagines in his mind could be interpreted as a narcissistic relationship as it dehumanises one insofar as such divine fellowship cancels one's earthliness and embodiedness, and one's desire to confront the other. The urge to be completely "alchemiz'd and free of space" (*Endymion* I. 780) is an impossible desire to be disembodied and to inhabit an atemporal and despatialised realm of immutability. Such a fellowship with the so-called divine essence obliterates the divide between self and other, subject and other, and therefore breeds sameness and incites horror. The abject strikes back; the so-called immaterial essence is expressed through the bodily base of language: free winds are impregnated and their lucid wombs release magic. Being utterly immersed in sensations, "the imponderable affect" (Kristeva *Powers* 10), incites fear as it causes the annihilation of the subject-object fissure and therefore the linguistic sign vanishes. In this case, it may be thought that the poetic voice seeks to be saved from getting drowned under the weight of the unsignifiable body and to shelter in the disembodied fellowship with the immaterial divine essence. However, such a fellowship obliterates the divide between self and

other, which generates fear in the first place. Therefore, the abject that does not respect boundaries strikes again; to signify such a fear, to articulate it in the symbolic realm, the poetic voice expresses such a cerebral (intellectual, nonsensical as in Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty", inapprehensible "unseen Power" (1) of Shelley's hymn) fellowship with the spiritual essence through corporeal images, the bodily base of language; reminding us once more of Steinhoff's comment that in Keats's poetry, "the spiritual realm is not without senses, it simply has more, and of greater intensity" (184). Hence, horror is not the legacy of the body *per se*; it results from the eradication of the divide between self and other. Such fellowship with divine essence strikes roots into the depth of the bodily base of language through which winds are impregnated and poetic words gestate before birth. The ordeal of the narcissistic Endymion, who is immersed in the asymbolic world of objectless affect, is expressed through the art of prosody: "Only the artist who is not enthralled by the pre-object, but plays with it in rhythm and lyricism, colour and forms, etc., can give it a truly social dimension" (Lechte *Kristeva* 172).

A Narcissus figure that is infatuated with his own image (Graves I: 286-88), or a Pygmalion figure that falls in love with a statue he carves (Graves I: 211-12), Endymion admiringly gazes at Adonis, a mythical figure of rebirth and eternal infancy, who resembles "the infant in the womb or cradle" (Sperry *Keats* 105). The discrepancy between Adonis and Endymion represents "the gap between the child's perfect unified image and its imperfect fragmented body in the mirror stage" respectively (Oliver *Kristeva* 70). This gap shows that the infant's relationship with the image in the mirror stage is "a relation of gap" (Lacan *Seminar II* 323). It makes Endymion feel good to see Adonis, an image of completeness and unity with "an Apollonian curve / Of neck and shoulder" (*Endymion* II. 399-400). This image of Adonis represents "the peaceful Apollonian (not Dionysiac) Greek corporeality" (Kristeva *Powers* 124). Adonis as "a sleeping youth / Of fondest beauty" (*Endymion* II. 393-4) fills his sight as an ideal body harmoniously coordinating such organs as neck, shoulder, knee and ankles in contrast to the disintegrating, decomposing images of the body of an uncoordinated infant, which evokes the Lacanian drama of the mirror stage that produces "the succession of fantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality" which Lacan calls "orthopaedic" (*Écrits* 3). Unlike dislocated joints that recall

“the phenomenon of dispersal” in Keats (Ricks 26), these joints of Adonis form an articulate body image; an articulate body articulates well, speaks coherently (in the symbolic), as the first and second meanings of the verb “articulate” refer to expressing an idea fluently and coherently, and forming a joint respectively (OED v. 1, 2). As opposed to the deadly feel of solitude represented in the myths of an inward-looking, contemplative Narcissus and the senseless stone of a frozen Pygmalion, the image of Adonis as a myth of revival and rebirth celebrates life and keeps the abject at bay.

Optical metaphors that permeate *Endymion* are important in this discussion of the Narcissian Endymion. Endymion’s “smothered sight” (I. 901) is suggestive of his castrated state as Freud reads blindness as a sign of castration: “the fear of going blind is quite often a substitute for the fear of castration (“The Uncanny” 139). He is immersed in his inward-looking subjectivity; his vision is impaired. The anxiety of having a smothered sight might be interpreted as fear induced by the abject. Endymion’s eyelids are “curtain’d up” and “their jewels [are] dim” as opposed to “the lidless-eyed train / Of planets” (*Endymion* I. 394, 598-9); “old eyes [are] dissolving at his woe” (*Endymion* I. 400). He has an “eager view” for celestial bodies, yet his sight is “dazed” (*Endymion* I. 588, 601-2); the moon makes him “veil my [his] eyes” (*Endymion* I. 603); he is blinded by Cynthia. The sky is “over-spangled with a million / Of little eyes” when the moon goddess rises “[f]rom out her cradle shell” (*Endymion* I. 626-30); a million of little eyes are associated with the moon goddess who, as it were, castrates Endymion whose sight is impaired.

In his encounter with Cynthia in his dream, Endymion is reduced to the state of being eyeless again: “madly did I kiss / The wooing arms which held me, and did give / My eyes at once to death” (*Endymion* I. 653-5). He is reduced to an infantile state where the maternal body and the infant are one; he is engrossed by the celestial vision of his mind and does not seek to see the external world outside of himself but to reside within his mind by looking inward. The image of his eyes given to death shows that his love for Cynthia points to the decease of the symbolic subject: his love “involves a drive towards fusion: a deathly fusion with the mother. Such a fusion is also the equivalent of the death of the symbolic and conscious subject” (Lechte *Kristeva* 177). A complete

fusion with the mother corresponds to an utter immersion in a solipsistic world where life is infected by death.

The image of dissolving eyes is again used in a reference to Cupid: “who / Look full upon it feel anon the blue / Of his fair eyes run liquid through their souls” (*Endymion* II. 542-4). The god of love blinds Endymion, his eyes melt, incorporating Endymion to himself as he is in love with a subjective vision of his inner psyche. In his descent to the underworld, he is “purblind amid foggy, midnight wolds” (*Endymion* II. 636). He suffers from “mental slough” (*Endymion* II. 638) as he is locked up in himself. His inner world is shrunken to a piece of uncultivated land as “the psychic space called love” dissolves without an other (Lechte *Kristeva* 167). Once he wanders completely out of the symbolic, a total immersion in the symbiotic sameness begins to disconcert him. He is overwhelmed by the moon and his vision suffers:

Now I begin to feel thine orby power  
Is coming fresh upon me: O be kind,  
Keep back thine influence, and do not blind  
My sovereign vision. (*Endymion* III. 180-3)

When Endymion is overpowered by Cynthia, he is deprived of his supreme vision; the power of the maternal body castrates him.

### **3.1.4 A Love of Yore: The Relationship of Sympathy between Glaucus and Endymion as the Embodiment of the Kristevan Narcissistic Structure**

There are two types of narcissism according to Freud: primary and secondary. The former refers to “an objectless stage in which the infant comprises all of its universe” whereas the latter points to “a withdrawal of the ego from the world of objects even after the ego has been constituted and taken love objects” (Oliver *Kristeva* 71). For Freud, primary narcissism claims “a place in the regular course of human sexual development”; it is not a “perversion”, but “the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation” (“On Narcissism” 73-4). Kristeva reinterprets Freud’s primary narcissism and creates her notion of “narcissistic structure”; she claims that “[n]either screen nor state, primary narcissism is already a structure” (*Tales* 374). The narcissistic structure offsets the horror of the abject maternal body; it enables the child to be weaned from the abject mother. Whereas the self-enclosed worlds of Glaucus’s

and Endymion's solipsistic subjectivity may correspond to the second type of narcissism, the relationship of sympathy and identification between such mirroring figures as Glaucus and Endymion matches the Kristevan narcissistic structure.

Kristeva argues that this narcissistic structure is prior to the oedipal ego (*Tales* 22). It is a kind of identification which differs from "an undifferentiated autoeroticism"; Oliver explains that the narcissistic structure "sets up the very possibility of symbolization" (*Kristeva* 72). The relationship of sympathy between Glaucus and his mirror image Endymion corresponds to the narcissistic structure which enables both figures to abject the Circean state of carnality and symbolize their plight; this encounter allows them to signify through the symbolic element of signification.

Kristeva's Narcissus is an "infinitely distant boundary marker" (*Tales* 125); the narcissistic relationship between Endymion and his mirror image marks the boundary between the abject maternal body and the symbolic. Yet, in the narcissistic [secondary] worlds of Endymion and Glaucus which is marked by their "unsocial tendency towards solitude and solipsism" (Fermanis 50) before they meet and go through this Kristevan narcissistic [primary] structure, boundaries are not marked; they are blurred.

Extricated from the Circean torture, Glaucus finds out that Scylla, his beloved, has been killed by Circe, "vulture-witch" (*Endymion* III. 620). Grieving, he comes upon "a fabric crystalline" where he "left poor Scylla in a niche and fled" (*Endymion* III. 628-35). Frye reckons that this image of a crystalline fabric evokes

like the 'orbed diamond' of the previous book (II. 245), a world which is visible but not approachable. Its poetic relatives include the crystal cabinet of Blake's poem in which the narrator struggles unsuccessfully to reach an 'inmost Form,' and the self-enclosed world of the unproductive and narcissistic beautiful youth of Shakespeare's sonnets, a 'liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass'" (140).

This crystalline fabric points to a self-enclosed realm where the divide between self and other is eroded. The crystalline structure is

Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and pearl.  
Headlong I darted; at one eager swirl  
Gain'd its bright portal, enter'd, and behold!  
'Twas vast, and desolate, and icy-cold;  
And all around – But wherefore this to thee

Who in few minutes more thyself shalt see? –  
I left poor Scylla in a niche and fled.  
My fever'd parching up, my scathing dread  
Met palsy half way: soon these limbs became  
Gaunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd, and lame. (*Endymion* III. 629-38)

This self-enclosed world of the crystalline fabric, similar to the crystalline dominion of Cynthia imagined by an onanistic Endymion and his speculative internality, points to the self-enclosed world of the narcissistic hero, Glaucus, who is “caught in the stasis of self-preoccupation” (Newey “Keats, History and the Poets” 174) and immersed in a world of glass where the split between self and other is annihilated. The crystalline fabric is where Glaucus and Endymion meet and leave behind. Therefore, Bloom regards the crystalline fabric as “an illusion of mercy until its unreal structure is startled into life by the engendering of a relationship of sympathy between Endymion and himself [Glaucus]” (*Visionary* 365-66). The unreal, lifeless structure is the narcissistic self-enclosed and end-stopped world of the inward-looking Glaucus and Endymion by themselves, whereas the relationship of sympathy between Glaucus and Endymion, their “symbiotic interdependence” (Fermanis 50), is engendered by the Kristevan narcissistic structure. The relationship of sympathy depends on many similarities between Endymion and Glaucus: “Glaucus is a kind of shepherd of the ocean, a follower of Neptune as Endymion was of Pan. But he is not contended, and feels ‘distemper’d longings’” (Bloom *Visionary* 364) like Endymion who wanders off the beaten track in his subterranean descent and submarine journey.

The relationship of sympathy between Glaucus and Endymion is of significance as the former sees the latter as “my [his] deliverer” (*Endymion* III. 561); “the youthful wanderer restores the aged Glaucus” (Newey “Keats, History and the Poets” 174). Endymion delivers him from “a watery death-in-life” (Steinhoff 224), from “that dark lair of night” (*Endymion* III. 560), “the concave green of the sea” (*Endymion* III. 191), the “monstrous sea” (*Endymion* III. 69), which curves inwards, suggesting a Kristevan anaphoric whirlwind which points to “something unknowable” (*Powers* 42), an engrossing image that evokes the abject maternal body and “the old womb of night” (*Endymion* IV. 372). The anaphoric whirlwind refers to the “non-structured”, the “non-spoken”, the “non-written” in Kristeva’s intellectual universe; moreover, anaphora evokes etymologically “the idea of a ‘carrying back’ in space, and what is ‘fixed in the

memory””, and it puts us “in touch with the ‘volume’ of language”; also, the Kristevan anaphora breaks down “the sharpness of the opposition” (Lechte *Kristeva* 93-4). The divide between Endymion and Glaucus breaks down; anaphora carries them back in space to the non-written maternal space as the birthing imagery suggests. Considering the birthing imagery which accompanies Glaucus’s expulsion from the Circean so-called impure matter, Endymion’s being his deliverer is pregnant with meaning; a connection which fuses both into a mirroring oneness is suggested; this connection is more intense than a relationship of sympathy. This mirroring oneness between Endymion and Glaucus, who is Endymion’s “counterpart” (Newey “Keats, History and the Poets” 174), and who “acts as a double for the poem’s hero” (Fermanis 50) is suggestive of the Kristevan narcissistic structure thanks to which they are born out of the abject Circean body:

In *Tales of Love* she [Kristeva] looks for the primary psychic structure that sets up both the experience of abjection and the mirror stage. She looks for a structure that at the same time offsets both the horror of the abject mother and the gap between the child’s perfect unified image and its imperfect fragmented body in the mirror stage. This structure, which enables the child to negotiate between the maternal body and the Symbolic order, is the “narcissistic structure” (Oliver *Kristeva* 70-1).

The Kristevan narcissistic structure built on preobjectal identification allows Glaucus and Endymion to negotiate between the Circean maternal body and the symbolic; it is a type of identification which is beyond “an undifferentiated autoeroticism” (Oliver *Kristeva* 72); it enables Glaucus to abject the Circean unclean and deformed matter. That’s why Glaucus is overjoyed when he beholds Endymion:

Thou art the man! Now shall I lay my head  
 In peace upon my watery pillow: now  
 Sleep will come smoothly to my weary brow.  
 O Jove! I shall be young again, be young!  
 O shell-borne Neptune, I am pierc’d and stung  
 With new-born life! What shall I do? Where go,  
 When I have cast this serpent-skin of woe? (*Endymion* III. 234-40)

Glaucus sees Endymion as his redeemer; he is overjoyed as he believes that he will be delivered from the Circean curse and cast away his “serpent-skin”, thrusting aside the abject. He will be young again and be reborn; he is pierced and stung with new life. He is imbued with new life since the Kristevan narcissistic structure makes

symbolization possible. By means of this structure, the Circean element in him is pierced and ejected, thus death is repelled. Endymion is the cause of this happiness; he gives life to Glaucus, giving an end to his serpentine existence. Glaucus experiences a moment of *jouissance*; he is “full of gladness” (*Endymion* III. 251); he feels like an unbound Prometheus:

I'll swim to the sirens, and one moment listen  
Their melodies, and see their long hair glisten;  
Anon upon that giant's arm I'll be,  
That writhes about the roots of Sicily:  
To northern seas I'll in a twinkling sail,  
And mount upon the snortings of a whale  
To some black cloud; thence down I'll madly sweep  
On forked lightning, to the deepest deep,  
Where through some sucking pool I will be hurl'd  
With rapture to the other side of the world!  
O, I am full of gladness! Sisters three,  
I bow full hearted to your old decree!  
Yes, every god be thank'd, and power benign,  
For I no more shall wither, droop, and pine.  
Thou art the man! (*Endymion* III. 241-55)

Immersed in a moment of *jouissance*, he experiences feelings of buoyancy and mobility after a thousand years of imprisonment; he dreams of being revitalized. He is in a mood of frenzy; he dreams of madly sweeping on a forked lightning, endowed with power; he is enraptured as he imagines being hurled to the other side of the world through a sucking pool. This moment of frenzy evinces his desire to be released from the Circean extreme state of grotesque carnality and to be hurled into the other, symbolic side of the world. He unwittingly knows that this journey to the symbolic realm is only through a sucking pool, an image suggestive of the Circean corporeality. He bows to the old decree of the Furies, which could be read as a sign of his submitting to the symbolic law<sup>38</sup>.

While Glaucus is overjoyed to see his deliverer, Endymion is distressed by his presence at first:

Endymion started back  
Dismay'd; and, like a wretch from whom the rack  
Tortures hot breath, and speech of agony,

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<sup>38</sup> It is also interesting that he yields to “Sisters three”, the female deities of vengeance, which demonstrates that the symbolic law does not have to be associated with the male.

Mutter'd: "What lonely death am I to die  
In this cold region? Will he let me freeze,  
And float my brittle limbs o'er polar seas?  
Or will he touch me with his searing hand,  
And leave a black memorial on the sand?  
Or tear me piece-meal with a bony saw,  
And keep me as a chosen food to draw  
His magian fish through hated fire and flame?  
O misery of hell! resistless, tame,  
Am I to be burnt up? (*Endymion* III. 255-67)

Glaucus, "that aged form" (*Endymion* III. 281), disconcerted Endymion. Endymion's horror evokes Glaucus's being terrified of Circe "presiding over a witch's sabbath" (Steinhoff 224); Endymion's fear might be resulting from the Circean curse cast upon Glaucus. Endymion is rendered almost speechless, speaking in agony. Glaucus incites fear in Endymion as the former reflects the latter or the situation he might fall into. Endymion is terrified of dying a "lonely death" like Glaucus. Like Endymion, Glaucus represents the narcissist "imprisoned in a water world of subjectivity" (Steinhoff 223). Endymion thinks that Glaucus might be a magician, which links Glaucus with Circe the enchanter, and which associates Endymion's fear with Glaucus's fear of being spellbound by the witch. Endymion dreads being frozen to death in this cold region, which evokes the coldness of the crystalline fabric, which embodies the self-enclosed world of the narcissistic hero. The chilliness of dying alone in this cold region paradoxically produces the same effect on Endymion as the fear of being touched by his scorching hand; his fear of being burned up in the infernal fire is similar to Glaucus's "fever'd parching up, my scathing dread" (*Endymion* III. 636). Also, the horror of being ripped up and torn to pieces is a manifestation of the abject, the primordial horror of being dismembered. Endymion fears Glaucus since he resembles him, or the version of him he might become, too much, much more than he can bear at first sight.

On the other hand, this encounter is a source of jouissance for Glaucus. He tells Endymion that he knows his "inmost bosom", suggestive of the Blakean inmost form, adding that "I feel / A very brother's yearning for thee steal / Into mine own" (*Endymion* III. 293-5). Endymion is a mirror image for Glaucus, who is pierced and stung with new-born life:

I am a friend to love, to loves of yore:  
Aye, hadst thou never lov'd an unknown power,  
I had been grieving at this joyous hour.  
But even now most miserable old,  
I saw thee, and my blood no longer cold  
Gave mighty pulses: in this tottering case  
Grew a new heart, which at this moment plays  
As dancingly as thine. Be not afraid,  
For thou shalt hear this secret all display'd,  
Now as we speed towards our joyous task. (*Endymion* III. 300-9)

A love of yore, a love of former times between Endymion and Glaucus is suggestive of primary narcissism. The asymbolic undifferentiated love in this realm disconcerts Endymion; this love of yore is fed by an unknown power. Glaucus feels mighty pulses in his blood and his body grows a new heart which he feels is articulated with Endymion's heart as their hearts dance to each other. Endymion dreads such an experience of fusion as the crystalline fabric, which may allow one to see his image, is also likely to produce scummy slime that Glaucus seeks to breathe away from "off a crystal pool" (*Endymion* III. 330-1) in the case of his captivity by Circe. Glaucus tells Endymion not to be afraid since they have a joyous task; however, before he continues to explain this task, he recounts to Endymion what has befallen him so that he could ease "in one accent his o'er-burden'd soul" (*Endymion* III. 229). Like Coleridge's ancient mariner, Glaucus is tempted to tell Endymion his story because telling is expressing and symbolising fear, relieving oneself of his horror. By communicating his fear by means of language, hence in the symbolic realm, Glaucus disencumbers himself of his "cumbrous load" (*Endymion* III. 71); therefore, telling a story is a form of abjection. Abjection is "an experience of unmatched primordial horror, putting the subject in the most devastating kind of crisis imaginable; but ultimately, certain modes of discourse have found a way of speaking that horror instead of repressing it" (Becker-Leckrone 20). The redemptive power of story-telling heals those who experience such primordial horror; literature is abjection's "privileged signifier" (Powers 208).

Glaucus purges himself of horror and hatred by means of a "joyous task" (*Endymion* III. 309); he tells Endymion how "a restoring chance came down to quell / One half of the witch in me" (*Endymion* III. 643-4). This restoring chance, which sets up the possibility of symbolization, allows him to subdue the Circean element in him, to

suppress his uneasiness and to rid himself of the Circean filth. While he was “[w]rithing with pity, and a cursing fit / Against that hell-born Circe”, and yearning to annul his “vigorous cravings” (*Endymion* III. 662-5), he came upon a restoring chance, a narcissistic identification with Endymion which opens up a space for symbolization:

When at my feet emerg'd an old man's hand,  
Grasping this scroll, and this same slender wand.  
I knelt with pain – reached out my hand – had grasp'd  
These treasures – touch'd the knuckles – they unclasp'd –  
I caught a finger: but the downward weight  
O'erpowered me – it sank. Then 'gan abate  
The storm, and through chill aguish gloom outburst  
The comfortable sun. I was athirst  
To search the book, and in the warming air  
Parted its dripping leaves with eager care.  
Strange matters did it treat of, and drew on  
My soul page after page, till well-nigh won  
Into forgetfulness; (*Endymion* III. 669-81)

In contrast to Circe's misshapen, “gnarled staff” (*Endymion* III. 508), this slender wand of the old man offers a restoring chance to him. The wand and the scroll give Glaucus “a shine of hope” and cheer him “to cope / Strenuous with hellish tyranny” (*Endymion* III. 685-7) of the Circean extreme state of carnality. These treasures could be seen as symbolic structures as they are produced by a symbolic culture; these things which belong to the realm of the symbolic are employed to disengage one from the hellish tyranny of solipsistic subjectivity; the book draws his soul page after page into oblivion, forgetful of the narcissistic self. The scroll is “the Word that discloses the abject” (Kristeva *Powers* 23). The scroll represents the symbolic: “Man speaks, then, but it is because the symbol has made him man” (Lacan *Écrits* 49). The wand and the scroll offer to restore Glaucus to the state of the symbolic where the divide between self and other is established, yet he needs a mirror image, Endymion to be delivered from the abject state. When Endymion beholds Glaucus for the first time, he appears to be:

An old man sitting calm and peacefully  
Upon a weeded rock this old man sat,  
And his white hair was awful, and a mat  
Of weeds were cold beneath his cold thin feet;  
And, ample as the largest winding-sheet,  
A cloak of blue wrapp'd up his aged bones,  
O'erwrought with symbols by the deepest groans

Of ambitious magic: every ocean-form  
 Was woven in with black distinctness; storm,  
 And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar,  
 Quicksand and whirlpool, and deserted shore  
 Were emblem'd in the woof; with every shape  
 That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape and cape.  
 The gulphing whale was like a lot in the spell,  
 Yet look upon it, and 'twould size and swell  
 To its huge self; and the minutest fish  
 Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,  
 And shew his little eye's anatomy.  
 Then there was pictur'd the regality  
 Of Neptune; and the sea nymphs round his state,  
 In beauteous vassalage, look up and wait.  
 Beside this old man lay a pearly wand,  
 And in his lap a book, the which he conn'd  
 So steadfastly, that the new denizen  
 Had time to keep him in amazed ken,  
 To mark these shadowings, and stand in awe. (*Endymion* III. 192-217)

This scene shows Glaucus, “a type of the Poet” (Newey “Keats, History, and the Poets” 174), both endowed with the symbolic power of the wand and the scroll, and devitalized by the Circean power. His cloak embodies the tension between the semiotic and the symbolic; the cloak as a signifier of human culture keeps in bay the semiotic which threatens to disrupt the symbolic. On the one hand, Glaucus is an enfeebled old man with his white hair, cold thin feet and aged bones; on the other hand, he is calm and peaceful; his white hair inspires reverential respect mixed with fear and wonder. His cloak embodies the authority of an old man of wisdom while it also evokes death as it is said to be as large as a shroud. The cloak “graphically displays evidence of Circe’s mesmerising power over her victims” and has “a deadening effect on the old man” (Kelley 176-7).

The cloak embellished with symbols, forms and emblems represents the symbolic register whereas the deepest groans, hideous roar, quicksand and whirlpool stand for the asymbolic. It is a symbolic cloak, yet it simultaneously looks like a baroque work of art over-ornate with symbols and marked by a baroqueness characterised by the plenitude and “oversaturation of sign systems” (Kristeva *Tales* 253), representing an artistic form predicated on “the metaphors of nonspeech, of a ‘semiotics’ that linguistic communication does not account for” (Kristeva *Tales* 249). The deepest groans of ambitious magic are symbolized in the cloak; all ocean forms are woven into the fabric

of this cloak; the hideous roar of a storm, quicksand and whirlpool are turned into images of a tapestry on a loom. Deep groans, hideous roars, swampy quicksand threatening to suck one in and beguiling whirlpool, which are images of the Circean extreme state of corporeality and imprisoning solipsistic subjectivity, are signified through the symbolic dimension of signification, so their disruptiveness is placated. Nonetheless, they continue to threaten the symbolic; “the gulping whale” looks like a dot in a spell, but would expand and swell to the natural hugeness of a whale if closely viewed, which suggests that the asymbolic could disrupt the symbolic at an unexpected time unless held in check. The regality of Neptune, pictured in the cloak, presides over the symbols; the sea nymphs bow to his stateliness in “beauteous vassalage”. This tension between the cloak, the woof and the scroll of the symbolic realm, and the roaring, groaning, boggy material base could be considered as a tension between the Circean misrule and the royalty of Neptune: “Circe’s self-absorbed tyranny is renounced in favour of Neptune’s regality of the sea” (Steinhoff 218).

Against Circe’s tyranny<sup>39</sup>, Glaucus is endowed with the wand, the cloak and the scroll. He needs Endymion to be delivered from the Circean tyranny; by the same token, Endymion needs Glaucus to be delivered from the hellish tyranny of his imprisoning narcissistic subjectivity, but he is unaware of it yet. The scroll reads:

In the wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch,  
 Doom’d with enfeebled carcase to outstretch  
 His loath’d existence through ten centuries,  
 And then to die alone. Who can devise  
 A total opposition? No one. So  
 One million times ocean must ebb and flow,  
 And he oppressed. Yet he shall not die,  
 These things accomplish’d: - If he utterly  
 Scans all the depths of magic, and expounds  
 The meanings of all motions, shapes, and sounds;  
 If he explores all forms and substances  
 Straight homeward to their symbol-essences;  
 He shall not die. Moreover, and in chief,  
 He must pursue this task of joy and grief  
 Most piously; - all lovers tempest-tost,  
 And in the savage overwhelming lost  
 He shall deposit side by side, until  
 Time’s creeping shall the dreary space fulfil:

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<sup>39</sup> This reading of Circe proposes that Circe does not refer to a physical woman, but to the body as a state of mind, a metaphor, a logos or a theoretical construct.

Which done, and all these labours ripened,  
A youth, by heavenly power lov'd and led,  
Shall stand before him; whom he shall direct  
How to consummate all. The youth elect  
Must do the thing, or both will be destroy'd. (*Endymion* III. 689-711)

The scroll refers to the abject state of Glaucus, who is described as a wretch doomed with his enfeebled carcase to outstretch his detested existence through one thousand years. Glaucus is doomed to live as an aged form, suggestive of Circean deformities, until he meets Endymion; he continues to suffer until the time of consummation, an identification that incorporates Glaucus and Endymion. His torture inflicted by Circe does not come to an end even if he is able to scan all the depths of magic, explain the meanings of all motions, shapes and sounds, and explore all forms and substances straight homeward to their symbol-essences. Glaucus might be a “sage” (*Endymion* III. 717) and a wise magician, a controller of images, pictures, signs and signifiers perhaps, but he is not yet completely registered in the symbolic order even if he manages to explore the very essence of forms and symbols. First, Endymion must stand before him and Glaucus must guide him how to consummate all; without the Kristevan narcissistic structure which is built on a preoedipal identification with Endymion, Glaucus fails to symbolise the Circean torture inflicted on him. Another person, who is very much like himself, must help Glaucus, who is in suffering in the hellish tyranny of narcissistic subjectivity, the inward-turning mortifying self-love; the self must confront the other; self and other must be consummated as mirror images of one and another.

Endymion, who is initially dismayed by the appearance of Glaucus, is overjoyed once he finds out that he is to consummate the lovers torn apart. He tells Glaucus that they are “twin brothers in this destiny!” (*Endymion* III. 712-3); Endymion and Glaucus are destined to be entwined. Endymion, impressed by this feeling of bonding, says that they both perish if his wandering feet swerve from Glaucus (*Endymion* III. /715-6). Endymion delivers Glaucus from his bondage; similarly, Glaucus delivers Endymion from his bondage; their bonding annuls their bondage as the Kristevan narcissistic structure allows for an imaginary bonding as it annihilates the Circean bondage.

They begin to do their joyous task; they go to the edifice where doomed lovers are enshrined:

So in that crystal palace, in silent rows,  
Poor lovers lay at rest from joys and woes. –  
The stranger from the mountains, breathless, trac'd  
Such thousands of shut eyes in order plac'd;  
Such ranges of white feet, and patient lips  
All ruddy, - for here death no blossom nips. (*Endymion* III. 735-40)

Endymion is fated to reanimate these poor lovers; the stranger from the mountains is destined to be estranged from his imprisoning narcissism and to reach out to help human beings other than himself. Lovers are in a frozen state in a crystal palace; their eyes are shut. Once they are reanimated, they will no longer look inward. Endymion partially manages to cast away the crystalline fabric of his frozen subjectivity as he helps the lovers step out of the crystal palace.

Glaucus the sage performs their joyous task as if it is a ritual, a rite of passage:

“Let us commence,”  
Whisper'd the guide, stuttering with joy, “even now.”  
He spake, and, trembling like an aspen-bough,  
Began to tear his scroll in pieces small,  
Uttering the while some mumblings funeral.  
He tore it into pieces small as snow  
That drifts unfeather'd when bleak northern blow;  
And having done it, took his dark blue cloak  
And bound it round Endymion: then struck  
His wand against the empty air times nine. (*Endymion* III. 744-53)

Glaucus, called the guide, performs the ritual like a shaman. This rite of passage is a symbolic structure, yet deeply invested in the semiotic. As a result of this ritual, lovers will be unified, so the divide between self and other will be re-established, which is a prerequisite for the symbolic to be set up and function; in order to produce this effect, the symbiotic relationship between Glaucus and Endymion is strengthened in a shamanistic ritual, only to serve temporarily: the sage trembles like an aspen-bough, utters some mumblings, tears the scroll into pieces; this image of Glaucus evokes the image of the Kristevan writer that is “a phobic who succeeds in metaphorizing in order to keep from being frightened to death; instead he comes to life in signs” (Kristeva Powers 38). Glaucus, horrified of the abject, comes to life in signs through the rituals

of the scroll and the cloak; these seemingly sacred rite and purifying acts signify horror and ward off abjection, and thus “a reconciliation with the maternal body becomes possible” (Lechte *Kristeva* 162). In other words, Glaucus’s rituals serve like art which “would be a rebirth (resurrection) for the artist in signs” (Lechte *Kristeva* 185-6). Glaucus binds his cloak round Endymion, so the deliverer and the delivered merge into one another in a ritualistic fashion. In order for lovers to be two, Glaucus and Endymion the twin brothers become one during the ritual. The plight of the lovers ends through a symbolic ritual based on the narcissistic incorporation between Glaucus and Endymion. Accordingly, Oliver notes that “[e]ven though the narcissistic structure guarantees symbolization, it does so through a preoedipal, preobjectal identification” (*Kristeva* 74).

Glaucus the sage guides Endymion, a kind of protégé-turned-deliverer, to whom the old shaman transfers his ritualistic power:

What more there is to do, young man, is thine:  
 But first a little patience; first undo  
 This tangled thread, and wind it to a clue.  
 Ah, gentle! ’tis as weak as spider’s skein;  
 And shouldst thou break it – What, is it done so clean?  
 A power overshadows thee! Oh, brave!  
 The spite of hell is tumbling to its grave.  
 Here is a shell; ’tis pearly blank to me,  
 Nor mark’d with any sign of character –  
 Canst thou read aught? O read for pity’s sake!  
 Olympus! We are safe! Now, Carian, break  
 This wand against yon lyre on the pedestal. (*Endymion* III. 754-65)

Endymion, upon whom the sage’s power is bestowed by means of the cloak, brings the ritual to an end. The wand, which represents “Mercury’s caduceus, the necessary antidote (or antibody) to Circean charm” (Steinhoff 230), allows Endymion to deliver both Glaucus and himself from the tyranny of the extreme state of Circean corporeality. In order to be released from the despotic power of Circe’s crooked staff and the Circean net of enthrallment, Endymion undoes the tangled thread. Once he undoes, a symbolic power overshadows him; the spite of hell tumbles to its grave; he is disencumbered from the Circean hell. Through the Kristevan narcissistic structure, the maternal abject body is expelled. Their separation from the maternal body allows them “to become narcissists, that is, to develop an identity, an ego” (Lechte *Kristeva*

167). It does not point to an already-formed ego, but it refers to an ego in the throes of formation.

Frye points out that “a good deal of imagery suggest[s] a version of the Theseus story in which all the previous sacrifices to Minos<sup>40</sup> were delivered from the labyrinth” (144). Being disentangled from the Circean tyranny allows him to be delivered from “the labyrinth in his soul of love” (*Endymion* III. 141). Steinhoff notes that “the ‘character’d’ butterfly (*Endymion* II. 62) leads Endymion into a metamorphosis of descent”; here the pearly shell which is not “mark’d with a sign of character” (*Endymion* III. 762) “augurs a counter-metamorphosis” (231). As he goes into the underworld and the marine world, Endymion descends into his mind, his soul, which “ceases being a goddess (Psyche) in order to reflect itself as a psyche, as an internality proper to each individual solitude” (Kristeva *Tales* 119) as the butterfly image representing the psyche suggests in the Hellenistic personification of the soul as a butterfly (OED). He confronts a “nameless monster” (*Endymion* III. 136) as he roams “the hollow vast” (*Endymion* III. 119-20). Now the “shell-borne Neptune” (*Endymion* III. 238) stands for his counter-metamorphosis, his symbolic birth, his ascent out of the underworld where he is smitten with “distemper’d longings” (*Endymion* III. 375) to “interknit / One’s [his] senses with so dense a breathing stuff” (*Endymion* III. 380).

Frye reckons that “during his descent Endymion has feared the total loss of his identity, and that he would suffer the traditional *sparagmos* [dismemberment] fate of the god in the underworld and be torn ‘piece-meal’” and he adds that “instead it is the scroll that is torn up and that fertilizes the sunken world with new life” (144). The symbolic culture provides Endymion with the scroll, thereby saving him, his body from being dismembered. Once he is released from the tyranny of the Circean charm, Glaucus tells Endymion to break the wand against the lyre; the phallic healing object is exchanged for another healing object. Endymion’s counter-metamorphosis is accompanied by music:

’Twas done: and straight with sudden swell and fall

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<sup>40</sup> Minos, like Circe, represents the abject. Minos does not refer to a physical man as Circe does not refer to a physical woman, either. This reading intends to interpret them as metaphors and see the maternal body as a theoretical construct.

Sweet music breath'd her soul away, and sigh'd  
 A lullaby to silence. – “Youth! Now strew  
 These minced leaves on me, and passing through  
 Those files of dead, scatter the same around,  
 And thou wilt see the issue.” – 'Mid the sound  
 Of flutes and viols, ravishing his heart,  
 Endymion from Glaucus stood apart,  
 And scatter'd in his face some fragments light. (*Endymion* III. 766-74)

This almost religious ritual demonstrates how fear is abjected, the Circean tyranny is vanquished. It also shows how the symbolic and the semiotic are interpenetrated; the semiotic music makes it possible for the symbolic ritual to release one from the despotic power of self-loving, inward-looking solipsistic Circean aspect of human existence. The ritualistic tearing of the scroll resuscitates the dead; minced leaves are scattered. The symbolic ritual not only releases the potential of the semiotic, but also derives its transformative power from the semiotic base of culture. The body reduced to the tyrannizing carnality is transformed into the embodied joy of music whose patterns and notes ravish the heart and embody the body, which shows that the semiotic and the symbolic both make meaning, that signification is also “the result of affect and drive” (Lechte *Kristeva* 77). The sexual overtones of the words such as “ravish” and “scatter” suggest that the body as matter is transformed into the body as meaning. As opposed to the dismemberment of the body, the merging of the semiotic and the symbolic promise a sense of wholeness only on condition that the self-loving, inward-looking narcissistic, imprisoning Circean element is discarded and the self is only loved through an ideal, through an other, Endymion through Glaucus. Therefore, mirroring figures are separated as Endymion stands apart from his twin brother Glaucus (*Endymion* III. 773); the subject-to-be and the object-to-be are established as distinct categories; the impulse for undifferentiated oneness is discarded and is transformed into music and poetry as the lyre suggests. Endymion showers “powerful fragments on the dead” (*Endymion* III. 784), perhaps inseminating them symbolically; lovers lift up their heads as “doth a flower at Apollo’s touch” (*Endymion* III. 785-6). Endymion is disrobed of the Circean tyranny, dons the garb of the sage, and is conferred upon the light-giving and life-infusing power of the god of the sun, music and poetry; he is granted a divine touch which resurrects dead lovers:

Death felt it to his inwards: 'twas too much:

Death felt a weeping in his charnel house.  
 The Latmian preserv'd along, and thus  
 All were re-animated. There arose  
 A noise of harmony, pulses and throes  
 Of gladness in the air – while many, who  
 Had died in mutual arms devout and true,  
 Sprang to each other madly; and the rest  
 Felt a high certainty of being blest.  
 They gaz'd upon Endymion. Enchantment  
 Grew drunken, and would have its head and bent.  
 Delicious symphonies, like airy flowers,  
 Budded, and swell'd, and, full-blown, shed full showers  
 Of light, soft, unseen leaves of sounds divine.  
 The two deliverers tasted a pure wine  
 Of happiness, from fairy-press ooz'd out.  
 Speechless they eyed each other, and about  
 The fair assembly wandered to and fro,  
 Distracted with the richest overflow  
 Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven. (*Endymion* III. 787-806)

Endymion, granted divine power, reanimates lovers, thus defeats death, the legacy of the abject maternal body. The most intense form of abject, death is triumphed over, the agony of death is averted. There ensues a festivity of life in which the semiotic energies and the symbolic forms are entwined: a noise of harmony, pulses of vitality and death throes are celebrated.

This spirit of happiness is described through “a remarkable kind of incremental synaesthesia” (Steinhoff 231): symphonies (auditory) are delicious (gustatory); flowers (olfactory) are airy; symphonies grow like flowers and they shed showers of light (visual) and divine sounds (aural); unseen leaves of flowers emit divine sounds. Through music, senses merge into one another through the Keatsian “inter-sensory images” in a semiotic way (Abrams *The Mirror* 94). Stewart points out that “[c]onfusing sense, synaesthesia concentrates it” (143). This instance of highly emotive language does not eliminate affect but includes it through the compression of senses. Kristeva points out:

Here the term metaphor should not bring to mind the classical rhetorical trope (*figurative vs. plain*), but instead, on the one hand, the modern theories of metaphor that decipher within it an indefinite jamming of semantic features one into the other, a meaning being acted out, and, on the other, the drifting heterogeneity within a heterogeneous psychic apparatus, going from drives and sensations to signifier and conversely (*Tales* 37).

Through synaesthesia, inexhaustible semantic features are perpetually squeezed into one another as delicious symphonies ceaselessly fuse taste into sound, scent into light like improvising musicians jamming musical notes undyingly; sensations and signifiers are jammed into one another. Kristeva notes that synaesthesia rests on “a condensation of infrasigns, of semiotic indications that have a meaning without for that matter having a signification”; these semiotic indications are spread over “the various perceptual ranges (hearing, sight, smell, taste, touch)”; she puts forward that this exchange between senses is “contamination” too; therefore, synaesthesia is “a metaphor in a language that is being destabilized, a language that is not yet, that already no longer is” (*Tales* 333). This contaminating condensation unsettles the univocal units of language.

Oliver notes that metaphor is “the reduplication in language of the primary transference that takes place through the structure of primary narcissism” (*Kristeva* 75). The primary transference between Glaucus and Endymion is realised through the cloak Glaucus bestows on Endymion. Kristeva puts forward that metaphor blurs all reference and “ends up as synaesthesia, as if to open the Word to the passion of the body itself, as it is” (*Tales* 277-8). Metaphor is where borders are muddled (*Tales* 268). In the narcissistic structure built between Glaucus and Endymion, drives are fleshed out in language through metaphorical ambiguity and synaesthesia; they metamorphose into pure condensation. Similar to Baudelaire’s image of porous glass that powerful odours penetrate, which Kristeva cites in *Tales of Love* (334), matter is porous for delicious symphonies which grow like flowers. Synaesthesia atomizes Endymion and Glaucus, pulverising them, penetrating them through the porous glass of the crystalline (narcissistic) structure.

In this state of fusion, Glaucus and Endymion cease to be territorial as they both become the two deliverers, mixing one with the other; at this point, who delivers whom becomes insignificant; such sensory anomaly makes meaning, which would be impossible in an exclusively symbolic and utterly desemioticed anaesthetised realm, where our capacity for vestigial synaesthesia would be unrealized. Steinhoff argues that “[c]ommunion follows the vicarious *sparagmos*, wine being the essence of natural fruition as well as the dying god’s blood” (231). The two deliverers taste a pure wine

of happiness after the Circean charm of impure, unclean state of being is subdued; the fear of being dissected is overcome by the joy of togetherness and closeness. They eye each other speechlessly, which evokes a sense of preverbal harmony, the pre-symbolic joy of an infant; they were distracted with the richest overflow of joy that ever poured from heaven, which might be called a vicarious experience of bodily joy realized through symbolic forms and rituals; it could be considered to be jouissance at one remove. This symbolic ritual, which vicariously allows self and other to merge into one another, offers an outlet for energies otherwise invested in the state of the Circean solipsism, which does not recognize the divide between self and other. The symbolic interrelationship between Glaucus and Endymion could be seen as a way of overcoming an *indivisible* individualism as the etymology of the word *individualism* suggests (OED). Their symbolic interdependence allows Endymion to be released from his “unsocial tendency towards solitude and solipsism” (Fermanis 50). The Kristevan narcissistic structure based on the relationship of intense sympathy between Glaucus and Endymion enables them to be freed from their solipsistic, inward-looking frozen subjectivity.

### **3.1.5 Neptune as the Kristevan Imaginary Father**

Besides this relationship of intense sympathy between Endymion and Glaucus as a movement away from the abject mother, Neptune, the god of the sea, could be seen as the Kristevan imaginary father that disengages the child from the engulfing maternal body. Neptune represents the imaginary father that plays “the role of the third” and facilitates “the progression of the infant from its immersion in the abject” (Chanter and Ziarek 10). Neptune symbolises “the beginning of [...] thirdness” in “the development of the future speaking being” (Kristeva *Sense and Non-Sense* 52-3). Kristeva claims that “in order to support the transition through abjection into the Symbolic order the infant needs a fantasy of a loving imaginary father” (Oliver *Kristeva* 4). This loving imaginary father is “an archaic disposition of the paternal function, preceding the Name, the Symbolic” (Kristeva *Tales* 22).

Neptune as the imaginary father might be regarded as an antidote that counteracts Circean tyranny, the “[g]roanings [which] swell’d / Poisonous about my [Glaucus’s]

ears” (*Endymion* III.490-1). This primary identification with the imaginary father becomes “the basis of the first movement away from the mother [Circe] towards the place of the father [Neptune]” (Lechte *Kristeva* 169). Accordingly, Steinhoff points out that “Circe’s self-absorbed tyranny is renounced in favour of Neptune’s regality of the sea” (218); “the regality of Neptune” is pictured in Glaucus’s cloak, which is used to suppress the Circean element (*Endymion* III. 21-1).

When Glaucus beholds Endymion for the first time, he exclaims: “O shell-born Neptune, I am pierc’d and stung / With new-born life!” (*Endymion* III. 238-9). Neptune is associated with life and vitality in opposition to the “hell-born” (*Endymion* III. 665) Circean tyranny which devitalizes Glaucus; in the same way, shell-born Neptune as the god of the sea allows Glaucus to cast off “this serpent-skin of woe” by means of offering him “a restoring chance” (*Endymion* III. 240, 644). Likewise, Neptune provides him with “treasures” (*Endymion* III. 672), which Glaucus uses to disgorge the Circean element in him: “When at my feet emerg’d an old man’s hand, / Grasping this scroll, and this same slender wand” (*Endymion* III. 669-70). In his captivity during which his vitality is sucked by “a vast sponge of fate” (*Endymion* III. 348-9), Glaucus was expecting to hear Neptune’s voice:

But the crown  
Of all my life was utmost quietude:  
More did I love to lie in cavern rude,  
Keeping in wait whole days for Neptune’s voice,  
And if it came at last, hark, and rejoice! (*Endymion* III. 352-6)

Enthralled by the Circean charm which causes “scummy slime” (*Endymion* III. 330), Glaucus longs to hear Neptune’s voice; “utmost quietude”, inflicted on him by Circe, refers to the solipsistic world of his own, which imprisons and enfeebles him, thereby reducing him to the state of foetal dependency; “cavern rude” might be seen as a primordial site associated with the maternal womb, “the old womb of night, his cave forlorn” (*Endymion* IV. 372). He gestates in “cavern rude”, yearning to rejoice in Neptune’s, the imaginary father’s voice, the vocal presence of “a redemptive third term” (Smith 163). Neptune as “ocean’s sire / [that] could grant in benediction” Glaucus’s desire (*Endymion* III. 375-7) seems to be in accord with the Kristevan loving

imaginary father who utters blessings, “the one who loves us, not the one who judges us” (Kristeva *Tales* 313):

Two copious tear-drops instant fell  
From the God’s large eyes; he smil’d delectable,  
And over Glaucus held his blessing hands. –  
“Endymion! Ah! Still wandering in the bands  
Of love? Now this is cruel. Since the hour  
I met thee in earth’s bosom, all my power  
Have I put forth to serve thee. What, not yet  
Escap’d from dull mortality’s harsh net? (*Endymion* III. 900-7)

Neptune, “the throned eminence” (*Endymion* III. 895), is portrayed as a merciful old man with “an idle tongue” and “a humid eye” (*Endymion* III. 909-10). He is not defined as a punishing and prohibiting father who poses paternal threats; he represents the Kristevan “loving father against Lacan’s stern authoritarian father” (Oliver *Kristeva* 77). Neptune says that he has empowered Endymion in his subterranean journey so that he could unyoke himself from the harsh net of dull mortality. The harsh net is suggestive of the Circean net of enthrallment; Circean captivity evokes dull mortality. Neptune the imaginary father utters his blessing: “All blisses be upon thee, my sweet son!”; Endymion kneels “to receive those accents halcyon” (*Endymion* III. 921-3). Neptune confers divine favour upon Endymion; he is sanctified by Neptune’s “accents halcyon”, which marks a stark contrast to Circe’s deceptive “charming syllables” (*Endymion* III. 444), which debase and desecrate him. The identification with the Kristevan imaginary father “sustains the gap [after the child’s separation from the mother] constitutive of the structure of signification” (Chase 125). Neptune’s “accents halcyon” emerge in this emptiness once Circean syllables are abjected. Kristevan theory points to this void or emptiness that “opens up as Narcissus separates from the abject-maternal and is transferred to the place of the third” (DeArmitt 189). This is the void where symbolic representations and identifications will unfold according to Kristeva.

Awakened into a new life, lovers pay homage to “Neptunus supreme”; heading for Neptune’s palace, they go “[t]hrough portal columns of a giant size, / Into the vaulted, boundless emerald”; they are joyous, following their leader down “marble steps” (*Endymion* III. 808-14). Once they arrive, Glaucus exclaims: “Behold! behold, the

palace of his pride! / God Neptune's palaces!" (*Endymion* III. 832-4). Neptune's palaces are described with acute details:

At every onward step proud domes arose  
In prospect, - diamond gleams, and golden glows  
Of amber 'gainst their faces levelling.  
Joyous, and many as the leaves as spring,  
Still onward; still splendour gradual swell'd.  
Rich opal domes were seen, on high upheld  
By jasper pillars, letting through their shafts  
A blush of coral. Copious wonder-draughts  
Each gazer drank; and deeper drank more near:  
For what poor mortals fragment up, as mere  
As marble was there lavish, to the vast  
Of one fair palace, that far far surpass'd,  
Even for common bulk, those olden three,  
Memphis, and Babylon, and Nineveh. (*Endymion* III. 836-49)

Neptune's palaces are marked by "proud domes", "opal domes", "jasper pillars", "lavish marble", "marble steps", gigantic "portal columns", and a large, bright "arch" (*Endymion* III. 850-2). Neptune's hall is also characterised by "doming curtains, high and magnificent" (*Endymion* III. 868-70). Neptune's grandeur is described through the architectural wonders of his palaces; the domes, pillars, portals and columns of his palaces are suggestive of the highest architectural achievements of ancient civilizations such as those of three cities, or perhaps of the Roman Empire as Neptunus, an extra-Latinized form of his already Roman name Neptune evokes. This architectural magnificence as an expression of culture and civilization is pitted against the "fabric crystalline / Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and pearl", which had a "bright portal" and, which was "vast, and desolate, and icy-cold" (*Endymion* III. 628-32). The former edifice refers to the symbolic realm of civilizing, vitalizing refined culture whereas the latter one points to the devitalizing, degrading force of a frozen solipsistic crude subjectivity of "cavern rude" (*Endymion* III. 353) which imprisons and disallows the psyche to reach out; this might also testify to a minor contrast between the classical elements of Neptune's palaces and the baroque ribbed vault of the crystalline fabric into which Glaucus enters "at one eager swirl" (*Endymion* III. 630-1) and where he gets out of synch with the symbolic.

The contrast between the crystalline fabric and Neptune's palaces could be mapped onto the contrast between Neptune and Circe. The description of the majestic palaces

matches shell-born Neptune with civic culture, whereas hell-born Circe is paired with wild nature, “serpentine” and “brute” (*Endymion* III. 500-1). Neptune’s Roman civilized domes, pillars and portals are pitted against Circe’s “cavern rude”, “mazy forest-house” and her “dark valley” (*Endymion* III. 353, 468, 490). Neptune’s state is also characterized by “the [rain]bow” (*Endymion* III. 850). Frye points out that the rainbow traditionally appears following the deluge (144); Neptune’s appearance is celebrated after the Circean inundating deluge. The imaginary father, who “leads me [him] beyond an autoerotic relationship with my mother” (Smith 168), helps Endymion (read Glaucus as well) survive abjection. Whereas Circe embodies the dark womb, “the dungeon core of that wild wood” (*Endymion* III. 565), “black magic” (Frye 144), Neptune represents “lucid depth” (*Endymion* III. 879). His “lucid depth” evokes “lucid wombs” where free winds are impregnated by music (*Endymion* I. 783-6). The lexical chord between lucid womb and lucid depth is also testament to the merging of maternal and paternal qualities in the imaginary father. The Circean potency of “the old womb of night” (*Endymion* IV. 372) is contrasted with Neptune’s lambent dome:

This palace floor breath-air, - but for the amaze  
 Of deep-seen wonders motionless, - and blaze  
 Of the dome pomp, reflected in extremes,  
 Globing a golden sphere. (*Endymion* III. 884-7)

The architectural spherical dome confronts the primordial womb, the cavity of the uterus, “cavern rude” (*Endymion* III. 354). In other words, the uterine “fabric crystalline” (*Endymion* III. 628) is countered by Neptune’s golden “proud domes”, “opal domes” (*Endymion* III. 836, 841). The location of the womb as an organ in the lower body where offspring are conceived and the position of the dome in the upper body of an architectural structure, resembling the crown, the head of a human body, where ideas to found a civilisation are conceived, might be considered to refer to the contrast between the womb and the dome, the regality of Circe and the regality of Neptune; the uterine confronts the cerebral.

A Kristevan understanding of the dialectical relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic does not invite such a stark contrast; it points to the interrelationship between the two; Neptune as the imaginary father does belong to the semiotic. Kristeva’s imaginary father is “a combination of the mother and the father” (Oliver *Kristeva* 77).

The god of the sea does not represent the symbolic father utterly cut off from the semiotic realm; as the Kristevan loving imaginary father, he “combines the positive characteristics of mother and father” (Bov   117-8). Therefore, this loving imaginary father has “an ambiguous position in terms of sexual difference” (Chanter and Ziarek 7). His realm is marked by “lucid depth” that echoes “lucid womb”. Neptune’s realm is not devoid of semiotic energies as he is the pre-symbolic father, “the father-mother conglomerate” (Kristeva *Tales* 40). His “throne / Of emerald deep” (*Endymion* III. 862-3) refers to a merging of different realms as Frye points out, when he notes that emerald is interpreted as “a reunion of the sphere of water with that of the green earth” (144). In accordance with this state of being twofold, the “palace of his pride” is also embellished with precious gemstones such as diamond, amber, opal, jasper and coral; differing from the architectural marvels, these stones are found in wild nature, removed from the bowels of the earth, yet they are fitted into the architectural design of his palaces; they are refined and embedded in the structure of the palaces, which evinces that nature and culture are blended in Neptune’s kingdom, the realm of the father-mother conglomerate.

In contrast to Circe’s delusional revelry, Neptune’s revelry is marked by life-affirming bounty, not the Circean devouring debauchery:

Meantime a glorious revelry began  
 Before the Water-Monarch. Nectar ran  
 In courteous fountains to all cups outreach’d;  
 And plunder’d vines, teeming exhaustless, pleach’d  
 New growth about each shell and pendent lyre;  
 The which, in disentangling for their fire,  
 Pull’d down fresh foliage and coverture  
 For dainty toying. Cupid, empire-sure,  
 Flutter’d and laugh’d, and oft-times through the throng  
 Made a delighted way. Then dance, and song,  
 And garlanding grew wild; and pleasure reign’d.  
 In harmless tendrils they each other chain’d,  
 And strove who should be smother’d deepest in  
 Fresh crush of leaves. (*Endymion* III. 924-37)

Neptune’s bounty represents the Kristevan imaginary father, “an ideal other who lacks nothing” and whom the semiotic body identifies with (Oliver *Kristeva* 78). Neptune’s revelry is glorified as it is characterised by freshness, smoothness and fluidity in contrast to the Circean revelry which chokes those in captivity. In Neptune’s revelry,

fountains are courteous, gracious and cordial, perhaps civil and cultivated. Circe's deceptive ambrosia, which leads to "fierce temptation" (*Endymion* III. 451-4), is replaced by Neptune's nectar; overhanging vines "teeming exhaustless" are disentangled, pulled down and their fresh foliage is used for dainty toying in contrast to Circe's clusters of grapes which her deformed captives devour voraciously and which entangle them in a net of enthrallment (*Endymion* III. 510-11). Neptune's revellers fasten each other with "harmless tendrils" and smother one another in "[f]resh crush of leaves"; these tendrils are harmless and leaves are fresh; they are not threatening to strangle them unlike the Circean charm which stifles her prisoners (*Endymion* III. 526). This scene of merrymaking is not destructive like Circe's revelry. Neptune as the imaginary father who "insures the subject's entrance into the universe of signs and creation" (Kristeva *Black* 23), helps Endymion to expel the abject maternal body of Circe; "identification with the imaginary father also allows the child to "ab-jet" its mother's body and thereby separate from her" (Oliver Kristeva 79).

The regality of Neptune dazzles the beholders like "callow eagles at the first sunrise", but thanks to "an eagle nativeness", their gaze becomes "[r]ipe from hue-golden swoons" and their eyes take all the blaze when they behold Neptune on his emerald throne (*Endymion* III. 858-63). Neptune's regality does not blind their sight, does not castrate his beholders; their eagle nativeness is allowed to flourish. By contrast, Circe, "remorseless as an infant's bier", "whisk'd against their eyes the sooty oil" (*Endymion* III. 520-1); she blinds her prisoners, thus castrating them; an unscrupulous witch, she annihilates their "eagle nativeness" by covering their eyes with sooty oil. The image of an infant's bier evokes the crime of infanticide, rendering Circe a murderous mother; callow eagles are not allowed to grow and flourish like imprisoned Glaucus, who is threatened by the "hungry hugeness" of "a dread waterspout" (*Endymion* III.346-7), another engrossing image of the anaphoric maternal body. The words "hugeness" and "nativeness" are phonic patterns repeated as an internal echo, and thereby pluralize language, dismantle signifier, disseminate meaning throughout the text; tightly organized and demarcated words are distorted by the "tireless internal adhesions" of Keatsian poetic language (Stewart 136). The semiotic challenges the symbolic on the morphophonemic level; language as an opaque object is broken down, which reveals the genotext through the sonic play of the semiotic continuum.

Neptune's regalia is associated with the fascination of the young eagles gazing at his throne and their eagle nativeness while the hungry hugeness of the dreadful waterspout stands for Circe's genitalia. The hugeness of Neptune's colossal palaces does not frighten the beholders while Circe's gargantuan appetite terrorizes Glaucus; the former exalts them, but the latter sucks them in. Likewise, the sovereignty of Neptune engenders "beauteous vassalage" in the sea nymphs (*Endymion* III. 210-2) whereas the reign of Circean terror makes Glaucus bow like "a tranc'd vassal" to the "arbitrary queen of sense" (*Endymion* III. 459-60). A vassal in trance does not respond to external stimuli as Glaucus is imprisoned in a subjective world of his own, which highlights that Circe does not represent an external force, that Circe is an internal state of mind. On the other hand, vassalage is defined as beauteous and does not refer to an individual, but to a system.

The hymn to Neptune defines him as the "King of the stormy sea!"; awful waves bow to his authority; stubborn rocks shrink at his feared trident; rivers are lost "in the wide home / Of thy capacious bosom" (*Endymion* III. 943-50). Rebel tempests skulk to their caverns when he frowns; dark clouds faint when he appears with his diadem (*Endymion* III. 951-5). Neptune's sovereignty is celebrated as he subdues unruly forces such as tempests and awful waves; the hymn praises his capacious bosom; it glorifies his awe-inspiring trident. He has "an empire stern"; he is unrelenting in the assertion of authority and exercise of discipline; his stern empire causes deep furrows on his brow (*Endymion* III. 960-61). Nevertheless, the hymn invites him to blend his reflective, "[s]ubdued majesty with this glad time" of merrymaking and festivity held in his honour (*Endymion* III. 962-4). Neptune, the "shell-borne King sublime" (*Endymion* III. 965), produces an overwhelming sense of awe through being vast, capacious and grand. Besides being a benign paternal figure who grants benedictions, Neptune is also portrayed as a sombre king. His solemn sovereignty shows Neptune as a potent monarch who suppresses disorderly and disruptive elements such as Circe, but also his capacious bosom is open to those who suffer from the Circean petrifying charm.

Another thing that we should discuss in terms of the features that make Neptune into an imaginary father is the hymn to Neptune that praises Aphrodite the goddess of love:

Breathe softly, flutes;  
 Be tender of your strings, ye soothing lutes;  
 Nor be the trumpet heard! O vain, O vain;  
 Not flowers budding in an April rain,  
 Nor breath of sleeping dove, nor river's flow, -  
 No, nor the Eolian twang of Love's own bow,  
 Can mingle music fit for the soft ear  
 Of goddess Cytherea! (*Endymion* III. 968-77)

Neptune's realm is a shelter for those who flee from the Circean charm; therefore, his realm does not admit the destructive Circean eroticism. Instead, it offers a domain for those delivered from Circe's devastating charm, "liberated from the chaotic id" (Steinhoff 223) in Freudian terms. Hence, love in Neptune's regality is marked by the softness of flutes, the tenderness of soothing lutes, the freshness of a timid bud, the quietness of an April rain, the gentleness of a sleeping dove and the mildness of a flowing river; even the penetrating, raspy sound of the trumpet is hushed. Such qualities as softness, tenderness and quietness are associated with love in the person of Aphrodite in opposition to the Circean eroticism which is characterised by "[a] sound of moan, an agony of sound", bestial "[g]roanings", and "[s]hrieks, yells, and groans of torture-pilgrimage" (*Endymion* III. 485, 490, 524).

A mortifying account of Circean erotic love is repulsed in the regality of Neptune, yet one is not called upon to mortify the flesh and chastise the body; the hymn goes on to praise Eros:

Bright-winged Child!  
 Who has another care when thou hast smil'd?  
 Unfortunates on earth, we see at last  
 All death-shadows, and glooms that overcast  
 Our spirits, fann'd away by thy light pinions.  
 O sweetest essence! Sweetest of all minions!  
 God of warm pulses, and dishevell'd hair,  
 And panting bosoms bare!  
 Dear unseen light in darkness! Eclipser  
 Of light in light! Delicious poisoner!  
 Thy venom'd goblet will we quaff until  
 We fill – we fill!  
 And by thy Mother's lips – (*Endymion* III. 978-90)

Eros is glorified; it is celebrated as a life instinct which drives away the shadow of death, dejection and melancholy. Eros is revered as the god of sexual love as he incites warm pulses. The hymn venerates Eros as the god of love intoxicates them with life;

Eros is described as “[d]elicious poisoner”; they drink heartily from his “venom’d goblet” to be filled with life and vitality, to be invigorated. This venom is intoxicating, invigorating and exalting while the Circean venom is destructive and debasing.

This account of erotic love represented by the health-giving “venom’d goblet” in the regality of Neptune the imaginary father is pitted against the notion of erotic love represented by poisonous “groanings” (*Endymion* III. 490-1) in the realm of Circe the abject mother. Circean eroticism stands for destructive “manic” Eros whereas the regality of Neptune favours “sublime” Eros, the “idealizing and divine aspect” of love (Lechte *Kristeva* 168). Kristeva maintains that Eros is “essentially manic” (*Tales* 79). However, symbolic idealizations seek to order it. Lechte explains the relationship between manic Eros and sublime Eros:

And it is so because even in its idealizing and divine aspect, ‘sublime’ Eros has to work both to prevent ‘manic’ Eros from breaking through and wreaking orgiastic destruction and death, and to prevent a successful repression of manic Eros from toppling over into depression and melancholia – and even death through suicide (*Kristeva* 168).

Circean manic Eros threatens to break through and wreak orgiastic destruction which reduces her prisoners to deformed beasts. Sublime Eros in the person of Neptune seeks to sublimate and civilize the Circean “serpentine” deformities through architectural symbols such as palaces, domes, pillars and portals, symbolic forms invested with affect. The repressed returns in Freudian terms; in Kristevan terms, the maternal abject does not vanish but hovers at the periphery of one’s existence. This tension between manic Eros and sublime Eros informs Endymion’s response to the clash between the Circean abject mother and Neptune the imaginary father, which evokes Plato’s illustration of the psyche as a team of two horses in the *Phaedrus*:

the soul, or psyche, is a team of two winged horses – one the equivalent of manic Eros, the other the equivalent of sublime Eros – guided by a charioteer. Sublime Eros is here engaged in an intense struggle to idealize the love relationship against the manic force urging that immediate pleasure be taken from the love object (Lechte *Kristeva* 168).

Circean manic Eros disrupts the orderliness temporarily established in the realm of Neptune the imaginary father. The repression of manic Eros topples into depression in the person of Endymion, who sinks at “Neptune’s feet” (*Endymion* III. 1013). The

realm of Neptune places the bar of symbolic idealization too high as it seeks to repress the Circean anarchy and abject the maternal body through symbolic forms of civilization; in response, anxiety and melancholia break through. An utter adherence to the exclusively symbolic realm disconcerts the subject in process/on trial just as too much affect shatters the symbolic in the Circean realm. The philosopher's amatory discourse points to "the oscillation between erotic love and the love of the ideal"; therefore, it begins "at a point after the separation [from the abject maternal body] and the institution of the [symbolic] law" (Lechte *Kristeva* 168-69); it begins after a primary identification with an other, with the imaginary father has already taken place. Endymion identifies with Neptune the imaginary father, yet the borders of the subject are still tenuous even after the imaginary father allows the child to abject the maternal body; his is an ego in the throes of formation, a subject in process/on trial as Kristeva's French "en process" refers to both (*Revolution* 22). The "stable 'I' goes missing, displaced by a subject 'in process/on trial'" as Faflak suggests (*Romantic Psychoanalysis* 35); therefore, he oscillates between Circe the abject mother and Neptune the imaginary father.

Despite the hymn which praises the god of love and the urge to be filled with life, vitality and energy, Endymion suffers from a sensation of whirling and a tendency to fall; he is disorientated:

The palace whirls  
 Around giddy Endymion; seeing he  
 Was there far strayed from mortality.  
 He could not bear it – shut his eyes in vain;  
 Imagination gave a dizzier pain.  
 "O I shall die! Sweet Venus, be my stay!  
 Where is my lovely mistress? Well-away!  
 I die – I hear her voice – I feel my wing –"  
 At Neptune's feet he sank. A sudden ring  
 Of Nereids were about him, in kind strife  
 To usher back his spirit into life:  
 But still he slept. At last they interwove  
 Their cradling arms, and purpos'd to convey  
 Towards a crystal bower far away. (*Endymion* III. 1005-18)

Endymion is dizzy; he is not animated or excited by the enlivening song of love sung in praise of Eros. He is disorientated as he is "far strayed from mortality"; he does not feel animated by the love song since to be animated with life and to be invigorated

through erotic love requires him to be mortal, corporeal. He feels disconnected from his physical, earthly existence; he shuts his eyes as he cannot bear that feeling of dizziness, yet his inner sight gives “a dizzier pain”; the fear of death overwhelms him; to rid himself of this terror, he calls upon his “lovely mistress”, Cynthia, an inaccessible, disembodied, idealized mother to whom he returns; he believes he feels his wing once he hears her voice; he loses his consciousness and sinks at Neptune’s feet. His imagination gives him “a dizzier pain” as his subjective, narcissistic imagination makes him feel his wing and makes him stray from mortality, locking him up in an incorporeal solipsistic vision which cancels out the earthly, fleshly aspect of human existence. This urge to have the mythical wings of Icarus and to be celestial conflicts with the erotic impulse to be immersed in a sexual jouissance of warm pulses, dishevelled hair and heaving bosoms; therefore, he is slumped in deep dejection in spite of the revitalizing love song sung in honour of Eros in the regality of Neptune. Since he is disengaged from a yearning for erotic love which is said to drive away “[a]ll death-shadows, and glooms that overcast / Our spirits” (*Endymion* III. 981-2), the fear of death overtakes him. The maternal body gives life, but also death is the legacy of the maternal body or the complete fusion with it and the disintegration of the psychic space: the pre-Oedipal mother is a “source of life...and of death” (Lechte *Kristeva* 183). Erotic love requires one to moor the self to the existence of the other; however, Endymion reverts to his narcissistic love for Cynthia rather than reaching out to the other. He sinks at Neptune’s feet because the regality of Neptune stands against the Circean state of mind which does not moor the self to the other, but which invites the self to be immersed in a narcissistic relation to itself. The regality of Neptune counteracts the Circean self-enclosed world of imprisoning subjectivity, but it does not seek to obliterate erotic love, sexual energy or sex drive so long as it is moored to the other.

When Endymion sinks at Neptune’s feet, the Nereids, the female spirits of sea waters, try to usher his spirit back into life, but he does not respond. These maternal figures hold him gently and protectively, cradling him in their arms like “a child of suckling time” (*Endymion* III. 456), and they take him to a crystal bower, suggestive of Peona’s maternal bower where he is soothed like an infant. Despite the regality of Neptune intervening as the imaginary father during the process of abjection, Endymion

regresses to the narcissistic crystal bower where the rupture between self and other is not established. In the crystal bower “his inward senses” speak to him; he hears the voice of Cynthia in his inner consciousness:

Dearest Endymion! my entire love!  
How have I dwelt in fear of fate: 'tis done –  
Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.  
Arise then! for the hen-dove shall not hatch  
Her ready eggs, before I'll kissing snatch  
Thee into heaven. Awake! awake! (*Endymion* III. 1022-7)

In his inner consciousness Endymion dreams of achieving immortal bliss and being snatched to heaven. Once he wakes up, “a placid lake / Came quiet to his eyes” (*Endymion* III. 1028-9); his whirling mind is soothed by the vision he sees in the crystal bower; his state of mind is like a smooth lake, undisturbed by external stimuli. He sees the green forest; it lulls “his fluttering breast”; he is happy to be back “in grassy nest!” (*Endymion* III. 1029-32); he is “like a new-fledg'd bird” (*Endymion* III. 388), an infant to be suckled and soothed to sleep.

In conclusion, *Endymion* seems to be “a poem which constantly threatens to explode the boundaries of its own narrative” (Bennett 73). The poetic romance oscillates between the desire to annihilate boundaries and the yearning to expel that which disrespects borders. An “inexplicable juxtaposition of nature’s irrepressible vitality and lingering disease” (Roe *Keats* 39) attests to this oscillation. The present (third) chapter focuses on corruption, disease, infection, repulsion and horror while the previous chapter has dealt with vitality, intensity, fullness and plenty. This section on the abject and abjection in *Endymion* has sought to demonstrate that the abject becomes manifest through the stifling sensuality of poetic diction, with the attending suggestion that the Keatsian perversion of language leads to the collapse of boundaries. This section also shows that the allusions to the slimy, boggy substances point to the abject and that filth and defilement threaten the subject and the tenuous borders of subjectivity. In addition, it discusses how the fear of being choked by the abject maternal body permeates *Endymion* and how Circe is associated with the abject maternal body. This section further investigates how the abject is expelled by means of the narcissistic structure (built between Endymion and Glaucus) that enables the infant to be weaned from the abject mother and through the figure of Neptune who

represents the imaginary father that disengages the child from the engulfing maternal body.

### **3.2 The Horror of Being Buried in the “opaque element”: The Abject and Abjection in *Hyperion***

This section deals with the abject and abjection in the epicscape of *Hyperion* in three aspects. First of all, the confrontation between the genres of romance and epic, between *Endymion* and *Hyperion* is investigated. Secondly, the fallen and disgraced Saturn is discussed as an abject figure. Thirdly, *Hyperion* is examined as the god of the sun beset by the Kristevan powers of horror.

#### **3.2.1. *Hyperion* and its Own *Disjecta*: The Epic Abjecting the Romance**

The second section of this chapter aims to demonstrate that *Endymion* is the abject for *Hyperion*, that the former is an abjected “intertext” for the latter (Bennett 144). Bennet proposes that the “inaugural negation” that opens *Hyperion* should be read as “a negation of *Endymion*” (144). This inaugural negation should be read in dialogue with the “inaugural *loss* that laid the foundations of its [the self’s] own being” (Kristeva *Powers* 5). Kristeva argues that “abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin” (*Powers* 5). Within this Kristevan context, *Hyperion* fails or refuses to recognise its kin, that is *Endymion*. Likewise, *Hyperion* is characterised by another failure or refusal to acknowledge kinship, that is the one between the Titans and the Olympians. *Hyperion* attempts to constitute its own territory, which is always “edged by the abject” in the words of Kristeva (*Powers* 6).

Composed as an act of denial of what antecedes the attempted epic, *Hyperion* is written by “a poet of recoil upon the self, of dissatisfaction with previous (and indeed current) achievements” (O’Neill “Keats’s Poetry” 114). Therefore, the process of composing *Hyperion* is read as an attempt to abject *Endymion*. In other words, *Endymion* is the precondition for *Hyperion* to exist; “[t]he seed of *Hyperion* was embedded in *Endymion*” (Walsh 72). The Keatsian denial of *Endymion* is a generating force for *Hyperion*. Hence, an attempt to identify how *Endymion* is purged out of *Hyperion* is crucial. The tension between *Endymion* and *Hyperion* chimes with the uneasiness

between the abject and the subject; the poetic persona that composes *Hyperion* evokes the subject who “defines the limits of his body through the violent expulsion of its own excess” (Ellman 181). *Hyperion* attempts to determine its contours by expelling the sickening excess of *Endymion*. The notion of abjection suggests that “[t]he subject must disavow part of itself in order to gain a stable self, and this form of refusal marks whatever identity it acquires as provisional, and open to breakdown and instability” (Gross 86). *Hyperion* attempts to disavow *Endymion*, which makes the former open to breakdown; therefore, the integrity of *Hyperion* dissolves under the invisible invasion of its own *disjecta*; it will be haunted by an inability to close its boundaries and to void itself of its abjected other, that is *Endymion*.

Keats is resolved to bid farewell to “the ‘syren’ of Romance” (Curran *Poetic Form* 129). Therefore, the poetic romance as a tantalising generic feature is jettisoned out of the epic in order for the latter to thrust aside the abject and not to be crushed under the weight of the imponderable, the intolerable and the impossible. In his letter to Shelley on August 16, 1820, Keats says that he “would willingly take the trouble to unwrite” his “poor Poem”, that is *Endymion* (*Letters* 465). Accordingly, Aske suggests that *Hyperion* should be regarded as an attempt to “unwrite” *Endymion*; he adds that “[t]he proposed epic’s ‘naked and grecian Manner’ will seek to jettison the parergonal [ornamental] style of *Endymion* in favour of the monumental sublimity of Milton” (*Keats* 71). This urge to unwrite *Endymion* is reflected in the attempt to jettison *Endymion* from *Hyperion*. Keats appears to be worried about “a deceptive treachery in the beguiling and transformative eloquence of ‘golden-tongued Romance’” (Sandy “Tragic Realisation” 117). Despite the resolution to abject the bewitching tongue of the earlier work, the fluid confines of the romance constantly challenge the solidity of the epic; therefore, *Hyperion* deviates from its formal intention to expel the Endymionese. The poetic romance of *Endymion* signifies, for the poet of *Hyperion*, “a wandering or interiorized discourse of the imagination feminized as a threat to the masculine Romantic visionary tradition”, the epic tradition to which the Keatsian poetic voice seeks to cling in *Hyperion* (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 29). *Hyperion* is haunted by the abjected feminised *Endymion*.

Indistinct profusion is a source of confusion of boundaries, leading to “the collapse of the border between inside and outside” (Kristeva *Powers* 53). Therefore, the Hyperionesque poetic voice attempts to winnow the Endymionese bowers of indistinct profusion from the epic. The cooling bowers of bliss, plenitude and indistinct profusion of *Endymion* are contrasted with the “covert drear” of *Hyperion* where the Titans hide (*Hyperion* II. 32). While *Endymion* is marked by a sense of oneness and unity or a desire for it, *Hyperion* does not feature such a sense of interfusion and symbiosis since the epic struggles to safeguard the boundaries and not to tumble into the archaic, pre-linguistic “mother-child symbiosis” (Kristeva *Powers* 43). The tactile immediacy of these bowers, semiotic cocoons is cherished in *Endymion* whereas in *Hyperion* the semiotic terrain of indistinct profusion and the sense of closeness and nearness are disregarded. Through images of roundness, suggestive of an enclosed maternal space, the poetic voice relapses into the maternal semiotic in *Endymion*, yet *Hyperion* resists such a sense of interlacement and commingling in the maternal “receptacle” (Kristeva *Powers* 14). A poetic romance pictures such bowers of bodily extension and interdependence; however, an urge to construct an epic with a masculine energy impersonated in the eponymous *Hyperion* keeps it at bay. The feminine-identified romance which is predicated upon permeable boundaries is rejected while the masculine-identified epic is built on fixed boundaries; in *Hyperion* the Keatsian poetic voice seeks to “assume the mantle of the virile epic poet” (Mellor “Complexities of Gender” 225).

The Endymionese bowers of interfusion and undifferentiation are avoided in the world of the Titans, and are especially discarded by the fiery Hyperion and the “fierce Enceladus” (*Hyperion* II. 382) in order to consolidate their power and identity by sharply accentuating the distinction between self and other and disambiguating their boundaries against the Endymionese fluidity of bodies melting into one another, words morphing into other words, and things flowing into each other. Kristeva contends that we might “call it a border; abjection is above all ambiguity” (*Powers* 9). The “heterogeneous flow” pertinent to the Endymionese style (Kristeva *Powers* 10) causes ambiguity and confusion. Keats’s “high threshold for ambiguity” (White 63) is found paralyzing in the world of the epic, in the realm of fixed boundaries. Therefore, the epic poet seeks to be embedded in the symbolic where “the subject posits itself as

different to, or as other than, that which it names in the process of signification” (Chanter 67).

### **3.2.2 Saturn as the Abject Cadaver That Falls into the Asymbolic**

Abjection of *Endymion* in *Hyperion* that has been discussed through generic features must also be investigated through characters. Before moving onto the epic defiance of Hyperion and Enceladus, it is useful to look at the overthrown Saturn, who cannot escape his current predicament, his abject condition. As the dethroned god who escapes signification in the symbolic order, Saturn represents the abject for Hyperion who fears to be dispossessed of his throne. The sovereignty of the symbolic subject is undermined. Saturn falls from the symbolic realm; he looks like a corpse, a cadaver that “falls beyond the limit” (Kristeva *Powers* 3). Considering that *cadaver* is derived from the Latin *cadere* which means to fall (Kristeva *Powers* 3), Saturn is like a dead body that falls into the impossible real, beyond the thinkable and the signifiable.

Saturn dreads remaining stuck in the abyss of undifferentiation which is marked by the dissolution of the distinction between self and other. He beholds “the breaking down of a world that has erased its borders: fainting away” (Kristeva *Powers* 4). Being succeeded by the Olympians is, for Saturn and the Titans, the breaking down of their knowable, nameable world where they are recognized as distinct identities. Keats portrays Saturn as “a statue fallen into abject fragments” and “cut off from his being and full embodiment” (Kelley 181). He suffers as he is bereft of his identity; he wants his identity, his distinction back. Saturn is “a study of position coterminous with being: dead because ‘unsculpted’; bereft of ‘identity’ because ‘realmless’” (Newey “Keats’s Epic Ambitions” 72). Being disrobed of his power, he is beset by the Kristevan powers of horror. Saturn is a metaphor of “an indeterminate self” that destabilises “the apparatus of the epic ego” which “constitutes identities as an array of bounded egos within a fixed symbolic tableau” (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 216). The “potentially groundless indeterminacy of Keatsian poetic subjectivity” (Sandy “Tragic Realisation” 125) embodied in the figure of Saturn chimes with the Kristevan subject in process / on trial.

Against the grain of the poem's epic desire, Saturn is marginalised from the symbolic realm of a fixed, determined, strong identity and a well-established position; he is castrated. He is drawn towards "the place where meaning collapses" (Kristeva *Powers* 2). His phenomenal identity vanishes. Saturn is "[f]ar sunken from the healthy breath of morn" (*Hyperion* I. 2). Like the Circean "dark lair of night" (*Endymion* III. 559), Saturn's insalubrious lair is marked by unpleasant, bad breath; a sign of corruption. His fall is seen as contaminating (de Almeida "Romantic Evolution" 284). There is no "stir of air" in his den; it is choking. "Forest on forest hung about his [Saturn's] head / Like cloud on cloud" (*Hyperion* I. 5-7); he is overwhelmed, suffocated.

Embodying the abject, Saturn is smothered as a result of loss of his distinct identity as a potent god. He is a "feeble shape" with his "wrinkling brow, / Naked and bare of its great diadem" (*Hyperion* I. 98-101); he is uncrowned, disrobed of his symbolic identity. He cannot make sense of his loss of power:

Who had power  
 To make me desolate? Whence came the strength?  
 How was it nurtured to such bursting forth,  
 While fate seemed strangled in my nervous grasp?  
 But it is so; and I am smothered up,  
 And buried from all godlike exercise  
 Of influence benign on planets pale,  
 Of admonitions to the winds and seas,  
 Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,  
 And all those acts which deity supreme  
 Doth ease its heart of love in. (*Hyperion* I. 102-12)

A feeble shape, devoid of power, Saturn feels he is smothered and buried; his loss of power stifles him. He sees his loss of power as a loss of masculine prowess; his deathly deprivation castrates him; he experiences death as an "imaginary equivalent of phallic dispossession" (Kristeva *Black* 25). He used to strangle fate in his "nervous grasp"; the Latin etymology of the word *nervous* (OED) shows that manliness is based on a vigorous, sinewy grasp, a muscular masculinity, so loss of power and identity unmans Saturn, turning him into a feeble shape deprived of qualities traditionally associated with men, an old wrinkling man with a shrivelling sense of manliness. This state of being emasculated makes him feel strangled, smothered and buried. Talking to Thea, he says he is gone

Away from my own bosom; I have left  
 My strong identity, my real self,  
 Somewhere between the throne and where I sit  
 Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!  
 Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round  
 Upon all space – space starred, and lorn of light;  
 Space regioned with life-air, and barren void;  
 Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.  
 Search, Thea, search! And tell me, if thou seest  
 A certain shape or shadow, making way  
 With wings or chariot fierce to repossess  
 A heaven he lost erewhile: (*Hyperion* I. 112-24)

Saturn is stripped of his symbolic identity; he is in a place where he feels evacuated; he is depersonalised. Deprived of his strong identity, he has fallen into the state of the abject, dangling somewhere between the throne and the lair, and blurring the boundaries, neither god nor man, not capable of “teeming up / From man to the sun’s God” unlike the not-yet-dethroned Hyperion (*Hyperion* I. 167-8). Saturn asks Thea “where is Saturn?” (*Hyperion* II. 134). The question of “where I am” overlaps, for him, with the question of “who I am”. Abjection’s horror involves “a crisis of place” and Kristevan theoretical framework describes this crisis as “a matter of ambiguous borderlines and unmapped frontiers, of strays and exiles and outcasts” (Becker-Leckrone 32). That is why Saturn asks Thea where Saturn is; he is menaced by undefined contours; who he is or isn’t is defined by where he is or isn’t. Abjection “draws the subject to the limits of its own defining boundaries” (Becker-Leckrone 32); a crisis of place is therefore a crisis of identity. In this place of crisis, Saturn appears as “a questioning subject who requires the other’s face and affect to validate his own identity” (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 217). The engulfing void of abjection horrifies him; the yawn of hell besets Saturn like “the wide-gaping air [which] / will gulph me [Endymion]” (*Endymion* II. 194-5). Saturn is no longer a distinct “certain shape” with an identity but a hazy, indeterminate “shadow” (*Hyperion* I. 122), “fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject” (Kristeva *Powers* 207).

Kristeva argues that the one by whom the abject exists is “a deject” (*Powers* 8). The epic begins with a fallen, dejected Saturn. Saturn is dejected since he is overthrown; the Latin etymology of the word “deject” suggests that he is “thrown down” (OED). In the words of Kristeva, he is “an exile who asks, ‘where?’” (*Powers* 8); the image of Saturn asking Thea where Saturn is (*Hyperion* I. 134) shows that he is a deject, an

exile who “*strays* instead of getting his bearings” (Kristeva *Powers* 8). Saturn cannot get his bearings because he has lost his symbolic position; dislocated out of the symbolic realm, he is disorientated; he has lost his sense of direction since he is oriented towards the maternal *chora*, “the space that engrosses the deject, the excluded, [which] is never *one*, nor *homogeneous*, nor *totalizable*, but essentially divisible, foldable, and catastrophic” (Kristeva *Powers* 8). The fluid confines of his universe “constantly question his solidity”; he is “on a journey, during the night” (Kristeva *Powers* 8), like Endymion who goes on a quest into “the old womb of night” (*Endymion* IV. 372). The nocturnal journey into the night of the abject maternal body is catastrophic, causing “overturning, sudden turn” as the Greek etymology of the word “catastrophe” suggests (OED); it is a return to the maternal night.

### **3.2.3 Hyperion Haunted by the Abject: The God of the Sun Beset by “monstrous forms”, “spectres” and “lank-eared phantoms”**

Hyperion is beset by the Kristevan powers of horror; this subsection investigates Hyperion’s fears of being disgraced, unsceptred and dethroned in his confrontation with the abject. A dejected Saturn is followed by “one of the whole mammoth-brood [who] still kept / His sovereignty, and rule, and majesty - / Blazing Hyperion” (*Hyperion* I. 164-6). An emasculated Saturn, whose “old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead, / Unsceptred” (*Hyperion* I. 18-9), is the abject which blazing Hyperion strives to keep at bay. A castrated old man who dwindles into pusillanimity is a threat that Hyperion seeks to fight against. Hyperion feels that he is threatened by the impending phallic dispossession that has befallen Saturn; he fears that he is to be castrated, too. A blazing Hyperion fights against the night of the deject, against the heterogeneous space that engrosses the abject, the excluded; he never stops demarcating the universe whose fluid boundaries subvert his solidity; in the words of Kristeva, he is a deviser of his territory (*Powers* 8). Through abjection, jettisoning the abject, he claims to establish himself, or reclaims his already established identity secured in their own world “distinguished by a clear demarcation of rank” (Fermanis 83); the loss or blurring of these demarcations is what Hyperion finds threatening.

Hyperion's fiery nature is emphasised in contrast to Saturn's paleness as the former struggles to abject the latter. Against the "icy trance" of the "frozen" Saturn (*Hyperion* I. 201, I. 87), the fiery nature of Hyperion as the god of the sun is stressed. He is blazing, sits "on his orb'd fire" (*Hyperion* I.166); his palace is "bright" and glares "a blood-red" with its "fiery galleries" and flushes "angrily" (*Hyperion* I. 176-82). He is "full of wrath"; with his "flaming robes" he gives "a roar, as if of earthly fire" (*Hyperion* I. 213-5); he stands "fierce" and stamps his foot, which jars "his own golden region" (*Hyperion* I. 222-4). As opposed to Saturn's lair which is "sunken from the healthy breath of morn" (*Hyperion* I. 2), Hyperion breathes "fierce breath" (*Hyperion* I. 266). Hyperion's "obdurate pride" stands in naked contrast to Saturn's listlessness and stagnancy (Allott 409).

Similar to Hyperion, Enceladus is another god that struggles against the abject condition of Saturn. Singled out by Keats "as the spokesman for the belligerent Titans" (Allott 421), Enceladus represents the epic Hyperionesque fiery anger: "once tame and mild / As grazing ox unworried in the meads; / Now tiger-passioned, lion-thoughted, wroth" (*Hyperion* II. 66-8). Enceladus with his fiery nature inspires even the enfeebled Saturn, who comes to the den of the doomed Titans:

So Saturn, as he walked into the midst,  
Felt faint and would have sunk among the rest,  
But that he met Enceladus's eye,  
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once  
Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,  
'Titans, behold your God!' (*Hyperion* II. 105-10)

Enceladus empowers the listless, impotent Saturn. He seeks to revitalise the lifeless Titans with his epic energy.

Enceladus refuses to be thrown (dejected), to fall (beyond the limit like a cadaver) into the abyss of the abject owing to the loss of their distinct, delineated identities. Therefore, he overwhelms the timorous voice of Clymene, who has been fascinated by the golden melody of Apollo, the sun god of the succeeding dynasty, and who seems to agree with Oceanus, who says that the Titans should yield to the perfect race of gods, the Olympians: the "overwhelming voice / Of huge Enceladus swallowed it [Clymene's timorous voice] in wrath" (*Hyperion* II. 300-4). In contrast to the fallen

Saturn's paralysed tongue, and Clymene's passive shell filled by the wave of the golden melody, the "ponderous syllables" of Enceladus, whose mightiness and hugeness are stressed, come booming "like sullen waves / In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks" (*Hyperion* II. 305-7). This image of penetrative manliness in the face of the timidity of a sea nymph is meant to reinvigorate the emasculated Titans who have lost their "nervous [sinewy, vigorous] grasp" (*Hyperion* I. 105). Supremely contemptuous of an open, passive, receptive Clymene, who is willing to be traversed by the energy of the other, that is the Olympian race in this case, Enceladus strives to inflate the Titans' sense of being by means of a language invested in the heroic energy of the epic which seeks to maintain and consolidate their power, and extinguish the other, the enemy:

Or shall we listen to the over-wise,  
Or to the over-foolish, Giant-Gods?  
Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all  
That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,  
Not world on world upon these shoulders piled  
Could agonize me more than baby-words  
In midst of this dethronement horrible.  
Speak! Roar! Shout! Yell, ye sleepy Titans all!  
Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile?  
Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?  
Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,  
Thy scalding in the seas? What, have I roused  
Your spleens with so few simple words as these?  
O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:  
O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes  
Wide-glaring for revenge! (*Hyperion* II. 309-24)

Enceladus refuses to listen to "the over-wise" Oceanus and "the over-foolish" Clymene. He infantilises them, reducing their remarks to "baby-words". He intends to enkindle the sleepy Titans smitten with dethronement and loss of power and identity. In order to rouse their spleens, he makes them remember who their foes are, the Olympians, the rebellious Jove with his youngling arm. As opposed to Oceanus' and Clymene's submissive openness to change and their receptiveness of the other, Enceladus struggles to reconsolidate the boundaries between themselves and their opponents in order not to surrender to the abject confusion of boundaries.

Once the Titans are enflamed by the arousing virility of Enceladus, the fiery nature of the epic masculine energy prepares to strike:

Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,  
And purge the ether of our enemies;  
How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,  
And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,  
Stifling that puny essence in its tent. (*Hyperion* II. 327-31)

The Hyperionesque effect embodied in the person of Enceladus, who scorns “Oceaus’s lore” (*Hyperion* II. 333), marks the epic. Enceladus repudiates the shrivelling image of manhood assumed by Saturn; he desires to extinguish the swollen Jove. As opposed to Saturn, who feels he is smothered up and buried, Enceladus wants to stifle the puny essence of Jove. By burning the ether of their enemies through fire, Enceladus wishes to be purged of the abject condition, the emasculating and suffocating effect of dethronement and loss of power. He encourages the Titans to follow the yet “undisgraced” Hyperion, not the “Unscptred” Saturn (*Hyperion* II. 344, I.19). He heartens the Titans not to groan (*Hyperion* I. 162, II. 6, II. 110, II. 157-8) like fearful animals kept in their den but to speak, roar, shout and yell (*Hyperion* II. 316).

In order to consolidate the boundaries between the Titans and the Olympians and maintain their distinct identities, the physical enormity of the former is highlighted against the “puny essence” of the latter (*Hyperion* II. 331). Different from the dethroned Saturn’s “nerveless, listless, dead” hand and his loss of “nervous grasp” (*Hyperion* I. 18, I. 105), the Titans are presented as “the brawniest in assault” (*Hyperion* II. 21). The fallen Titans inflate their image of manliness through a picture of vigour, and “nervous,” as in sinewy, muscular, strong male bodies (*Hyperion* I. 105). Being dwarfed by the loss of power, their sense of being is aggrandised through their titanic massiveness; they are described as “mammoth-brood” (*Hyperion* I. 164); their horrors are proportionate to “a giant nerve” (*Hyperion* I. 175). Similarly, Hyperion paces with “stride colossal” (*Hyperion* I. 195); he is portrayed as “a lithe serpent, vast and muscular” (*Hyperion* I. 261); his majestic shape is regal, with “a vast shade / In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk / Of Memnon’s image at the set of sun” (*Hyperion* II. 372-4). Saturn cannot explain why “[t]he first-born of all shaped and palpable Gods, / Should cower beneath what, in comparison, / Is untremendous might” (*Hyperion* II. 153-5). The massiveness of the fallen Titans is accentuated by the puny Olympians, by which a secure differentiation between subject and object, self and other, is established; their hostility gives them “a defensive *position* to be

established” in the symbolic realm of positions and structures (Kristeva *Powers* 7). Their enormity is intended to overwhelm that which threatens to devour and overshadow them.

Likewise, Enceladus’s mightiness inspires Saturn (*Hyperion* II. 108-9). Enceladus is described as “huge” (*Hyperion* II. 304); he lifts up “his stature vast” (*Hyperion* II. 325). This hefty, bulky, brawny and muscular enormity stresses the “severe magnificence” of the Titans against the puny Olympians, one of whom is Jove, “that infant-thunderer” (*Hyperion* I. 211, I. 249). This highlighting of the physical differences between the Titans and the Olympians helps to maintain the boundaries between the Titans and their enemies.

The Hyperionesque element of the epic is thus marked by an urge to maintain and consolidate the established boundaries, to fight against the Endymionese dissolving of distinctions. Therefore, Hyperion vows to destroy the intruders:

Fall? No, by Tellus and her briny robes!  
Over the fiery frontier of my realms  
I will advance a terrible right arm  
Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,  
And bid old Saturn take his throne again. (*Hyperion* I. 246-50)

Hyperion refuses to “fall” into the abyss of undifferentiation, which once again shows that falling in the political domain is, for the Titans, similar to falling (like a cadaver) from the symbolic order. His speech is informed by “the fiery frontier of my [his] realms”; he vows to re-establish the order by repelling the trespassers. In the landscape of the epic, things are not melting into other things, bodies are not flowing into other bodies; on the contrary, distinct identities are maintained, things harden and stiffen as the contours of bodies solidify. However, Hyperion cannot command the dawn and “bid the day begin” (*Hyperion* I. 290-5):

And the bright Titan, frenzied with new woes,  
Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent  
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;  
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,  
Upon the boundaries of day and night,  
He stretched himself in grief and radiance faint. (*Hyperion* I. 299-304)

The vast, bulky, muscular Hyperion is forced to bend and stretch, a predicament which recalls Saturn's "bowed head" (*Hyperion* I. 20), and which does not accord with the image of unbending masculine prowess he strives to maintain. His grief and "radiance faint" also suggest Saturn's mourning and "faded eyes" (*Hyperion* I. 90). Incapacitated to command the dawn, Hyperion is reminiscent of the "realmless eyes" of Saturn, who "saw his kingdom gone" (*Hyperion* I. 20, I. 90). Hyperion dreads being enfeebled like Saturn; therefore, the uncrowned, disgraced Saturn is the abject for the not-yet-dethroned Hyperion. He is stretched upon the boundaries of day and night, the "in-between, the ambiguous" (Kristeva *Powers* 4), dangling somewhere between the light and the darkness, neither with the strength of a god nor with the mortality of the humans. The dissolution of boundaries is threatening for Hyperion who is:

teeming up  
 From man to the sun's God – yet insecure:  
 For as among us mortals omens drear  
 Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he –  
 Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,  
 Or the familiar visiting of one  
 Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,  
 Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;  
 But horrors portioned to a giant nerve  
 Oft made Hyperion ache. (*Hyperion* I. 167-76)

The dissolution of boundaries is frightening and perplexing as the collapse of boundaries is confusing. Boundaries are safe because they secure one's sense of being, draw the contours of one's identity, and thus keep the abject at bay. As opposed to the newly-sceptred Jove, who is "swollen" with pomp and power (*Hyperion* II. 330), Hyperion, who fears to shrivel and be unsceptred, disoriented with poison (*Hyperion* II. 98), and disgraced like Saturn, is just teeming up from "man to the sun's God", pending somewhere between the two. In contrast to the overteeming world of *Endymion*, the verb "teem" is used only once in *Hyperion*; Hyperion is not a god bursting with his own identity. His swelling, not swollen, sense of being is insecure; therefore, he tries not to be dislocated out of his symbolic realm where distinctions are made, positions are taken, structures are set, and monstrosities and deformities are exiled.

The abject that is expressed through monstrosities, amorphousness and deformations in *Hyperion* is never entirely banished. Deprived of his power and identity, Saturn dreams of forming another symbolic universe:

But cannot I create?  
Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth  
Another world, another universe,  
To overbear and crumble this to naught? (*Hyperion* I. 141-4)

Devoid of a symbolic form defining his identity, his position and the structures established to certify and validate his authority, Saturn yearns for a new form, a new world to construct, longs to obliterate the chaotic state of being he has been forced into by capture. However, he cannot see “[a] certain shape or shadow, making way / With wings or chariot fierce to repossess / A heaven he lost erewhile” (*Hyperion* I. 122-4). There is no certain shape to form a new universe; his chaotic state does not leaven into an intelligible, recognizable form, and transform for the better. Oceanus says that light comes from chaos and darkness; the first fruit of the “intestine broil [civil war]” between the generations of gods is light (*Hyperion* II. 191-2). The “sullen ferment”, which is expected to produce light once the Olympians accede to the thrones, does not ripen in itself “for wondrous ends” in the case of Hyperion, either (*Hyperion* II. 193-4). Instead, it ferments chaos, incites disorder and engenders unrest; the intestine broil between light and darkness ends with darkness for Hyperion as the fallen Titan is to be consigned to darkness, left without a palpable shape, a distinct identity. The sullen ferment that does not ripen turns sour and festers, “disappointing” the Titans with poison as opposed to the holy oil that consecrates kings (*Hyperion* II. 98). The sullen ferment that decomposes and disintegrates Hyperion’s selfhood causes him to be smitten with the “plagues he [Saturn] strove in vain” against (*Hyperion* II. 96) and monstrous forms that corrupt a living organism. Thus, the sullen ferment becomes a sign of the abject, decomposing one’s symbolic self, breaking down an identity. The etymology of the word “sullen” as “sole” (OED) is worth taking into account; once the distinction between self and other is obliterated, the boundaries are confused in the abject state, one is unaccompanied by an other in the asymbolic world of the abject; that is why Hyperion struggles to maintain his position and to regard the Olympians as the other,

the enemy; otherwise, he is to be banished from the symbolic realm of structures, positions and distinct identities.

The plague that pesters Saturn is contagious; “the father’s body is infected with a nervous contagion that is passed on to” Hyperion (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 217). Hyperion is appalled by the “monstrous forms” he sees (*Hyperion* I. 228):

O dreams of day and night!  
O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!  
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!  
O lank-eared phantoms of black-weeded pools!  
Why do I know ye? Why have I seen you? Why  
Is my eternal essence thus distraught  
To see and to behold these horrors new?  
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall? (*Hyperion* I. 227-34)

Suggestive of Circe’s “deformities”, the monstrous shapes she transfigures men into (*Endymion* III. 503), these monstrosities are abject images for Hyperion as they disturbingly remind him of the portentously gloomy amorphous state he is to fall into, like an impure Saturn adulterated with the disanointing poison. This region of “black-weeded pools” fosters “poisons and putrescence” (de Almeida “Romantic Evolution” 285). These unstable boundaries of this rotting region horrify him; indistinct, shapeless spectres repel him. The “spectre” may call up the “sceptre” as a lexical shadow: once Saturn is deprived of a sceptre, he turns into a spectre, an unsceptred spectre. Saturn as a frozen God of a cold gloom and as an effigy or a motionless sculpture of pain is associated with the abject phantoms in Hyperion’s mind. Evidently, for him, a dethroned god is a disfigured monstrosity, which is also to say that an emasculated god is a deformity in his eyes. Reminiscent of the “weeded rock” that Glaucus sits upon (with a cold “mat / Of weeds” beneath “his cold thin feet”), and of the “sucking pool” through which he is hurled (*Endymion* III. 193-5, III. 249), the lank-eared phantoms of the black-weeded pools evoke the swampy abject that threatens to suffocate Hyperion, who is haunted by the ghosts of nebulous indistinctness and obscurity, and that blurs the boundaries and shatters his eternal essence. Through Hyperion beset by these abject things, Keats gives “a profoundly original image of the paranoia of a dying breed, a dying class” (Coote 203).

Terrified of the abject phantoms, “the repulsive visions” (Baker 85) threatening to devastate his eternal being, Hyperion dreads being dispossessed of his remaining “lucent empire” even though it is:

Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.  
The blaze, the splendour and the symmetry  
I cannot see – but darkness, death and darkness.  
Even here, into my centre of repose,  
The shady visions come to domineer,  
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp. (*Hyperion* I. 239-45)

The god of the sun is here beset by darkness and death, “the equivalent of the abject” at the “level of downfall in subject and object” (Kristeva *Powers* 26). He fears the states of emptiness and evacuation which have befallen the Titans who are “absent from the signs which represent them” (Fermanis 88). His domain is no longer his haunt, but it is haunted by the ghosts of oblivion; for Hyperion, the abject is “a *land of oblivion* that is constantly remembered” (Kristeva *Powers* 8). Hyperion despises this land of oblivion, regarding it with “aversion, repugnance”, unlike Endymion who views it as “a magnetized pole of covetousness” once upon “blotted-out time” (Kristeva *Powers* 8). To be obliterated in an obscure, atemporal place, in a landscape marked by “its own lack of identifying temporal or spatial perspective” (Hamilton 43) is his biggest fear. This fear of oblivion shows that abjection is “a gravitational field that summons the subject from its proper place to a no-man’s land where the subject is not only ‘beside himself’ but also almost ceases to be” (Becker-Leckrone 33). The abject asserts a gravitational pull, a centre of gravity into which Hyperion strives not to fall; he tries to defy the glamorous siren call of the death-dealing gravitational pull.

For Hyperion there is symmetry between blaze and splendour, light and majesty, radiance and grandeur; however, this symmetry is broken by asymmetrical, monstrous forms that are fermented by the loss of his solid identity; not only symmetry but proportion itself is “distracted” by these immeasurable amorphous forms. The symmetry is further upset by “shady visions” which shatter a distinct sense of a solid being, a certain sense of an unwavering identity (*Hyperion* I. 244). He fears that his imperious self will dwindle into a misty vagueness, and is upset that his delineating overbearing self will be dominated by the monstrous shady visions. He fears that his majestic self will be stifled by the phantoms of the black-weeded pool.

The insubstantial spectres haunting Hyperion smother the god's words, similar to the heterogeneous flux in the maternal *chora* which represses the linguistic sign:

For as in theatres of crowded men  
Hubbub increases more they call out 'Hush!'  
So at Hyperion's words the phantoms pale  
Bestirred themselves, thrice horrible and cold;  
And from the mirrored level where he stood  
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh. (*Hyperion* I. 253-8)

The spectral hubbub suppresses Hyperion's words; the hubbub, the Keatsian pandemonium, is far from being shaped into signifying sounds and intelligible words. The horrible, pale phantoms horrify Hyperion because he is threatened with dissociation from the symbolic realm of distinct shapes and forms as the abject confronts him. De Almeida notes that the pale phantoms in the passage above are "the sights and sensations from his nightmare that blind Hyperion and deform his waking vision" and adds that Hyperion is "self-consumptive and able only to generate overwrought, sickly dreams born of his mind's despair" (*Romantic* 279). His sick dream points to his confrontation with the abject. The mirrored level where he stands represents the dissolution of boundaries between self and other while reflecting Hyperion back to himself; it is a misty, hazy place where Hyperion talks to pale phantoms - which are, perhaps, his inner demons, "a thought nebula, an amorphous imagination, a muddled representation" (Kristeva *Black* 73). It is a scummy marsh like the "scummy slime / From off a crystal pool" of the poetic romance (*Endymion* III. 330-1). The scummy, slimy marsh is a concrete manifestation of the abject.

The scummy marsh also represents a solipsistic Hyperion talking to the ghosts in his mind. The eerily spectral, boggy place, which resonates with "the sodden ground" upon which Saturn's "nerveless, listless, dead / Unscattered" old hand lies (*Hyperion* I. 17-8), indicates once more that Saturn is the abject for Hyperion, the abject which he fights against. Furthermore, suggestive of Saturn's introspective "realmless eyes" (*Hyperion* I. 18), which, uninhabited by a strong identity, do not reflect the external realms of his lost domain, but look inward, Hyperion sees the spectral demons of his inner mind. Beset by abjection, the subject becomes "weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within" (Kristeva *Powers* 5). The pale spectres he sees are the shadowy images that he sees, the apparitions that

appear in his mind's eye, considering the Latin etymology<sup>41</sup> of the word "spectre" refers to image, apparition (OED). The hubbub of the pale phantoms that disorients Hyperion is like the "noisy nothing" which in the earlier poem rings upon Endymion's ear and disturbs the eponymous hero of that romance (*Endymion* II. 321).

Struggling with the abject that pesters him, Hyperion refuses to be disrobed of his identity as the god of the sun and dons his fiery garb. He rises out of the darkness that blinds him and stifles up his pomp to command the dawn:

At this, through all his bulk an agony  
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,  
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular  
Making slow way, with head and neck convulsed  
From over-strained might. Released, he fled  
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours  
Before the dawn in season due should blush,  
He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy portals,  
Cleared them of heavy vapours, burst them wide  
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams. (*Hyperion* I. 259-68)

The bulky, mighty Hyperion manages to release himself from the devouring scummy marsh, from the sucking black-weeded pool through a serpentine transformation. The vast and muscular serpent stands for the tumescent, muscular masculinity of the vigorous Titan. The castrating loss of a distinct, strong identity is countered with the swollen virility of the titanic muscular serpent. Assuming the masculine prowess of a fierce sun god, Hyperion breathes fiercely against the sleepy portals and burst them wide, an act suggestive of thrusting and penetrative male sexuality. The orb of fire he rides on clears the sleepy portals of heavy vapours, thus fire purifies the scummy marsh, purges the slimy abject, and heat drains the boggy ground. Heavy vapours and shady visions are avoided as they make lines unclear and less distinct and are themselves neither solid nor liquid, neither obscure not clear. The monstrous spectres are not allowed to break the symmetry; the dawn is to blush in due season to maintain order. Hyperion detests the confusion of boundaries because the dissolving of the boundaries entails the collapse of the system that defines him as the god of the sun and

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<sup>41</sup> It helps one to take into consideration the etymology of words, when studying Keats, who, Stewart notes, "warms to Latinate etymologies", notwithstanding his "[r]egretting Latinate syntax" (137).

delineates his strong identity within the symbolic realm of the structures established, positions taken up and boundaries clearly demarcated.

The god of the sun fights against the abject condition through his power of light, yet he fails. The blazing Hyperion rises and rides on his orb of fire from the east to the west through the heavens; he repudiates the saturnine dormancy as he spins round “in sable curtaining of clouds”:

Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,  
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,  
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,  
Glowed through, and wrought upon the muffling dark  
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep  
Up to the zenith – (*Hyperion* I. 269-77)

Unlike the veiled Saturn, who is sunken “[d]eep in the shady sadness of a vale” (*Hyperion* I. 1-2), Hyperion rises unveiled. He refuses to be blinded by the darkness and, differing from the fallen Titans who are “self-hid, or prison-bound” (*Hyperion* I. 161), he does not keep out of sight. In fact, he detests being muffled by the dark. Despite his fierce defiance, Hyperion cannot command the dawn: “the operations of the dawn / Stayed in their birth” (*Hyperion* I. 294-5), and even though he is “a primeval God” (*Hyperion* I. 292), he is disgraced. The dark which stands for the nocturnal abject condition overwhelms him at this point.

Coelus, father of the Titans, looks down on Hyperion with pity and whispers in his ear (*Hyperion* I. 306-8):

O brightest of my children dear, earth-born  
And sky-engendered, son of mysteries  
All unrevealed even to the powers  
Which met at thy creating; at whose joys  
And palpitations sweet, and pleasure soft,  
I, Coelus, wonder how they came and whence;  
And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,  
Distinct, and visible – symbols divine,  
Manifestations of that beauteous life  
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space.  
Of these new-formed art thou, O brightest child!  
Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!  
There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion  
Of son against his sire. (*Hyperion* 309-22)

Coelus's words point to the difference between being distinct, visible, manifest divine symbols and forms, and the diffused beautiful life unseen throughout elemental space. Although the Titans are formed out of these mysteries and beautiful eternal life, they have lost their distinct identities and their abilities to rule the thunderbolt, to govern the seas or to command the dawn. This feud between the Titans and the Olympians will determine which race of gods will be the visible, distinct, manifest powers reigning over the universe. Furthermore, if Hyperion is dethroned like the disgraced Saturn, he will be diffused into the unseen beautiful life throughout eternal space, intermingled with the primordial universe. This means that in losing his power he is also losing his distinct identity, which is how he can be - indeed, will be - atomised into the primeval space like the disembodied Coelus of the generation preceding the Titans. Thus, it is that Coelus speaks to Hyperion in these terms:

This is the grief, O son,  
 Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!  
 Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,  
 As thou canst move about, an evident God,  
 And canst oppose to each malignant hour  
 Ethereal presence. I am but a voice;  
 My life is but the life of winds and tides,  
 No more than winds and tides can I avail.  
 But thou canst. Be thou therefore in the van  
 Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb  
 Before the tense string murmur. To the earth! (*Hyperion* I. 335-45)

Without a distinct, visible, imperious identity, the celestial Coelus, "like the winds and tides, is at the mercy of unalterable natural laws" (Allott 414); he is diffused into the voice of winds and tides, the heterogeneous flux; his face is "in vapours hid" (*Hyperion* I. 326) and he can but whisper from the sky (*Hyperion* I. 349). Coelus is disseminated into the elemental universe; he is almost unlocalizable in the diffused, unseen beautiful life of eternal space. That is to say, in the terms of this thesis' argument, that he is in an Endymionese and semiotic state where things are fused with other things. However, he tells the still unvanquished Hyperion to strive, to seize the arrow and to oppose the usurping Olympians. Hyperion, who "clings to some residual sense of 'strong identity' even in the face of catastrophe, mortality, vacuity, and negation" (Sandy "Tragic Realisation" 126), is encouraged to clear the sleepy portals of "heavy vapours" in which Coelus now hides his face. Unlike Coelus, Hyperion is still "in the

van of circumstance.” That is, he is in the forefront of the opposition against the intruding Olympians. This leading position defines him, separating him from the deposed and impotent Saturn. It is a driving force for Hyperion to maintain his distinct identity, for being in the vanguard of the attack can allow him to preserve his sovereignty, and spearheading an opposition may release him from the scummy marsh which confuses boundaries. Being in the van of circumstance thus concretises Hyperion as an epic hero in action; it materialises him by being a particularised form of power which refuses to be diffused into the elemental universe. This position of power singles Hyperion out as an individual divine being able to fight against the usurping Olympians. In the epic landscape, distinctions are not blurred but, on the contrary, they are rigidly maintained. Firm and unbending structures like this are kept in order and within such clear delineations differences between self and other are clearly defined. Without them, the world of the Titans is “unhinged” (*Hyperion* II. 147) and “the symmetry” is broken (*Hyperion* I. 241). Unlike Coelus, who has been intermingled with other substances as in a poetic romance, Hyperion, who is still in the van of circumstance, is localised and positioned by the epic action he attends to. With respect to the structuring and boundaries under discussion here, it should be noted that the Latin etymology of “circumstance” (OED) reminds us that he is encircled, or encompassed by an epic fight; his circumstances draw the boundaries that delineate his identity. An epic hero makes his characteristic and distinct place through his actions in circumstances that dis sever him from the diffused, unseen and prelapsarian beautiful life; that is, from the state of being intermingled with winds, tides, waves, lights and leaves as in the bucolic world of *Endymion*. This reading shows how and why Hyperion is crystallised as a muscular and vast epic hero fighting against shady visions, which are spectres threatening to dominate him.

The vast and muscular Hyperion struggles not to fall into the abysmal state of the fallen and dejected Titans, for the den of the “bruised Titans”, which is defined by Aske as “a graveyard of fragmentary monuments” (*Keats* 94), is choking like the scummy marsh that Hyperion fears (*Hyperion* I. 4-5). The “monstrous horns” which characterise their craggy “nest of woe” evoke the abject “monstrous forms” that haunt Hyperion (*Hyperion* I. 228).

The deposed Titans are repressed and smothered, and the fiery Hyperion who is characterised by breathing “fierce” (*Hyperion* I. 266) dreads being imprisoned in the regions where the groaning Titans are “pent in regions of laborious breath” (*Hyperion* II. 22). They are dungeoned in “opaque element” and keep

Their clenched teeth still clenched, and all their limbs  
Locked up like veins of metal, cramped and screwed;  
Without a motion, save of their big hearts  
Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed  
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse. (*Hyperion* II. 23-8)

Contained, contracted and compressed, they suffer from a pain that is very palpable. This passage collects “the accumulative force of a series of compressive verbs” (Bari 130). Hyperion fears that he too is to be buried in the “opaque element” (*Hyperion* II. 23), to be “engulfed in the vacuity of that which he feared most” (Sandy “Tragic Realisation” 127), a destination that would be especially horrifying for the blazing Hyperion who strives to maintain his distinct, visible, manifest identity to ward off the usurping Olympians. To be reduced to the shapeless chaos which stifles his “pomp” and grandeur is his greatest fear (*Hyperion* I. 245). In this horrid “depth” (*Hyperion* II. 85-6), where the Titans are smothered, “[n]o shape [is] distinguishable, more than when / Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds; / And many else whose names may not be told” (*Hyperion* 79-81); to be pent up in the thick darkness of the night is to be unnamed, to be unsignified, to be consigned to oblivion. Thus, we find that to be obscured and clouded from others’ sight is as terrifying for Hyperion as the threats posed by the spectres of the black-weeded pool which obscure his mind and cloud his inner sight.

The image of the confined Titans with all their limbs “locked up” evokes an unborn embryo in the Endymionese “old womb of night” (*Endymion* IV. 372). As shown and elaborated at some length above, to fall into the Endymionese maternal abyss, “the unsurmountable ascendancy of the stifling mother” (Kristeva *Tales* 77), where things and bodies are undifferentiated is sheer horror for Hyperion, who is haunted by the dissolution of boundaries: to be rendered limbless is to become a monstrous form which he loathes, especially a body without limbs, without limits, “body without end, without appendage” (Cixous “Medusa” 344), is a source of anxiety since it confounds

the boundaries that identify him and place him in his epic world and godly identity. The English word “limb” is derived from the Latin word “limbus”, meaning “border” (*OED*); thus, limbs define the boundary between the distinct, visible, divine symbols of the beautiful life diffused throughout the universe and the groaning, fearful Titans pent up in their lair. To be rendered limbless is to be stuck in a limbo, since the word “limbo” is also derived from the Latin word “limbus” (*OED*); Hyperion is left in a limbo between the image of a dethroned, disgraced, emasculated god befouled by “[a] disanointing poison” (*Hyperion* II. 98) and that of the vast, muscular, majestic serpent crowned, or between being a divine form, “an evident [clearly seen, obvious] God” (*Hyperion* I. 338) and a limbless deformity of obscurity.

This fundamental difference between having a distinct, distinguishable, visible, manifest divine form and a disfigured, monstrous, misshapen form also appears in the speech of Oceanus, who explains to the Titans why they should yield to the Olympian dynasty. Oceanus, whose speech depicts “a progressive view of mankind’s history” (Barnard *Keats* 58), tells the Titans that they “fall by course of Nature’s law” (*Hyperion* II. 181). He imparts the “eternal truth” that explains why the Titans fall and why they should give in to the Olympians (*Hyperion* II. 187):

And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,  
So art thou not the last; it cannot be.  
Thou art not the beginning nor the end.  
From chaos and parental darkness came  
Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,  
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends  
Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,  
And with it light, and light, engendering  
Upon its own producer, forthwith touched  
The whole enormous matter into life. (*Hyperion* II. 188-97)

Oceanus says that first there was an intestine broil, a “civil war” between chaos and light (Allott 427), and following the triumph of light, the heavens and the earth become “manifest.” They then engendered “the giant race” of the Titans (*Hyperion* II. 199-200). He adds that “heaven and earth are fairer” than “chaos and blank darkness” (*Hyperion* II. 206-7). Similarly, the Olympians have more “compact and beautiful” “form[s] and shapes”, and are “in will [and] action free” and more perfect than their progenitors (II. 207-18) - for Oceanus believes in “the law of progress” (Allott 426).

Thus, the “ferment” ripens into “purer” and wondrous ends through the Olympians, who are anointed with a “fresh perfection” (*Hyperion* II. 93-4, 211-2).

Following the speech of an enraged Enceladus, who rouses the Titans’ “spleens” with his words, and scorns “Oceanus’s lore” (*Hyperion* II. 320-1, II. 333), Hyperion, who “still is undisgraced” in the words of Enceladus (*Hyperion* II. 344), arrives at the haunt of the doleful Titans:

In pale and silver silence they remained,  
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,  
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,  
All the sad spaces of oblivion,  
And every gulf, and every chasm old,  
And every height, and every sullen depth,  
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams;  
And all the everlasting cataracts,  
And all the headlong torrents far and near,  
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,  
Now saw the light and made it terrible.  
It was Hyperion: (*Hyperion* II. 356-67)

Here Hyperion shines upon their “covert drear” (*Hyperion* II. 32), animating everything with life and brightening all the features earlier mantled in darkness. His splendour repudiates the shapeless chaos; permeating every chasm, every gulf and every depth, his light refuses to be consigned to oblivion. Thus not only is the haunt of the Titans no longer obscured once he shines upon it, but he still, visibly, maintains his distinct identity, his divine form, his regal, majestic shape (*Hyperion* II. 372). This brightness is nevertheless shaded because the mournful, “dejected King of Day” knows that he cannot command the dawn and bid the day begin (*Hyperion* II. 372-80).

To summarise the many reasons set out in this section, we may say that while a dethroned, disgraced Saturn represents the abject for Hyperion, the less pure, fouler Titans embody the abject for the fair Olympians, and that Hyperion’s individual yet connected fears that centre upon certain sights and settings, and on the fate of his predecessors are fears of the abject in its many manifestations. Despite and because of the resolution to compose an epic poem uncontaminated by the Endymionese, *Hyperion* remains an incomplete poem, and to that extent a failed attempt at an epic, “a monument unaccomplished and disfigured” (Aske *Keats* 85). Similarly, in Keats’

estimation *Endymion* was “a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished” (Steinhoff 58). *Hyperion*, however, turned out to be an unaccomplished attempt, though not feverish perhaps, and fails as an epic, *Endymion* is “the only poem of epic intent Keats managed to complete” (Steinhoff vii). Keats thought that the foundations of *Endymion* were “too sandy” (Keats *Preface* 505), suggesting that it may fail; nonetheless, *Hyperion* remains as only a fragment even though its foundations are claimed to be rocky like the “hard flint they [the Titans] sat upon,” . . . “rugged stone, and slaty ridge / Stubborn’d with iron” (*Hyperion* II. 15-7). Using his own terms, then, the sandy and semiotic romance succeeded where the iron epic failed. Tellingly, the Keatsian poetic voice quits the epic *Hyperion* right after the line in which the Bacchic Apollo shrieks, bringing the semiotic return through a Dionysian outburst and dissuading the poet from completing an attempt at a desemioticised epic. The frenetic excitement, the Dionysian frenzy which fills four thousand lines of verse in *Endymion* is almost chastened in *Hyperion*, causing the latter to remain incomplete. The Bacchic Apollo of *Hyperion*, in the words of Kristeva, relinquishes a static identity “in rhythm, dissolving the buffer of reality in a mobile discontinuity” (*Revolution* 104). This incomplete epic is a testament to the irrepressible assertion of human heterogeneity.

The process of composing *Hyperion* is thus seen as one of abjection, where *Hyperion* sees *Endymion* as the abject. The projected *Hyperion* is structured around the otherness of the abjected Endymionese. Yet the abject strikes (shrieks) as it returns; the jettisoned *Endymion* haunts *Hyperion* in the third book. *Endymion* opens up a space where the abject plays along, spends itself, or is sublimated, but *Hyperion* seeking to leave it outside the poem puts itself in harm’s way and is fatally damaged: it remains a fragment. As Apollo shrieks, *Hyperion* is invaginated. The epic ceases when the Bacchic Apollo shrieks; the Hyperionesque poet is fearful of the maternal body, represented as a crack or a vacancy as the Latin etymology of the verb “invaginate” suggests (OED); he is terrified by the maternal body that is viewed as “hollow and vaginated” (Kristeva *Revolution* 153). The epic poem is haunted by this vacuity since the abject points to “the unspoken of a stable speaking position, an abyss at the very borders of the subject’s identity, a hole into which the subject may fall” (Gross 87). The Hyperionesque poet of the epic fails to cherish the “vocalic” (shrieking) body and

render it as the source of poesy: “throat, voice, and breasts: music, rhythm, prosody” (Kristeva *Revolution* 153).

### **3.3 The Visage of the Mother “deathwards progressing to no death”: The Abject and Abjection in *The Fall of Hyperion***

This section concentrates on the abject and abjection in two aspects. First of all, the attempt to expel the Endymionese effect and the resolution to jettison and thus abject some parts of *Hyperion* is investigated. Secondly, Moneta is examined as an important character in the discussion of the abject and abjection in *The Fall of Hyperion*.

#### **3.3.1 Distinct Images on “a sombre loom”: The Expulsion of the Abject Images from the Poet-Narrator’s Allegorical Tapestry**

*The Fall of Hyperion* alters and jettisons some parts of *Hyperion* and the threatening Endymionese effect that is found to be repulsive in order to safeguard boundaries, the collapse of which leads to the abject. The apotheosis of Apollo from *Hyperion* is excised in *The Fall*, and the Apollo of *Hyperion* is replaced by the poet-narrator of *The Fall* who, attempting to be different from a self-indulged subliminal dreamer, asks ethical and philosophical questions about the art of poetry. The Apollo of *Hyperion* represents, for *The Fall*, the abject that is “the always improperly excluded other, that which is expelled in an attempt to maintain the sanctity and integrity of the subject”, of the poet-narrator in the recast *The Fall* (Chanter “Abject Objections” 158).

Differing from the beginning of *Hyperion* that introduces the fallen and melancholic Saturn whose image has “undefined contours” (Garrett 43), Keats’s dream-vision, the allegory that *The Fall* embodies, opens with the poet-narrator apparently struggling against the collapse of boundaries; the poet-narrator seeks to be the deviser of his own (symbolically demarcated) territory. *The Fall* does not begin with the despondent and frozen Saturn, for the poet avoids being immersed in the boundary-blurring, death-bearing melancholy of the speechless Saturn. Instead, the dream-vision opens with a poet-narrator who believes in the power of “the fine spell of words” to save human beings from “sable charm / And dumb enchantment” (*The Fall* I. 9-11), to let their tongues be “loos’d in poesy” (Keats “I stood tip-toe” 235). Poesy returns the poet

“from enraptured auditor to self-attuned expressive agent” (Stewart 143-4). The poet as the agent of language is severed from the luxuriant dreamer that represents the speechless savage intoxicated by the sheer materiality of language.

*The Fall*'s poet-narrator strives to avoid descending into the abyss of the speechless despondence; he endeavours to distance himself from the deathly stillness of Saturn, from a cadaver that falls beyond the borders of the symbolic (Kristeva *Powers* 3), a corpse that falls into the abyss of the sable charm, beyond the nameable or representable. In the allegorical quest that symbolises the development of a poet, the dreamer who drinks the potion starts up “as if with wings”, and later on in the poem attempts to “ascend / These steps”, to “mount up these immortal steps”, and to “usurp this height” (*The Fall* I. 58-9, I. 107-8, I. 117, I. 147). The threat of falling into the asymbolic abyss is counteracted by these references to rising and ascending. Therefore, the depressive beginning of *Hyperion*, which threatens to extinguish the poetic word by locking it up in dumb enchantment, is excluded in order to avoid a deathly confrontation with the stifling abject. As opposed to the beginning of *Hyperion* (marked by silence and immobility), the poet-persona is inserted into the beginning of *The Fall* in order to employ “the poet’s revivifying word” (Parker 112). He counters *Endymion*'s Glaucus’s “wither’d, sapless, feeble, cramp’d, and lame” limbs that were devitalised by the abject figure of Circe (*Endymion* III. 638), and stands against the laugh of the Medusa (represented by Circe in *Endymion*) that petrifies anyone who looks into her eyes. The figure of *The Fall*'s persona also opposes the lifeless, “nerveless, listless, dead” hands of *Hyperion*'s abject Saturn (*Hyperion* I. 18). Parker argues that the poet-persona’s quest is “to animate the stony forms” of *Hyperion* (115). Poetic utterance is employed against the exterminating sable charm and the potential loss of language; the poet-persona seeks to reject the dumb enchantment by means of deploying “the fine spell of words” (*The Fall* I. 9-11); poetic language refines dumb enchantment. Therefore, *The Fall* is characterised by this “dialectic of stone and voice”, which is a dialectic between petrification that exterminates speech, and poetic utterance that animates and gives voice to the petrified (Parker 114). *The Fall*'s poet-narrator thus attempts to abject the petrified figures of *Hyperion* that were stuck within the realm of the unsymbolisable and to glorify the human voice that expresses

melodious utterances. Through this abjection, he tries to secure his identity within the confines of the symbolic.

*The Fall* is marked by an emphasis on distinctions and boundaries which are to be maintained against the abject, which is itself identified with the threatening collapse of boundaries. Therefore, *The Fall*, which expresses fear of falling into “the hollow dark”, the swart abyss, of melancholy of the vanquished Titans (*The Fall* I. 455), begins with the discussion of the difference between fanatics and poets given above. As opposed to the Bacchic Apollo of *Hyperion*, who stands for the negatively capable poet that dissolves into multiple selves and has no identity, the poet-narrator of *The Fall* focuses on the distinctions between the savage who is engrossed by dumb amazement and the poet who commands the art of poetry. This resolution to draw a boundary between the savage fanatics who do not trace their dreams on wild leaves and thus not register their visions in the symbolic realm of the letters, and the poets who express their dream visions through “the fine spell of words” (*The Fall* I. 1-10) and seek to “act with that pleasant unison of sense / Which marries sweet sound with the grace of form” (*The Fall* I. 442-3) is an act of abjection. Hence, the poet-narrator’s emphasis on distinctions is suggestive of the ways in which “‘proper’ sociality and subjectivity are based on the expulsion or exclusion of the improper, the unclean, and the disorderly elements of its corporeal existence that must be separated from its ‘clean and proper’ self” (Gross 86). The savage corresponds to the abject that threatens to break down identity, order and stability; therefore, the poet-persona seeks to expel it. The savage fanatics are found to be improper and unclean, therefore revolting, since they blur the boundary between animality (dumb amazement) and symbolicity (spell of words).

*The Fall* focuses on differences, distinctions and borders in order to discourage the collapse of boundaries and the dissolution of identities. Unlike *Endymion* that tends to synthesise, *The Fall* analyses and categorises concrete particulars (Sheats “Stylistic” 236). The poetic voice focuses on distinct “imageries from a sombre loom” (*The Fall* I. 76-7); these distinct images should be considered in opposition to the confusing and boundary-blurring images of a storm, a quicksand and a whirlpool “emblem’d in the woof”, the symbols of the cloak of Glaucus captivated by Circe (*Endymion* III. 192-

217). The “sombre loom” of *The Fall* on which the poet-narrator weaves his narrative and produces distinct images is an indication of the abjection of the Endymionese tapestry associated with anaphoric images that unsettle the symmetrical lines of the woof and, by extension, of the narrative. The loom in *The Fall* represents poetry as an attempt to “sublimate the abject” (Gross 93). The Endymionese (romance) images of a quicksand and a whirlpool (that threaten to dissolve the symbolic) are sublimated into the distinct images of the allegorical tapestry of *The Fall*, a narrative of clear outlines woven on a loom used by a sombre and sober poet (as opposed to the intoxicated and ecstatic poet of the romance).

### **3.3.2 The Simultaneously Nourishing and Murderous Moneta: The Poet-Narrator Engulfed in his own Abject Swampy Mindscape**

In the following discussion of the abject and abjection, Moneta is the central character that *The Fall* is predicated upon, as Sperry indicates when he finds that “[m]uch of the problem revolves around the conception of Moneta” (*Keats* 326). The conception of Moneta in *The Fall* points to a dialectical oscillation between the impulse for undifferentiated heterogeneity (to semiotise the symbolic) and the desire to draw boundaries and to establish distinctions (to symbolise the semiotic). In other words, she represents “the symbolic breakdown” on the one hand and “an anchoring of the symbolic dimension” on the other hand (Kristeva *Black* 37). Keats’s allegorical poem is therefore defined as “actively and progressively dialectical” (Sperry *Keats* 326). Likewise, the conception of Moneta reflects the dialectical oscillation between “dissemination and reconstruction”, between “semiotic dissolution” and “thetic consolidation” (Minow-Pinkney 164). This oscillation testifies to the fragility of subjectivity: “Even at times of its strongest cohesion and integration, the subject teeters on the brink of this gaping abyss, which attracts (and also repulses it). This abyss is the locus of the subject’s generation and the place of its potential obliteration” (Gross 89). Generating and destroying at once, Moneta represents “the desirable and terrifying, nourishing and murderous, fascinating and abject inside of the maternal body” (Kristeva *Powers* 54).

The figure of Moneta and her “enigmatic nature” (Kucich “Keats’s Literary Tradition” 257) is seen in this study as having two aspects: she is represented as the poet-narrator’s mentor who helps him keep the abject at bay and as the incarnation of “the poet’s superego” that enables him to maintain the boundary between self and other (O’Neill “Romantic Period” 319), and she is also represented as the shadowy self of the solipsistic poet and the death-bearing maternal body which reminds one of the “looming” Kristevan maternal Thing that conflates the boundaries upon which the symbolic is built (Kristeva *Black* 15). The poet’s encounter with Moneta is therefore described as “the very mire in which the poem appears to flounder” (Thomas 30); the poet-dreamer gets mired in the swampy mindscape. In other words, she represents both the abject and that which expels the abject at once.

As “the narrator’s guide and mentor” (Barnard *Keats* 130), and “the dreamer’s guide, admonisher, and judge” (Sperry *Keats* 313), Moneta represents the symbolic authority that the poet-narrator of *The Fall* holds on to in order to be able to safeguard boundaries and thus save himself from the Endymionese realm where things perpetually merge with other things and distinctions are obliterated. The dreamer needs a mentor who will save him from falling into the realm of the speechless savage where distinctions between self and other are blurred. The poet-persona of *The Fall* needs a guide in order to be orientated towards the symbolic realm of distinctions and boundaries.

Moneta replaces the Milton of *Hyperion*. Milton, the paternal figure of *Hyperion*, has been expelled from *The Fall*. Keats’s dependence on Milton strikes him as “forced and artificial”; instead, Dante is embraced as his new master (Bennett 152; Sperry *Keats* 311-3; White 198; Gittings *The Living Year* 178); Kucich “Keats” 198). Both Milton and Dante are “primarily poets of clear boundaries and fixed places” (Parker 115). Keats the poet holds on to these paternal figures in order to distance himself from the maternal abyss that dismantles the boundaries of the self, from the abject that “respects no definite positions, or rules, boundaries, or socially imposed limits” (Gross 90). However, aside from the structural influence of Dante (the use of canto) and his use of allegory (which does not predominantly emerge since the incomplete poem ceases at line 529 of the second canto), Moneta, as an internal overarching character rather than an external paternal influence, presides over *The Fall* as the maternal authority. Within

the confines of this allegorical poem, Moneta resembles both the Virgil and the Beatrice of Dante's *Divine Comedy* (Sperry *Keats* 313; Barnard *Keats* 130; Gittings *The Living Year* 179; Thomas 37). That Moneta evokes both Dante's idealised paternal figure and his idealised female figure also resonates with the twofold nature of the figure of Moneta, "the grandly purgatorial form" (Bloom *A Map* 154), "a protean form" (Kucich "Keats's Literary Tradition" 257) in *The Fall*. In my reading of the poem, Moneta, with her "dual nature" (Vassallo 214), equally represents the Virgilian mentor that enables the poet to continue to compose poesy and the Circean abject that stifles poetic utterance.

Before starting the Kristevan discussion about Moneta, it is useful to introduce her character and her relationship with the poet-narrator. The poet-narrator's encounter with Moneta is of primary concern in the reconstruction of *Hyperion's* epic material. The poet drinks the potion in the arbour, falls sleep and awakens in a dream. Within his dream he sees "an old sanctuary" (*The Fall* I. 43-62). He goes into the temple, the "daunting edifice" that "dwarfs the poet" (Webb "Romantic Hellenism" 153), and approaches the altar where he sees Moneta for the first time:

Towards the altar sober paced I went,  
Repressing haste, as too unholy there;  
And, coming nearer, saw beside the shrine  
One minist'ring; and there rose a flame. (*The Fall* I. 93-6)

This poet's first sighting of Moneta shows her, through the simple word *ministering*, as a grave figure invested with propriety and sobriety that betokens the wisdom and respectability of a mentor. The poet is overcautious, fearing to overstep the mark in a holy place; he is "sober paced"<sup>42</sup>, repressing "haste", which adds to the awe-inspiring nature of this encounter with a figure who, in such a place, must surely be powerful. Moneta, as the guide who is to help the poet maintain his boundaries of the self, emerges (in this scene where she appears for the first time in the poem) as one who sets a boundary between holy and unholy, proper and improper, clean and unclean,

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<sup>42</sup> This "sober-paced" sobriety resonates with the sober poet's weaving his poetic tapestry on "a sombre loom".

pure and impure. These distinctions are vital since she functions as the power that enables the poet to keep the abject at bay.

Moneta's immediate association with a holy flame is important, and the significance of the flame itself is elaborated upon in the following lines:

When in mid-May the sickening East wind  
Shifts sudden to the south, the small warm rain  
Melts out the frozen incense from all flowers,  
And fills the air with so much pleasant health  
That even the dying man forgets his shroud;  
Even so that lofty sacrificial fire,  
Sending forth Maian incense, spread around  
Forgetfulness of everything but bliss,  
And clouded all the altar with soft smoke (*The Fall* I. 97-105)

As the poet's guide who helps to repress the abject, Moneta is associated with the cleansing power of the flame, the purifying power of the fire in these lines; the lofty sacrificial fire drives away the sense of filthiness and defilement related with the repulsive abject. The sickening East wind representing the revolting abject gives way to the refreshing and cleansing warm rain that revivifies the incense of the flowers and repels the abject; that which sickens turns to pleasant health, and death turns to life. The holy fire repels decomposition, and thus cultivates vitality and bliss. The old sanctuary, "that eternal domed monument" (*The Fall* I. 71), where the poet will see the fallen Saturn, is different from the abject places where Saturn and the vanquished Titans were seen in *Hyperion*. Moneta helps the poet to distance himself from the sickening, revolting situation in which the defeated Titans are locked up. Moneta functions as the mediator between the poet and the Titans, and through her, the poet is able to avoid being engulfed in their deathly melancholy. She thus enables him to express their plight by means of his words and to liberate himself from the death-bearing silence of the Titans which extinguishes poetic utterance.

Following this relatively soft image of Moneta, she next emerges as "an admonitory figure" (Barnard *Keats* 129), an admonishing and forbidding figure that represents the maternal authority; without being seen by him, she addresses the poet-narrator:

If thou canst not ascend,  
These steps, die on that marble where thou art.  
Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,

Will parch for lack of nutriment - thy bones  
Will wither in few years, and vanish so  
That not the quickest eye could find a grain  
Of what thou now art on that pavement cold.  
The sands of thy short life are spent this hour,  
And no hand in the universe can turn,  
Thy hourglass, if these gummed leaves be burnt  
Ere thou canst mount up these immortal steps. (*The Fall* I. 107-117)

Moneta emerges as an intimidating goddess, even a “sphinx-like figure” (Ryan 273)<sup>43</sup>. Marilyn Butler notes that she is “the most abrasive of Muses” (153). The “unexpected fury of Moneta’s violent condemnation” (Sperry *Keats* 328) is intended to groom the poet. Moneta evokes the sphinx that Kristeva foregrounds in her revisiting of the myth of Oedipus: a “hybrid” monster of “the borders and the crossroads” (Kristeva *the European Subject* 167-8). She represents a place of meeting and splitting at once, as borders and crossroads suggest. The figure of the sphinx is a “hybrid guardian of the threshold whose name in Greek [...] can be interpreted as meaning both ‘to throttle’ (i.e. to choke or strangle but also to prevent any kind of utterance) and ‘to bind’ (i.e. to impose an obligation or a duty on, to ratify a contract or agreement, to cohere)” (Margaroni “The Trial of the Third” 52). This is pertinent to Moneta’s multivalent nature. Accordingly, Moneta simultaneously embodies the abject that chokes the poet and the symbolic contract/obligation/law that expels the abject.

Menaced by Moneta, the poet-narrator feels “the tyranny / Of that fierce threat, and the hard task proposed” (*The Fall* I. 119-120). The hard task of ascending the immortal steps requires the poet-persona to abandon the Endymionese luxurious arbour characterised by the profusion of sensual delight where “appetite / More yearning than on earth I [the poet-narrator] ever felt / Growing within, I [he] ate deliciously” and drinks from “a cool vessel of transparent juice” (*The Fall* I. 19-46), and to rise up the ladder of the poetical development, to go beyond “the pleasure principle” (Garrett 42), to “feel the giant agony of the world; / And more, like slaves to poor humanity, / Labour for mortal good” (*The Fall* I. 157-9). Therefore, *The Fall* is marked by “its

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<sup>43</sup> This critic’s reference to the figure of the Sphinx in the myth of Oedipus may remind us of such elements that resonate with the poet’s encounter with Moneta as the powerful female creature (Moneta) and the male hero who solves her riddle (the poet who penetrates into the brain of the muse), the plague that pesters the city as a concrete manifestation of the abject as an infectious disease. This may be discussed in relation to the Kristevan poet’s rendering in poetry of the infant’s primary fusion with the maternal body as “the Oedipus complex of a far-off incest” (Kristeva *Revolution* 153).

searching debate over the ability of poetry to alleviate human suffering” (Lau *Romantic Poets* 28). This “prodigious” task (*The Fall* I. 121) forces the poet-narrator to discriminate between the fanatic/savage who luxuriates in “that state of indolence where impressions are received and associations made”, and the state of the creative poet who actively shapes his impressions and gives to them “a form which is apprehensible to others, rescuing them from oblivion” (Garrett 41). The poet-narrator begs this “High Prophetess” to “purge off” his “mind’s film” (*The Fall* I. 145-6), to free him from the Endymionese “thick films and shadows” that had floated before Endymion’s eyes (*Endymion* II. 323). Moneta is now seen as a powerful figure who is able to purify the poet (from the abject) and free him from what we may associate with the confusing state of his mind, and with the abject collapse of boundaries. The goddess warns the poet-narrator who aspires to mount up the immortal steps of the temple that:

“None can usurp this height,” [...]
 “But those to whom the miseries of the world  
 Are misery, and will not let them rest.  
 All else who find a haven in the world,  
 Where they may thoughtless sleep away their days,  
 If by a chance into this fane they come,  
 Rot on the pavement where thou rotted’st half” (*The Fall* I. 147-53)

The now-menacing goddess tells the aspiring poet to open himself up to the miseries of the world and to gain insight into the tragic nature of human existence. Moneta urges him to leave behind the garden of earthly delights. As his mentor who is helping him to purify his mind, Moneta warns him against the abject condition of rotting into which he will fall if he fails to discriminate between the savage dreamer enchained in dumb amazement in the asymbolic realm of undifferentiated heterogeneity and the poet who feels the agony of the world and expresses it in a symbolic form intelligible in the world of the linguistic sign. On the one hand, she may seem to be a benign guide who tells him what it takes to be a mature poet; on the other, she reprimands him for his rotting “half”. She castigates him for being a weak dreamer seeking wonders:

Thou art a dreaming thing,  
 A fever of thyself. Think of the Earth;  
 What bliss even in hope is there for thee?  
 What haven? Every creature hath its home;  
 Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,



Like the poet-narrator who distinguishes between fanatics and poets in the beginning of *The Fall*, and between eagles and vultures in the exchange above, Moneta, in response to his question, vigorously discriminates between poets and dreamers:

Art thou not of the dreamer tribe?  
The poet and the dreamer are distinct,  
Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.  
The one pours out a balm upon the world,  
The other vexes it. (*The Fall* I. 198-202)

Moneta represents the symbolic realm which maintains distinctions, positions and thus sets up structures. She warns the poet-narrator against the dreamer who is self-indulged and immersed in utter abundance of sensuous intensity, against the influx of too much affect which causes linguistic signifiers to remain as impulsive sounds not shaped into intelligible utterances. The semiotic influx of drives vexes the symbolically constructed world. The poet heals and soothes the muddled dreamer engulfed by “vexing conceptions” which “sameness breeds” (*Endymion* II. 235-6), overwhelmed by “[a] fever of thyself” (*The Fall* I. 169). The poet is urged to embalm the abject corpse whereas the dreamer is imagined as gnawing away at it.

The poet-persona clings to the majestic Moneta as holder of authority in order to avoid relapsing into the chasm of the abject, the Circean abyss of “the sable charm / And dumb enchantment” (*The Fall* I. 10-11). As the mother of the muses who inspire poets, Moneta stands for “the fine spell of words” (*The Fall* I. 9) which saves the poet from the realm of the unsignifiable. Moneta, however, also represents the abject, the suffocating abject maternal body. When she intimidates the poet-persona, his experience is described in terms which are suggestive of Glaucus’s plight when he confronted the abject Circe in *Endymion*. Moneta tells him that his flesh will “parch for lack of nutriment” and his bones will “wither in few years” (*The Fall* I. 109-11); it seems that the poet-persona will suffer like Glaucus did, tortured by his “fever’d parching up” and “wither’d” limbs (*Endymion* III. 636-8). Moneta’s threat tyrannises the poet-persona as her intimidating presence recalls death. The death-dealing abject looms over the aspiring poet, hovering on the periphery of his words:

So fine, so subtle, felt the tyranny  
Of that fierce threat and the hard task proposed.  
Prodigious seem’d the toil, the leaves were yet

Burning when suddenly a palsied chill  
 Struck from the paved level up my limbs,  
 And was ascending quick to put a cold grasp  
 Upon those streams that pulse beside the throat:  
 I shriek'd; and the sharp anguish of my shriek  
 Stung my own ears I strove hard to escape  
 The numbness; strove to gain the lowest step.  
 Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace: the cold  
 Grew stifling, suffocating, at the heart;  
 And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not.  
 One minute before death, my iced foot touch'd  
 The lowest stair; and as it touch'd, life seem'd  
 To pour in at the toes: I mounted up,  
 As once fair angels on a ladder flew  
 From the green turf to Heaven. (*The Fall* I. 119-36)

Death reaches out to claim the aspiring poet through his immobility. Moneta who intimidates the poet with “the tyranny / Of that fierce threat” (*The Fall* I. 119-20) is suggestive of the earlier image of Circe as the “tyrannizing” of queen in *Endymion* (III. 507). The menacing goddess of memory has a Circean effect upon the poet, for the “petrific chill” that strikes his limbs (Thomas 31) is very like the “palsy” that made Glaucus’s limbs “sapless, feeble, cramp’d, and lame” in the earlier poem (*Endymion* III. 637-8). The “cold grasp” and the “numbness” in the poet’s description in *The Fall* are reminiscent of the “icy numb” that fell on Glaucus in his encounter with death-bearing Circe (*Endymion* III. 55-6). The abject stifles and suffocates this aspiring poet, which recalls the “stifled throat” of the deformed captives of Circe (*Endymion* III. 526). Keats’s representation of abjection lies close to Kristeva’s “violent, clumsy breaking away” from the maternal body, “with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as secure as it is stifling” (*Powers* 13). Moneta’s “Holy Power” (*The Fall* I. 136), then, is not only that of providing security as a mentor and a guide to the poet, but it is also stifling as that of an overbearing admonisher. The abject that appears through one facet of Moneta points to “the revulsion and horror of the pre-oedipal attempt to separate from the mother, that is, the attempt to separate from the mother prior to the autonomy of language” (O’Connor 46).

In this Kristevan interpretation we see the aspiring poet shrieking as he fights against the abject which engulfs him. He shrieks because the abject “beseeches a discharge, a convulsion, a crying out” (Kristeva *Powers* 2). Similarly, as the camelion poet who oscillates between life and death, challenging the tenuous borders of the self, Apollo

shrieked at the end of *Hyperion* (III. 135) where his poetic utterance is exterminated and the epic ceases. The poet-persona of *The Fall* strives hard to escape the feeling of numbness; he shrieks and is revived; “one minute before death”, life seems to “pour in at the toes” (*The Fall* I. 132-4). Revitalised, the aspiring poet mounts up the steps (*The Fall* I. 134) while in *Hyperion* the Bacchic Apollo, the violator of the boundaries, fell into the abyss where poetic utterance is terminated.

The difference between the poet of *The Fall* and the Apollo of *Hyperion* runs parallel to the difference between their muses, between Moneta of *The Fall* and Mnemosyne of *Hyperion*. Both Moneta and Mnemosyne refer to the same figure, the mother of the muses; these two names are used interchangeably in *The Fall*, although Moneta is used predominantly. Moneta differs from the Mnemosyne of *Hyperion* in that the former is an admonishing, intimidating, judging goddess while the latter is a comforting, nourishing maternal figure; she does not frighten Apollo. Even the sound of their names hint at the difference; the sound-heavy luxuriance of Mnemosyne with all its continuant sounds seems to be softer, more fluid, free-flowing and meandering than that of Moneta, with its three short syllables and the plosive *t*, which make it seem more consonantal, more concentrated, solid, stable and fixed. The disparity between the two figures of Mnemosyne and Moneta resonates with the distinction between poesy and poetry, which is explored through *Endymion*, *Hyperion* and *The Fall*. *Endymion* was marked by the desire to compose poesy, “[t]he passion poesy”, “[s]weet poesy by moonlight” (I. 29, I. 369), the urge to tread the “path of love and poesy” and “the sun of poesy” (II. 38, II. 729). *Hyperion*, though, was not characterised by poesy, although its muse, Mnemosyne, sounds more like poesy than poetry, for poesy is contained in the crevasse of Mnemosyne. Poesy returns in *The Fall* where, as we have seen, we are told that poesy “alone can tell her dreams, / With the fine spell of words” (*The Fall* I. 8-9). Nevertheless, the muse of *The Fall*, Moneta sounds more like poetry than poesy. Poesy is Endymionese while poetry is Hyperionesque. The difference between the Endymionese poesy and the Hyperionesque poetry is similar to the distinction between the poetic diction of the romance and the poetic language of the epic: the diction of *Endymion* is “relatively polysyllabic, less consonantal, and softer in phonetic character” whereas the diction of *Hyperion* is “short, frequently monosyllabic [...] stronger in phonetic and consonantal body” (Bate *Stylistic* 67). In

order to compose poesy without being utterly immersed in the asymbolic realm of sensuous indistinct profusion, the poet needs a controlling agency, a “forbidding and imperious” Moneta (Vassallo 214) who makes distinctions and who helps the poet to be embedded in the realm of the symbolic structures. There is a tiny Endymionese opening (to poesy) in *The Fall*, but this appears only in the few lines found before the poet-narrator falls under the sway of the monitoring goddess who will “choke [his] utterance sacrilegious” (*The Fall* I. 140).

Under the eyes of his mentor, the poet-persona shrieks, feels the sensation of dying and coming back to life. Moneta assures him that the strength that took him up the first step of the temple to save himself was his own, and remains his saving ability: “Thou has felt / What ’tis to die and live again before / Thy fated hour. That thou hadst power to do so / Is thy own safety” (*The Fall* I. 141-4). In contrast to this reassurance, she reminds him that his other half had “rottedst” before he mounted the immortal steps of the temple (*The Fall* I. 153). When Moneta goes on to admonish him for being a weak dreamer who still rots in the Endymionese arbour of indistinct profusion (although he has mounted the first step of the temple), the poet-persona castigates himself and attempts to sever himself from all rotting dreamers:

Then shouted I  
Spite of myself, and with a Pythia’s spleen,  
Apollo! faded! O far flown Apollo!  
Where is thy misty pestilence to creep  
Into the dwellings, through the door crannies  
Of all mock lyrists, large self worshippers,  
And careless Hectorers in proud bad verse.  
Though I breathe death with them it will be life  
To see them sprawl before me into graves. (*The Fall* I. 202-10)

He represents them as worshipping themselves and breathing death as they lie buried in their solipsistic worlds and wants them to be killed by a misty pestilence. Thus, these dreamers are associated with the death-bearing abject, the sickening and death-infecting disease. The aspiring poet strives to dissociate himself from these rotting dreamers.

Moneta now begins to recount to him the tragedy of the Titans and the dethronement of Saturn. As she starts, she changes into a desperately mourning figure: “by her voice

I [the poet] knew she shed / Long treasured tears” in the “temple, sad and lone” (*The Fall* I. 220-21); she describes herself as the “[s]ole priestess of this desolation” (*The Fall* I. 227); “sad Moneta” cries and says to the poet that her power of memory is a curse to her (*The Fall* I. 240-44). The goddess who has been so far called “Holy Power” (*The Fall* I. 136), “High Prophetess” (*The Fall* I. 145) and “Majestic” (*The Fall* I. 187, I. 211) turns into a desolate, grieving figure. Up to this point in the poem, she has been marked by shadows; when she is first introduced, she is hidden by “soft smoke” and the poet only hears her voice (*The Fall* I. 105-6); she is called “the veiled shadow” and “that shade” when she speaks for the second time (*The Fall* I. 141, I. 147). Similarly, the poet listens to “the sooth voice of the shade” (*The Fall* I. 155). She is also named “Majestic shadow” (*The Fall* I. 187, I.22) and called a “tall shade” veiled in “drooping linens” (*The Fall* I. 194, I. 216); she is rendered as “that voice” (*The Fall* I. 162) and an “accent feminine” (*The Fall* I. 215). That Moneta is heard but not seen clearly and that she is surrounded by shadows contributes to her image as an admonishing, forbidding goddess, makes her more majestic and awe-inspiring, and makes her loftiness more impressive by rendering it inaccessible and tantalisingly ambiguous; her symbolic authority is enhanced by her being unreachable. However, as she begins recounting the sorrowful tale of the fallen Titans, this harsh image is mitigated, making her appear less severe; as the poet listens to the mournful account of the miserable Moneta, he thinks her voice sounds like a maternal figure: “As near as an immortal’s sphered words / Could to a mother’s soften, were these last” (*The Fall* I. 249-50). Mellor points out that the poet-dreamer “approaches the goddess as a child does its mother, reaching only up to her ‘broad marble knees’ (I. 214)”; Mellor regards the poet-dreamer’s relationship with Moneta as “that of goddess-mother-muse to human-son-poet” (“Complexities of Gender” 227). Moneta here changes to a maternal figure from an admonishing goddess, which once again evinces her enigmatic character.

Moneta is associated with a mother’s soft words, but only temporarily; she is different from the maternal figures of *Endymion* and *Hyperion*. She is a forbidding goddess who frightens the poet-persona of *The Fall*. In addition, he likens her “sphered words” to those of a mother while her robes which invest her with symbolic authority still intimidate the poet:

As near as an immortal sphered words  
Could to a mother's soften, were these last:  
But yet I had a terror of her robes,  
And chiefly of the veils, that from her brow  
Hung pale, and curtained her in mysteries  
That made my heart too small to hold its blood. (*The Fall* I. 249-54)

As we have seen, Moneta is recurrently emphatically presented as veiled in one or another way in the poet's descriptions. For instance, she is shown as a "tall shade veiled in drooping white" whose speech and breath moved "the thin linen folds that drooping hung / About a golden censer from the hand / Pendant" (*The Fall* I. 194, 196-98). The poet repeats almost word-for-word the same description of Moneta within the space of eighteen lines. This repetition of Moneta's description is striking, especially when one thinks that the Keatsian poetic voice is resolved to discipline his style. The shadow that has an "accent feminine so courteous" (*The Fall* I. 215) is different from the image of Moneta as an admonishing mentor and judge. This enigmatic figure shrouded in mystery is suggestive of the hazy image of the mother seen from the infant's fledgling point of view, of the nebulous pre-image (a pre-Oedipal image that is not distinct yet) of the maternal body felt very faintly by the infant. The tall shade veiled in drooping linens, her voice, her breath stirring the linen folds, and the censer pending from her hand evoke not only the perspective of the child who looks upward towards the mother (vertically) but also the intimacy between the mother and the infant (horizontally). It is not clearly indicated in these lines what the comparative phrase "much more earnest" refers to, but one may suggest that this image of Moneta as maternal voice and breath is much more earnest, sincere and intense than Moneta as an admonitory figure.

These two representations of Moneta as an intimidating goddess and a hazy maternal body are followed by a death-bearing image of Moneta when she:

... with sacred hand  
Parted the veils. Then saw I a wan face,  
Not pined by human sorrows, but bright-blanced  
By an immortal sickness which kills not;  
It works a constant change, which happy death  
Can put no end to; deathwards progressing  
To no death was that visage; it had passed  
The lily and the snow; and beyond these  
I must not think now, though I saw that face – (*The Fall* I. 255-63)

The abject emerges through Moneta's face which is "drained of blood as if in death" (Roe *Culture of Dissent* 192). The sickness that does not kill points to the abject condition of living in death; death infects life; the boundary between death and life is blurred. Hence, the distinction that an admonishing Moneta makes between pain and joy, life and death is obliterated. The poet says to himself that he must not think now because Moneta's bright-blanchéd face progressing "deathwards" to "no death" is beyond the thinkable, beyond the communicable: this visage is the unrepresentable, the unsignifiable real. With the veils parted and thus the thetic derailed and the bar between the signifier and the signified cancelled, the poet-persona gestates towards a primary fusion with the maternal body, and this union with the mother leads to "a living death" (Kristeva *Black* 4), a union that is characterised as an immortal sickness that does not kill. Death (as the death of the symbolic subject of the linguistic sign) is the most important marker of the dissolution of the symbolic contract. In Kristevan terms, the poet-persona is journeying back into the unnameable realm of the maternal body, which is "a trespass on ancestral space" (Parker 116), for there he trespasses on the realm of the forefathers by moving into the land of the primordial mother, transgressing into the pre-linguistic realm where there is no gap between the maternal body and the infant. In the poem, the union with the mother is shown to be both delightful because comforting, and threatening because smothering:

But for the eyes I should have fled away.  
 They held me back, with a benignant light  
 Soft mitigated by divinest lids  
 Half closed, and visionless entire they seem'd  
 Of all external things; they saw me not,  
 But in blank splendour, beam'd like the mild moon,  
 Who comforts those she sees not, who knows not,  
 What eyes are upward cast. (*The Fall* I. 264-71)

The eyes of the mother are captivating; the poet who would otherwise have escaped from this figure does not present her unseeing eyes as despairing and terrifying as the "realmless eyes" of *Hyperion's* Saturn, who was engulfed in the abject (*Hyperion* I. 19). In contrast to this earlier figure, a benignant light shines from Moneta's blankly splendid eyes, made beautiful also by their superb lids, which mitigate the otherwise overpowering intensity of the kind 'beams' of her look, and renders their splendour comforting rather than terrifying. The face of a Circean death-bearing mother is

conflated with the benign effluence of kindness, a supernatural effluence of kindness resembling in some way Keats' earlier-described beam of the mild moon -- the "loveliest", "gentle", "lovely" moon of *Endymion* (I. 592, III. 110, III. 169). This twofold nature of Moneta points to "the threshold state of *The Fall*" (Parker 116); its liminal, threshold state dovetails with what Kristeva called "the threshold of language" (*Revolution* 45), for as we have seen, *The Fall* presents itself as existing in a limbo between the poesy of true poetic utterance (I. 9) and the potential termination of poetic utterance by dreamers and fanatics, who are dangerous, lesser users of words (I. 10-11).

Simultaneously fearing and cherishing the death-bearing mother, the poet-persona transgresses into the realm of the unnameable through delving into Moneta's mind:

As I had found  
 A grain of gold upon a mountain 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 ach'd to see what things the hollow brain  
 Behind enwomb'd: what high tragedy  
 In the dark secret chambers of her skull  
 Was acting, that could give so dread a stress  
 To her cold lips, and fill with such a light  
 Her planetary eyes, and touch her voice  
 With such a sorrow 'Shade of Memory!'  
 Cried I, with act adorant at her feet,  
 'By all the gloom hung round thy fallen house,  
 'By this last temple, by the golden age,  
 'By great Apollo, thy dear Foster Child,  
 'And by thyself, forlorn divinity,  
 'The pale Omega of a withered race,  
 'Let me behold, according as thou saidst,  
 'What in thy brain so ferments to and fro!' (*The Fall* I. 271-90)

In order to see "the scenes / Still swooning vivid through my [Moneta's] globed brain" (*The Fall* I. 244-5), the poet-persona plunges into it to see things there. Like an explorer yearning to set off into the unknown, like Cortez in Keats's sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer", who surveys the limitless expanse of the newly-discovered Pacific Ocean and longs to explore "its widenesses!" (309), "strange and marvellous new worlds" (Roe "Introduction" 13), the poet-dreamer thus ventures into "obscure regions at the limits of identity" (Kristeva *Powers* 180), (the dark secret

chambers of Moneta's skull) in order to be able to recount the tragedy of the vanquished Titans. The poet-persona "turns towards the void" (Moneta's "hollow brain") and embarks "on a lone night-journey without landmarks" (Garrett 43). Through the medium of Moneta, the poet journeys into "the hollow dark" (*The Fall* I. 455), which is the void that defies representation, and the abyss that resists signification. He is in fact embarking on a nocturnal journey into what Keats earlier called "the old womb of night" (*Endymion* IV. 372) through Moneta's brain where the unnameable is "enwombed"; this nocturnal realm is where "the outline of the signified thing vanishes and where only the imponderable affect is carried out" (Kristeva *Powers* 10). He stretches his mind to its limit "at the cable's length" and thus journeys into this trans-linguistic realm without landmarks, without linguistic signifiers, without anchoring points, without "the gentle anchor pull" in whose strength one "gladdens" (Keats "Lines Written in the Highlands" 39-41). This is terrifying for a poet who dreads being stifled, suffocated and choked (*The Fall* I. 130, I. 140). The verb "enwomb" renders Moneta's brain as a "maternal vessel" and it highlights "an adhesive maternal wrapping" (Kristeva *Tales* 38, 34-5). The "strained transitive verb 'enwomb' may call up the more familiar 'entomb' as a lexical shadow" (Stewart 147); in the Keatsian echo chamber, the former evokes its ghostly shadow; this lexical association<sup>44</sup> suggests that being engrossed in Moneta's brain is like being buried in a grave. In the realm of this uterine night, "consciousness has not assumed its rights and transformed into signifiers those fluid demarcations of yet unstable territories where an 'I' that is taking shape is ceaselessly straying" (Kristeva *Powers* 11).

This journey into the night is marked by pain and fear; he wishes to look into Moneta's brain, aches to see what things are stored in her brain, with a desire so intense that he terms it avarice, and his eyes are strained. Meanwhile, Moneta's deathly face with its benign gaze is further complicated by the fact that her thoughts are sad (the tragedy of the Titans) and produce a dreadful "stress" on Moneta's cold lips. All the same, the poet-persona, twinging with his need to enter her mind, aspires to conquer this night of melancholy as if he were an avaricious prospector expecting to find "sullen entrails

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<sup>44</sup> This association is also made in the soundscape of *Endymion* where "wombs" rhyme with "tombs" (I. 785-6).

rich with ore” there (*The Fall* I. 271-4). This tendency to envision himself as the fearless conqueror may be related with his anxiety about being submerged in the “globed” mind of the primordial mother and hence his attempt to inflate his (masculine) ego and empower himself.

Moneta is also “the mirage of the primal Thing” (Kristeva *Black* 41)<sup>45</sup>. This voyage into the nocturnal realm of the mother evokes Nerval’s metaphor of the black sun: “an insistence without presence, a light without representation: the [maternal] Thing is an imagined sun, bright and black at the same time” (Kristeva *Black* 13). The description of the melancholic odyssey into the globed brain of Moneta is characterised by a conglomeration of both light and darkness. We have been told, for instance, that the poet-persona strains his eyes -- perhaps “at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness” (Keats *Letters* 271), and Moneta’s death-bearing visage has been contrasted with her eyes’ “benignant light” (*The Fall* I. 260-70), which resonate with the maternal Thing as an imagined sun, both black and bright at once. Her “visionless” eyes that beam “like the mild moon” in “blank splendour” are suggestive of a light without representation (*The Fall* I. 267-9). The poet-persona’s journey into the sable womb of the night, “the dark secret chambers of her skull” and into the “Shade of Memory” is marked by Moneta’s “planetary eyes” filled with light (*The Fall* I. 278-82). His union with the mother is both enlightening and smothering; the abject is “edged with the sublime” (Kristeva *Powers* 11).

The smothering mother could be discussed in relation to the Kristevan focus on matricide. Kristeva argues that killing the suffocating, death-bearing mother is a necessity, “the first step on the way to becoming autonomous” (*Black* 27). She adds that matricide is “our vital necessity, the sine-qua-non condition of our individuation” (*Black* 27-8). The matricidal drive seems to be hindered in the case of the poet-dreamer of *The Fall* who is captivated by the Muse that stands for the archaic Maternal Thing. Moneta as a death-dealing image suggests that “the maternal object” has been

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<sup>45</sup> At this point in this section, the analyses about the poet’s relationship with Moneta benefit from Kristeva’s understanding of melancholy. Therefore, there will be no sub-section in the following chapter with regards to melancholy and *The Fall of Hyperion* since the poet’s encounter with Moneta is a complex, enigmatic one that is simultaneously inclusive of both abjection and melancholy due to the twofold nature of their relationship. Hence, the possible references to Kristeva’s account of melancholy are briefly given here in order to avoid repetition.

“introjected” and the melancholic self is put to death; this is what follows, Kristeva asserts, instead of matricide when the drive to kill the mother is inhibited (*Black* 28). The poet-dreamer makes “of Her an image of Death” when he identifies with Her (*Black* 28). Making the archaic mother into an image of death is to give her a representation; thus, “the feminine as image of death” is, Kristeva maintains, “a screen for my fear of castration” (*Black* 28). Being immersed in the archaic Thing is, therefore, an “oceanic death and “a lethal flood” (Kristeva *Black* 73).

Embracing the maternal is oceanic as well as deathly. Moneta’s “cold lips” are revitalised by the poet’s “devout lips” (*The Fall* I. 280, I. 292). The aspiring poet and Moneta stand side by side “like a child by its mother” (Williams 115), like “a stunt bramble and a solemn pine” (*The Fall* I. 292-3), an image reminiscent of the (de)penda(e)nt infant looking up to the majestic shadow and the maternal body as the tall, overpowering shade. By means of this union with the mother of the muses, the poet journeys into the dark valley, the realm of the barely representable, the rapacious depth that threatens to dissolve the linguistic sign, and the land where the Titans suffer (and where *Hyperion* begins to take over again, at line 294, with slight differences and alterations):

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.  
Onward I look’d beneath the gloomy boughs,  
And saw, what first I thought an image huge,  
Like to the image pedestal’d so high  
In Saturn’s temple. Then Moneta’s voice  
Came brief upon mine ear ‘So Saturn sat  
When he had lost his realms’ whereon there grew  
A power within me of enormous ken  
To see as a god sees, and take the depth  
Of things as nimbly as the outward eye  
Can size and shape pervade. The lofty theme  
At those few words hung vast before my mind,  
With half unravel’d web. I set myself  
Upon an eagle’s watch, that I might see,  
And seeing ne’er forget. (*The Fall* I. 294-310)

By means of delving into Moneta’s globed brain that enwombs the tragedy of the Titans, the poet manages to recount the story of the fallen Titans stuck in the vale; the poet journeys through the veiled Moneta curtained in mysteries into the land of the

vanquished Saturn veiled in the dark, gloomy, “shrouded” vale (*The Fall* I. 311). On the one hand, the poet mourns for “the archaic Thing” through Moneta; on the other hand, telling the tragedy of the deposed Titans, he accepts “a set of signs” which signify precisely because of the loss of the primordial Thing (Kristeva *Black* 41). The poet-narrator is, in one aspect, similar to the infant who learns language “when that intrepid wanderer leaves the crib to meet the mother in the realm of representations” (Kristeva *Black* 41). In another aspect, differing from (also, similar to) the (seemingly) intrepid wanderer, the poet-narrator is fearful lest he could submerge in the archaic Thing. The fear of being incorporated by the archaic Thing is accompanied by the poet-dreamer incorporating her speech, that is the tale of the deposed Titans recounted by Moneta. Their encounter is marked by loss of identity and the forging of identity through language at once: “When the object that I incorporate is the speech of the other – precisely a nonobject, a pattern, a model - I bind myself to him in a primary fusion, communion, unification. An identification” (Kristeva *Tales* 26). Kristeva’s account of orality, introjection and language also sheds light on the poet-dreamer’s relationship with Moneta. The poet-narrator incorporates Moneta’s speech, introjects her language in order to recount the tragedy of the Titans like an infant incorporating the speech of the other, that is the (phallic) mother. He nourishes himself “with words”; thus, he becomes what he incorporates; he becomes his muse (Kristeva *Tales* 25-6). In one aspect, he leaves the crib to meet the mother represented in the domain of signs; in another aspect, he is fused with the archaic mother and becomes the mother, the muse of his own self.

The Keatsian poetic voice resumes the narrative of (the original) *Hyperion* at line 294 following this journey. The poet’s imagination is housed in Moneta’s globed brain. With the poet passing through Moneta, she becomes the medium (Parker 117). The poet goes into the old womb of night (in the dark valley of the abject Titans dethroned and thrown into oblivion) through Moneta’s globed brain that enwombs the night. The infantile stunt bramble identifies with the solemn maternal pine in order to continue his odyssey, and we may say that he has to that extent merged with his mentor. Through the protective medium of Moneta, the poet is able to enter the realm of the bankrupt symbolic father without being engrossed by the death-dealing despondence of the overthrown Titans. Moneta guides him, he hears her voice “upon mine ear”, and

she shows him a dethroned Saturn who has lost his realms. He realises that “what first I [he] thought an image huge” is an “[u]nsceptred” Saturn with “his realmless eyes” (*The Fall* I. 324), for Saturn is no longer “the image pedestal’d so high / in Saturn’s temple” (*The Fall* I. 298-300). Upon seeing Saturn as unsceptred, the poet is invigorated, a power of “enormous ken” grows within him, which enables him to see as a god sees and to apprehend things profoundly; the poet-figure’s experience of seeing as a god sees parallels “Moneta’s god-like perspective” (Reeves 91). Now his inward eye (seeing things through Moneta) can see through things “as nimbly as” his outward eye. The merging of Moneta as the inward eye and the poet as the outward eye helps him gain an insight beyond his limited ken. Thus, the union with the mother immortalises him, making him see as a god sees, soar with wings and mount up the immortals steps of Moneta’s shrine. Now the lofty theme regarding the high tragedy of the Titans is hung vast before his enlarged vision, his “eagle-vigilant mind” (Harris 52). Set upon “eagle’s watch” and seeing as a god sees, he is now endowed with a divine, omniscient perspective, his gaze soon to ripen with “an eagle nativeness” (*Endymion* III. 859-60). He now knows that he no longer belongs with vultures that “feel / They are no birds when eagles are abroad” (*The Fall* I. 191-92), birds that chiefly feed on carrion, the abject decaying flesh of the dead animals, but, thanks to Moneta, he is reborn as an eagle, a bird known for its keen sight and powerful soaring flight. The legacy of the Circean mortality of the abject maternal body is now replaced by Moneta’s promise of immortality: “My power, which to me is still a curse, / Shall be to thee a wonder” (*The Fall* I. 243-44).

Reuniting with the primordial mother is, we should recall, “as lethal as it is jubilatory” (Kristeva *Black* 19). The poet-persona’s reunion with Moneta is also lethal since she is “the archetype of death” (Garrett 43), with a face that stands for death-in-life (*The Fall* I. 206-61). He progresses deathwards, moving “backwards to the ‘sable charm’ – to the potential loss, or stifling, of voice - a return to infancy (*in-fans*) or speechlessness” (Parker 117). This fear of regressing to a state of dumb enchantment pervades the poem, as its numerous references to stifling, suffocation and choking suggest. The poet-dreamer carves out a territory for himself within Moneta’s globed mind; therefore, he is covered with abjection as he lacks “being *particular*” (Kristeva *Tales* 7); the “voracity of the dual symbiosis” (Kristeva *Tales* 55) disables the poet-

dreamer from being autonomous. Therefore, the poet is threatened by a dissolution of identity; the negatively capable poet assumes Moneta's identity and encloses himself in her brain, which challenges the tenuous borders of his selfhood. The merging with Moneta is marked by "a deep romance fear" that is "Protean flexibility" (Parker 117). The maternal "solemn pine" threatens the "stunt bramble" (*The Fall* I. 294). The poet dreads speechlessness as "the house or bower of imagination [Moneta] becomes a stifling enclosure" (Parker 118). He fears the smothering muse of memory, like Endymion who dreaded "the burr / Of smothering fancies" (*Endymion* II. 138-9), and like Saturn who fears being "swallow'd up" (*The Fall* I. 412). Being terrorised by Moneta's "fierce threat", he fears being stifled and suffocated (*The Fall* I. 119-20, I. 130), and he is worried that his utterance will be choked (*The Fall* I. 140), for, in Moneta's presence, he has "no words to answer, for my [his] tongue, / Useless, could find about its roofed home / No syllable of a fit majesty" (*The Fall* I. 228-30). Moneta's "globed brain" (*The Fall* I. 245) overshadows the roofed home of his tongue, so he remains tongue-tied. Her "globed brain" is contrasted with the "roofed home" of his tongue in terms of magnitude, which also suggests a link with the difference in size between the tree and the bush respectively. Also, obliterating semantics with acoustics, these two words ("globed" and "roofed") also evoke volubility and roundness besides being phonetic cognates of each other. Keats as a poet of "seductive verbal melds and meltings" (Stewart 141) allows the poetic language to generate meaning through lexical chords. The globed brain of Moneta brings to mind unbounded knowledge beyond a mortal's ken while the roofed home of the tongue refers to the symbolic aspect of signification that works in a limited space delineated by fixed boundaries; the former suggests untamed imagination that is rendered through the semiotic component, whereas the latter recalls the symbolic aspect of language domesticated by linguistic rules and laws.

The reunion with the maternal Thing is potentially lethal since it threatens to dehumanise the poet; this can happen in two ways. Firstly, in the realm of Circe, where the borders between self and other, between human and animal are obliterated, the merging with the death-dealing maternal Thing causes her captives to lose their human forms and become "serpentine" speechless brutes, as seen in *Endymion* (III. 496-5003). Secondly, merging with Moneta collapses the boundary between self and other,

mortal and immortal, and this leads the poet to be dehumanised, in other words, to be immortalised and to see as a god sees. The poet-narrator of *The Fall* strives to accomplish the latter by rejecting/abjecting the former. Despite his resolutions to resist and transcend the dehumanising Circean carnality, which is a pre-human condition of animality and to idealise the disembodied ascension to the temple of sublime poets through the desexualised medium of Moneta, the abject still resurfaces in “the hollow dark” (*The Fall* I. 455). As he recounts the high tragedy of the Titans through the brain of Moneta, the tenuous borders of his identity are threatened by the emergence of “the sable trees, / Whose arms spread straggling in wild serpent forms, / With leaves all hush’d” (*The Fall* I. 446-48). When these Circean serpent forms (that straggle, grow untidily, spread irregularly) intimidate him and threaten the linearity of the narrative as he recounts the tragic story of the mournful Titans, his “pleasant union of sense” is broken:

So he [Saturn] feebly ceas’d,  
 With such a poor and sickly sounding pause,  
 Methought I heard some old man of the earth  
 Bewailing earthly loss; nor could my eyes  
 And ears act with that pleasant unison of sense  
 Which marries sweet sound with the grace of form,  
 And dolorous accent from a tragic harp  
 With large limb’d visions. (*The Fall* I. 438-45)

The sickening abject disturbs the unison of sense, and this unsettles the poet-persona, as it did Hyperion whom the abject also threatened, and who could not see “the symmetry” in the void, the maternal cave, in the uterine darkness (*Hyperion* I. 240-42). In *The Fall*, the poet-narrator is crushed underneath the weight of the gloomy vision of the fallen Titans:

A long awful time  
 I look’d upon them: still they were the same;  
 The frozen God still bending to the earth,  
 And the sad goddess weeping at his feet,  
 Moneta silent. Without stay or prop  
 But my own weak mortality, I bore  
 The load of this eternal quietude,  
 The unchanging gloom, and the three fixed shapes  
 Ponderous upon my senses, a whole moon.  
 For by my burning brain I measured sure  
 Her silver seasons shedded on the night,  
 And ever day by day methought I grew

More gaunt and ghostly. (*The Fall* I. 384-96)

Despite recounting the tragedy of the Titans through the medium of Moneta, the poet-narrator, overburdened with the despair of the Titans' story, curses himself (*The Fall* I. 398-99); his brain cannot handle the influx from Moneta's divine brain. His weak mortality disturbs the poet because he aspires to be immortal and to see as a god sees. The legacy of the maternal body, which is death, disrupts the poet's "redemptive ascent" (Sperry *Keats* 323). Suffering, he had become more gaunt and ghostly, like Glaucus whose limbs become "[g]aunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd, and lame" as a result of being captivated by Circe in *Endymion* (III. 637-8), and like Hyperion who was haunted by the abject "phantoms pale" (*Hyperion* I. 255); the "misty pestilence" creeps into the dwelling of the poet-narrator (*The Fall* I. 205-6).

The initial image of Moneta as the guardian of antipodal distinctions is marred by the poet merging with his muse. Moneta's power is both a wonder and a curse (*The Fall* I. 243-44); for a poet who is submerged in the maternal Thing, the distinction between self and other is obliterated. Barnard argues that "Moneta's otherness has a weird familiarity" (*Keats* 132). She is, to the poet, an other that is uncannily familiar; he passes through her; being enclosed in the uterine brain coalesces the poet and the muse; the poet-dreamer "has become Moneta" (Barnard *Keats* 137); also, the negatively capable poet "disappears into the creatures of his imagination" (Ward "Keats and the Idea of Fame" 18).

In this allegorical poem, the poet-persona comes across Moneta in a dream within a dream, and Moneta recounts the tragedy of the Titans "from the antechamber of this dream" (*The Fall* I. 465). The antechamber of this dream stands for the unconscious of the poet, the unrepresentable in the psyche of the poet, the "source of poetic wisdom [that] seems to lie in deep, possibly dangerous crevices of the mind, a terrain to which only the dreamer can gain access" (Garrett 41). The antechamber of this dream resists signification; therefore, the poet hesitates to go beyond the confines of the apprehensible symbolic:

And she spake on,  
As ye may read who can unwearied pass  
Onward from the antechamber of this dream,

Where even at the open doors awhile  
I must delay, and glean my memory  
Of her high phrase: perhaps no further dare. (*The Fall* I. 463-68)

Through the medium of Moneta, the poet digs into the unsignifiable, pauses to give a shape to whatever he has gleaned from Moneta's brain and to render it in an intelligible form; he does not dare go beyond as he fears falling into the maternal abyss where the symbolic is entirely exterminated, into "the unimaginable lodge / For solitary thinkings" (*Endymion* I. 293-4), where the distinction between self and other is blurred.

The framing structure of *The Fall* might be seen as having been designed to protect the poet from falling into the unrepresentable, into Moneta's enwombing brain; the poem is marked by the several layerings of frame:

The Induction (I, 1-18) frames the whole poem; the first scene within the garden (I, 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 (I, 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 (I, 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' (I, 291-end) (Bennett 155).

The several layerings of the frame could be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, all these layers of the frame seem to help put a distance between the poet and the muse, forging boundaries and distinctions; the subject matter of the poem, that is the fall of Hyperion, is "at three removes from the narrator of the poem" (Watkins *Keats's Poetry* 163). The poet's encounter with the threatening, death-dealing face of Moneta is deeply buried behind these several encrustations of the frame. Secondly, Moneta's brain that enwombs represents the Platonic cave, but the dreamer is not the Platonic philosopher who looks out toward the light, but the poet who looks into the hollow eyes of Moneta becomes one with the muse. The poet becomes a threshold figure between these boundaries, traversing both sides; therefore, Bennett argues that the "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'" (155). Hence,

the several layers of the framing structure do not safeguard the boundaries between the poet and Moneta; the poet becomes a liminal figure that incorporates otherness. His journey through the layers of the frame involves “an explicit transgression of borders and boundaries” (Bennett 157). These nested layers do not prevent the poet-dreamer from regressing into the maternal nest or retreating into the innermost recesses of the dreaming mind.

In the solipsistic realm of the poet merging with the mother of the muses (Barnard *Keats* 137), with his unconscious, the boundary between “the outward eye” of the poet and the inward eye of the muse (*The Fall* I. 305) is blurred. This collapse of the boundary points to “solipsistic, self-enclosed and self-referential poetic making” (Bennett 157). Similarly, O’Neill notes that “nurturing by his muse involves terror, acceptance of the burden of the mystery, and isolation” (“Writing and History” 162). Moneta as the inward eye is “visionless” of “all external things”. She represents the introspective half of the poet, and since she is inward-looking, her eyes have “a blank splendour” (*The Fall* I. 267-69). The poet creates “his own spectral self” in Moneta (Barnard *Keats* 132); the poet-dreamer’s framing double dream makes it clear that Moneta is “the figment of his imagination” (Homans 356), “a product of his imagination” (Watkins *Keats’s Poetry* 165). Similarly, Thomas proposes that the poet-dreamer confronts “Moneta as a mirror, a revealing mirror, of himself” (31). Vendler puts forwards the idea that the “theatre of the [poet’s] mind” in Keats’s “Ode to Psyche” eventually becomes “Moneta’s hollow skull” (57). The poet-dreamer and Moneta are the *dramatis personae* of the Keatsian psyche, which splits into a multiplicity of selves. A negatively capable, polymorphous poet-dreamer retreats into “a mental sanctuary”, as Keats describes his role as poet in his “Ode to Psyche” (Curran “Romantic Poetry” 218). The poet-dreamer may represent a “certain archetype of the poet, living in the dreamily introverted remoteness of his own consciousness” (Perry “Romanticism” 7). The muse is “an anima figure” for the poet-speaker of *The Fall*, like *Endymion*’s moon goddess who is “an objectification of a dimension of Endymion’s own self” (Aidan 171). Through this relationship with his muse, the poet-dreamer “like the Spider spin[s] from his own inwards his own airy Citadel” (Keats *Letters* 92). The poet-dreamer’s encounter with Moneta is not a dialogue between “two full-fledged subjects (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 226). Therefore, the poet-

dreamer is never able to see his spectral self clearly, as the poem witnesses, for the veiled, shadowy self of the solipsistic poet-dreamer is always shrouded in mystery; the outlines of this allegorical mindscape in *The Fall* are frustratingly evanescent; Moneta is like a form enveloped in fog seen through the clouded surface of a mirror. In this allegorical dream within the dream where self and other are conflated as primary processes such as condensation and displacement prevail, Moneta is too familiar to be an other; therefore, she is always engulfed in shadows, too hazy for the poet to see her clearly, too close for the poet to be able to behold her from a distance, like the Endymionese poet's "Muse of my native land" (*Endymion* IV. 1), an in-born muse of his inner self, a proximity supported by the Latin *nativus* (OED), or an ideal Athena springing from Zeus's head, "the icon of wisdom itself" (Mellor "Complexities of Gender" 226), or a Keatsian Galatea not sculpted into a distinct other by a failed Pygmalion. The guardian of boundaries, *Moneta* swings back to the (relatively) more polysyllabic, internally rhyming, self-resonating *Mnemosyne* (which repeats and encloses the sound of the syllable *-ne* within the sound ripples of the echoing syllable) and its gentle wave-like patterns of rising and falling as the poet merges with her; she is called *Mnemosyne* only twice: "the griev'd voice of *Mnemosyne*" that is different from the menacing voice of *Moneta*, and *Mnemosyne* of "the dusk vale", the darkness of which obliterates the distinction between self and other (*The Fall* I. 331, 518).

*Moneta*, as the phallic mother, dominates the poet-dreamer, and subjects him to pain and self-castigating rituals. This primary fusion does not lead to an opening or an "emptiness" that is "apparently the primer of the symbolic function, is precisely encompassed in linguistics by the bar separating signifier from signified and by the 'arbitrariness' of the sign, or in psychoanalysis by the 'gaping' of the mirror" (Kristeva *Tales* 42). The symbolic is constructed in this emptiness; however, the merging of the poet and the maternal muse cancels the linguistic bar between the signifier and the signified. Therefore, the emptiness isn't, for the poet-dreamer, encompassed in the symbolic sign but "enwombed" by the maternal muse (*The Fall* I. 274). Separation from the maternal Thing gives the poet-dreamer an opportunity to become a subject of representation, which also shows that the symbolic realm of representations "rest on emptiness" (Kristeva *Tales* 42). Nonetheless, the vacuity that this separation opens up is also "the barely covered abyss where our identities, images, and words run the risk

of being engulfed” (Kristeva *Tales* 42). The poet-dreamer is sucked in by this gaping abyss, his words are engulfed, which is why *The Fall* comes to a standstill.

Moneta also embodies the Kristevan imaginary father. The imaginary father is “the same as ‘both parents’” (Kristeva *Tales* 26). The maternal position (fusion) and the paternal position (differentiation) are intermingled in one figure. The imaginary father is endowed with the attributes of both parents and “by that very token a totalizing, phallic figure” (Kristeva *Tales* 33): “the father-mother conglomerate” (Kristeva *Tales* 40), “the unity of the imaginary father, a coagulation of the mother and her desire [for the Phallus as the paternal position and “the signifier of the social power of the father” (Lloyd 139)]” (Kristeva *Tales* 41). Moneta is, in one aspect, the imaginary (presymbolic) father who prompts the poet to distinguish himself from the dreamer embedded in the archaic Thing; she represents the Third Party (paradoxically in the dyadic relationship between herself and the budding poet) within whose sight the poet-dreamer could turn the emptiness (produced by the separation from the archaic mother) into a realm for “a producer of signs, representations, and meanings” (Kristeva *Tales* 42). As the imaginary father, Moneta is

simple virtuality, a potential presence, a form to be cathected. Always already there, the forming presence that nonetheless satisfies none of my autoerotic needs draws me into the imaginary exchange, the specular seduction. He or I – who is the agent? Or even, is it he or is it she? The immanence of its transcendence, as well as the instability of our borders before the setting of my image as “my own,” turn the murky source [...] from which narcissism will flow into a dynamics of confusion and delight (Kristeva *Tales* 43).

The “globed” brain of Moneta (*The Fall* I. 245) is a forming presence that provides the poet-narrator with her vision of the tragedy of the Titans that he will recount. The specular seduction between the poet and his muse as the imaginary father is marked by the “benignant light” of Moneta’s eyes (*The Fall* I. 265). Yet, this is confusing as much as delightful; the borders between the poet and the muse are blurred and uncertain. The murkiness of the archaic unity with the Thing haunts the identification with the forming presence. Moneta appears to have this dual nature: the forming presence as the imaginary father and the deforming (abject) maternal body. The Hyperionesque impulse for differentiation and the Endymionese drive towards heterogeneity are folded into one figure in *The Fall*: Moneta. Her ambiguous nature

resonates with the ambiguity of the Kristevan imaginary father that “undermines the precarious oppositions” between the maternal function and the paternal function (Margaroni “The Trial of the Third” 47).<sup>46</sup>

Within the Kristevan lexicon, loss refers to loss of the primal Thing. Negation follows this loss. To recover the archaic Thing in language is the negation of loss: “Upon losing mother and relying on negation, I retrieve her as sign, image, word” (Kristeva *Black* 63). Thus, negation starts language; there is no “symbolic gift” (of speech) without splitting and separation from the mother. The melancholic who is tied to the Thing denies or disavows the negation, so the depressive affect is characterised by the denial of the negation. The disavowal of the negation corresponds to the rejection of the signifier. If negation is repudiated, the symbolic framework collapses. The melancholic subjects who suspend the negation “nostalgically fall back on the real object (the Thing) of their loss”; they remain “painfully riveted” to the primal Thing (Kristeva *Black* 43-46).

The denial of the signifier is accompanied by “a denial of the father’s function, which is precisely to guarantee the establishment of the signifier”; the melancholic person’s father is “deprived of phallic power, now attributed to the mother”; hence, the disavowal of the signifier leads to “the fantasy of a phallic mother” (Kristeva *Black* 44). This explanation of the Kristevan notions shows that Moneta as the admonishing goddess is the phallic mother for the poet-dreamer. She is also “the maternal father” on whom idealisation relies and through whom the poet follows the path to sublimation. The twofold nature of Moneta suggests that she both stands for the lost, archaic maternal Thing and provides the poet with “a sublimatory hold over the lost Thing” by means of prosody (particularly by distinguishing poets from dreamers) (Kristeva *Black* 97).

There is no third party that disrupts the dyadic relationship between the poet-dreamer and Moneta. This primary fusion is not marked by “the maternal ‘diversion’ toward a

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<sup>46</sup> Differing from the symbolic father, this imaginary father is an archaic one located within a pre-oedipal structure. As Grosz suggests, the notion of the imaginary father is a contradiction from a Lacanian perspective (158). Yet, the Kristevan approach opens up a space for such a contradiction; therefore, this Kristevan approach is in tune with the Keatsian ambiguity that is embodied in the figure of the enigmatic Moneta.

Third Party” (Kristeva *Tales* 34). Moneta represents “narcissistic motherly coating” for the poet; he is coated, “enwombed” by Moneta and her “globed” brain. He is “wrapped up in that shroud”, which shows that to be enwombed is, for him, to be entombed. Thus, the melancholic remains a “prisoner of the nonlost object (the Thing)” (Kristeva *Black* 47). She is like “a false mother”, “a maternal substitute” and “a reassuring balm, asthmogenic perhaps, but nevertheless a permanent wrapping” (Kristeva *Tales* 35). In one aspect, she bolsters his confidence, encouraging him to become a poet who “pours out a balm upon the world” (*The Fall* I. 201); in another aspect, this primary merging causes him to be a dreamer who coils up within himself, a dreamer who “vexes” the world (*The Fall* I. 201); the dreamer becomes an asthmatic subject, who is choked by the archaic Thing.

Being contained by the “nonobjectal Thing”, the poet exhausts any possibility of a subject (Kristeva *Black* 48). Submerged in the archaic Thing, the poet is shielded from “the pain of pre-oedipal separation” (Kristeva *Black* 49). The poet-dreamer capitalises “on the narcissistic object” and broods over it “within the enclosure of an exitless personal vault” or “in the vault where sadness has locked [the melancholic] up with the mother” (Kristeva *Black* 60, 63); meeting Moneta in the “domed monument”, her “globed brain” becomes for the poet his personal vault. Moneta’s “globed brain” that enwombs things is domed. This architectural metaphor suggests that the poet-dreamer is housed in Moneta’s brain, as the Latin etymology of “dome” refers to “domus” that means “house”; drawing on this etymological association, we can see Moneta as either dominating or domesticating the poet-dreamer, for both verbs are derived from the Latin word “domus” (OED). A simultaneously dominating and domesticating Moneta would be congruous with her dual nature: a muse admonishing and comforting the poet at once. As a dominating goddess, she could be imagined as “the archaic Thing of omnipotent ascendancy” that enwombs the poet-dreamer (Kristeva *Black* 64), while as a domesticating goddess, she could be envisaged as guiding, training and taming the indulged dreamer, reminding him of the distinction between the cultivated land and the wilderness, thus, by extension, the difference between the poet as the maker of a symbolic artifice, mastering “the fine spell of words”, and the dreamer as the savage whose imagination submerges in “the sable charm / And dumb enchantment” (*The Fall* I. 9-11). The words that are inventively associated such as “enwombed”,

“globed”, “roofed” and “domed” are strangely semanticised. Distant semantic fields are connected, thereby producing new verbal associations that destabilise the signifier. The poet-dreamer evacuates (symbolically fixed) meaning from words and shows a delight in their asemantic echolalias. As the phallic mother, Moneta also compels the poet not to disown the signifier, not to repudiate splitting, not to deny the divide between self and other, and the distinction between poets embedded in the realm of signs and indulged dreamers. She forces him to acknowledge “a chasm in the very subject” between signifiable subjects and symbolisable objects (Kristeva *Black* 51).

To conclude this section on *The Fall of Hyperion*, one should note that the poet-persona is engulfed by the very thing which he seeks to expel. The conglomeration of the abject and that which attempts to exclude the abject into one figure stifles the poet and suffocates his poetic utterance; the fire of poetic utterance is extinguished as the poet-dreamer is submerged in the oceanic maternal Thing. As a result of the blurring of boundaries, *The Fall of Hyperion* is “never able to clarify its sense of the difference between the dreams of poet and fanatic” (O’Neill “Writing and History” 151), despite the firm resolution to keep them apart. Therefore, *The Fall* oscillates between light and darkness, between “the fine spell of words” (*The Fall* I. 9) and “the old womb of night” (*Endymion* IV. 372). This vacillation continues until, the narrator expects, “this warm scribe my hand [will be] in the grave” (*The Fall* I. 18). Therefore, similar to *Endymion* written by a budding poet who sees his work as a “test, a trial of my [his] Powers of Imagination and chiefly of my invention” (Keats *Letters* 42), trial is the central drama of *The Fall* (Parker 111, Barnard *Keats* 130). The ongoing theme of trial that pervades his work indicates that *The Fall* is “less about the gestation of an Olympian divinity than about the immediate birth pangs of the poetic sensibility itself in its struggle for legitimisation” (Stewart 149). Similar to the Kristevan subject in process/on trial, the poet-narrator undergoes the process of becoming a poet who strives to dissociate himself from the realm of the black charm of dumb enchantment and to associate with the symbolic law and thus be legitimised. He is also on trial; his poetic capabilities are being tested and he is being tried to see whether he is the illegitimate and also illiterate savage (who does not trace his utterances on “vellum or wild Indian leaf” (*The Fall* I. 4-6) relapsing into the realm of the black charm of dumb enchantment (the criminal who commits the sin of being utterly immersed in luxurious sensations, the culprit to

be imprisoned in the cell where the solipsistic inmate does not differentiate between self and other) or the nascent poet who masters the spell of words, who “commands language, who saves imaginative promptings from ‘dumb enchantment’” (O’Neill “Writing and History” 151), who is released from the prison house of undifferentiated heterogeneity, and who “shall be among the English poets after my [his] death” (Keats *Letters* 199). Considering that his relationship with Moneta represents his solipsistic encounter with his own veiled, shadowy self, this self-trial is taking place in the court of his psyche, in the theatre of his mind. Hence, *The Fall* “becomes a psychomachia, or mind-debate, about the function and value of poetry” (Newey 78). Therefore, the trial never ends; he always oscillates between being a poet and a dreamer; the inner debate of *The Fall* is “never finally resolved” (Sperry *Keats* 326). *The Fall of Hyperion* is “Keats’s final attempt to move beyond [...] the threat of suffocation or smothering” (Parker 119), yet it fails; poetic utterance comes to a standstill and the poem remains incomplete. For these reasons, *The Fall* is “very much a purgatorial poem” (Muir 219). This allegorical poem oscillates between the semiotic realm of undifferentiated heterogeneity where things dissolve and melt into other things, and the symbolic realm of defined contours, clear distinctions and structures, between the sable speechless enchantment of asymbolia and the words anchored in the symbolic, between the stirrings of the soul and the strictures of convention, between Moneta and Mnemosyne, between a prelapsarian state of plenitude and a postlapsarian realm of positions and boundaries, between *Endymion* and *Hyperion*, between this unfinished fragment and the projected complete poem. Since it is an oscillation, it is neither about the inaugural loss nor the end point of redemption; it is about the subject falling, in process and on trial. It is also an allegory of abjection, of “an ellectric [sic] fire in human nature tending to purify” (Keats *Letters* 271). Therefore, *The Fall of Hyperion* is also purgatory in the (archaic) sense that it has the quality of cleansing and purifying; the Latin etymology of “purgatory” shows that the purgatory purges one of the abject (OED).

## CHAPTER 4

### MELANCHOLY

This chapter attempts to discuss how the Kristevan melancholy permeates these longer poems. The melancholic Endymion withdraws from the symbolic and retreats into the realm of the unnameable Thing where self and other are undifferentiated. The fallen Titans in *Hyperion* relapse into asymbolic melancholy while the Olympian Apollo, the new god of the black sun, merges with the unrepresentable Thing, obliterating the divide between subject and object. Similarly, the poet-narrator of *The Fall of Hyperion* mingles with the muse Moneta, eradicating the breach between inside and outside.

#### 4.1 The Uterine Night of Melancholy in *Endymion*

To employ the term melancholy would not appear to risk imposing an alien conceptual structure on the textual phenomena in question as melancholy is central to *Endymion* and to the poetic spirit that moves behind this romance: an unsigned obituary says that the “temperament and feeling of the poet, which is always ‘much nearer allied to melancholy than to jollity or mirth,’ seem to have been the heritage of Keats” (in Matthews 243). Hence, melancholy holds a special place in Keats’s poetry as it “runs through the poetry like a dark vein of marble” (Waldoff 195). Melancholy permeates *Endymion*; this section intends to demonstrate how the melancholic Endymion relapses into the realm of primary fusion with the maternal Thing and how he withdraws from the symbolic realm of signs. It also aims to show how the Keatsian invisible light in the dark resonates with the Kristevan black sun and to investigate that Endymion retreats into the “Cave of Quietude” where he merges with the archaic mother who is “resistant to meaning” and naming (O’Connor 44). Furthermore, this section attempts to indicate how an introspective Endymion evokes the Kristevan Narcissus, and that immersion in the primordial Thing is joyful as well as lethal.

##### 4.1.1 The Melancholic Endymion in the Maternal “Cave of Quietude”

Melancholy pervades the whole *Endymion* although it appears to be more accentuated in Book IV. The “contemplative beginning of Book I” (Walsh 39) shows that a feeling

of pensive sadness surrounds Endymion: he is beset by “despondency” (I. 8), “the inhuman dearth” (I. 8), “the gloomy days” (I. 9), “the pall” (I. 12) and “dark spirits” (I. 13). He is described as a “melancholy spirit” who wishes to “win oblivion” (I. 98-9); he feels he is spiralling into extinction, nothingness; dejection emanates from him as “[t]he lark was lost in him” even though “the mass / Of nature’s lives and wonders puls’d tenfold” (I. 102-5).

Endymion’s melancholy is marked by an abrogation of interest in the outside world; he communes with “melancholy thought” (*Endymion* II. 867-8). Although some people in the Latmian community might think that he is dreaming of “idleness in groves Elysian”, others could notice “[a] lurking trouble in his nether lip” (*Endymion* I. 175-9); he is drowned in melancholy as he pines away (*Endymion* I. 184). Similarly, in the company of the priest and the shepherds of Latmos who tell their “fond imaginations”, a brooding Endymion, “[w]hose eyelids curtain’d up their jewels dim” (his eyes are shut because he looks inside, internally speculating), keeps quiet since the melancholic does not feel he belongs to the realm of the symbolic; the melancholic lacks motivation to engage in the symbolic realm as he “has entirely internalized one who is barely an identifiable other: the mother” (Lechte “Love and Death” 82). Nevertheless, Endymion strives to “hide the cankering venom, that had riven / His fainting recollections” (I. 395-7). Despite his struggle to conceal that he is infected with a pervasive and corrupting bitterness, his senses “had swoon’d off: he did not heed / The sudden silence, or the whispers low, / Or the old eyes dissolving at his woe” (I. 398-400). A mood of deep melancholy descends upon contemplative Endymion; “in the self-same fixed trance he kept” (I. 403); he seems to be “as dead-still as a marble man, / Frozen in that old tale Arabian” (I. 405-6). He withdraws from life and is united with death, with grief that embalms (I. 402, II. 1), with sadness that he “tame[s] and cherish[es] for lack of another” (Kristeva *Black* 12). He is in a pensive mood and suffers from “the troubled sea of the mind” (I. 454), as the etymological root of the adjective “pensive” is related with the French verb *penser* which means “to think”, and it is also associated with the verb “to ponder” that derives from the Latin word *ponderare* which means both “to reflect on” and “to weigh” (OED). Hence, the melancholic Endymion is crushed underneath the weight of his contemplative mind.

Besieged by the “wayward melancholy” of the wild self of the solitary breeze (*Endymion* I. 686-8), which evokes the Ovidian *novitas furores* or Narcissus perceived by Ovid as insane (Kristeva *Tales* 115-6), Endymion, the “[b]rain-sick shepherd prince” (*Endymion* II. 43), also seeks to strive against it through his moments of lucidity at which he tells his sister what has befallen him:

Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it brought  
Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled adieus! –  
Away I wander’d – all the pleasant hues  
Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest shades  
Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny glades  
Were full of pestilent light; our taintless rills  
Seem’d sooty, and o’er-spread with upturn’d gills  
Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown  
In frightful scarlet, and its thorns out-grown  
Like spiked aloe. (*Endymion* I. 689-98)

Endymion wants to be marked by Peona in the sense that he struggles to signify, make meaning in the symbolic realm. All the meanings and connotations of the verb “to mark” refer to his yearning to name and symbolise his despondency; he longs to be marked, identified, designated, delineated and to be distinguished from other things. This scene shows in another aspect the dialectical oscillation between symbolic speech and asymbolic extinction; he speaks, therefore he exists. When he does not speak, Endymion becomes opaque as “an excess of melancholic consciousness topples over into unconsciousness and he acquires the sharp loveliness of one lost to the present scene, transported [“alchemiz’d” (*Endymion* I. 780)] to some other place” (Swann 22). When he is not marked by the symbolic, the melancholic tumbles into the realm of the asymbolic. Yet, speaking helps him unburden himself and cling to the present scene: “Revive, or these soft hours will hurry by / In tranced dullness; speak, and let that spell / Affright this lethargy” (*Endymion* II. 767-9). Spelling as in writing and naming the letters that form a word in a correct sequence and thus signify it in the symbolic register (OED v. 1) is meant to reinvigorate the melancholic sapped by the asymbolic. He seeks to withstand the “lethargic rays” of the black sun that pin him to the ground (Kristeva *Black* 3). These lethargic rays of the black sun are lethal besides being jubilatory. The Greek etymology of the words “lethal” and “lethargy” both refer to forgetfulness (OED); Endymion is a “melancholy spirit” who hankers after “oblivion”, forgetfulness (*Endymion* I. 98-9); the Latin etymology of the word “oblivion” also

points to the verb “forget” (OED). Hence, the melancholic also yearns for dying and forgetting, deceasing and being forgotten. The inner threshold of despondency is between an “avenging death” and “a liberating death” (Kristeva *Black* 4). From an exclusively symbolic point of view, death is avenging; however, according to the melancholic’s perspective, death is liberating. Endymion vacillates between the two. On one hand, he seems to be “ready at any moment to plunge into death”; on the other hand, his “devitalized existence” is occasionally fired by the effort he makes to prolong it (Kristeva *Black* 4). At this point of the narrative, he wants to be marked by Peona and thus to prolong his existence, occasionally though. As the quote above indicates, melancholy disengages Endymion from the pleasing colours of heaven and earth, sunny glades and taintless rills. Deepest dungeons, pestilent light, upturned gills of dying fish and the fearful scarlet of the rose embody his dejection; as he is sorrowful, nature does not heal him. The taintless rills that seem sooty evoke Circe’s “sooty oil” (*Endymion* III. 521), which shows once again that Circe is a state of his inner mind rather than an external object or referent, an actual person.

In the little journey of an innocent bird, Endymion sees a “disguis’d demon, missioned to knit / My soul with under darkness” (*Endymion* I. 698-702). It is a demon of his mind fed by melancholy; the darkness of the underworld indicates the melancholic’s union with death, “the melancholy person’s complicity with the world of darkness and despair” (Kristeva *Black* 147). This demon entices him to stumble “down some monstrous precipice: / Therefore I eager followed, and did curse / The disappointment” (*Endymion* I. 703-5). The melancholic desires to merge with sadness, “the fundamental mood of depression” (Kristeva *Black* 21), thus eagerly follows the demon of dejection. He eagerly stumbles down a precipice; he is disappointed when he does not debase as he stumbles down the monstrous precipice, which demonstrates the melancholic’s desire for death. On the one hand, the depressed Endymion wishes to be united with sadness and death; on the other hand, the melancholic romance hero, who is like “an orphan” in the symbolic world (McAfee 63), wants to be soothed by symbolic structures such as time and narrative. He is like the Kristevan artist who is “consumed by melancholia” and who is “at the same time the most relentless in his struggle against the symbolic abdication that blankets him” (*Black* 9). By the same token, being

immersed in the Kristevan Thing, posited as “the center of attraction and repulsion”, is alluring and repulsive at once (Kristeva *Black* 13).

Deprived of his primordial maternal nurse, Endymion says he has been lulled by a symbolic nurse: “Time, that aged nurse, / Rock’d me to patience” (I. 705-6); time as a symbolised form of timelessness comforts the melancholic Endymion for whom “time has been erased or bloated, absorbed into sorrow” (Kristeva *Black* 4). Telling also comforts him:

Now, thank gentle heaven!  
These things, with all their comfortings, are given  
To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,  
Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea  
Of weary life. (*Endymion* I. 706-10)

All those things such as deepest dungeons and upturned gills of dying fish of his down-sunken sorrowful hours are not only deemed to be comforting as he merges with sadness but also found to be weary as he is crushed under their weight; he wishes to be soothed in his sister’s bower. He is like an “udderless” lamb (*Endymion* I. 210), an infant without a mother who must be taken care of; he is like an uncoordinated infant “[f]rom languor’s sullen bands, / His [whose] limbs are loos’d” (*Endymion* II. 66-7). He feels that his limbs are disorganised; his unarticulated limbs are suggestive of the inarticulate, aphasic melancholic, of the speechless infant. He feels that his canvas for the voyage of life is tattered, which leaves his bark bare (*Endymion* I. 772-3); that’s why his bare boat stripped of its symbolic trappings sullenly drifts out of the symbolic realm (*Endymion* I. 774) as he has “been wandering in uncertain ways”, counting “his woe-worn minutes” (*Endymion* II. 48-50); he feels layers of subjectivity are ripped off; he is disrobed of a symbolic garb as he retreats into Peona’s bower.

For Endymion, grief is sweet, melancholy is “gleaming”; weary days offer “dreadful leisure” (*Endymion* I. 939; II. 223; I. 910). This dreadful leisure is “made deeper exquisite, / By a fore-knowledge of unslumbrous night!”; he finds it “sickening” that anticipation makes “dreadful leisure” much deeper (*Endymion* I. 910-12). He seems to be torn between these feelings. He appears to be content about merging with sadness on the one hand, yet he is sickened on the other hand. The melancholic desires this state to continue as he would rather “be struck dumb, / Than speak against this ardent

listlessness” (*Endymion* I. 824-5), while he also wants “the deadly yellow spleen” to be swept away (*Endymion* I. 916-7). Being struck dumb evokes asymbolic muteness; for the melancholic, “language is always foreign, never maternal”; for him, words “have become detached from their drive base and marked with a deathly stillness” (Lechte *Kristeva* 186). His desire to be immersed in ardent listlessness is in accord with the melancholic withdrawal from life as he lacks motivation to engage in the symbolic domain. Nevertheless, he desires to be rid of this fatal spleen. He oscillates between the two.

Endymion is “coop’d up in the den / Of helpless discontent” (*Endymion* I. 928-9). A reflecting Endymion vows to take up a life of contemplation to ward off this “helpless discontent”:

I’ll smile no more, Peona; nor will wed  
Sorrow the way to death; but patiently  
Bear up against it: so farewell, sad sigh;  
And come instead demurest meditation,  
To occupy me wholly, and to fashion  
My pilgrimage for the world’s dusky brink.  
No more will I count over, link by link,  
My chain of grief: no longer to strive to find  
A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind  
Blustering about my ears: (*Endymion* I. 972-81)

Endymion struggles to stand up against melancholy; he strives not to unite dejection with death. Instead he is resolved to maintain a life of reflection in order not to be beset by the melancholic oblivion. Similarly, he “sinks adown a solitary glen, / Where there was never sound of mortal men” (II. 77-8); he broods “o’er the water in amaze” (II. 132); brooding puts him in a maze. He is frozen “to senseless stone” (II. 200) like the “marble man, / Frozen in that old tale Arabian” (I. 405-6). Once he dives into “the deep abyss” (II. 232), he goes through “winding passages, where sameness breeds / Vexing conceptions” (II. 235-6). His melancholy is marked by inward-looking “thoughts of self” (II. 275) and the “deadly feel of solitude” (II. 284); he is far from companionship in an “unknown time, surcharg’d with grief” (II. 291-2). In this “rapacious deep” (II. 332), the abyss of sorrow and incommunicable grief, the melancholic, disengaged from the realm of the symbolic, relapses to a narcissistic state. McAfee stresses that “[w]ithout the symbolic, the subject regresses, falling back

into a realm where nothing is differentiated, so the self cannot separate itself from its heterogeneous surroundings” (63). Kristeva asserts that humans’ “gift of speech, of situating ourselves in time for an other, could exist nowhere except beyond the abyss” (Kristeva *Black* 42). However, the abyss reclaims the melancholic; therefore, in such “a mournful place”, Endymion is “wayworn” (II. 650-1). In the “swart abysm”, he is so “sad, so melancholy, so bereft” (*Endymion* II. 376; II. 685); the melancholic feels that he is bereft of something, deprived of an unnameable, of something unrepresentable. Therefore, the melancholic Endymion feels he is disinherited of the Kristevan Thing that “does not lend itself to signification” (Kristeva *Black* 13), the Romantic ungraspable, unnameable which resists articulation, the Keatsian “known Unknown” that defies signification (*Endymion* II. 739).

Similar to the den of helpless discontent of Book I and the solitary glen of Book II, the “Cave of Quietude” (*Endymion* IV. 548) is of central importance in Book IV:

There lives a den,  
 Beyond the seeming confines of the space  
 Made for the soul to wander in and trace  
 Its own existence, of remotest glooms.  
 Dark regions are around it, where the tombs  
 Of buried griefs the spirit sees, but scarce  
 One hour doth linger weeping, for the pierce  
 Of new-born woe it feels more inly smart:  
 And in these regions many a venom’d dart  
 At random flies; they are the proper home  
 Of every ill: (*Endymion* IV. 512-22)

This den beyond the confines of the symbolically designated space might be seen as the den of helpless discontent beyond the confines of the symbolic; the mind wanders in this den and unearths its own primordial existence, its “depth Cimmerian” (*Endymion* IV. 375) and deepest “glooms”; in the dark regions of this den, the soul confronts its primeval fears, which causes more sadness; therefore, this den of the psyche is considered to be the source of anxieties. The melancholic feels wounded in this native hell as “a primitive self” feels “wounded, incomplete, and empty” (Kristeva *Black* 12):

the man is yet to come  
 Who hath not journeyed in this native hell.  
 But few have ever felt how calm and well

Sleep may be had in that deep den of all.  
There anguish does not sting; nor pleasure pall:  
Woe-hurricanes beat ever at the gate,  
Yet all is still within and desolate.  
Beset with plainful gusts, within ye hear  
No sound so loud as when on curtain'd bier  
The death-watch tick is stifled. (*Endymion* IV. 522-31)

This native hell is characterised by an impression of bleak emptiness and despondency. In this den, anguish does not sting because the melancholic is frozen; woe beats at the gate of the den; gusts seem to be left outside of the den, yet new-born woes beset the melancholic who has merged with sadness. The death-watch tick is stifled as the melancholic has already merged with death. Hence, this state is called “Happy gloom!” and “Dark paradise!” (IV. 537-8); death does not frighten the melancholic as he is already fatally frozen, dead-still; it sounds like Nerval’s *soleil noir*; it is a dark paradise without representation; it is the maternal paradise unrepresented by the symbolic, “the non-integrated self’s lost paradise, one without others or limits, a fantasy of untouchable fullness” (Kristeva *Black* 20). This Kristevan “insistence without presence, a light without representation” (*Black* 13) is more intense than Young Semele’s “maternal longing”:

Just when the sufferer begins to burn,  
Then it is free to him; and from an urn,  
Still fed by melting ice, he takes a draught –  
Young Semele such richness never quaft  
In her maternal longing! (*Endymion* IV. 533-7)

Semele is Dionysus’s mortal mother impregnated by Zeus. Steinhoff notes that “Pregnant with Bacchus by Jove, she asked for and received Jove’s lethal lightning stroke” (247). The melancholic sufferer burns like Semele struck by fatal lightning and consumed in lightning-ignited flame. The melancholic is similar to the pregnant maternal body, “the threshold of culture and nature” and “a being of folds” (Kristeva *Tales* 259-60). Therefore, Endymion’s experience of primal fusion in the maternal cave of speechlessness (infancy) is likened to Semele’s pregnancy. The maternal womb and the paternal light are enfolded into one figure; that is why his melancholy is a light in the dark, a *soleil noir*.

This den of helpless discontent is characterised by the “silence dreariest [which] / Is most articulate” (IV. 539-40); the mute melancholic is wrested away from the symbolic realm; therefore, this dark paradise lacks light to represent it; it is not articulated in the symbolic. This den is like a cave where “those eyes are the brightest far that keep / Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep” (*Endymion* IV. 541-2). Similar to “the foetal subject” in the Kristevan *chora* (Payne 169), he sleeps in the maternal cave; once it is weaned, its eyes will be dazzled like those of Semele. Since the foetal melancholic resides in the uterine night, his light is dark. No matter how dark and dreary it is, the melancholic desires to cling to it:

O happy spirit-home! O wondrous soul!  
Pregnant with such a den to save the whole  
In thine own depth. Hail, gentle Carian!  
For, never since they griefs and woes began,  
Hast thou felt so content: a grievous feud  
Hath led thee to this Cave of Quietude. (*Endymion* IV. 543-8)

The grieving and woeful melancholic retreats into the Cave of Quietude, withdrawing from life, from the symbolic. The Cave of Quietude is “a kind of Keatsian Center of Indifference” (Sperry *Keats* 110), where, from a Kristevan point of view, the difference between self and other is obliterated; the melancholic’s indifference, his lack of interest could be seen as a consequence of the extermination of the difference between subject and object, here and there, now and then. The melancholic Endymion sinks “into the blankness of asymbolia or the excess of an unorderable cognitive chaos” in this maternal cave (Kristeva *Black* 33). In this cave, he is, in the words of Kristeva, “without objects” and “glued to the Thing” (Kristeva *Black* 51). Nevertheless, the wondrous human psyche is “pregnant with such a den” as the quotation above shows, and he is likened to Semele impregnated by Zeus and pregnant with Dionysus. This realm of beings enfolded into one another is expected to produce offspring; this will be the poetic romance of *Endymion* for the Keatsian poetic voice that is “enwombed” in the maternal cave (*The Fall* I. 274). Like Semele giving birth to Dionysus (maternal conception), the Keatsian poetic spirit also gives birth to a Dionysian romance (paternal conception), a Bacchic *Endymion* which is not predominantly marked by Apollonian clear distinctions, outlines and impermeable boundaries, but which is characterised by Dionysian folds, overlaps and

interlacements. Therefore, this Dionysian romance ends and recommences with Endymion's sister Peona who is, in the last line of *Endymion*, seen going home "through the gloomy wood in wonderment" (IV. 1002-3). The romance continues to be a preverbal space, a presymbolic register for Peona. The last line of the romance shows that there is only one way to go home and that is through the gloomy wood in wonderment, that is through the unsignifiable and the unrepresentable.

The romance ends with Peona journeying into the wood, while the melancholic Endymion leaves the scene with the Indian Maid; the "hermit young" of the maternal cave (*Endymion* IV. 860) meets with the "dark-eyed stranger" who changes, "[t]o Endymion's amaze", into "Cynthia bright", and they "vanished far away" (*Endymion* IV. 977-1002). His encounter with the Indian Maid is also important in the discussion of Endymion's melancholy. As opposed to the elusive form of Cynthia produced by the psyche of an inward-looking, internally speculating Endymion, the corporeal Indian maid offers Endymion an opportunity to step out of the swart abysm of melancholy and moor his self to the existence of an other: "My Indian bliss! / My river-lily bud! One human kiss! / One sigh of real breath – one gentle squeeze [...] warm with dew at ooze from living blood!" (*Endymion* IV. 663-7). Endymion renounces his quest for Cynthia; he feels "the solid ground" (*Endymion* IV. 622):

I have clung  
 To nothing, lov'd a 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! Against his proper glory  
 Has my own soul conspired: so my story  
 Will I to children utter, and repent.  
 There never liv'd a mortal man, who bent  
 His appetite beyond his natural sphere,  
 But starv'd and died. My sweetest Indian, here,  
 Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast  
 My life from too thin breathing: gone and past  
 Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone, farewell!  
 And air of visions, and the monstrous swell  
 Of visionary seas! No, never more  
 Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore  
 Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast.  
 Adieu, my daintiest Dream! (*Endymion* IV. 636-56)

Endymion bids farewell to Cynthia, an unlocatable “shape-shifting goddess” (Bari 88), an elusive dream, his “daintiest Dream”, the Kristevan Thing. The melancholic, disengaged from the realm of the symbolic’s subject-object distinction, comes to realise that he has loved a nothing, clung to a nothing. The melancholic has been presumptuous against love, not observing the limits of what is permitted within the confines of the symbolic. He comes to see that mortals (that are linguistic subjects inhabiting the symbolic domain) are tied to each other, that the self is moored to the existence of an other. He has bent his appetite beyond his natural sphere, regressing from the symbolic and returning to a narcissistic state, as a result of which he has starved and died, like “dead-born / From the old womb of night” (*Endymion* IV. 371-2). However, the Indian maid redeems him; he departs from lone presymbolic caverns where he is in pursuit of the maternal Thing which is not “a separate object in the world that faces me, but a devouring attachment to what refuses signification” (Keltner *Thresholds* 53). Therefore, cloudy phantasms are discarded; the monstrous swell of visionary seas is repudiated; he is resolved not to be entangled by wonder. Dreams will encumber him no more (*Endymion* IV. 669). He goes on to imagine their earthly dwelling: “Still let me speak; / Still let me dive into the joy I seek, - / For yet the past doth imprison me” (*Endymion* IV. 689-91); he wishes to continue to speak within the symbolic realm as he dreads being devoured by the narcissistic self; thus, he strives “to clear / His briar’d path to some tranquillity” (*Endymion* IV. 722-3).

Bacchus is an antidote to the melancholy of the “mournful wanderer” (*Endymion* IV. 407). The Indian maid sings a roundelay; in her song she blames Sorrow for borrowing “[t]he natural hue of health from vermeil lips”, “[t]he lustrous passion from a falcon eye”, “[t]he mellow ditties from a mourning tongue” and “[h]eart’s lightness from the merriment of May” (*Endymion* IV. 145, 148, 154, 160, 166). Dionysian revellers are seen as an antidote to sorrow:

And as I sat, over the light blue hills  
 There came a noise of revellers: the rills  
 Into the wide stream came of purple hue –  
 ’Twas Bacchus and his crew!  
 The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills  
 From kissing cymbals made a merry din –  
 ’Twas Bacchus and his kin! (*Endymion* IV. 193-9)

Bacchus's revellers are crowned with green leaves and their faces are all on flame; they madly dance and scare melancholy away; they rush into folly (*Endymion* IV. 201-3, 208). Bacchus is in dancing mood, trifling his ivy dart (IV. 209-10); his female followers are merry and gleeful in their "wild minstrelsy" (IV. 218-27); "jolly Satyrs" too follow Bacchus, "Great God of breathless cups and chirping mirth", and join "mad minstrelsy" (IV. 228-38).

To explain the relation between melancholy and Bacchic joy, Kristeva references Aristotle and his reliance on the notion of four humours and temperaments. According to the Greek conception, "spermatic froth" is "the euphoric counterpoint to black bile", to *melaina kole*; she notes that Aristotle makes "explicit references to Dionysus and Aphrodite"; she also adds that Aristotle considers that melancholy is not "a philosopher's disease but his very nature, his *ethos*" (*Black* 6-7). From this perspective, melancholy characterises a contemplative Endymion who thinks until his head is "dizzy and distraught", a ruminating hero who holds "his forehead, to keep off the burr / Of smothering fancies" (*Endymion* I. 564-65; II. 138-39). Drawing on Kristeva's references to Aristotle, we could see Endymion's encounter with the Indian Maid as the meeting of the black bile and the spermatic froth. Endymion yields to the Indian Maid:

Poor Lady, how thus long  
Have I been able to endure that voice?  
Fair Melody! kind Syren! I've no choice;  
I must be thy servant evermore:  
I cannot choose but kneel here and adore.  
Alas, I must not think – by Phoebe, no!  
Let me not think, soft Angel! (*Endymion* IV. 298-304)

Endymion bows to the Dionysian impulse realised in the person of the Indian maid. He wishes to be stripped of the Apollonian impulse.

Apollo represents "the drive toward distinction, discreteness and individuality, toward the drawing and respecting of boundaries and limits", whereas Dionysus embodies "the drive towards the transgression of limits, the dissolution of boundaries, the destruction of individuality, and excess" (Geuss xi). *Endymion* portrays the encounter between the Dionysian and the Apollonian. The Dionysian and the Apollonian are "inseparable modalities at the level of experience, just as the semiotic and the

Symbolic coexist within the same signifying process” (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 70). Endymion wants the Indian Maid to foster him “beyond the brink / Of recollection” unlike an Apollonian man who “represents conscious forces of logic and rationality, order and control” (MacMurry-Kavanagh 103). He desires his Apollonian side to be killed: “Do gently murder half my soul, and I / Shall feel the other half so utterly!” (*Endymion* IV. 306-10). He wants the rational side to perish so that he could feel the Dionysian side, “unconscious forces of instinct and passion, individualism and excess” (MacMurry-Kavanagh 103). He is giddy (IV. 311), intoxicated by the Dionysian spirit. The Dionysian impulse is “associated with intoxication” while the Apollonian impulse evokes dreams (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 70).

#### **4.1.2 A Narcissan Endymion in the Nocturnal Old Womb of Melancholy**

We see Endymion sinking at Neptune’s feet in the previous chapter on the abject; he relapses into the narcissistic state in which self and other are undifferentiated. His identification with the Kristevan imaginary father fails to separate him from the archaic unity with the mother. Melancholy refers to a failed separation from the mother, which is illustrated by Endymion’s sinking at Neptune’s feet and being taken care of the female spirits of sea waters. Melancholy results from a withdrawal from the symbolic domain. As a melancholy person, Endymion is dissociated from the symbolic realm when he sinks at Neptune’s feet; therefore, he gives “the impression of having vacated this world” (Swann 21). He is disaffiliated from the symbolic realm, for “an over-intensity in the subliminal self” results in desolation and melancholy (Beer 62). This subliminal self (the self that falls beyond the symbolic limit) retreats into the pre-linguistic realm where he is fused with the primordial mother. He is disconnected from the social realm as the etymology of the word “dissociate” refers to “being separated from a companion” (OED). He is not associated with a companion; in other words, he is not engaged with an other in the symbolic realm which is predicated upon the distinction between self and other.

Kristeva’s metaphor of *soleil noir* is important in the discussion of melancholy in *Endymion*. The Kristevan glaring black sun of melancholy is rendered as gleaming

melancholy in *Endymion*. For Endymion, Eros is “Dear unseen light in darkness! Eclipser / Of light in light!” (*Endymion* III. 986-7). This description of Eros evokes Kristeva’s use of the metaphor of the black sun (taken from Nerval) in *Black Sun*. The Kristevan black sun “suggests an insistence without presence, a light without representation” like the Keatsian “unseen light in darkness” (*Endymion* III. 986). Kristeva proposes that the maternal Thing is “an imagined sun, bright and black at the same time” (*Black* 13). Kristeva speaks of this primal Thing as “being the ‘something’ that, seen by the already constituted subject looking back, appears as the unspecified, the unseparated, the elusive” (*Black* 262). Similarly, the Keatsian Thing is unspecified and unseparated as light is eclipsed by light. This Kristevan black sun is “glaring and inescapable” (Kristeva *Black* 3), like *Endymion* marked by “Dark, nor light, / The region; nor bright, nor sombre wholly, / But mingled up; a gleaming melancholy” (*Endymion* II. 221-3). This Keatsian shimmering melancholy chimes with the Kristevan sun, bright and black at the same time. This Kristevan black sun, by the same token, resonates with the Keatsian “sun – a shadow of magnitude”, the Keatsian sun, paradoxically bright and dark at once (“On Seeing the Elgin Marbles”).

Disinherited of the Thing, the despondent Endymion wanders in pursuit of continuously disappointing adventures (into the subterranean and submarine - subliminal - realms) and loves (his encounters with Cynthia and the Indian Maid), and retreats into the “Cave of Quietude” (*Endymion* IV. 548), disconsolate and aphasic, alone with the archaic, unnamed Thing in “the old womb of night” (*Endymion* IV. 372), where the black sun is a “source of dazzling light” (Kristeva *Black* 151). The black sun not only casts light on the poet, but also blinds him, depriving him of sight in the “Cave of Quietude”, where he merges with the unrepresentable Thing.

Kristeva claims that the narcissist melancholic mourns not an object but the unnameable Thing (*Black* 13). According to Kristeva, the melancholic appears to have been deprived of “an unnameable, supreme good, of something unrepresentable” (*Black* 13), like an unseen light in darkness. For the melancholic, it is impossible for an erotic object to replace the irreplaceable primordial preobject. Endymion, embarking on a quest for the irreplaceable maternal Thing, wanders through the subterranean realm and the submarine world. His melancholic sadness is

“unsymbolizable, unnameable” (Kristeva *Black* 12); therefore, he hears the voice of the maternal body in the person of Cynthia in his inner consciousness (*Endymion* III. 1022-7). Accordingly, she is not symbolised as an external object or by an external referent; no word could signify the Thing; “no outside agent can be used as referent” (Kristeva *Black* 12). Hence, Cynthia is also seen as a preobject, not only as an erotic object belonging to the realm of the symbolic.

Melancholy evokes the image of an introspective Endymion in a pensive mood. Endymion as a Kristevan Narcissus is a melancholy being without an object; an inward-looking Endymion suggests the Narcissan “internalization of reflection” (Kristeva *Tales* 115). Endymion’s Narcissan “speculative internality” could be described, in the words of Kristeva, as “the dank, swampy, wastelands of human experience” (*Tales* 115), “the marshy land of the Narcissus myth” (*Black* 5). Narcissus, who has no other external object other than his image, his reflection, represents the internalization of reflection, contemplation. A specular Narcissus turns into a speculating one, into Endymion who “bent his soul fiercely like a spiritual bow, / And twang’d it inwardly” (*Endymion* IV. 847-8): a “reflexive, specular, speculative, and intimist” Narcissan Endymion (Kristeva *Tales* 122). An inward-looking Endymion contemplates inwardly in his mind; a ruminating Endymion will live like a “hermit young” in a “mossy cave” in the dank, swampy wastelands of his universe (*Endymion* IV. 860). His “contemplative internality” (Kristeva *Tales* 116) is marked by “pomp of solitude” (*Endymion* IV. 954). His seclusion in this contemplative interiority points to a Narcissan Endymion from whose gaze Cynthia vanished as he “brooded o’er the water in amaze” (*Endymion* II. 131-32). Thinking in a maze points to his being immersed in his swampy mindscape embodied as the maternal cave of quietude.

The Narcissan Endymion should be considered in two aspects within the Kristevan universe. Kristeva puts forward that “loss, bereavement, and absence trigger the work of the imagination and nourish it permanently as much as they threaten it and spoil it” (*Black* 9). Loss opens up space for the imagination to flourish as much as it leaves one “fancy-sick” (*Endymion* I. 853). On the one hand, the narcissistic melancholic is in a maze that stands for the Kristevan marshy wasteland since it does not incorporate the divide between self and other. On the other hand, a Narcissan Endymion, who has a

specular identification with his reflection over the water, which is a mirage, is endowed with a psychic interiority in which he could reflect upon himself and contemplate the universe. This understanding of the myth of Narcissus makes “inner space the reflection of an alterego” (Kristeva *Tales* 59). The former refers to the first meaning of the verb “reflect” as in a mirror sending back an image (OED v. 1.), while the latter points to its second meaning as in thinking deeply (OED v. 2.). Accordingly, the depressed narcissist who looks at his image over the water is also a speculating and theorising thinker, for the Latin etymology of the verb “speculate” is *specere* which means “to look”, and the Greek root of the word “theory” refers to speculation and contemplation (OED).

In the “subjective internality” of the brooding melancholic (Kristeva *Tales* 123), Endymion “inwardly began / On things for which no wording can be found; / Deeper and deeper sinking, until drown’d / Beyond the reach of music” (*Endymion* IV. 961-4). The melancholic that broods in a maze and feels beyond “the reach of music” is like the “feather’d lyrist [a cupid] that is “brooding o’er the cadence of his lyre” (*Endymion* II. 432, 456). The winged lyrist is steeped in the asymbolic language of music and rhythm, in the semiotic realm where the inflection of the maternal voice is faintly heard. The Narcissan Endymion is not only drowned in the unsignifiable, but also he is provided with a psychic interiority. Such ruminative internality endows the melancholic person with psychic space, which is embodied by the “Cave of Quietude” that Endymion retreats into (*Endymion* IV. 548). Accordingly, Kristeva claims that “[w]ithout a bent for melancholia there is no psyche” (*Black* 4). Melancholy provides the depressed person with a place for observation, a psychic temple where the melancholic subject could contemplate, as the Latin etymology of “contemplate” suggests (OED).

The speculative space of such psychic interiority cannot be articulated through symbolic forms of grammar and structures; no word could signify the arhaic Thing. The “reflective closure” of this psychic space (Kristeva *Tales* 117) cannot be fully expressed through music and rhythm, either; the melancholic sinks deeper and deeper into the Kristevan Thing “in a sort of deathful glee” (*Endymion* IV. 945). Since melancholy is described as gleaming within the Keatsian universe, death is portrayed

as gleeful, too. Being steeped in the incommunicable Thing that is “inscribed within us without memory”, Endymion merges with “the buried accomplice of our unspeakable anguishes” (Kristeva *Black* 14). This jubilatory merging is marked by “the delights of reunion” as much as it is portayed as lethal, presented as “the nuptials of suicide” (Kristeva *Black* 14). To be tied to the archaic Thing could be an immersion in either a joyful “oceanic void” or a “lethal ocean” (Kristeva *Black* 29-30).

The Kristevan Narcissus is not simply a youth admiring himself “in a mirage”; Kristeva argues that melancholy is “the hidden face of Narcissus, the face that is to bear him away into death” (*Black* 5). Endymion, who is ready at any moment for a plunge into death, resembles Kristeva’s Narcissus who

lives in another dimension. Nor secured to an object, his anguish returns, and when he realizes through that rebound that the other in the spring is merely himself, he has put together a psychic space – he has become subject. Subject of what? Subject of the reflection and at the same time subject of death. Narcissus is not located in the objectal or sexual dimension. He does not love youths of either sex, he loves neither women nor men. He Loves, he loves Himself – active and passive, subject *and* object. Actually, Narcissus is not completely without object. *The object of Narcissus is psychic space; it is representation itself, fantasy.* But he does not know it, and he dies (*Tales* 116).

Not being attached to an other, Endymion strives “by fancies vain and crude” (IV. 722), is located in the Cave of Quietude, the psychic space, where the lids of the eyes are “shut longest in a dreamless sleep” (IV. 541-8), where the melancholic unites with the maternal Thing and death since melancholy corresponds to union with the mother and death.

A union with the mother and death suggests that melancholy is “a living death” (Kristeva *Black* 4). Once bereft of the Indian maid, his “[c]ompanion fair” (*Endymion* IV. 870), Endymion takes a vow of chastity, remains without an object “as he a corpse had been / All the long day” (IV. 919-20). In the words of Kristeva, Endymion lives a life in death and his

flesh is wounded, bleeding, cadaverized, my rhythm slowed down or interrupted, time has been erased or bloated, absorbed into sorrow ... Absent from other people’s meaning, alien, accidental with respect to naïve happiness. I owe a supreme, metaphysical lucidity to my depression. On the frontiers of life and death, occasionally

I have the arrogant feeling of being witness to the meaninglessness of Being, of revealing the absurdity of bonds and beings (*Black* 4).

Like a corpse, he falls from the symbolic; like a cadaver falling from the symbolic realm of life and meaning, he relapses into the pre-linguistic realm where he rejoices in the poetic cadences of the asymbolic, jubilatory and lethal at once, voluptuous and sad at the same time, verging on the frontiers of life and death, “a borderline case” (Kristeva *Tales* 115). Both “cadaver” and “cadence” derive from the Latin word *cadere* that means “to fall” (OED). The fusion with the archaic Thing leads to a downfall that carries him along into the incommunicable and the unnameable. In the realm of the inexpressible Thing, symbolic time has been eradicated: “the alien, retarded, or vanishing speech of melancholy persons leads them to live within a skewed time sense”; this awry sense of time “does not pass by, the before/after notion does not rule it” (Kristeva *Black* 60). For the melancholic, time is not defined by symbolic timely indicators such as past, present and future. In addition to the erasure of time, the melancholic speech is characterised by linguistic retardation<sup>47</sup>. However, this deceleration is also accompanied by “an accelerated, creative cognitive process”; their language shows “hyperactivity with signifiers” that “reveals itself particularly by connecting distant semantic fields”; their speech is marked by “associative originality” and “cognitive hyperlucidity”; inventive and original associations “destabilise the subject and afford it an escape route away from confrontation with a stable signification or a steady object”; this hyperlucidity, not holding the melancholic subject within the semantic field of a signifier, allows him/her to invent strangely semanticised words. (Kristeva *Black* 59).

Accordingly, Endymion, affected by shimmering melancholy, has his moments of lucidity, his moments of luminosity in the old womb of night. These twilight moments are adumbrated in poetic cadences; his attachment to the unnameable Thing is rendered almost intelligible. The melancholic person’s “sad voluptuousness” and “despondent intoxication” are lucidly expressed with a fleeting clear-mindedness (Kristeva *Black* 5). Therefore, death is a “voluptuous thought” or “perverse deliciousness” (*Endymion*

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<sup>47</sup> This will be examined in depth in relation to Saturn’s melancholy in the following section that focuses on melancholy in *Hyperion*.

IV. 759-61) as it heralds the fusion with the Thing. The “reuniting with archaic non-integration” is, we should remember, both “lethal” and “jubilatory” (Kristeva *Black* 19). This tendency towards disintegration as an expression of the death drive is exuberantly fatal. Dying is perversely delicious for the melancholic because dying is “a merging with sadness and, beyond it, with that impossible love, never reached, always elsewhere, such as the promises of nothingness, of death (Kristeva *Black* 12-3). The death of the linguistic subject in the maternal cave of speechlessness testifies to this.

#### **4.2 The Urge to Defy or the Desire to Cherish the Maternal Thing: Different Approaches to Melancholy in *Hyperion***

Melancholy that pervades *Hyperion* becomes apparent through the characters of Saturn, Hyperion, Enceladus and Apollo. These characters of the epic embody different approaches to melancholy; the first three of the deposed Titans represent the urge to refuse to be exiled into the asymbolic realm of the maternal Thing and to conquer the uterine night of melancholy, while Apollo of the ascending Olympians emerges as the new solar deity who is transformed by the nocturnal womb of melancholy. The following discussions in this section cohere around these characters and their responses to melancholy. First of all, this section focuses on Saturn and tries to explain how he is embedded in the darkness of melancholy and withdraws from the symbolic, how he falls from grace and descends into the vacuity of asymbolia. Secondly, it concentrates on Hyperion who strives to ward off the blinding and enervating melancholy of the disgraced Saturn; it seeks to indicate how Hyperion dreads being stifled by the shades that dominate his mind and how he fights against the melancholic banishment from the symbolic that defines him and consolidate his exiting position. The section also emphasises the importance of the correlation between impotency and loss of eyesight; it suggests that seeing and being seen are essential to perpetuate one’s position in the realm of signs; it proposes that the male gods struggle to hold on to light, the source of (symbolic) representations in order to resist the uterine night of the archaic maternal Thing. This section further discusses the emergence of the new Olympian god of the sun, namely Apollo; it first attends to Apollo’s experience of the melancholy situation of living in death; the boundary

between life and death is blurred for Apollo, a threshold figure who dies into life; then it goes on to discuss how Apollo, the new god of the sun, allows the night to transform him and thus becomes the Kristevan god of the black sun; it also examines a Delphic Apollo who is open to the ambivalence of the twilight; finally, it demonstrates how a Bacchic Apollo merges with death and the darkness, thereby making boundaries indistinct, and how the Dionysian Apollo is threatened by the swampy excess of the unsignifiable affect and his Bacchic shriek, uncontainable in a linguistic sign, causes the poem to come to a halt.

#### 4.2.1 The “realmless eyes” of a Saturnine God: Symbolic/Political Abdication and Saturn’s Melancholy

A saturnine temperament marks *Hyperion*<sup>48</sup>. The political abdication of the Titans corresponds to the Kristevan “symbolic abdication” that is germane to melancholy (Kristeva *Black* 40). *Hyperion*’s beginning features Saturn as melancholic; he has “melancholy eyes” (*Hyperion* I. 70). The first book of the epic focuses on the fallen, dejected Saturn racked by “an abyss of sorrow, a noncommunicable grief” (Kristeva *Black* 3) for 157 lines, before moving on to the eponymous epic hero, “one of the whole mammoth-brood [who] still kept / His sov’rignty” (*Hyperion* I. 164-5). Saturn is despondent; he gives up signifying and submerges “in the silence of pain” (Kristeva *Black* 41):

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; (*Hyperion* I. 1-5)

Like Endymion with his “down-sunken hours” (*Endymion* I. 708), a motionless Saturn is sunken in the veiling vale, forlorn of light with his hollow eyes. The “lethargic rays” of the Kristevan black sun reach him, pinning him to the ground and compelling him to silence and abandonment (Kristeva *Black* 3). There is a conjunction between the

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<sup>48</sup> Kristeva reminds us that “medieval thought returned to the cosmologies of late antiquity and bound melancholia to Saturn, the planet of spirit and thought” (*Black* 8).

mental landscape of the melancholic Saturn and the inhospitable landscape of *Hyperion*:

Saturn's inner melancholy extends to darken his very landscape in the evocative 'shady sadness of a vale' where place and person are almost imperceptibly elided. Shrouded in 'shady sadness', it might be difficult to discern one's surroundings very clearly; statuesque Saturn is not simply embedded 'deep' in darkness but so 'far sunken', 'far from' the timely indicators of 'morn', 'noon' and 'eve's one star', that he is also unable to track the passing of days. Saturn's seclusion is absolute in terms of both time and space, and presents the symptoms of the kind of withdrawn de-realisation that might affect someone under considerable psychological duress. The remove ('far') from 'eve's one star' is indicative both of the seclusion of his lair and his detached mental state (Bari 120).

The melancholic Saturn's "devitalized existence" (Kristeva *Black* 4) is reflected in the unwelcoming surroundings. Saturn's melancholy is based on a withdrawal from the symbolic, where time and space prevail in the constitution of life, into the asymbolic where "there is no morning, afternoon, and evening – no differentials because no representation – there is also no temporal passage [...] no history" (Levinson 205). Being far from these indicators of time is consonant with the melancholic subject's "denial of sequentiality", his repudiation of temporality (Kristeva *Black* 20). He is disconnected from the paternal realm of time, as Kristevan theory shows that time is traditionally "attributed to masculinity, to the father" (Chanter 68).

Saturn's dethronement causes this withdrawal, as shown by the image of his "old right hand [lying] nerveless, listless, dead, / Unsceptred" (*Hyperion* I. 18-9), and with it he is cut off from the realm of life, vitality and energy. Not only did dethronement cause the withdrawal from the symbolic, but the withdrawal itself caused him to lose his very godlike selfhood, for the realm of the symbolic had defined him as a sovereign god: he feels he is "gone / Away from my bosom; I have left / My strong identity, my real self" (*Hyperion* I. 112-4). His "real self" was predicated upon a position secured by the symbolic, yet he is disgraced; he falls from grace as he falls from the symbolic; his fall from grace (loss of a position of power) corresponds to a descent into the asymbolic; the melancholic "appears to stop cognizing as well as uttering, sinking into the blankness of asymbolia" (Kristeva *Black* 33).

A deathly stillness marks his melancholy withdrawal from the symbolic; he is as still “as the silence” (*Hyperion* I. 5) and even the streams become voiceless and reeds mute (*Hyperion* I. 11-4). This points to both silence and immobility, as also indicated by a large number of descriptions connected with silence and immobility: Saturn is “quiet as a stone” (*Hyperion* I. 4) and “postured motionless, / Like natural sculpture” (*Hyperion* I. 85-6), his “nerveless, listless” old hand does not move (*Hyperion* I. 18), and he is charmed by the unwavering stars, while trees dream “without a stir” (*Hyperion* I. 74-5), and there is “[n]o stir of air” (*Hyperion* I. 7). Like Endymion, who seems to be “as dead-still as a marble man, / Frozen in that old tale” (*Endymion* I. 405-6), Saturn is the “frozen god still couchant on the earth” (*Hyperion* I. 87), he is petrified. Both his exile from the symbolic and the resultant loss of voice/identity paralyse him and, like Glaucus who was deprived of power and vigour by a Circean Medusa, he is incapacitated, frozen, motionless, petrified, listless and “withered, sapless, feeble” (*Endymion* III. 638).

Saturn’s retreat from the symbolic is also characterised by a lack of motivation “to engage in the symbolic realm – that is, to speak or write” (McAfee 63). Saturn’s “palsied tongue” (*Hyperion* I. 93) demonstrates his banishment from the symbolic realm as much as his immobility. He is dislodged from the realm of signs; therefore, he is one of melancholy persons who are “potential exiles” (Kristeva *Black* 64). Saturn’s exile from the symbolic domain seems to have impaired his linguistic capacity. His “palsied tongue” refers to language “retardation” of the melancholy person: “speech delivery is slow, silences are long and frequent, rhythms slacken” (Kristeva *Black* 34). Evidently he is in a domain where he has lost his real self, his strong identity; now indistinct profusion claims him; self and other are coalesced and his boundaries are blurred. His tongue is “palsied” in the realm of asymbolic extinction. For the melancholic, language is always foreign.

As a result of withdrawal from the symbolic, the melancholic, like “a primitive self,” feels “wounded, incomplete, and empty” (Kristeva *Black* 12). Saturn’s banishment from the symbolic is further marked by a sense of emptiness that is indicated by his eyes being sunken and his bosom hollow, by the heaven being parted from him, the

ocean having passed from his sceptre, and the air being emptied of his majesty (*Hyperion* I. 55-9).

Among all these powerful depictions of his sadly changed state, Saturn's expulsion from the symbolic realm is most powerfully expressed through his melancholy eyes: "his realmless eyes were closed" (*Hyperion* I. 19). From one point of view, the melancholic is introspective as shown by the eyes of the despondent Saturn that do not behold the outside world (being closed) and do not look out on external realms but rather look inward to the internal realm. Melancholy is also characterised by a pensive sadness, for an inward-looking melancholic is in a pensive mood. Kristeva argues that being steeped in sadness can be seen as a defence against falling into pieces: "sadness reconstitutes an affective cohesion of the self, which restores its unity within the framework of the affect"; this "nonverbal" integrity is considered to make up for "symbolic invalidation and interruption" (*Black* 19). From another perspective, we are shown that Saturn's eyes are realmless because he has lost the realms he once ruled, and therefore, his eyes neither look on nor reflect any personal realms, unlike the epic vision of "the charioteer" of *Sleep and Poetry* who "[l]ooks out upon the winds with glorious fear" (17-8). In this way too, the realmless eyes of Saturn do not befit an epic hero. The poem is therefore named after Hyperion, the god of the sun who is not yet dethroned. Saturn, whose eyes are hollowed and whose wrinkling brow is "[n]aked and bare of its great diadem" is "desolate" (*Hyperion* I. 100-3). Besides expressing his deep sadness and misery, this adjective in its primary definition means a place uninhabited and giving an impression of a bleak emptiness (OED adj. 1.), and so his being desolated by the usurping Olympians suggests the realmless, uninhabited and untenanted eyes of Saturn, who asks Thea "where is Saturn?" (*Hyperion* I. 134), and presents a powerful impression of evacuation. Thus, his melancholy is described through a spatial metaphor, that is, an uninhabited realm, and also through a visual metaphor, that is, his realmless eyes, which paradoxically makes meaning by means of an image of a god whose vision is sealed and whose specular identification with his strong identity is dissevered. His realmless eyes recall the depressed body, "the body untenanted by meaning" (Kristeva *Black* 101).

#### 4.2.2 Loss of Sight, Potency and Light: The Struggle against Sinking into the Asymbolic Darkness of Melancholy

For Saturn, Hyperion and Enceladus, loss of sight is associated with impotency; loss of power is linked with the dying of the light. While Saturn seems to have surrendered to this loss, Hyperion and Enceladus still rage against the dying of the light and strive against being beset by the darkness and death.

The image of Saturn's realmless eyes links his melancholy with loss of sight. Indeed, the relations between seeing and being, eyesight and potency, and blindness and impotency pervade the epic poem. Saturn's eyes are sealed by sleep and his melancholy is characterised by a slumberous solitude, as Thea remarks:

Saturn, sleep on! Oh, thoughtless, why did I  
Thus violate thy slumberous solitude?  
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?  
Saturn, sleep on, while at thy feet I weep! (*Hyperion* I. 68-71)

Thus this melancholy and these eyes are once more seen as an indication of Saturn having retreated into himself and having been cut off from the symbolic realm. Once he eventually opens his eyes, he will see that his realms are lost: "Until at length old Saturn lifted up / His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone" (*Hyperion* I. 89-90). As a result of his loss of power and his strong identity, his eyes lose their brightness and grow faint; the light in his eyes vanishes, like the Latmians' "old eyes dissolving at his [the melancholic Endymion's] woe" (*Endymion* I. 400). Upon asking Thea where Saturn is, a line powerfully expressing his self-alienation, his melancholy eyes will peter out or "fever out" (in contrast to Hyperion's fiery nature) because his real self is gone, and his voice ceases (*Hyperion* I. 138). The image of his eyes, which start out of his head feverishly, is linked with the image of his hollow, realmless eyes; the eyeless god stands unsighted as he loses his potency.

Loss of sight also portends the loss of power in the realm of the sun god Hyperion, who strives to fend off the blinding melancholy of the disgraced Saturn. Hyperion's precarious selfhood rests on a fragile crest where death and life vie for dominance, and for him, loss of sight coincides with the former. Hyperion is despondent as his "lucent empire" is:

Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.  
The blaze, the splendour and the symmetry  
I cannot see – but darkness, death and darkness. (*Hyperion* I. 239-42)

Hyperion dreads the possibility of being blinded by the loss of his sovereignty; he feels that the punctual ego (that he struggles to cling to) is always threatened by chameleonic non-identity. His deserted empire recalls the realmlessness of the desolate Saturn, and darkness and “shady visions” dominate and insult him, “blind[ing], and stifl[ing] up [his] pomp” (*Hyperion* I. 244-5). The loss of the majesty that he identifies as his self is expressed through a loss of sight, for blindness signifies impotency and emasculation. He rides on his orb of fire through the heavens, and therefore, unlike Saturn who is veiled in the shady vale of sadness, Hyperion is not “veiled quite, blindfold and hid” (*Hyperion* I. 269-72); he refuses to be blinded by the loss of his domain. However, when he fails to command the dawn and bid the day begin, his spirit is bent “to the sorrow of the time” and he lies “in grief and radiance faint” (*Hyperion* I. 300-305). The brightness of the blazing Hyperion fades as he realizes that he is, too, to fall like Saturn. A sorrowful Hyperion is then beset by darkness, and the grieving god of the sun loses his radiance, turning into the Kristevan god of the black sun, and recalling the faded eyes of the melancholic Saturn.

Nevertheless, his eyes rekindle once Coelus inspires him to fight against the usurping Olympians:

Ere half this region-whisper had come down,  
Hyperion arose, and on the stars  
Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide  
Until it ceased; and still he kept them wide;  
And still they were the same bright, patient stars. (*Hyperion* I. 349-53)

As he listens to Coelus whispering from the sky, Hyperion is encouraged and aroused and defiance is expressed through his wide opened eyes. In contrast to Saturn, who “lifted up / His faded eyes” (*Hyperion* I. 89-90), Hyperion lifts up his curved lids; unlike Saturn whose eyes are sealed, Hyperion unseals his eyes; he refuses to be enfeebled like Saturn whose sunken eyes are covered. Keeping his eyes wide open is thus a sign of repudiation of the melancholic Saturn’s faded eyes. Unlike the untenanted realmless eyes of Saturn, the resolutely unblinking eyes of Hyperion are inhabited by the realm of the unwavering and patient stars; beholding the bright

domain of the steadfast stars in turn revitalises Hyperion, empowering him to be the bright god of the sun untainted by melancholy (as opposed to the Kristevan *soleil noir*) and to fight against the blinding darkness of melancholy that has befallen Saturn. Opening his eyes like the epic charioteer of *Sleep and Poetry*, he gloriously looks out at the stars; as he opens his eyes and keeps them wide, the stars open out, extending into his view, reinvigorating him. As Hyperion is empowered by the light of the stars, the disaster that is to befall him is overcome. As the Latin etymology of the word “disaster” refers to the absence of the stars (OED), the disaster is, for the Titans, to be engulfed in an unlit, starless night, “the old womb of night” of *Endymion* (IV. 372); the catastrophe that will befall the Kristevan nocturnal god of the sun racked by melancholy is to be no longer the celestial source of the light of representation. His curved lids opened echo his wings opening, and with his eyes and wings unfolded, Hyperion, refusing to be bent, plunges “into the deep night” (*Hyperion* I. 355-7) and slides “into the rustled air” “at the self-same beat of Time’s wide wings” (*Hyperion* II. 1-2); he seeks to conquer the night of the melancholy, the uterine night of *Endymion* (IV. 372). Winged and with open eyes, Hyperion withstands the melancholic withdrawal from the symbolic realm of systems and structures that define and maintain his strong identity. Hyperion here appears to soar upon “Time’s wide wings” (*Hyperion* II. 1-2); he refuses to be captured by “depressive temporality”; he struggles against “melancholy temporization”:

Riveted to the past, regressing to the paradise or inferno of an unsurpassable experience, melancholy persons manifest a strange memory: everything has gone by, they seem to say, but I am faithful to those bygone days, I am nailed down to them, no revolution is possible, there is no future ... An overinflated, hyperbolic past fills all the dimensions of psychic continuity (Kristeva *Black* 60).

Hyperion challenges this sense of melancholic temporality, refusing to be a “dweller in truncated time” or “a dweller in the imaginary realm” (Kristeva *Black* 61). To start a counterrevolution against the Olympians, he feels that he has to fly into the symbolic, repudiating the immemorial time of the archaic Thing.

The eyes of Enceladus also provide reverse evidence of eyelessness corresponding to loss of power. Like Hyperion, Enceladus struggles against the predicament of the

melancholic Saturn's banishment from the symbolic realm, and it is Enceladus's eyes that resuscitate the melancholic Saturn as he arrives at the haunt of the fallen Titans:

So Saturn, as he walked into the midst,  
Felt faint and would have sunk among the rest,  
But that he met Enceladus's eye,  
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once  
Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,  
'Titans, behold your God!' (*Hyperion* II. 105-10)

Enceladus's eyes revive Saturn's sunken eyes; they inspire Saturn and seem to breath life into his hollow eyes; they seem as if they con-spire, breathe together to rise against the usurping Olympians, if one takes into consideration the Latin root of *conspire* (OED). The awe of Saturn that shows in Enceladus's regard helps him rise out of his melancholic state; the Titans who "bow'd with reverence" (*Hyperion* II. 112) repopulate Saturn's realmless eyes and his voice "[g]rew up like organ" (*Hyperion* II. 125-6). The Titans who are subject to him in this way provide him with a realm to inhabit his eyes. Once he is stirred, he shouts and commands the Titans to use their own eyes and behold him. Being eyeless here literally corresponds to impotency, and seeing is holding power, yet Saturn's command indicates that not only seeing but also being seen is important to maintain power; to be beheld is to hold power, to maintain one's position, and to sustain one's strong identity. Once more etymology reinforces the poem's message, for the verb "behold" has both senses of holding, maintaining, retaining, and of looking (OED). The Keatsian "verbal topography" that "draws on a root system" (Stewart 137) communicates the idea that the Titans beholding Saturn offer him a realm to behold in return and a position of power to sustain him. A realm to behold is meant to save Saturn from falling into the vacuity of the asymbolia; he appears to resume "cognizing as well as uttering" (Kristeva *Black* 33). Beheld, Saturn is given a grand sight, an impressive spectacle of the Titans bowing "with reverence" (*Hyperion* II. 112) to fill his sight, to inhabit his eyes. The Titans beholding Saturn enable him to retain his power, to hold on to his strong identity; beheld, he can resist falling into the depths of the shady vale of melancholy; once beheld, his real self is underpinned and his eyes are not sunken. Not being beheld, Saturn might fall back into the sunken vale where he would be "[d]iffused unseen throughout eternal space" (*Hyperion* I. 318), yet being seen, he is given a distinct, visible shape and becomes a

manifest, divine symbol (*Hyperion* I. 315-6). Again, once beheld, his eyes receive the vision of an impressive spectacle. If he was unbeheld and consigned to oblivion, the impressive spectacle (the Titans who behold him and bow to Saturn with reverence) would change into the monstrous spectres that haunt Hyperion who dreads being dethroned like Saturn. The existence of the Titans who reverently look at him offers him a vision to behold; this vision/spectacle in turn makes him visible, enabling him to manifest himself like an undisgraced deity. However, without this impressive spectacle, he is rendered realmless since his self loses his specular identification with the other; the lack of the spectacle or the realmlessness makes him introspective; he looks inward since his eyes are hollowed; once the distinction between self and other is obliterated, the spectres might threaten to dominate over the introspective melancholic (as it happens in the case of Hyperion)<sup>49</sup>. Also, being beheld by the Titans, Saturn is beholden to them; he remembers that he is duty-bound as their chief deity; his being honour-bound then allows him to maintain his distinct identity as if he has fallen from grace and makes him moor his self more consciously to the existence of the other, thus striving to rise out of the inward-looking and solitary melancholic state. Bound to his status, for a moment he delays his floating into the vacuity of melancholy.

The reinvigorating power of eyes which fends off the melancholic state is also evident in the fiery speech of Enceladus addressed to the sullen Titans and given as a response to the remarks of Clymene, who is impressed by the Olympian Apollo's music, and to the words of Oceanus, who believes that the Titans should give in to the Olympians:

What, have I roused  
Your spleens with so few simple words as these?  
O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:  
O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes  
Wide-glaring for revenge! (*Hyperion* II. 320-24)

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<sup>49</sup> This passage refers to the same etymological root of the words "spectacle", "spectators", "(intro)spective", "specular" and "spectre". All of them are derived from the Latin verb "specere" meaning "to look" (OED). This is fundamental to the discussion on the relationship between seeing/being seen and potency/being powerful, the tension between having a distinct strong identity and being selfless, being consigned into oblivion. I also think of "manifest", "palpable" and "evident" as they are related to visibility.

Defying the “hollow eyes” of the dispirited Titans (*Hyperion* II. 115), Enceladus is happy to see their “roused” eyes glaring for revenge; their wide-glaring eyes become a sign of their being not lost, not yielding to melancholy, a refusal of faint eyes.

All eyes are on Enceladus when he announces the appearance of Hyperion: “Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced - / Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here!” (*Hyperion* II. 344-6). The Titans behold the radiance of Hyperion and the god of the sun sees “full many a God / Wroth as himself” (*Hyperion* II. 347-51). Mutually revitalised by the exchanged or mirrored acts of beholding, Hyperion “looked upon them all, / And in each face he saw a gleam of light” (*Hyperion* II. 351-2). The god of the sun shines upon the Titans who reflect back his light and their gleaming eyes rejuvenate each other reciprocally; thus, they attempt to fend off the Kristevan *soleil noir*. When Hyperion beholds Saturn, the gleam of light is “splendid in Saturn’s” than in other faces and the fallen god’s “hoary locks / Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel / When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove” (*Hyperion* II. 352-5). Saturn, whose hollow eyes are “emptied of [his] hoary majesty” (*Hyperion* I. 59), are reanimated by Hyperion’s light. His hoary locks of hair shining like the bubbling foam sweep away the air of apprehensive gloom and drive away his dormant, motionless state; he is bubbling with enthusiasm and excitement; he “craves that solid, fixed, familiar notion of subjectivity” (Sandy “Tragic Realisation” 124). An emasculated, dethroned Saturn is revived, which is expressed through the image of a prow sweeping into a midnight cove, a metaphor of penetrative, thrusting maleness dominating the bubbling foam. This image of phallic manliness expresses the view that Hyperion’s animating light rejuvenates Saturn whose melancholy “destroys erection” (Kristeva *Tales* 77). Saturn’s gleaming locks of hair shine upon the midnight cove, chasing away the darkness and the melancholy. Hyperion’s light has thus regenerated Saturn, who seeks to “engine our [the Titans’s] great wrath” (*Hyperion* II. 161), to convert their tremendous power into motion, and the great wrath of the writhing Titans is to be pushed into the darkness and melancholy. They hold on to the light to repel the darkness while their gleaming eyes expel the sunken eyes of melancholy. The male gods try to cling to light in order to banish the uterine night of the maternal Thing.

Hyperion's splendour permeates the Titans's den which is, as the poem repeats, "lorn of light" (*Hyperion* I. 118) and a "covert drear" (*Hyperion* II. 32):

In pale and silver silence they remained,  
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,  
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,  
All the sad spaces of oblivion,  
And every gulf, and every chasm old,  
And every height, and every sullen depth,  
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams;  
And all the everlasting cataracts,  
And all the headlong torrents far and near,  
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,  
Now saw the light and made it terrible.  
It was Hyperion: (*Hyperion* II. 356-67)

Hyperion's light drives away the gloominess of the overhanging precipices and the sadness of oblivion; his splendour penetrates the gulfs, chasms and sullen depths which threaten to smother up the fallen Titans in the darkness of melancholy, and his radiance spreads through streams, cataracts and torrents which have been cloaked in darkness and veiled in shade. His divine brightness is a remedy for the darkness muffling the melancholic Titans.

The light of the sun penetrates into the horrid, sullen depth where the Titans are hidden; however, Hyperion becomes depressed when he sees the "misery his brilliance had betrayed / To the most hateful seeing of itself" (*Hyperion* II. 369-70). As he sees the abject forms of the fallen Titans enfeebled by "the frailty of grief" (*Hyperion* I. 93) and some of them "chained in torture", "pent in regions of laborious breath", "[d]ungeoned in opaque element" with "all their limbs / Locked up" (*Hyperion* II. 18-25), the god of the sun becomes melancholy or "mournful" and "contemplative" (*Hyperion* II. 376-7). Then, seeing Hyperion beset by pensive sadness,

Despondence seized again the fallen Gods  
At sight of the dejected King of Day,  
And many hid their faces from the light.  
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes  
Among the brotherhood; and at their glare,  
Uprose Iapetus, and Creus too,  
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode  
To where he towered on his eminence. (*Hyperion* II. 379-86)

The fallen Titans thereupon cease to behold Hyperion, and once more it is Enceladus's eyes that revitalise, this time the glare of his eyes arouses the Titans and they start chanting Saturn's name (*Hyperion* II. 387-91); "a thousand eyes / Wide-glaring for revenge!" (*Hyperion* II. 323-4) are rekindled again by the glitter of Enceladus's piercing eyes. The glaring eyes defy the faded eyes of the melancholic Saturn.

In the "swart abysm of melancholy" (*Endymion* II. 376) marked by the "opaque element," (*Hyperion* II. 23) the melancholic remains indistinguishable. However, an ocular communication among the fallen Titans again reinvigorates them as the solidarity of wide-glaring eyes struggles against the hollow eyes of a melancholy which annihilates the distinction between self and other in the sad spaces of oblivion where the melancholic, withdrawing from the symbolic, closes his eyes in upon himself.

For Kristeva, melancholy corresponds to union with death, and this association is very clearly made in Keats's epic fragment. The melancholic Saturn retreats into a sort of buried existence in a den, surrounded by dead leaves and deadened streams and sleeps there, a figure with old, lifeless, dead hands and hollow eyes (*Hyperion* I. 1-19). Dreading to be dispossessed like Saturn, Hyperion is also beset by death and darkness: "I cannot see – but darkness, death and darkness," he says (*Hyperion* I. 242), enjoining the age-old association of darkness with death. So when the god of the sun is engulfed by "the dusk demesnes of night" (*Hyperion* I. 298), he is in a death-like situation. Similarly, the melancholic Titans are overwhelmed by the dark domain of the night as if they are "dead born / From the old womb of night" (*Endymion* IV. 371-2). "[E]very gulf, and every chasm old" (*Hyperion* II. 360-1) that Hyperion's splendour permeates in the uplifting passage discussed earlier is finally overtaken by the lethal darkness of the night, and the disinherited Titans are dominated by "the yawn of hell" (*Hyperion* I. 120). The disinherited Titans fall into the predicament of the melancholic person disinherited of the Thing. Their loss of power and the ensuing disenchantment they experience appear to "awaken echoes of old traumas" and "discover antecedents to my [their] current breakdown in a loss, death, or grief" (Kristeva *Black* 4-5). Their deprivation in the present harks back to the past, a primal wounding experience of deprivation.

### 4.2.3 *Disjecti Membra Poetae*: Apollo as the New God of the Black Sun

Before attending to the melancholy of the new god of the sun, it is useful to talk about the similarities and differences between Hyperion of the deposed Titans and Apollo of the rising Olympians.

While the grieving Titans are engulfed by the death and darkness that their “dolorous fate / Had wrought upon” them (*Hyperion* II. 240-1), the Olympian Apollo, whose “new blissful golden melody” is paradoxically defined as “living death” in Clymene’s rapturous encounter with it (*Hyperion* II. 280-1), inhabits a realm that blurs the boundary between death and life. This can be interpreted with reference to Kristeva’s claim that a fusion with the archaic Thing is both “lethal” and “jubilatory” (*Black* 19). The Titans’ confrontation with the archaic unnameable Thing is lethal as they are surrounded by death; however, Apollo’s encounter with death is also jubilatory as his “new blissful golden melody” is marked by “living death” (*Hyperion* II. 280-1). Thus, Apollo’s melancholy is related with “a living death”, with the experience of being on “the frontiers of life and death” (Kristeva *Black* 4). The Keatsian notion of living death resonates with the Kristevan concept of living death as they both refer to the collapse of the frontiers of life and death and the existence which is “on the verge of collapsing” (Kristeva *Black* 3); melancholy jams “life into death, leaving no space between them” (Kristeva *Tales* 77).

For the dispossessed Titans of the epic, the boundary between death (being dethroned) and life (being crowned) is very clear since they strive to retain their strong identities as defined by not only their diadems, but also this very boundary. However, for Apollo, who dies into life in his assumption of godhead (*Hyperion* III. 130), the boundary between death and life is evidently blurred. His enchanting music which drifts with the shifting wind both drowns and keeps alive Clymene’s ears during her enrapturing experience of it (*Hyperion* II. 276-7): “each gush of sounds” is inhabited by a “living death” (*Hyperion* II. 281); his “rapturous hurried notes” fall “one after one, yet all at once, / Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string” (*Hyperion* II. 282-4). It is Apollo’s music that coalesces such opposites. The dove winged with Apollo’s music hovers round Clymene’s head and makes her “sick / Of joy and grief at once”

(*Hyperion* II. 286-9). Such integrated joy and grief simultaneously inhabit the musical realm of Apollo, a “transitional and liminal” figure (Sandy “Tragic Realisation” 127) who is in a liminal space between death and life, where “all the vast / Unwearing ear of the whole universe” listens “in pain and pleasure at the birth / Of such new tuneful wonder”, his golden melody (*Hyperion* III. 64-7). This new wonderful melody that oscillates between joy and grief, pain and pleasure wanders out of the epic landscape of *Hyperion*, which is intended to be rid of oscillations and thus be embedded in fixed positions.

There are several similarities between Hyperion and Apollo although they are of the warring dynasties. Both Hyperion and Apollo are the gods of the sun, the former of the deposed Titan race and the latter of the rising Olympian dynasty. Both of these sun gods confront death and darkness, but in different forms. In Kristevan terms, both are gods of the black sun, and as shown, both of them are melancholic. Hyperion appears as “a vast shade / In midst of his own brightness (*Hyperion* II. 372-3); light and shade consort uneasily together in the selfhood of Hyperion, the god of the black sun, the deity of “the dusking east” (*Hyperion* II. 375). Hyperion sees “darkness, death and darkness” (*Hyperion* I. 242) in his “lambent palace”; this “bleak vision” shows that Hyperion’s light as the god of the black sun “illuminates darkness as darkness” (Bari 144). Hyperion’s spirit is bent “to the sorrow of the time” and he stretches himself “in grief and radiance faint” (*Hyperion* I. 300-4), while Apollo is beset by a “solitary sorrow” and “a lonely grief” (*Hyperion* III. 5-6). Both of these dark gods are nevertheless associated with an embowered, rather than buried, life: Hyperion’s bright palace is marked by “bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light” (*Hyperion* I. 219), and Apollo lives on an embowered isle (*Hyperion* III. 23). Beauty and art are produced by these gods, too: Hyperion’s “slow-breathed melodies” blown by Zephyrs (*Hyperion* I. 207-8) resonate with “the loudest song” breathed by the Zephyr of Apollo’s embowered Delos (*Hyperion* III. 26). They share their restful emboweredness, for the “deep recess” of Hyperion’s palace (*Hyperion* I. 196) echoes the “green recess” of Apollo (*Hyperion* III. 41). In beauty and music again, the image of Hyperion sleeping “in the arms of melody” (*Hyperion* I. 193) recalls Apollo’s golden melody which fills Clymene’s sense (*Hyperion* II. 279-80).

Despite these associations between Hyperion and Apollo, there are striking contrasts between Hyperion “the Giant of the Sun” (*Hyperion* III. 29) and the new Olympian “Young Apollo” (*Hyperion* II. 293). The main difference between the two is that the “Blazing Hyperion on his orbèd fire” (*Hyperion* I. 166) dreads envelopment by darkness and death whereas the “morning-bright Apollo” (*Hyperion* II. 294) opens himself up to the transformative powers of death and darkness. Hyperion is the old solar deity refusing to be engirdled by “the dusky demesnes of the night” (*Hyperion* I. 298); however, Apollo is the new solar deity who is to be metamorphosed by the old womb of the night, death and the darkness silvered by the lunar light, the “prophesyings of the midnight lamp” (*Hyperion* I. 174). Apollo is a lunar god of the sun because he is the god of the black sun whose music is a living death. Unlike Apollo, Hyperion is not identified with poetry and music; he is only the god of the sun, but Apollo is also a god of art, who affords “a golden theme” (*Hyperion* III. 28) because he is “the god of the sun and of poetry” (Allott 436). Apollo’s being the god of the sun, poetry and music makes him receptive to both shade and light, while Hyperion, being god of the sun only, is consigned to and virtually obliterated by darkness. He is the old god of the dark sun who, with no divine art, does not or cannot appreciate the beauty of the darkness, but Apollo is the new god of the black sun, of both light and shade, of both “aching ignorance” and “[k]nowledge enormous” (*Hyperion* III. 107, III. 113). An Apollo of both light and shade reflects Keats the poet who is impressed by the “light and shade – the sort of black brightness – the ebon diamonding” as he writes in the margin while he reads *Paradise Lost* (Lau *Keats’s Paradise Lost* 82-84). This immersion in black brightness marks Apollo as the god of *soleil noir*. He is the Apollo of black brightness, as he is “the solar source of representation” that seeks the possibility of representing the Bacchic other in “the maternal watery element” of the Narcissus myth (Kristeva *Tales* 42); the god of the sun gives us the light of representation which enables us to see and distinguish things (in the symbolic realm), whereas the maternal watery element blurs those things (in the semiotic realm) as water causes the erosion of distinctions, the dissolving of definitions, disintegrating boundaries; the state of in-betweenness eats away at distinctions; the Bacchic shriek gnaws away at the classical Apollonian image of Apollo, thus causing a new Apollo to emerge. Yearning to remain the solar source of representation, Hyperion is “frenzied

with new woes” as he confronts death and the darkness (*Hyperion* I. 299) while Apollo engenders music that sparks off enrapturing notes making an ecstatic Clymene experience a moment of frenzy; Hyperion is drowned in a frenzy of chaos whereas Apollo dies into life through a Bacchic frenzy, through the “ecstasy of the Dionysiac state, which destroys the usual barriers and limits of existence” (Nietzsche 129). The Dionysiac Apollo, merging with death and the darkness, blurs the boundaries, which also explains why he is melancholic.

The realm of a shuddering and perplexed Hyperion is marked by the “gloom-bird’s hated screech” (*Hyperion* I. 170-1), a bird portending death; such frightening hooting of the owl is, in Apollo’s realm, replaced by the melodious song of the nightingale (*Hyperion* III. 36). Thus, the night for Hyperion presages death while for Apollo it becomes a melodious addition to life. In the domain of the morning-bright Apollo, when the nightingale ceases at dawn, the “calm-throated” thrush begins singing (*Hyperion* III. 36-8). In the realm of the old god of the sun, words “[h]eld struggle with his [Hyperion’s] throat but came not forth” (*Hyperion* I. 251-2) and the pent-up Titans convulse with “sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse” (*Hyperion* II. 27-8). In a parallel contrast, Hyperion’s hollow throat is supplanted by Apollo’s “white melodious throat” which “[t]hrobbed with the syllables” as he speaks “melodiously” to Mnemosyne, the mother of the muses (*Hyperion* III. 81-2, III. 49). The throat of the god of the sun and of poetry and music pulsates rhythmically while Hyperion’s throat is seized.

Another major difference between Hyperion and Apollo is that the former strives to retain his distinct identity and maintain the boundaries between light and darkness, while the latter blurs these boundaries, vacillating between life and death. Hyperion, “leaving twilight in the rear, / Came slope upon the threshold of the west” (*Hyperion* I. 203-4); Hyperion seeks to preserve the boundaries that define his real self; he struggles to leave the twilight zone while Apollo wanders “in the morning twilight” besides the river, full deep-ankle in the lilies of the vale (*Hyperion* III. 33-5). Hyperion does not want to be enveloped by the semi-darkness below the horizon; he desires to command the dawn and bid the day begin, thus ending “the dusk demesnes of night” (*Hyperion* I. 298). Hyperion hates the obscurity of the twilight which threatens to

annihilate the lucidity of his distinct identity pervading all the chasms, gulfs and sullen depths, whereas Apollo, enthralled by the Delphic obscurity which incites joy and grief, pain and pleasure at once, embraces the shifting state of being adrift in the twilight. Apollo embodies the “sort of Delphic Abstraction” Keats mentions in a marginal note in his copy of *Paradise Lost* expressing his affection for the word “vale”:

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 ... 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 (in Allott 396).

The Keatsian Delphic abstraction is indicated in Apollo’s encounter with Mnemosyne, “the goddess of memory, and the repository of the knowledge of universal mutability and impermanence” (Sperry *Keats* 194), who comes “over the unfooted sea” and moves in “these vales invisible” (*Hyperion* III. 50-2). The veiled vales are attractive for a negatively capable Apollo who is open to the Delphic ambiguity of the twilight, who is willing to be immersed in “the Luxury of twilight” (Keats *Letters* 97), which puts everything in a mist. However, Hyperion refuses to be “veilèd quite, blindfold, and hid” (*Hyperion* I. 272); he rises out of the mist of the scummy marsh like a vast and muscular serpent (*Hyperion* I. 258-63); he struggles to break free of the misty “heavy vapours” that contaminate his realm (*Hyperion* I. 267). Hyperion yearns for the supremacy of the light unsullied by the Delphic shades and mist; disinherited, he grieves; “a vast shade / in midst of his own brightness”, the god of the black sun sighs “mournful” (*Hyperion* II. 372-6). Examining the cancelled manuscript of *Hyperion*, Allott notes that Hyperion there sighed “melodious” (434); “melodious” is corrected into “mournful”, since melody is associated with Apollo, the god of poetry and music, whose throat throbs with words melodiously.

Having compared and contrasted the two gods of the sun, it is time to focus on the melancholy of Apollo, the god of the black sun. The third book of *Hyperion*, which focuses on Apollo and his initiation as the god of the sun, begins with an invocation to the Muse to leave the vanquished Titans “to their woes” and their “tumults dire”, and to “touch piously the Delphic harp” to sing of Apollo, “the Father of all verse” (*Hyperion* III. 10-13). The Delphic harp sings of an oracular Apollo of shades as

opposed to an ocular Hyperion who is obsessed with seeing and being seen in the full light. The Delphic harp is accompanied by the Dorian flute. Allott notes that the Dorian flute echoes “the Dorian mood / Of flute” (l. 550-1) from Milton’s *Paradise Lost*; she adds that “Keats marked the passage in his copy of Milton with the marginal note: ‘The light and shade ... the sorrow, the pain, the sad-sweet melody’” (435). The Delphic harp and the Dorian flute herald the emergence of Apollo. The Delphic Apollo is the Kristevan god of the black sun whose poetry and music is immersed both in light and shade, sadness and sweetness, steeped in a “sad voluptuousness” and “a despondent intoxication” (Kristeva *Black* 5). Davenport notes that “the glory of the new gods shines out to eclipse the Titans” (445); in addition, Apollo as the new god of the nocturnal sun eclipses himself too; the Dionysian “dark passages” eclipse “the light of those Apollonian unifying harmonies” (Sandy “Tragic Realisation” 115), which produces a Bacchic, Delphic Apollo of the Kristevan *soleil noir*.

The advent of Apollo is marked by the things flushing with “a vermeil hue”, the rose glowing intensely and warming the air, the clouds floating voluptuously, the red wine boiling “[c]old as a bubbling well”, the faint-lipped shells turning vermilion and the maid blushing keenly (*Hyperion* III. 14-22). The rise of Apollo is contrasted with “the angry sunrise” of Hyperion who “[g]lared a blood-red” and “[f]lushed angerly” (*Hyperion* I. 179-82). The Endymionese Apollo, through whom light and shade merge, joy and grief fuse, pain and pleasure blend, undermines the Hyperionesque urge to retain differences, to maintain distinctions and to preserve boundaries. The melancholic Apollo’s union with the unnameable Thing is both jubilatory and lethal.

The melancholic Apollo wanders in the morning twilight beside “the osiers of a rivulet, / Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale”; a few stars are lingering in the skies; the “calm-throated” thrush begins singing; “the murmurous noise of waves” haunts all the coverts and caves of the isle; Apollo “listened, and he wept, and his bright tears / Went trickling down the golden bow he held” (*Hyperion* III. 33-43). Apollo stands “with half-shut suffused eyes” in these “grassy solitudes” (*Hyperion* III. 44, III. 57). Mnemosyne, the mother of the Muses, finds it strange that Apollo “shouldst weep, so gifted; she tells him to explain his sorrow, “thy griefs” (*Hyperion* III. 67-70). Apollo utters these mournful words to Mnemosyne:

For me, dark, dark,  
 And painful, vile oblivion seals my eyes.  
 I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,  
 Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;  
 And then upon the grass I sit and moan,  
 Like one who once had wings. Oh, why should I  
 Feel cursed and thwarted, when the liegeless air  
 Yields to my step aspirant? Why should I  
 Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet? (*Hyperion* III. 86-94)

An Endymionese Apollo is immersed in a dyadic relationship with the mother of the muses which is uninterrupted by the symbolic third party; the “liegeless air” represents the absence of a symbolic law (since the word “liege” refers either to a feudal superior, sovereign or to a vassal, subject (OED n. 1, 1.1). The “unstructured freedom of Apollo’s ‘liegeless’ reign” is contrasted with the fixed boundaries of the Titans’s world (Fermanis 84).

The Delphic Apollo is enveloped in the obscurity of the darkness; he is the god of the black sun, mantled in unrepresentable darkness. His melancholy associates him with the dethroned Saturn and Hyperion. His eyes sealed by oblivion recall Hyperion who “cannot see – but darkness, death and darkness” (*Hyperion* I. 242). His limbs numbed by melancholy evoke Saturn’s “nerveless, listless, dead” hand (*Hyperion* I.18) and his “palsied tongue” (*Hyperion* I. 93). Like Saturn who asks Thea to “search” and “tell me [him]” why he is dispossessed (*Hyperion* I. 116), Apollo, unburdening himself to Mnemosyne, strives to search why he is so sad. Telling, uttering and finding a solution in language can be “a deterrent from [melancholic] withdrawal into [asymbolic] inactivity” (Kristeva *Black* 36). Telling about one’s loss entails a subject and an object; it compels one to speak to an other; therefore, telling Thea or Mnemosyne enables Saturn and Apollo respectively to be implicated in the symbolic.

An aspirant to the throne of the sun, Apollo does not fathom why he is melancholic. He feels cursed and frustrated, moaning like the fallen Titans wailing and groaning in their den (*Hyperion* I. 162, II. 6). Apollo moans like someone “who had once wings”, which evokes the image of Icarus; Apollo feels he is wingless, limbless now like Saturn with the realmless eyes or the Titans whose limbs are locked up. As he feels engirdled by the extinction of oblivion, he feels he is thwarted as his Icarian wings melt, unlike Endymion, who utters, “I die – I hear her voice – I feel my wing” as the

romance hero imagines he sees his celestial love (*Endymion* III. 1012). Apollo is an Icarian god of the sun. It is paradoxical that his wings melt as the prospective god of the sun. He is wingless/limbless in the liegeless (lordless) air where he is not controlled by the symbolic law, unlike the Daedalian overreacher who flies toward the sun, thus beyond the reach of the symbolic law, despite his father's warning.

Apollo wants to leave the embowered island where he was born, like Icarus who wants to flee the labyrinth. He asks Mnemosyne for help:

Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing.  
Are there not other regions than this isle?  
What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun!  
And the most patient brilliance of the moon!  
And stars by thousands! Point me out the way  
To any one particular beauteous star,  
And I will flit into it with my lyre,  
And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss. (*Hyperion* III. 95-102)

Apollo, who has not yet transformed into a god, wishes to fly away from the isle, from the labyrinth of oblivion. Since it confuses boundaries, the labyrinth represents the semiotic maze where Apollo is not guided by a paternal figure, an imaginary father, unlike Icarus, whose father warns him of the dire consequences of his prospective flight. An identification with the imaginary father, Kristeva argues, “insures the subject’s entrance into the universe of signs and creation”; she adds that this “supporting father of such a symbolic triumph is not the oedipal father but truly that “imaginary father,” “father in individual prehistory” according to Freud, who guarantees primary identification” (*Black* 23). The melancholic Apollo seeks for a steadfast star to settle there. He yearns for the sun but, also enchanted by the brilliance of the moon, which indicates that once crowned as the god of the sun, he will be a solar deity impressed by the lunar light as well. Keltner points out that “the subject, in losing the archaic Other, can be consoled of its loss only through primary identification with the imaginary father” (*Thresholds* 54); however, on this embowered isle, Apollo does not have an imaginary father. Keltner adds that “the one who suffers from melancholia is the one who is unable to identify with an imaginary father” (*Thresholds* 54-55).

Mnemosyne might be seen as an imaginary father for Apollo. The melancholic Apollo raves “about these groves” and listens to “the cloudy thunder” on the shores “[i]n

fearless yet in aching ignorance” (*Hyperion* III. 103-110). The prospective god of the sun hankers after knowledge; he is longing to know, as Allott indicates when pointing out that “aching” means “longing” in that line (439). Beholding Mnemosyne’s face, Apollo reads

A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:  
Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.  
Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,  
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,  
Creations and destroyings, all at once  
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,  
And deify me, as if some blithe wine  
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,  
And so become immortal. (*Hyperion* III. 111-20)

Longing to know, the Delphic Apollo becomes a god through knowledge; he “becomes a god through his knowledge of human suffering” (Allott 440). That he knows about not only creations but also destruction is another indication of his becoming the god of the black sun; if he knew only about creations, he would be the god of the sun, the god of the light, yet his knowing about destruction as well makes him into the god of the black sun, the god of the darkness too. The hollows of his brains are loaded with enormous knowledge; he knows of both light and shade; he is a Delphic Apollo who sees through darkness. His melancholy is born of “an excess of knowledge that ultimately renders it incommensurable with *any* form of representation” (Pfau 309). This excess of enormous knowledge refuses to be delineated by the boundaries of the representable and the knowable; it exceeds “the scope of any one epistemological model” that may be utilised to explicate melancholy (Pfau 310); therefore, Pfau notes that melancholy has been marked by “a profound despair over all representation” (310); the melancholic despairs as all forms of symbolic representations are insufficient to signify and symbolise all knowledge.

He is also a Dionysian Apollo who is deified as if he has drunk wine and become intoxicated. Through Dionysian intoxication, “the [Apollonian] principle of individuation” is overcome; it is marked by “the loss of clarity, and the merging of individualities” (Tanner 355). This merging opens up a space for Delphic obscurity, and the Apollonian and the Dionysian coalesce into another. Differing from the Titanic Hyperion who strives to retain distinctions and preserve boundaries, the Olympian

Apollo is a merger of individualities, blurring boundaries. The Apollonian rational, ordered, self-disciplined epic is muddled by the Dionysian impulse. The Keatsian Apollo oscillates between the Grecian Apollo and Dionysus. Susan Wolfson notes that Romantic literature is “hallmarked by unities and fragments, identity formation and identity crisis” and she proposes that melancholy is “the big tent for this oscillation” (“Romanticism & Gender & Melancholy” 435-36). The Keatsian Apollo oscillates between the Apollonian identity formation and the Dionysiac dismemberment of it.

Apollo’s enormous knowledge is related to the sensual, the emotional aspect through this Dionysian tendency. Resonating with Dionysian frenzy, the apotheosis of Apollo is realised through a voluptuous metamorphosis:

Thus the God,  
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance  
 Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept  
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.  
 Son wild commotions shook him, and made flush  
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs –  
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death;  
 Or liker still to one who should take leave  
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang  
 As hot as death’s is chill, with fierce convulse  
 Die into life. So young Apollo anguished;  
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed,  
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.  
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld  
 Her arms as one who prophesied. At length  
 Apollo shrieked – and lo! from all his limbs  
 Celestial... (*Hyperion* III. 120-136)

As congruent with a god of the black sun, Apollo is born through death. His suffused eyes are enkindled; he trembles with light; Dionysian wild commotions shake him; his fair limbs flush with immortality. Allott notes that line 125 is followed in the MS by these lines: “Into a hue more roseate than sweet pain / Gives to a ravish’d Nymph when her warm tears / Gush luscious with no sob. Or more severe” (440). Apollo is likened to a raped nymph in one sense of the verb “ravish” and he is also enraptured, filled with intense delight in another sense of the verb. Allott explains that Keats’s only other use of the word “luscious” is in *Endymion*, “her luscious lips” (II. 942); she adds that the passage “reverts to the erotic style of Keats’s earlier poems” (440-1). The Endymionese feminine Apollo is penetrated by light, unlike *Hyperion* whose

splendour and masculine thrusting energy pervades all the gulfs, chasms and depths. The Bacchic shriek renders an Apollo enraptured by pain and pleasure, exploding with *jouissance*, an Apollo mystified by “the Dionysian’s ceaseless flow” (Faflak *Romantic Psychoanalysis* 73). The Bacchic Apollo that collapses separations and frontiers is “the bearer of a *jouissance* fused with the archaic Thing”; this fusion leads to “a downfall that carries them [the melancholic] along into the invisible and unnameable” (Kristeva *Black* 15). Therefore, Apollo’s Bacchic shriek lacks the filter of language as the fragment of *Hyperion* ends in the following line after Apollo shrieks. The Kristevan maternal Thing looms large and darkly behind the coalescence of Apollo and Dionysus. In melancholy, Kristeva argues, “the self is yet joined with the other, it carries it within, it introjects its own omnipotent projection – and joys in it” (*Black* 64). Dionysus is an undissociated other for Apollo.

The oceanic joy of Bacchic Apollo is threatened by the lethal excess of affect that “swamps the subject” and the surge of primary semiotic processes such as displacement, condensation, vocal and gestural rhythms (Kristeva *Black* 64). A shrieking Bacchic Apollo represents the melancholic persons who are “prisoners of affect”; Apollo cannot inscribe his shriek in linguistic signs and his experience with the Thing that “eludes representation and naming” can only be expelled “by means of gestures, spasms, or shouts” (Kristeva *Black* 14-5). His melancholy leads him into “the enigmatic realm of *affects* – anguish, fear, or joy” (Kristeva *Black* 21). This translanguistic shriek is so loaded with affect that “translation – our fate as speaking beings – stops its vertiginous course” toward the symbolic as a complete sign system (Kristeva *Black* 42). In other words, this transverbal shriek irreducible to a steady signifier is beyond the confines of linguistic representability and it therefore recoils upon itself, whirling in eddies of asymbolia. No conceptual framework located in the symbolic proves adequate to account for this vestigial shrieking “presign and prelanguage” (Kristeva *Black* 21). The shrieking Apollo is the residue of the archaic integration into the Thing. This lingering sense of the fusion with the Thing within the psychic space of the human being is not assumed by verbal representation. Born through death, he is one of those Kristevan “Messengers of Thanatos”, the bearers of the Freudian death drive; he is like melancholy people who “are witness/accomplices of the signifier’s flimsiness, the living being’s precariousness” (Kristeva *Black* 20). A

Bacchic Apollo blurs the boundary between the signifier and the signified, and thus reveals the fragility of the linguistic word dependent on the gap between Apollo and Dionysus and the tenuousness of the speaking subject located in the linguistic universe of the symbolic predicated upon the division between life and death. Therefore, a merging with the Thing is both fatal and euphoric: “My necessary Thing is also and absolutely my enemy, my foil, the delightful focus of my hatred” (Kristeva *Black* 15). The language of the melancholic “conveys the collapse of meaning into the unnameable where it founders, inaccessible and delightful, to the benefit of affective value riveted to the Thing” (Kristeva *Black* 52).

An Apollo uttering a Bacchic shriek and disintegrating into limbs embody the *disjecti membra poetae*, that is Latin for “limbs of a dismembered poet” (OED); dissolving and dying into life, Apollo represents this dismembered poet; the scattered fragments of his body, the limbs are followed by only one word, that is “celestial”; the body that is breaking apart is celestialised, that is, diffused into the elemental air and thus jubilantly fused with the archaic Thing. *Disjecta membra* also refer to “scattered fragments, especially of written work” (OED n.); once Apollo, the god of poetry, is dismembered and dissolved into limbs, *Hyperion* comes to a standstill at the next line, thus the projected epic becomes a fragment; *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* are the *disjecta membra* of this epic project attempted by the oscillating, disintegrating melancholic poet who lethally falls into pieces. The ending of *Hyperion* is suggestive of the “adventure of the body and signs that bears witness to the affect”; the signs are vanquished and hence the projected poem in its completion is not settled in “the universe of artifice and symbol” (Kristeva *Black* 22). The intended entirety of the poem is consumed by melancholy withdrawal, yet the fragment of *Hyperion*, as it stands, is informed by the transposition of affect into “rhythms, signs, forms”, producing “the communicational imprints of an affective reality” (Kristeva *Black* 22). The existing communicable, inscribed fragment is haunted by the incommunicable, unwritten *disjecta membra*. In another aspect, the unrepresentable *Hyperion* in its entirety dispersed into the currents of the primordial space constitutes the lack which is “necessary for the *sign* [the existing current fragment of *Hyperion* disseminated in the realm of signs] to emerge” (Kristeva *Black* 23). The Bacchic Apollo shrieks, thereby opening his mouth and letting out a howl; the incommunicable *Hyperion* is ex-haled,

discharged; it is breathed out into the elemental air, the Latin *anima* or *spiritus* that “signified wind and breath, as well as soul” (Abrams “Correspondent Breeze” 44). It is also a form of ventilation, perhaps a sign of abjection; the black bile is breathed out and carries the projected epic poem along into the void of asymbolia. The existing fragment of *Hyperion* shrieks its unborn sister, the unrealised *Hyperion*; the second meaning of the verb “shriek” (OED v. 1.2.) suggests that they are strikingly discordant.

In contrast to the Hyperionesque resolution to retain a distinct identity and preserve boundaries, Apollo dissolves through commotions and convulsions, dying into life. Hunt thinks that “there is something too effeminate and human in the way in which Apollo receives the exaltation which his wisdom is giving him” (in Matthews 174). With his “hair of short Numidian curl” (*Hyperion* II. 371), “like the mane of an African lion” (Allott 433), the Titanic Hyperion is contrasted with the Olympian Apollo with “his golden tresses” undulating “round his eager neck” (*Hyperion* III. 131-2). The Bacchic Apollo, who unsettles monolithic subjectivity and is open to the vertiginous crossings into the other, is found to be feminine. A Delphic Apollo, who “lacks a sense of identity” (Barnard *Keats* 64), embodies the Keatsian negatively capable chameleonlike poet who oscillates in a state of perpetual becoming; he is the negatively capable, “passive and receptive young god” who has “a sharper sensitivity to external stimuli, a deeper sense of internal sympathy, a greater vulnerability to pain [...] and, most of all, a heightened and healing receptivity to the beauty and pain of other life forms” (de Almeida *Romantic* 286-7). In contrast to the Titans who are “men of identity and power”, the Olympians, “whose qualities are epitomised in Apollo, have no identity and embody Keats’s idea of the poetical character” (Allott 403). The Keatsian poetical character is different from “the wordsworthian [sic.] or egotistical sublime, which is a thing per se and stands alone”; Hyperion wants to be a thing *per se* and to stand alone, not merging with other things; he represents “the Titans’ predatory force” (de Almeida *Romantic* 287). However, the chameleonic Apollo has “no Identity” and “enjoys light and shade” as the god of the black sun, “lives in gusto” of the Bacchic enthusiasm (*Letters* 194-5). In Keats’s words, the Titans are “Men of Power” who strive to keep their proper selves while the Olympians are “Men of Genius” who “have not any individuality, any determined Character” (*Letters* 52). This difference between the two is important in Keats’s poetry because

Keats was especially sensitive to anything which threatened or discredited identity (his and others'), and he was especially audacious in believing that the healthy strength of a sense of identity depends paradoxically upon the risk and openness and not upon self-protection; depends upon risking the absence of identity rather than upon guarding the circumscription of one's identity (Ricks 25).

Like the Kristevan subject in process/on trial, who is "a dynamic subject in movement and in the throes of production, in contrast to the punctual, phenomenological subject of consciousness" (Lechte *Kristeva* 114), the Keatsian chameleon poetic voice is never static or fixed, but always ecstatic and oscillating; it does not delineate characters clearly. This chameleon poetic voice unsettles one's sense of self-certainty, attachment to identity and unity. In this attempted epic realised as a fragment, marked by vague outlines and volatile borders, characters are not delineated as entirely hermetically sealed personalities, one from the other. Saturn is melancholic, but once inspired and encouraged, he aspires to act like the fiery Hyperion. Hyperion seems to be an epic hero with a determined course of action, yet he also sounds melancholic like Saturn at times, and appears to be slumbering in the arms of melody like Apollo. Likewise, Clymene is immersed in both joy and grief. The relatively prosaic language of Oceanus, who calmly explains the law of the progress, the naked truth, the structures of the symbolic realm, is eclipsed by the semiotic diction. Distinct boundaries are blurred. Apollo's music is a living death. Keats's oxymoronic poetic voice swings back and forth between pain and pleasure. The melancholic Apollo enjoys both shade and light as the god of the black sun. The god of the sun is eclipsed by maternal imprint. The collapse of boundaries in the person of a Dionysian Apollo, a lunar god of the sun challenges thethetic phase, which splits the semiotic continuum and produces signification; therefore, like the infant who is not yet able to attribute differences to subject and object, self and other, the Dionysian Apollo is immersed in "the ceaseless heterogeneity of the *chora*" (Moi *Sexual/Textual* 161). In the heterogeneous *chora*, the melancholic merges with the maternal Thing and thus with death.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

At the heart of this study is an attempt to reconceive Keats's poetry within the frame of Kristevan theory, specifically in the light of her notions of the semiotic and the symbolic, abjection and melancholy. This thesis attends closely to Keats's *Endymion*, *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*, presenting a new account of his poetry. Although it seems that the thesis is chronologically organised to trace the Keatsian trajectory from juvenilia to mature work, it does not follow a rectilinear narrative and does not focus on a linear developmental understanding of Keats's poetry. Instead, it concentrates on the oscillations between the earlier work and the later one, examining how they are interrelated. This study argues that these oscillations point to less a regression than a release; therefore, it views the infantile, the puerile as central to the discussion; the immature is important in this discussion of the poet whose mind teems with "the rich first fumes of boyish fancy" (Colvin *Keats* 101). This reading of Keats suggests the ways in which the Keatsian account of chameleonic subjectivity warrants a Kristevan attention. This notion of a fluid subjectivity is developed with recourse to Kristeva's account of the subject in process / on trial. Central to the project is the proposition that three objectives guide this study: to read the poetry of an ambivalent Keats, who "resists being boxed into a neat dialectical progression" (Ward "Keats and the Idea of Fame" 19), with a particular attention to the unsettling dialectical oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic that distorts the seemingly uncluttered dialectical progression, to investigate the abject and abjection and to analyse Keatsian melancholy through the perspective of Kristevan approach to melancholy.

The second chapter has focused on the dialectical oscillations between the semiotic and the symbolic in *Endymion*, *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*. This chapter has demonstrated that, taken individually, these three poems are marked by these oscillations within their own scope; however, when comparatively viewed alongside one another, the semiotic seems to be more prominent in *Endymion*, the symbolic is more underscored in *Hyperion*, and they are interfused in *The Fall of Hyperion*.

The first section of the second chapter deals with *Endymion* which is characterised by the vacillations between semiotic drives and consciousness that generates the symbolic animal. It has been observed that this poetic romance oscillates between the diffuse, amorphous perpetual flux of drive energies that unsettles the organizing power of the symbolic and the ordering of this semiotic undercurrent as a recognizable mythical structure. The semiotic and the symbolic are interrelated in the realm of this poetic romance; however, it has been noted that the semiotic threatens to overwhelm the symbolic despite this interrelatedness.

This study has found that the semiotic is manifested in several aspects in *Endymion*. First of all, the semiotic emerges as the unsignifiable that resists representation in the domain of the linguistic signifier. The unsignifiable is semiotically articulated through the bodily base of language. Secondly, Keats's sensuously informed Platonism discloses the affectivity of the semiotic. His sensual Platonism subverts the Cartesian denial of the corporeality of the speaking subject. Through this subversion, the instinctual, drive-based semiotic becomes prominent in *Endymion*. Also, the Keatsian investment in Greek myths has been discussed as an imagined space where the semiotic seems to emerge in *Endymion*.

This thesis has also found that the voluptuous poetic diction in *Endymion* is another manifestation of the semiotic component of signification. The analysis of this poem has illustrated that the employment of such a sensuous poetic language allows the poetic voice to imagine a semiotic infantile space of plenitude before the imposition of the symbolic law. A commingling of all senses represents the affect-laden semiotic component of the signifying process. The deployment of all senses intensively opens up a semiotic space where the dynamics of proximity prevails; in this pre-symbolic space, the symbiotic relationship between the maternal and the speechless infant is voluptuously rendered since it is preverbal.

The search for infantile plenitude and oneness has also been discussed in relation to the semiotic in *Endymion*. The bowers in this poetic romance have been seen as the embodiment of the Kristevan semiotic *chora*. It has been claimed that metaphors of fullness which permeate *Endymion* represent the desire to be immersed in sheer

fullness of being; this desire is suggestive of the urge to be involved in the semiotic chora prior to the thetic division that facilitates the symbolic. Besides this wish to be immersed in the semiotic bowers, the incommunicable yearning for the mysterious abyss has also been found to be suggestive of the desire to relapse into the maternal. In addition, Keatsian emphatic identification and negative capability have been regarded as notions through which the semiotic becomes prominent in *Endymion*. Due to the tendency towards emphatic identification, self and other are not seen as distinct categories. Similarly, for the negatively capable poet, boundaries between subject and object are blurred.

This study has also asserted that the Keatsian luxuriant poetic language perverts the symbolic aspect of signification. The distortion of the denotative, communicative modality of language demonstrates the predominance of the pre-linguistic semiotic in *Endymion*. The Keatsian poetic voice challenges the imposition of the symbolic law by means of coining new words beyond the symbolic confines of the linguistic signifier, twisting the already existing words, using anachronistic words and forms disruptively, overusing adjectival past participles and adjectival contortions, and dislocating conventional syntax.

The second section of the second chapter deals with the oscillations in *Hyperion* and the distinction between *Endymion* as a semiotic romance and *Hyperion* as a symbolic epic. *Hyperion* has been discussed as an epic that is designed to have a disciplined style as opposed to the lush style of *Endymion*; therefore, it has been suggested that the Endymionese semiotic effect is repressed in the epic landscape of *Hyperion*. However, the Kristevan interpretations of this poem have demonstrated that the suppressed semiotic of the romance returns to upset the epic. Hence, this thesis has found that romance as a genre allows the semiotic to flourish while the generic features of an epic poem point to the imposition of the symbolic law.

As a symbolic epic, *Hyperion* resists the Endymionese temptation to venture beyond the boundaries of the signifiable. It has been noted that the inexpressible and the unutterable do not characterise *Hyperion* since it fears to fall into the abyss of the incommunicable. *Hyperion* also represents the epic repudiation of the Endymionese

bowers and the semiotic *chora*. As opposed to the fluid romance world of *Endymion* where things flow into other things, the epic world of *Hyperion* is characterised by a sense of petrification and congealment. It has been observed that the metaphors of plenty and fullness in *Endymion* are replaced by the images of evacuation in *Hyperion*. The semiotic bowers in the poetic romance are supplanted by the dreary, deadened dens and coverts in the epic. Despite the resolution to repudiate the Endymionese bowers, Saturn's relationship with Thea, the palace of Hyperion and the realm of Apollo are suggestive of the pre-symbolic bowers of the romance.

This study has also found that *Hyperion* stands for the epic attempt to castigate and anaesthetise the semiotically charged tongue. The attempt to eschew a voluptuous poetic language that breaches the thetic is fundamental to the epic design of *Hyperion*. The "honeyed tongue" of romance in *Endymion* (II. 818) is reduced to "our feeble tongue" in *Hyperion* (I. 49). The soundscape of *Hyperion* is not attuned to the unheard primal language of the infant pre-linguistic world. Accordingly, Saturn's "palsied tongue" (*Hyperion* I. 93) represents the repression of the semiotic tongue that embodies the material base of language. However, Saturn's paralysed tongue is rejuvenated, which shows that the semiotic leaks into the symbolic domain of *Hyperion* despite the effort to keep it at bay. Saturn's revitalised tongue is followed by Oceanus's "first-endeavouring tongue" (*Hyperion* II. 171), which produces a *sortie* into the pre-symbolic realm. Oceanus's murmuring tongue is then followed by Clymene whose ecstatic encounter with the golden melody of Apollo stands for the return of the repressed semiotic.

It has been claimed that *Hyperion* as an epic project is shattered by the arrival of a Bacchic Apollo in the third book. The semiotic seems to unsettle the symbolic with the emergence of Apollo. Apollo's initiation as a god in the third book of the epic has been seen as a manifestation the poetic voice relapsing into the semiotic Endymionese. With the appearance of Apollo in the third book, the epic is also eclipsed by the Delphic; the resolution to produce an epic in the Grecian manner is undermined by the Delphic obscurity. Apollo's Bacchic pre-linguistic shriek has been regarded as testament to the failure of the epic project; with this primordial shriek, the epic descends into the realm of the asymbolic.

The third section of the second chapter is concerned with the oscillations in *The Fall of Hyperion*. As he composes *The Fall*, Keats speaks of the distinction between the true voice of sensations and instincts, and the high artifice of the epic. This study has found that this Keatsian distinction corresponds to the Kristevan distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic respectively. Since the poet says that he “cannot make the division properly”, he oscillates between the two (Keats *Letters* 345). Despite these oscillations, the poet-narrator in *The Fall* attempts to repress the semiotic and to situate the poem within the domain of the symbolic. This resolution is evident in the first canto of *The Fall* which makes a distinction between poets and fanatics and later on this division is supported by another distinction between poets and dreamers.

The third chapter has concentrated on the confrontation with the abject in Keats’s poetry. For Kristeva, abjection is “the journey to the end of the night” (*Powers* 58); similarly, for Keats, abjection is the venture into “the old womb of night” (*Endymion* IV. 372). On such a quest, boundaries threaten to collapse in *Endymion*, which provokes disgust and repulsion in the encounter with the abject. *Hyperion* struggles to preserve boundaries against the revolting presence of the abject; likewise, *The Fall of Hyperion* seeks to perpetuate borders and distinctions in the face of the blurring of boundaries; nevertheless, both *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion* are haunted by the abject.

The first section of this chapter has focused on the abject and abjection in *Endymion*. This study has found that the venture into the unnameable is found revolting since what lies beyond the confines of the nameable threatens and sickens the subject.

Fascinated by the abject, the poet of *Endymion* “perverts” language (Kristeva *Powers* 16). The choking voluptuousness of the Keatsian poetic language has been found to challenge boundaries and cause them to collapse; therefore, it has been seen as a manifestation of the abject. The ravenous mode of signification that gnaws away at the symbolic is expressed through the devouring wilderness that is incommensurable with any form of symbolic representation. In the face of the smothering sensuousness that blurs the boundaries between self and other, the poetic voice attempts to jettison some of the weight that crushes him so as to open up a space where linguistic signifiers could

arise. In order to thrust the abject aside, he strives against the obliteration of limits and borders.

Besides the suffocating voluptuous poetic language, there are references to slimy substances and dizzying spaces as manifestations of the abject. Slimy things are found to be repulsive since they annihilate differences and obliterate space between things through their stickiness; therefore, they are seen as representations of the abject. Also, dizzying spaces have been regarded as manifestations of the abject since they cause a stifling and perplexing atmosphere which threatens to suck one in; they stand for the abject that engulfs the subject. This study has demonstrated that the subject dreads sinking into the wide-gaping void because it resists symbolisation.

It has been argued that Circe represents the abject maternal body in *Endymion*. Circe is portrayed as malicious and embodying animal physicality. In the confrontation with Circe, the tenuous borders of identity are broken. Glaucus's enthrallment by Circe in Book III of *Endymion* has been discussed as an experience with the abject. Glaucus speaks of his enthrallment through expressions of disgust and repulsion. We should remember that Circe as the abject stands for the jettisoned other that Glaucus attempts to suppress; she is a manifestation of Glaucus's imprisoning and sickening subjectivity that does not recognise the distinction between self and other. In the company of Circe, the abject maternal, Glaucus is like a speechless infant; in her deceptive bower, he is enfeebled and incapacitated. He has a strong urge to abject Circe since rejecting Circean physicality transforms the human animal into a speaking being.

The figure of Narcissus and the Kristevan narcissistic structure have been considered to be important in the discussion of the abject in *Endymion*. Endymion seems to be a figure of Narcissus who is not located in the objectal realm; he is immersed in the asymbolic realm of objectless affect since his sight is smothered with his own sight. It has been suggested that the Narcissan Endymion is characterised by the uncertainty of the boundaries of his selfhood; his solipsistic subjectivity is not predicated upon the rupture between self and other. However, the relationship of sympathy and identification between such mirroring figures as Glaucus and Endymion that matches

the Kristevan narcissistic structure enables the speechless infant to be weaned from the abject maternal body. Therefore, Glaucus sees Endymion as his redeemer.

Neptune as the Kristevan imaginary father has been seen as important in the discussion of the abject in *Endymion*. It has been asserted that Circe's tyranny is repudiated in favour of Neptune's regality. Neptune as the imaginary father disengages the speechless infant from the engulfing maternal body. Thanks to the imaginary father, the third party that intervenes in the symbiotic mother-infant relationship, the infant is severed from the immersion in the abject. Neptune's revelry is contrasted with Circe's revelry in the sense that the former is associated with plenty and fullness while the latter chokes those in captivity. However, despite the regality of Neptune that intervenes as the imaginary father to help him expel the abject mother, Endymion sinks at Neptune's feet, regressing to the narcissistic crystal bower where the divide between self and other is not established.

The second section of this chapter has concentrated on the abject and abjection in *Hyperion*. This section consists of three subsections: *Hyperion* as an attempt to abject *Endymion*, Saturn as the abject cadaver that falls from the symbolic domain, and *Hyperion* beset by the Kristevan powers of horror.

This study has found that *Hyperion* regards the romance of *Endymion* and its Endymionese style as the abject. The Hyperionesque poetic voice strives to jettison the Endymionese. Therefore, *Hyperion* is composed as an act of denial of what antecedes the epic. Viewing *Endymion* as its own inaugural negation, *Hyperion* struggles to determine its boundaries, which are always haunted by the earlier work and edged by the abject. The permeable boundaries of *Endymion* are rejected in favour of the fixed boundaries of *Hyperion*. Despite the attempt to expel *Endymion*, *Hyperion* disintegrates under the sickening weight of its own *disjecta*.

*Hyperion* begins with Saturn who falls from grace and is dethroned. Hence, Saturn has been discussed as the embodiment of the abject for *Hyperion* who fears to be dispossessed of his symbolic position or identity. In the words of Kristeva, Saturn is like a cadaver that falls beyond the border of the symbolic (*Powers* 3). The abject as death infects life in the figure of Saturn. His fall is seen as contagious. He falls into the

undefined realm of asymbolia where meaning, system and order collapse, and boundaries are erased; he dangles somewhere between the symbolically endowed throne and the insalubrious lair that is found to be repulsive by the yet undisgraced Hyperion.

The eponymous character of the attempted epic, Hyperion has been found to be beset by the Kristevan powers of horror. He fears falling from grace (his symbolic position), being dethroned (like Saturn), and thus being abjected, dejected like a cadaver from the symbolic domain of distinctions. Therefore, he strives against the night of the deject in order not to surrender to the abject confusion of boundaries. Despite his attempts to strive against the abject, Hyperion, the god of the sun, swings loosely between the light and the dark; he is beset by the monstrous forms and demonic spectres which have been viewed as the manifestations of the abject. Saturn's infectious dis-ease is passed on to Hyperion. It has been noted that he dreads being engulfed in the abject that will annihilate his symbolically anchored identity.

The third section of this chapter has dealt with the abject and abjection in *The Fall of Hyperion*. This section is comprised of two subsections: the (partial) abjection of *Hyperion* and the expulsion of the Endymionese effect, Moneta as the simultaneously nourishing and murderous maternal body.

Similar to *Hyperion's* attempt to abject *Endymion*, *The Fall of Hyperion* abjects *Hyperion*. This abjection has been discussed in two ways. Firstly, the Apollo of *Hyperion* is replaced by the poet-narrator in *The Fall*; thus, the epic is converted into an allegory, that is the dream-vision of the poet-narrator. The Bacchic Apollo of *Hyperion* that challenges the tenuous borders of subjectivity is jettisoned; instead, the poet-narrator who struggles against the blurring of boundaries emerges. The poet-narrator stresses the importance of borders; therefore, he underlines the difference between poets and fanatics. Secondly, the depressive beginning of *Hyperion* is excluded as part of the abjection of the epic. The melancholic beginning of *Hyperion*, which focuses on a cadaverised Saturn, is expelled in order to avoid a deathly confrontation with the abject.

It has been observed that the discussion of the abject and abjection revolves around the central character Moneta. She has a dual nature; her twofold being has been claimed to represent the oscillation between the desire for undifferentiated heterogeneity and the urge to draw boundaries and maintain distinctions. Therefore, Moneta simultaneously embodies the abject and that which expels the abject. Her enigmatic characterisation demonstrates that the Endymionese drive towards heterogeneity and the Hyperionesque attempt at differentiation are folded into one figure, that is Moneta.

Moneta is a mentor who guides the poet-narrator; she helps him to preserve distinctions between poets and dreamers and to safeguard boundaries against the abject. Therefore, she is associated with the cleansing power of the flame and the purifying power of the fire. She is also an admonisher. As his mentor, she warns the poet-narrator against the abject condition of rotting into which he will fall if he fails to make the division properly between the savage dreamer imprisoned in dumb amazement and the poet who is able to master the linguistic sign. All these features show her as the one who enables the poet to expel the abject. Besides being an intimidating goddess, a muse and an admonishing mentor, she also emerges as a mother. The son-poet's relationship with the maternal muse is both jubilatory and lethal. On the one hand, it is jubilatory because he quests into Moneta's "globed" brain in order to recount the tragedy of the fallen Titans which is "enwombed" there (*The Fall* I. 244-5, 276-7). On the other hand, it is lethal since he sees the death-bearing visage of the mother that progresses "deathwards" (*The Fall* I. 260-1); he journeys into the nocturnal (uterine) realm where the linguistic sign disintegrates. With the veils parted (*The Fall* I. 256) in this preverbal realm, the thetic is derailed, and the bar between the signifier and the signified is cancelled; hence, it has been asserted that he tumbles into the pre-linguistic realm where the divide between the mother and the infant is not established.

The poet-narrator quests into the globed mind of Moneta to tell the tragedy of the Titans, yet, all the same, *The Fall* becomes another fragment; the poet-narrator is unable to finish the epic project. He makes a vertiginous crossing into the mind of Moneta that enwombs things. It has been suggested that he journeys into the realm of

the archaic Thing, confronts the unnameable in the mother tongue, “a total word, new, foreign to the [paternal, symbolic] language” in the words of Mallarmé (in Kristeva *Black* 42). He voyages beyond the fissured sign of the symbolic domain into the terrain of full words of plenitude that does not recognise the divide between self and other. However, “translatability” of the maternal total word into the paternal split word becomes impossible so long as “the weight of the primal Thing prevails” (Kristeva *Black* 42).

The fourth chapter has focused on how the Kristevan melancholy permeates these longer poems. The melancholic Endymion withdraws from the symbolic and retreats into the realm of the unsignifiable Thing where self and other are undifferentiated. The fallen Titans in *Hyperion* relapse into asymbolic melancholy while the Olympian Apollo, the new god of the black sun, merges with the unrepresentable Thing, obliterating the divide between subject and object. Similarly, the poet-narrator of *The Fall of Hyperion* mingles with the muse Moneta, eradicating the breach between inside and outside.

The first section of this chapter deals with melancholy in *Endymion*. This study has found that the melancholic Endymion relapses into the realm of the symbiotic fusion with the Kristevan maternal Thing and therefore withdraws from the symbolic domain of the linguistic sign. This section has also showed how the Keatsian invisible light in the dark resonates with the Kristevan black sun. This section has further asserted that the introspective Endymion evokes the Kristevan Narcissus; it has argued that the immersion in the primordial Thing is jubilatory as well as deathly.

This thesis has found that melancholy pervades Keats’s poetic romance. Endymion is portrayed as a “melancholy spirit” who has a yearning for “oblivion” (I. 98-9). He is also cooped up in the preverbal “den of helpless discontent” (I. 928-9). In this pre-symbolic den, he encounters the unnameable maternal Thing. Similar to this pre-linguistic den, the Cave of Quietude has been seen as a space beyond the boundaries of the symbolic. In this cave of speechless infancy, the melancholic Endymion merges with the maternal Thing. Eventually, he comes across the Indian Maid who sings in

the company of the Dionysian revellers; this Bacchic encounter has been thought as antidote to his melancholy.

It has been argued that melancholy in *Endymion* evokes the Kristevan black sun of melancholy. This Kristevan melancholy as a light without representation chimes with the Keatsian “unseen light in darkness” (*Endymion* III. 986). Keats’s gleaming melancholy is similar to the Kristevan sun of melancholy, bright and black at the same time. This black sun is the unseen light in the nocturnal old womb of melancholy. In this uterine night, Endymion is without an object since this night refers to a pre-linguistic realm where the melancholic merges with the maternal Thing and therefore the distinction between self and other is not recognised. Hence, Endymion has been discussed as a Kristevan Narcissus, a melancholy being without an object. In this realm, we see the Narcissan Endymion endowed with a psychic interiority; the melancholic narcissist contemplates in this psychic temple.

The second section of this chapter has examined melancholy in *Hyperion*. Melancholy has been discussed in this section through the characters of Saturn, Hyperion, Enceladus and Apollo, and their responses to melancholy. The gods of the Titanic race represent the defiance against the dark abyss of melancholy and the urge to conquer the uterine night of melancholy. However, Apollo, the new god of the sun from the succeeding Olympian dynasty, embodies the desire to be immersed in the maternal Thing and to be metamorphosed by the nocturnal womb of melancholy. Therefore, Apollo incorporates the realm where the uterine night of melancholy merges with the light of the sun, thereby allowing the Kristevan black sun to emerge.

The first subsection has investigated how Saturn is beset by the darkness of melancholy and exiled from the symbolic domain of the linguistic sign. As he falls from grace, he descends into the land of asymbolia. The second subsection has concentrated on loss of sight, potency and light. Already dethroned, Saturn seems to have almost surrendered to impotency, deathly stillness and darkness although he is momentarily invigorated by the energy and fiery nature of Hyperion and Enceladus. These two gods strive to fend off the blinding and enervating melancholy; they rage against the dying of the light and they refuse to be consigned to the dark abysm of

melancholy. They struggle to hold on to the light as the source of life and, by extension, all symbolic representations. By contrast, Apollo has been discussed as a liminal figure between light and darkness, life and death. Portrayed as a Bacchic Apollo, he allows the uterine night to dissolve his identity and transform him into the new god of the Kristevan black sun. Appearing as a Delphic Apollo, he also welcomes the ambivalence of the twilight and the oscillations between the solar and the lunar. As the new god of the sun, music and poetry, he merges with the abysmal night of melancholy, the maternal Thing and death. However, this immersion in the primordial Thing is both jubilatory and lethal.

The Kristevan readings practiced in these chapters have demonstrated that oscillations are fundamental to the analyses of Keats's *Endymion*, *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*. At the very beginning of this study, I expected to see Keats's poetry entirely enthralled by the power of the semiotic to disrupt the symbolic. I thought his poetry would only allow me to study the predominance of the semiotic without attending to the desire and the tendency to be located in the symbolic. However, this thesis has disclosed that oscillations between the semiotic and the symbolic are central to Keats's poetry rather than a complete overthrow of the one or the other. I also expected that the semiotic urge to attain sheer fullness of being before the imposition of the symbolic law and the images of wholeness and oneness would guide this investigation of Keats's poetry. Nevertheless, what has been unexpectedly found is the persistence of the abject. Besides the correspondent breeze of Romantic poetry, which emphasises oneness and harmony through the Latin etymology that suggests similarity and togetherness (OED), the sickening wind as the manifestation of the abject has also come to my attention. I have realised that Keats's poetry not only reflects the correspondent breeze but also incorporates its otherness and therefore contains the sickening wind. Moreover, this insight has enabled me to think about the relationship between the sickening wind and the purifying flame and it has helped me to structure this thesis around the oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic. I also expected to read the romance of *Endymion* as only representative of the semiotic and the epic *Hyperion* as merely representative of the symbolic and focus on the oscillation between the two. However, I have realised that *Endymion* is already marked by this oscillation within its boundaries. Likewise, this oscillation is integral to *Hyperion*

itself. Therefore, this thesis has focused on the oscillation both within and between texts.

Oscillations are essential in terms of both Keatsian poetry and Kristevan theory. Oliver argues that Kristeva's writings oscillate between the semiotic and the symbolic, adding that Kristeva focuses more on the semiotic in *Revolution in Poetic Language* and *Powers of Horror* while in *Tales of Love* and *Black Sun* she emphasises the symbolic (Kristeva 11). This Kristevan oscillation between the urge to semiotise the symbolic and the attempt to symbolise the semiotic corresponds to the Keatsian oscillation between *Endymion* and *Hyperion*. Accordingly, in *Endymion*, the semiotic overshadows the symbolic since the former is unleashed; however, in *Hyperion*, the symbolic predominates the semiotic as the latter is restrained. This oscillation between the poetic romance and the epic is repeated in a concentrated form in *The Fall of Hyperion*; it is reflected in the enigmatic character of Moneta, by means of whom the semiotic and the symbolic slide through each other.

These oscillations evince that the Kristevan semiotic and symbolic are not antipodal, but interdependent. Similarly, the Endymionese and the Hyperionesque are interrelated as they do not refer to a chronological order of development which designates the former as the puerile and the latter as the mature. Levinson points out that *Endymion* is the work that "would, literally, *make* him [Keats]" (7). Furthermore, this thesis has shown that *Hyperion* is the work that *unmakes* the Keats of *Endymion*. However, Keats feels a strong urge to "unwrite" *Endymion* (Keats *Letters* 465). This Keatsian wish to unwrite his poetic romance points to the desire to abject *Endymion* in *Hyperion*. Although *Hyperion* is an attempt to curb *Endymion*'s profligacy of imagery, thereby expelling the Endymionese effect in the epic, we should recall that the semiotic Endymionese returns in the third book of the epic that has been intended to be registered in the symbolic. This tension between the romance and the epic shows that *Endymion* is the precondition for *Hyperion* to exist. Therefore, *Endymion* is the foundational text. The meandering (romance) narrative of *Endymion*, replete with confusions, digressions, polyvalence, entanglements and improprieties, is productive; in support of this view, Bennett notes that "this wandering structure [of *Endymion*], often rightly criticized as unreadable, should be valued for the bemusement which it

offers” and adds that it “is precisely this sense of narrative defamiliarization, the bemused confusion produced by the tangled, dilatory narrative of *Endymion* that marks the poem’s generative solecism” (79). Hence, *Endymion* should be seen as generative like the Kristevan semiotic that leads to “productive dissolution” (Kristeva *Revolution* 113). *Endymion* precedes *Hyperion*; the romance functions not only as the semiotic negativity that challenges the unified epic and its (failed) epic hero attempting to gain self-mastery, but also as the precondition for the epic to exist; the seed of *Hyperion* exists in *Endymion*. The lunar romance and the solar epic reshape one another. Keats’s poetic trajectory is not seen, in this thesis, as marked by “the steady movement from the poetry of dream to the poetry of actuality that standard accounts propose” (Kern 69). Such a straightforward movement is misleading. Parker points out that “[n]o purely developmental scheme will finally fit, just as the characteristic fluidity or ambiguity of the verse makes any attempt to wrest a coherent philosophy or definitive conclusion from Keats’s poetry inevitably doomed” (109). The poetry of the ambivalent Keats unsettles the marshalling of meanings towards a monolithic end.

The Keatsian poet that oscillates between *Endymion* and *Hyperion* is impressed by the depiction of human beings in *King Lear*; he writes that “Man is originally ‘a poor forked creature’ subject to the same mischances as the beasts of the forest, destined to hardships and disquietude of some kind or other” (*Letters* 289). Keats as a forked poet vacillates between the poetic romance and the epic; this oscillation dovetails with the bifurcated nature of the Kristevan subject in process/on trial. The Keatsian/Kristevan bifurcated creature oscillates between the desire to gain “knowledge of the terra semi incognita of things unearthly” and the resolution to “keep in the check rein” (*Keats Letters* 104). This “equestrian metaphor” (Waldoff 189) suggests the tension between the Endymionese drive to course through the uncharted territory and the Hyperionesque resolve to “keep as tight a reign [sic] as possible” (*Keats Letters* 44). This spelling mistake is telling in that keeping in the check rein equals to reigning over the uncontrollable horse, “the winged Fancy” (Keats “Fancy” 93). This thesis has found that the uncontrollable horse or the winged Pegasus of imagination journey beyond the signifiable in *Endymion*, a complete poetic romance; the poet is able to finish the poem of four thousand lines once the semiotic is unleashed. However, the semiotic is repressed in *Hyperion* and it becomes a fragment; the poet is unable to

finish the poem. Likewise, the poet brings together the rider and the horse in one enigmatic figure in *The Fall of Hyperion*, which frightens the poet and causes the allegory to remain as an incomplete poem.

This thesis argues that the Bacchic Apollo of *Hyperion* is central to Keats's poetry. Oscillations within *Endymion*, oscillations within *Hyperion*, and oscillations between the two are reflected in the image of Bacchic Apollo as the god of the black sun in whom light and darkness are blended. De Almeida notes that "Apollo's powers are multiple" (*Romantic* 18); Apollo's powers include "the ability to afflict with 'misty pestilence' [*The Fall* I. 204-5] and thereafter purify with therapeutic fire" (*Romantic* 17). Apollo is not only the god of the sun, poetry, music and healing, but also "the author of pestilence, the god of disease" (De Almeida *Romantic* 19). Barnard agrees that Apollo is "the author of plagues and contagious diseases" (*Complete Poems* 699). This dual nature of Apollo leads us to envision the Bacchic Apollo of Keats's *Hyperion* that wavers between the semiotic (celebrating the musical, material, instinctual aspect of signification) and the symbolic (striving hard not to lapse into the asymbolic state of the abject described through the language of contagious disease, rotting bodies) when one thinks of this with respect to Apollo's twofold nature as the god of healing and of pestilence simultaneously. This language of disease, infection and plagues and pestilence enables us to imagine Apollo in relation to the abject. In support of this, Circe is said to be "Phoebus' daughter" in *Endymion* (III. 414); D'Avanzo thinks that Circe represents the perverse use of the divine power of poetry and hence "Apollo's bad seed" (49). Hence, Circe appears as the dark underside of the myth of Apollo. The sickening abject is the Circean seed of Apollo. Paradoxically, Circe appears as a disease integral to the deity who heals. Consequently, the Keatsian Apollo is not a classical Apollonian Apollo, but an Apollo that contains his otherness within, that is an Apollo who utters a Bacchic shriek, a feminised Apollo who embraces the rhythmical semiotic, and a solar deity who is described as being immersed in Delphic obscurity. This Dionysian Apollo embodies the collapse of boundaries; with Circe as his offspring, he is also an Apollo through whom the abject exists. This Keatsian Apollo further represents the negatively capable chameleonic poet. In his apotheosis, this Bacchic Apollo dissolves and his limbs are dismembered at the end of *Hyperion*. The Keatsian Bacchic Apollo of *Hyperion* embraces the semiotic negativity and

subsumes in the maternal Thing. As a result, the epic ends when he shrieks and descends into the realm of asymbolia.

This Bacchic Apollo is replaced by the poet-narrator in *The Fall of Hyperion*. However, the semiotic negativity returns in the poet-narrator's relationship with his muse Moneta. As the poet-narrator ventures into her globed brain that enwombs the story which he will narrate, he is submerged in the maternal Thing and confronts the death-bearing visage of the maternal muse. The poet-narrator experiences the same venture into the land of asymbolia as the Bacchic Apollo. *The Fall of Hyperion* remains a fragment like *Hyperion*. Neither the Bacchic Apollo nor the poet-narrator can survive in these two epic fragments which are named after Hyperion who resists the blurring of boundaries, and therefore do not open up a space for the negatively capable chameleonlike liminal poet who journeys through impermeable boundaries.

In accordance with the Keatsian and Kristevan negativity, I would to like conclude this discussion by looking at the photographic negative image of Keatsian poetry and thus envisioning the absent, unwritten *The Rise of Apollo* or *The Ascent of the Bacchic Apollo*. The Bacchic Apollo in this unwritten piece descends into the land of asymbolia, is immersed in the globed mind of the maternal muse in her primordial cave, absorbs the things that are enwombed in her brain, journeys through the uterine night and returns into the domain of the symbolic where he can use language semiotically and transform his experience into the art of poetry. This unrealised work attests to the revolutionary power of the semiotic negativity in the sense that it challenges the existing symbolic order, unsettles its tenuous borders and lays bare the fragility of the symbolic law and the traversability of the thetic boundary, and eventually recomposes the symbolic in a new perspective that includes the semiotic rhythmical instinctuality and the embodiedness of the linguistic subject. This new Bacchic Apollo, like the Kristevan subject in process/on trial, becomes "the ultimate means of society's transformation, a subversion of the socio-symbolic order through the reactivation of what that order normally represses" (Brandt 31). This revolutionary Bacchic Apollo is an indication of a new symbolic register, a brave new world that challenges the existing order/symbolic discourse and that differs from the flinty, stony world of an indissoluble Saturn or Hyperion, of a new world where identities dissolve

and forge relations with otherness, dismantling divisions. Therefore, Apollo stands for “a new phase in human development” (Fermanis 88). This polyvalent Apollo suggests that modern poetry is produced by “a heterogeneous subject, split between the semiotic and the symbolic, between language and a body of memories and affects and drives” (Sjöholm 37). This new Bacchic Apollo believes in the power of the semiotic to undermine the symbolic, thereby expanding the boundaries of the symbolic. The Keatsian speculation that imagination prefigures a reality that is yet to emerge attests to this. This refers to Keats’s interpretation that Adam wakes up and finds his dream turned into reality: “The Imagination may be compared to Adam’s dream – he awoke and found it truth” (*Letters* 54). The imagination of what is incomprehensible in the domain of the symbolic prefigures a symbolic reality to come. The Keatsian Bacchic Apollo is not an Oedipus who “stifles the call of the unnameable behind his eagerness to provide *the* name”; he is an Orpheus seduced by the song (Margaroni “The Trial of the Third” 58). Like the archaic (imaginary) father who combines the maternal and the paternal, the Orphic Apollo “unites two forms of love, which are two variants of identification – the paternal, symbolic variety and the maternal, drive-related one” (Kristeva *Maladies* 185). This points to “the necessity and viability of an existence at the *crossroads*” (Margaroni 50). Kristeva maintains that only the “men and women of the borderlands”, “these new beings of language and blood, rooted in no language and blood” can challenge and destabilise the symbolic representations (*European Subject* 168-9). The Kristevan semiotic negativity is the key to any revolution in meaning and subjectivity. The Bacchic Apollo of the borderlands knows that the dear abyss of death is also “the abysm-birth of elements” (*Endymion* III. 28). Birth and death merge in the figure of Bacchic Apollo. Without Apollo embarking on the simultaneously lethal and jubilatory journey to the end of the night through Circe and Moneta, Keats the poet is unable to realise his poetic imagination.

This thesis has discussed Keats’s longer poems in accordance with Kristeva’s theory. As a further question, this perspective might be employed to study Keats’s odes and to investigate the oscillation between the semiotic and the symbolic in these short poems. As another follow-up question, the interpretation of Keats’s poetry within the Kristevan framework could be deployed in a further study interested in what is called “cognitive poetics” and engaged with the question of “embodied cognition” which

stresses the relationship between the cerebral and the visceral, the sensual and the intelligent (Giovanelli 4, 12). Moreover, the perspective of this dissertation resonates with the affect studies in literature. Affectivity is “a term that connotes both physiological sensations and psychological states” and it refers to “a nexus of associations which might include ‘emotions, feelings, passions, moods, anxiety, discharge of psychic energy, motor innervation, pleasure, pain, joy, and sorrow, rapture, depression’” (Bari xviii). Hence, Romanticism that is described as an “affective revolution” (in Craciun 155) provides a fertile avenue for the affect studies. Keats’s embodied thinking which has been investigated in this thesis in line with Kristevan focus on affectivity might invite a critical approach to reconceive Keats’s poetry in the light of the affect studies. Ricks’s *Keats and Embarrassment* has been cited in scholarly work that concentrates on the affect. Pfau’s *Romantic Moods* also focuses on melancholy among other things. Thanks to this thesis’s approach on the abject in Keats’s longer poems, a further study might be based on Keats and repulsion.

This thesis has employed the practice of close reading as a methodological tool to examine Keats’s poetry with the Kristevan concepts. Analysing Keats’s poetry with Kristevan theory which is intensely poetic and sometimes seems to be anti-theoretical may be a limitation of this study. Examining Keatsian poetic subtleties through Kristevan conundrums may cause obscurity, and sometimes my explanations and interpretations might shift towards a metaphoric register. However, methodologically speaking, the desired interpretation can only ever be realised in the figural domain of the semiotic.

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## APPENDICES

### A. CURRICULUM VITAE

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

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Date and Place of Birth: 18 April 1985, Samsun

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#### EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	Hacettepe Uni. English Language and Literature	2006
BA	METU English Literature	2009
High School	Milli Piyango Anatolian High School, Samsun	2002

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2006- Present	Ankara University	Instructor of English

#### FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Beginner French

## B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

John Keats'in Şiirinde Diyalektik Salınımlar: *Endymion*, *Hyperion* ve *The Fall of Hyperion* Adlı Uzun Şiirlerin Kristevacı Okuması

Bu doktora tezi, İngiliz Romantik şairi John Keats'in *Endymion*, *Hyperion* ve *The Fall of Hyperion* adlı uzun şiirlerini, post-yapısalcı Fransız feminizminin önde gelen isimlerinden birisi olan Julia Kristeva'nın semiyotik, sembolik (simgesel), iğrenç/iğrenme (abjekt/abjeksiyon) ve melankoli (karaduygu) kavramları üzerinden incelemektedir. Çalışmada diyalektik salınımların Keats şiirine nüfuz ettiği savunulmaktadır; bu doğrultuda, Keats şiirinin semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki salınımları araştırılmaktadır. Şairin şiirsel bir romans olarak tanımladığı *Endymion* adlı şiirinde semiyotik olanı benimsediği ve onun içine gömüldüğü iddia edilmektedir. Diğer taraftan ise, epik bir şiir olan *Hyperion* ve bir alegori olarak görülen *The Fall of Hyperion* adlı şiirlerinde, semiyotikle olan bu kucaklaşma bastırılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Yine de, semiyotik ortaya çıkar ve böylece onu dizginleme kararlılığına meydan okur. Bu tez aynı zamanda şairin iğrençlikle karşılaşmasını da çözümlenmeyi hedeflemektedir. *Endymion* şiirinde, sınırların muğlaklaşması tehdidi vardır; bu da şairde korku ve tiksinti duygularını uyandırır. *Hyperion* şiiri ise bu iğrenme duygusuna karşı, sınırları sağlamlaştırmaya çalışmaktadır. Benzer şekilde *The Fall of Hyperion* şiirinde de, şair sınırların muğlaklaşmasına karşı onları pekiştirmeye ve idame ettirmeye çabalamaktadır. Fakat tiksinti her iki şiirin de peşini bırakmamaktadır ve abjekt her ikisine de musallat olmaktadır. Ayrıca bu tezin bir diğer maksadı da Kristeva'nın yorumladığı haliyle melankolinin bu uzun şiirlere nasıl sindiğini tahlil etmektir. Melankolik *Endymion* sembolik düzlemden uzaklaşır, ben ve öteki arasındaki bölünmenin olmadığı, adlandırılmaz olan Şeyin etkisine çekilir. *Hyperion* şiirinde ise çaptan düşmüş, yenik Titanlar asembolik melankolinin alanına geri düşerken, yükselmekte olan Olimpos hanedanından Apollo -ya da Kristeva'nın kavramıyla söyleyecek olursak yeni *kara güneş* tanrısı- ifade edilemez olan Şeyle kaynaşır ve böylece özne ve nesne arasındaki ayrımı aşındırır. Benzer şekilde, *The Fall of Hyperion* şiirindeki şair-anlatıcı esin perisi olan Moneta ile birleşip, içeri ve dışarı arasındaki gediği ortadan kaldırır. Bu tez bu şiirlerin kendi içlerindeki salınımları incelemenin yanı sıra, şairin sesinin *Endymion* ve *Hyperion* şiirleri arasında

bir sarkaç gibi sallanışını, ikincisinin birincisine iğrençlik atfedişini ve onu bastırmaya, dışlamaya çalışmasını ortaya koymaktadır. Fakat bu girişimin başarısız olduğu ve bu sebeple *Hyperion* şiirlerinin yarım kaldığı ileri sürülmektedir.

Keats şiirinde semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki salınımlara odaklanan tartışmada beden önemli bir odak noktasıdır. Bu nedenle, çalışmanın kuramsal çerçevesi bedenin içinden ve beden aracılığıyla yazan Fransız feminizminden beslenmektedir. Kristeva'nın vokal bir aygıt olarak tanımladığı bedenin şiir dilini nasıl biçimlendirdiği ve gündelik iletişimsel dili nasıl kesintiye uğrattığı tartışılmaktadır. Şiir vokal, dolayısıyla dans gibi bedensel bir sanattır; şiirin dili insan bedenidir. Şiir, dilin cismani kökenini ortaya çıkarır; şair kelimelerin maddi varlığına duyarlıdır; o yüzden şiirde iniltilerin, hıçkırımların ve bedene özgü diğer seslerin anlamlandırabilir sözcüklere, dilbilimsel göstergelere nasıl dönüştüğünü görürüz. Böylece, semiyotik aracılığıyla yaşayan, nefes alan, ritmik bir biçimde sallanan insan bedeninin, tıpkı kan nakli gibi, şiir diline aktarıldığını görürüz. Konuşan öznenin bedenli oluşunu derinden hisseden ve bu bedenli oluştan beslenen Keats'in, şiirlerinde sözcüklerin neyi ifade ettiği kadar onların sesleriyle de ilgilendiğine ve böylece iletişimsel dilin, yani sembolik düzlemde kullanılan dilin bedensel tabanını açığa vurduğuna şahit oluruz. İnsanın bedenli oluşuna yapılmış bu şiirsel yatırım sayesinde, bedensel dürtülerin nasıl da şiir dilinde yüzeye çıktığını görürüz. Böylece, dilin ötekiliğine, başka bir ifadeyle simgesel iletişimsel dilin ötekisi olan semiyotik dile tanıklık etmiş oluruz.

Kendisinden önce gelen Neo-Klasik şiirin sınırları çizilebilen, bilinen ve tanıdık olanı vurgulamasının aksine, İngiliz Romantik şiiri genellikle insani sınırların ötesine gitme, bilinmeze ve sonsuza doğru yönelme arzusu ile nitelendirilmiştir. Dilbilimsel göstergeler tarafından temsil edilemez ya da ifade edilemez olana doğru çıkılan bu Romantik yolculuk, şairlerin belirsiz, müphem, saptanamamış, sabit olmayan ve değişken varoluş hallerine duydukları tutkuda görülmektedir. Romantik şair, rasyonel düşünceyi yerinden eden dile getirilemez bilinç hallerine, alacakaranlıkta kalan söze dökülemez bilinç dışı durumlara, ulaşılamaz ve ele geçirilemez olana dair büyük bir arzu duymaktadır. Adlandırılmaz olana duyulan bu arzu yönetilemez olduğu söylenen düşüncelerde, ölçülebilir olmayan mağaralar, girdaplar, dipsiz kuyular ve anaforlda, iç dünyamızdaki isimlendirilemez derin kargaşada, zihnimizin daha önce

ayak basılmamış diyarlarında, tarif edilemez seslerde ve izi sürülemez deneyimlerde ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Keats'in şiirlerinde adlandırılmaz olanla bu karşılaşmayı Kristeva'nın semiyotik kavramı ile açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Kristeva'nın deyimiyle, bu deneyim konuşabilir ve görülebilir olanın sınırlarındaki bir gezintiye eşdeğerdir. Kristeva'nın kuramı düşünülemez olanı düşünmek ve adlandırılmaz olanı adlandırmak girişimi olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu da bize Keats'in şiirleri ve Kristeva'nın kuramsal dünyası arasında bir alışveriş olabileceğini göstermektedir. Kristeva'ya göre, Romantizm bireyin değişkenliğini dile dökmektedir. Yerinden edilmiş, azledilmiş ya da üstü örtülmüş, gizlenmiş, yoğunlaştırılmış ve kat kat örülmüş anlamlar aracılığıyla, Romantik öznelğin kırılmasını, oynaklığını ve indirgenemez akışkanlığını görebilmekteyiz.

Adlandırılmaz ve temsil edilemez şekilde ifade edilen tüm bu olumsuzluklar aslında besleyici ve üretken temel bir anlamsızlığa ya da sembolik düzlem tarafından anlamlandırılmaz olana işaret etmektedir. Dile dökülemez olan şey, öznelğin tam da kendisine içkin bir yarığı, yarılmayı ifade etmektedir. Dillendirilebilen ve dillendirilemez arasındaki ayrım, gösterenler zincirindeki gösteren ve gösterilen arasındaki kopukluğa ya da özne ve nesne, ben ve öteki arasındaki (kurucu) boşluğa işaret etmektedir. Bu yarıklık, simgeleştirilemez olarak ifade edilen Romantik şairin dipsiz kuyusunu üretken kılar. Bu dipsiz kuyu sayesinde, sembolik düzlem yerinden edilir, sınırları ihlal edilir. Bu Romantik yarıklık, sembolik alanın altını oyduğu gibi, bir taraftan da semiyotik olanı sembolize etmeye çalışır. Keats'in şiirleri tam da bu ikisi arasındaki salınımların kavşağında vücut bulur. Bu üretken Romantik yarıklık, sembolik özneyi semiyotik alanı simgeleştirmeye davet ettiği gibi, semiyotik alanı da sembolik düzleme karşı koymaya ve böylece yeniden tanımlamaya çağırır. Semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki ayrım bu sınırın ihlal edilebilirliğine de kanıttır. İhlal edilebilir bu sınır sembolik düzlemin kırılmasını da ortaya çıkarır. Bütün sınırlar aşılabılır olmaları üzerine kurulur, yıkılır ve yeniden kurulur. Bu yüzden de, semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki uçurum üretkendir. Semiyotik alt akıntı sayesinde simgesel sistemler çözülür ve yeniden tanımlanır.

Semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki bu ilişki Keats şiirinde beden üzerinden tartışılmaktadır. Semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki dil eşliğini geçmek, bedensellikle

ve bedenın imkânlarıyla eşleřtirilen semiyotikle kucaklařmakla mümkündür. Batı Metafiziziđinin bedenden terhis edilmiř ve hakikati sadece akıl yoluyla arayan öznesini aldatıcı bulan Fransız feminizmi bedenın ritmini duyuran semiyotikle kucaklařmayı öne sürer. Fransız feminizmi beden ve zihin arısındaki hiyerarřik iliřkiyi reddeder ve onun yerine birbirlerini dıřlamayan, iç içe geçmiř bir iliřki tahayyül eder. Bu iç içe olma hali Romantik řairin kavramsalla duygusalı birleřtirmesinde yankı bulur. Keats řiirinde de duyumsal bedenle düşünselin birlikteliđini ifade eden bedenli ya da bedene gömülü düşünceyi görürüz. Cismani bir yücelik anlayıřını öven bir řair için, beden her zaman dile aktarılmıřtır. Kristeva'nın önerdiđi semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki salınım Keats'in řiirindeki duyumsal ile düşünselin arasındaki salınımlara denk gelmektedir. Dilin eřiđi hakkında düşünöen bir kuramcının fikirleri, eřikte olduđu söylenen bir řairin řiirlerinin çözümlenmesinde son derece yardımcı olmaktadır.

Kristeva'nın semiyotik ile sembolik arasındaki ayrımının Neo-Klasik řiir ile Romantik řiir arasındaki ayrıma denk düştüđu söylenebilir. İnsan dođasındaki anarřik, aşırı ve tuhaf unsurlara saldırdıđı söylenen Neo-Klasik řiir ile betimlenemez, tanımlanamaz olanın sınırlarında gezinen Romantik řiir arasındaki gerilim semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki iliřkilere tercüme edilebilir. Neo-Klasik řiir özneyi sınırlı ve belirli olarak ifade ederken, Romantik řiir bireyin sınırları ihlal etme arzusuna ışık tutar.

Keats'in řiiri ve Kristeva'nın kuramı arasındaki yankılanmayı genel olarak ifade ettikten sonra, řimdi Keats'in řiirlerine ayrıntılı bir řekilde bakabiliriz. Bu tez Keats'in *Endymion*, *Hyperion* ve *The Fall of Hyperion* adlı uzun řiirlerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu tercihin belirli sebepleri vardır. Öncelikle, bu çalıřma *Endymion* romansını yazan genç řairin esas Keats olduđunu öne süren eleřtirmenlere katılmaktadır; bu yüzden bu romans yazan toy řairin diri, gür ve ham sesini çıkıř noktası olarak görmektedir. Toyluktan kaynaklanan gür dirimselliđin semiyotik ile kucaklařmaya imkân sađladıđı düşünölmektedir. *Endymion* romansının semiyotik sesinin Keats külliyatına nüfuz ettiđi aşikârdır. Bu çalıřma aynı zamanda *Endymion* romansını Keats řiirinin maddi temeli olarak görmektedir; bu pastoral romansta bedensel dürtülerin řiir diline nasıl işlediđine tanık oluruz. Ayrıca *Hyperion* ve *The Fall of Hyperion* řiirleri için *Endymion* romansı bir referans noktasıdır; bu epik ve alegorik řiirler kendilerini romanstan ne kadar farklı oldukları üzerinden tanımlamaya çalıřırlar. Bu yüzden,

*Endymion* ve *Hyperion* arasındaki gerilim Kristeva'nın her daim tıpkı duruşmada gibiymişçesine, devamlı süreç ve sınanma halinde olduğunu söylediği özneyi hatırlatır. Bu iki şiir arasındaki gelgitler tüm Keats şiirini özetler gibi görünmektedir.

Bu tezin ana bölümleri Keats'in şiirlerinin sıralamasına göre kurgulanmamıştır. Onun yerine, tekrardan kaçınmak amacıyla, Kristeva'nın kavramları üzerinden düzenlenmiştir. Böylece, ilk ana bölüm üç uzun şiirdeki semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki salınımları inceler; bunu takip eden ana bölüm ise bu uzun şiirleri iğrenç ve iğrenme kavramları üzerinden çözümler; bir sonraki ana bölüm ise melankoli açısından bu şiirleri tahlil eder.

Semiyotik ve sembolik şeklinde isimlendirilmiş ikinci bölüm, Keats şiirinin bu ikisi arasında nasıl salınımlar yaşadığını incelemektedir. *Endymion* romansında şairin semiyotiği kucakladığı ve onun içine gömüldüğü iddia edilirken, *Hyperion* aldı epik şiirde ve *The Fall of Hyperion* alegorisinde semiyotiğin bastırılmaya çalışıldığı ama yine de geri döndüğü öne sürülmektedir.

Bu bölümün ilk kısmı *Endymion* romansında şairin semiyotik bir yolculuğa çıkışına odaklanır. Bu romans bir antik Yunan mitine dayanmaktadır. Endymion defalarca rüyasında gördüğü bir tanrıçayı aramak üzere yola koyulur; bu yolculukta yeraltına ve denizaltına gider. Ay tanrıçasını ararken, "Indian maid" diye isimlendirilen, şarap tanrısı Dionysos'un müritlerinden olan bir kadınla karşılaşır. Endymion uhrevi tanrıçayı unuttur ve cismani "Indian maid" ile birlikte olmaya karar verir; romansın sonunda bu ikisinin zaten aynı kişi olduğunu öğrenir.

*Endymion* romansında semiyotik sembolüğü boğmakla tehdit eder. Semiyotik bu romansı kuşatır; bu kuşatma romans boyunca çeşitli şekillerde görünür. Öncelikle *Endymion*'ın bedensel şiir dili bunu görünür kılar. Bu romanstaki şiir dili bedenden kopuk değildir; aksine beden ritminin ve dürtülerinin şiir diline aktarılmış olduğunu görürüz. Semiyotik Keats şiirinin nefes alan ritmi ile ortaya çıkar.

Bu romansın duyumsal dili şiirin semiyotik içine gömülü olduğuna işaret eder. Yoğun şekilde duyumsal olan bu dil, ben ve öteki arasındaki ayırımın üzerine kurulu olan sembolik düzlem öncesi, semiyotik düzlemdeki dilsiz çocuğun yaşadığı bütünlüğü ve

bolluğu anıştırır. Böyle bir şiir dili tüm duyuları harekete geçirir. Dokunma, duyma, görme, koklama ve tat alma duyularını yoğun bir şekilde harekete geçiren bu şiir dili sembolik düzenin ifade edemediği bir tamlık hissini çağrıştırır. Örneğin bu bolluk hissiyatı romans kahramanın kız kardeşi ile kameriyede birlikte olduğu anlarda şiir diline yansır. Bütünlük duygusunu yaratan bu şiir dili, dilsiz çocuğun sembolik düzlemde konumlanmadan önce semiyotik düzlemdeki anne bedeni ile olan tamlığını ifade eder. Bu noktada Kristeva'nın semiyotik *khora* kavramı tartışmaya girer; semiyotik *khora* dil öncesi bir tamlık hissini içinde barındırır. Bütünlük hissini ifade eden metaforlar şiir boyunca defalarca görülür.

Keats'in "negatif kabiliyet" diye Türkçeleştirebileceğimiz kavramı da semiyotiğin *Endymion* romansına nasıl nüfuz ettiğine işaret eder. Bu negatif yeterlilik fikri, kesin bilgiler yerine alacakaranlıkta kalan, belli belirsiz bir yarı bilgiyle memnun kalabilme becerisini ifade etmektedir Keats için. Ayrıca, negatif kabiliyet şairin gözlemediği kendi dışındaki nesnelere tam bir bütünleşme halindeyken kendini kaybetmesini de imler. Kendini kaybedip öteki içerisinde erimesi semiyotik düzlemi çağrıştırır; çünkü böylesine bir birleşme ve yakınlaşma sembolik düzlemin ön koşulu olan ben ve öteki arasındaki ayrımı aşındırır.

Keats'in gündelik iletişimsel dili eğip bükmesi semiyotiğin sembolik üzerindeki tehdidine işaret etmektedir. Semiyotik alt akıntı, sözdizimini altüst ederek ve kelimeleri bükerek, sembolik düzlemin kurallarını ihlal eder ve dilin sembolik şeklini bozguna uğratar. Şair bu dil bozumunu çeşitli şekillerde yapar: Yeni kelime türetmek bunlardan bir tanesidir. Yeni kelimelerin yaratılması, halihazırda, sembolik dilin yetersizliğine işaret eder. Buna benzer biçimde, şair sözcükleri de eğip bükerek; mesela isimler sıfat olarak ya da sıfatlar zarf gibi kullanılır. Anakronistik kelimeler kullanmak da dil bozumunun görünür olduğu yerlerden birisidir; şair tarih-dışı kelimeleri seçerek, sembolik düzlemin sınırlarını ihlal eder; çünkü o çağa ait olmayan kelimeler sembolik düzlemin adlandırabildiği ve temsil edebildiği sınırların ötesine geçildiğinin bir ifadesidir. Keats'in şiir dili böylece sembolik eşliğin ötesine taşar. Bu yüzden de kendi çağdaşı birçok (muhafazakâr) eleştirmen tarafından şiir dili tuhaf, hastalıklı, gülünç, iğrenç, saçma, haddini bilmez, bayağı ve kaba bulunur.

Bu bölümün ikinci kısmı ise *Hyperion* şiirindeki semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki salınımlara odaklanmaktadır. *Hyperion* şiiri üçüncü kuşak Olimposlu tanrıların ikinci kuşak Titanları tahtından etmesini konu eden epik bir mücadeleyi anlatmaktadır. *Endymion* romansından farklı olarak, *Hyperion* şiiri disiplin altına alınmış ve ıslah edilmiş bir tarzda yazılmaya çalışılır. *Endymion* sınırları ihlal ettiği ve muğlaklaştırdığı için semiyotik boyutu temsil ederken, *Hyperion* şiirinin ise bu sınırları daha da güçlendirdiği ve belirginleştirdiği için sembolik düzlemi yansıttığı öne sürülür. Keats *Endymion* romansına özgü bulduğu taşkınlıkları ve gereksiz fazlalığı *Hyperion* şiirinden arındırmayı hedefler. Fakat bu arındırma girişimi başarısızlıkla sonuçlanır; çünkü *Endymion* romansı epik şiirin etrafında gezinmeye ve sınırlarını ihlal etmeye devam eder. *Endymion*, bir karaltı gibi belli belirsiz varlığını *Hyperion* şiirinde hissettirir. Semiyotik, epiği tehdit eden bir karaltı gibi, simgesel düzlemde bir alt akıntı olarak devam eder.

Bu epik şiir dili, simgesel düzlemde ifade edilemez olanın tehdit ettiği *Endymion* romansının aksine, bedenselliğin ıslah edildiği, semiyotikten arındırılmış simgesel bir alana yerleşmeyi amaçlamaktadır. *Endymion* romansında semiyotiğin bir tezahürü olarak gördüğümüz ritmik bir şekilde nefes alıp veren beden güçten düşmüş, zorlukla nefes alabildikleri zindanlara hapsedilmiş Titanlara tanık olduğumuz *Hyperion* şiirinde baskılanmıştır. Fakat bu epik şiirin üçüncü kitabında Apollo'nun yükselişi ile birlikte nefes alan beden tekrar canlanır. Şiir tanrısı da olan Apollo'nun yükselişi dilin müzikal, melodik, yani semiyotik boyutunun tekrar dirilmesi anlamına gelir; bununla birlikte rüzgârların dile getirdiği tınılar bile tekrar canlanır.

Öznel olan *Endymion* romansının aksine, *Hyperion* nesnel olarak tasarlanır. Keats bu maksatla epik şiirini yazarken Milton'ın *Yitik Cennet* şiirinden yararlanır. Amacı epik şiiri modern bir şairin tehlikeli bir şekilde içine gömüldüğü öz-bilinçten ve solipsizmden uzaklaştırmaktır. Bu tehditkâr solipsizmin ötesinde bir nesnellik kazanma girişimi, şairin *Hyperion* şiirini simgesel yasanın hâkim olduğu alana konumlandırma çabasının bir ifadesidir. Şairin kendisini onu önceleyen İngiliz şiirinin baba soylu (paternal) şairleriyle ilişkilendirme eğilimi yine simgesel düzlemde kendine yer açma arzusunun somutlaştığı bir ana denk düşer. Fakat bu girişim başarısız olur; çünkü Apollo'nun ilahlaştığı üçüncü kitap *Endymion* romansının tarzını yansıtır

ve bu şekilde epik şiirin altını oyar. Baskılanan semiyotik geri döner ve şairin sembolik bir epik şiir yazma girişimini altüst eder.

Simgesel bir epik şiir olarak tasarlanan *Hyperion* bilinmeyene, adlandırılmayana açılan semiyotik bir yolculuğa çıkmaz. Bu yüzden de, dil öncesi bir alana sapmaktan kaçınır. Bunun sonucu olarak, *Endymion* romansına özgü semiyotik *khora*ya gömülme ve onun içinde erime arzusu epik şiire işaret etmez. Romansa özgü dil öncesi bütünlüğü ve iç içe geçmişliği çağrıştıran dil öncesi alanlar epik şiirde baskılanmıştır. Romansın akışkanlığı ve ayrımları yok sayan çokluğu epik şiirden defedilir. Bu akışkanlığın yerine, epik şiire taşlaşma ve donma hâkim olur. Kan naklini hatırlatırcasına bedensel enerjinin şiir diline aktarıldığı romansın aksine, epik şiirde gür bir dirimselliğin ifadesi olan kan akışı sekteye uğrar.

Epik şiirde semiyotiği dizginlemenin başka bir yolu olarak, *Endymion* romansına özgü bolluk ve tamlık hissini uyandıran metaforlar *Hyperion* şiirinde boşalma ve eksilme imgeleriyle yer değiştirir. Bu değişikliğin amacı, romansı anıştıran unsurları epik şiirden tahliye etmektir. Bu unsurları yok etme kararlılığına rağmen, semiyotik yine de sızabileceği aralıklar ya da açıklıklar bulur.

Semiyotik dili ıslah etme girişiminin başka bir ifadesi olarak, simgesel dile karşı koyan duyumsal şiir dili zapt altına alınmaya çalışılır. Güçten düşmüş bir Titan tanrısı olan Satürn'ün aksayan felçli dili bu girişimin somut bir ifadesi gibidir. Bu aksak dil içgüdüsel, ritmik ve canlı bir semiyotiğin felce uğradığını çarpıcı bir şekilde betimler. Her ne kadar semiyotik dil uyuşturulmuş olsa da, yine de bu aksak dilin görece yeniden canlandığı, kısmen dirildiğini gördüğümüz anlar da vardır.

Simgesel epik yazma girişimine asıl darbeyi vuran, yine bu epik şiirin üçüncü kitabında ortaya çıkan Olimpos tanrısı Apollo'nun yeni güneş tanrısı olarak yükselmesi ve yaşadığı dönüşümdür. Yeni güneş tanrısı Apollo, şarap tanrısı olan Dionysos'a ait özellikleri de kendinde barındıran bir tanrı olarak doğar. Bu Dionysosçu Apollo semiyotik ile sembolik arasındaki ayrımın aşındığının bir tezahürü olarak görülür. Aynı zamanda Apollo'yu tanımlayan başka bir ifade ise onu antik Yunan'da kehanetlerin merkezi olarak görülen Delfi şehri ile ilişkilendirir ve böylece bu kente ve kehanet pratiğine özgü gizlilik, anlaşılmazlık, çift anlamlılık ve belirsizlik bu yeni

güneş tanrısının özellikleri arasına eklenir. Bu betimlemeler sınırları ihlal eden, ayrımları bulanıklaştıran ve eşiği geçen bir Apollo imgesini tasvir eder.

Bu bölümün üçüncü kısmı *The Fall of Hyperion* adlı alegorideki semiyotik ile sembolik arasındaki salınımlara odaklanır. Bu eseri yazarken Keats, kendi ifadesiyle söylemek gerekirse, duyguların gerçek sesi ile epik türünün yapmacıklı sesi arasında bir sınır çizmeye koyulur. Bu çalışma, Keats'in bu iki sesi ayırıştırma çabası ile semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki ayrımın belli paralellikler taşıdığını öne sürer. *The Fall of Hyperion* eserindeki anlatıcı-şair aslında ikisi arasındaki bu ayrımı tam olarak kuramadığını ifade eder. İki ses arasındaki salınımlara rağmen, anlatıcı-şair yine de bu alegoriyi simgesel alanın sınırları içerisinde sabitlemeye çalışır. Bu sebeple, anlatıcı-şair fanatikler ve şairler arasında kesin bir ayrım kurmaya yeltenir. Bu ayrıma göre, fanatiklerin ritmik sözleri ve onların gölgeli anlamları semiyotiğe denk gelirken, şairlerin sözcükleri ustalıklı kullanımı ise anlam bulanıklığına yer açmayan sembolik düzleme tekabül eder. *Hyperion* şiirine benzer şekilde, *The Fall of Hyperion* şiirinin şair-anlatıcısı da *Endymion* romansına özgü duyumsal dili ve bu dilin bedenselliğini, sınırların muğlaklığını ve her şeyin birbirine karıştığı ve birbiri içinde eridiği bolluk ve çokluk hissiyatını bu şiirden uzaklaştırmaya çabalar.

Bu tezin üçüncü bölümü Keats'in uzun şiirlerinde abjekt ve abjeksiyon ile karşılaşmasını ele alır. *Endymion* şiirinde sınırların tamamen yıkılması ya da bulanıklaşması tehdidi tikslenme ve korku duygularını uyandırır; bu duygular doğrultusunda şairin abjekt ile karşılaşmasını tahlil edebiliriz. *Hyperion* ise abjektin iğrendirici varlığı karşısında, sınırları sağlamlaştırmaya ve idame ettirmeye çalışır. Aynı şekilde, *The Fall of Hyperion* şiiri de tiksindirici abjeksiyonu dışlamak için ayrımları keskinleştirmeye ve belirginleştirmeye uğraşır. Ama yine de abjekt her iki eseri de ele geçirir.

Üçüncü bölümün birinci kısmı *Endymion* romansında iğrençliği ve iğrenmeyi ele alır. Simgesel alanda temsil edilemez ve adlandırılmaz olana doğru yapılan yolculuk ile abjektin ortaya çıkışı ilişkilendirilir. Çünkü sembolik alanın sınırları dışında kalır ve dilbilimsel göstergeler tarafından imlenemez; büyüleyici olmasının yanı sıra tehditkâr ve mide bulandırıcıdır. Keats'in şiir dilinin boğucu duyumsal yoğunluğu sınırların

bulanıklaşmasına ve böylece tikslenme duygusunun uyanmasına yol açar. Şair, bir taraftan bilinmeyenin dipsiz kuyusunu cezbedici bulur; diğer taraftan da bu bilinmezlik karşısında sınırların yok olmasını arzular. Dolayısıyla, abjeksiyonu kovmak için çabalar.

*Endymion* romanının Kirke karakteri, abjekt tartışmasında önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Kirke abjeksiyonunun vücut bulmuş halidir. Kirke ile ölümcül karşılaşmada simgesellik ve hayvanlık arasındaki sınırlar tamamen çözülür. Kirke'nin tahakkümü altındaki biçimleri bozulmuş hayvan şekilleri abjektin cisimleşmiş halidir. Bu bozulmuş, şekilsiz figürler Glaucus'u korkutur ve tiksindirir; çünkü insan ve hayvan arasındaki kırılma ve belli belirsiz ayrımı ortadan kaldırırlar. Bu grotesk formlar simgesellik tarafından anlamlandırılmamış ve isimlendirilememiş olanı anımsatır ve bu yüzden de iğrenç bulunur. Bu tikslenme hissi dilin ve özneliğin dizginlenemez bedenselliğinin ve onun mekruh, kirlenici görülen varlığının aşılmasının imkânsız olduğunu gösterir.

Glaucus ve Endymion gibi birbirlerine ayna tutan kişiler arasındaki duygudaşlığa dayalı ilişki abjekt tartışmasında önemli bir yere sahiptir. Bu ilişki, dilsiz çocuğun annesel bedeni kenara itmesini sağlayan Kristeva'nın narsisist yapısını temsil eder. Endymion bir Narkissos figürüdür; Endymion'ın özneliği ben ve öteki arasındaki ayrım üzerine kurulu değildir; bu sebeple de kişiliğini belirleyen özne ve nesne arasındaki abjekt muğlaklıktır. Ama Kristeva'nın narsisist yapısı sayesinde bu abjekt durumdan uzaklaşabilir. Glaucus ve Endymion birbirlerini yansıyan karakterler oldukları için Glaucus'un Kirke ile olan ilişkisi Endymion'ın da içinde bulunduğu psikik durumu dolaylı olarak ifade eder. Aralarındaki duygudaşlık sayesinde, birbirlerini kurtarıcı olarak görürler çünkü birbirlerini Kirke'de cisimleşmiş olan abjekt durumdan kurtarırlar. Bu ilişkiyi ifade eden imgeler asa ve parşömandır. Bu imgeler, ben ve öteki arasındaki ayrımın kurulu olduğu simgesel alanı, yani dile girilen alanı temsil eder. Yine de Glaucus bu simgesel alana girebilmek için bir ayna imgesine ihtiyaç duyar; bu ayna imgesi de Endymion'da ete kemiğe bürünür. İki arasındaki bu ilişki aracılığıyla Kirke'nin temsil ettiği abjeksiyonun dipsiz hasis kuyusundan uzaklaşabilirler.

Kristeva'nın imgesel baba kavramı abjeksiyon tartışmasında çok önemlidir. *Endymion* romansında Neptün bu imgesel babayı temsil eder. Kirke'nin tahakkümü reddedilir ve onun yerine Neptün'ün hükümdarlığı geçer. Neptün imgesel baba olarak, dilsiz çocuğu annesel beden ile kurduğu boğucu simbiyotik ilişkiden koparır. Neptün, anne-çocuk arasındaki ikili ilişkiye müdahale eden üçüncü taraftır. Böylelikle ben ve öteki arasındaki ayrımın aşındığı simbiyotik ilişkiden, yani sınırların bulanıklaştığı abjekt durumdan dilsiz çocuğu çıkarır ve simgesel alana geçmesine yardımcı olur. Kirke'nin tılsımlı sözlerinden Neptün'ün durgun ve dingin sularına geçiş yapılır. Bununla birlikte, Neptün'ün imgesel baba olarak müdahale etmesine karşın, *Endymion* yine de abjekt anneyi kovamaz ve Neptün'ün ayakları önünde düşer bayılır. Böylece, ben ve öteki ayrımının olmadığı kristal sığınağa geri döner. Ayna imgesi olan Glaucus ile bütünlük hissini yaşadığı kristal sığınağa çekilir.

Üçüncü bölümün ikinci kısmı *Hyperion* şiirinde abjekt ve abjeksiyon tartışmasına değinir. *Hyperion* şiiri *Endymion* romansını abjektin bir tezahürü olarak görür ve bu sebeple romansa özgü nitelikleri ve unsurları epik şiirin simgesel dünyasından dışlamaya uğraşır. *Endymion* şiirinin *Hyperion* tarafından dışlanması kimlik, düzen ve sistem gibi simgesel kurumları tehdit eden semiyotiğin üzerindeki sembolik baskıyı ifade eder. *Hyperion* kendinden önce geleni olumsuzlayarak ve dışlayarak kendini kurmaya çalışır. *Hyperion* şiirinin romansı def etmesi sembolik düzenin kurulması için abjeksiyonun önkoşul olduğunu gösterir. Romansı tahliye çabasına rağmen, yine de sürgüne gönderilen *Endymion* geri döner, epik şiirin sınırlarında dolaşmaya başlar ve böylece sınırlarını ihlal eder. Epik şiirin hedeflediği sağlam ve geçirimsiz sınırlar böylece çözülme ve dağılma tehlikesiyle karşı karşıya kalır.

Tahttan indirilen, güçten düşen Satürn simgesel konumunu kaybeder. Artık sembolik bir makamı olmayan Satürn, *Hyperion* için abjektin cisimleşmiş halidir. Abjekti temsil eden Satürn bir ceset gibidir; sembolik bir şekilde kurulmuş yaşamın dışına itilen cansız bir beden gibi tiksindirici ve ürkütücüdür. Satürn ölüm ve yaşam arasındaki sınırı ihlal ettiği için de abjekt olarak görülür. Ölüm yaşama bulaşır ve böylece ölüm ve yaşam arasındaki çizgi silikleşir. Satürn yaşamın kıyısına sürülmüş bir atık gibidir. Sembolik düzlemin üzerini kapatmaya çalıştığı dehşet saçan dipsiz karanlık kuyunun ele geçirdiği bir ceset gibidir. Satürn'ün "Satürn nerede?" sorusu, onun abjektin ete

kemiğe bürünmüş hali olduğunu kanıtlayan en güçlü örnektir. Bu soru simgesel kimliğin abjekt tarafından istila edildiği anlamına gelir.

Hyperion, Kristeva'nın tanımladığı haliyle dehşetin güçleri tarafından istila edilen ya da edilmeye çalışılan diğer bir karakterdir. Tanımlanamaz, kategorize edilemez olan tarafından, yani sınırları ve bunların üzerine kurulu kimlikleri istila eden abjekt tarafından köşeye sıkıştırılan başka bir figürdür Hyperion. Bu karakterin en büyük korkusu, Satürn gibi tahttan indirilmek, güçten düşmek, sembolik konumunu kaybetmek ve bunun sonucu olarak da abjekt tarafından ele geçirilmektir. Çünkü sembolik bir konumu kaybetmek yapıların, pozisyonların ve kimliklerin simgesel dünyasının dışına sürülmek demektir. Bu yüzden abjektin kışkırttığı muğlaklığa karşı savaşıyor. Sınırların bulanıklaşmaması için mücadele verir; abjeksiyonun gayyasına düşmemek için, onun kimliğini ve pozisyonunu tanımlayan sınırları sağlamlaştırmaya, geçirimsiz kılmaya çalışır. Örneğin; Hyperion'ın ateşli ve kızgın doğasına yapılan vurgu, abjekti temsil eden, cansız, soluk bir cesedi andıran Satürn'den farklılığını belirginleştirir. Aynı şekilde, Titanların yerine geçecek olan Olimpos tanrılarının küçüklüğü ve zayıflığı karşısında, Titanların iriliğinin ve fiziksel kuvvetinin altı çizilir. Bu farklılıklar Hyperion ve diğer Titanların pozisyonlarını korumak için daha da ön plana çıkarılır. Fakat abjekti savuşturmak için verilen mücadeleye rağmen, zaman zaman Hyperion korkusuna yeni düşer ve abjekt zihnini işgal etmeye başlar. Bu dehşetli korkunun sonucu olarak heyulalar, hortlaklar ve iğrenç grotesk figürler hücum eder.

Üçüncü bölümün üçüncü kısmı ise *The Fall of Hyperion* adlı alegorik şiirdeki abjekti ve abjeksiyonu incelemektedir. *The Fall of Hyperion* kendisini önceleyen *Hyperion* şiirinin bazı bölümlerini dışarıda bırakır çünkü dışarıda bıraktığı bu unsurlar sayesinde abjekti savuşturmaya çalışır. Mesela *Hyperion* şiirindeki sınırları muğlaklaştıran Dionysosçu Apollo dışarıda bırakılır ve onun yerine, sınırların idame ettirilmesi gerektiğine inanan bir şair-anlatıcı figürü *The Fall of Hyperion* şiirine yerleştirilir. Bu bir abjeksiyon örneğidir çünkü batmakta olan bir gemiden yük boşaltmak gibi, *Hyperion* şiirinden de (şairin yükü altında ezildiği) bazı unsurlar atılır ve yeniden, hafiflemiş, hatta safrasını atmış olarak, başka bir adla yeni bir şiir yazılır. Buna ek olarak, *Hyperion* şiirinin girişi de atılır; çünkü bu epik şiir tahammül edilemez, abjekt

bir cesedi çağrıştıran Satürn ile başlar ve böylece adlandırılmaz olanın, yaşama bulaşan ölümün ağırlığı altında ezilir. Buna karşılık, *The Fall of Hyperion* alegorisi, şair-anlatıcının fanatikler ve şairler arasındaki ayrımı ve çizgiyi tartıştığı bir bölümle başlar ve böylece daha şiirin başından itibaren bu alegorik şiirin sınırlara ve ayrımlara ihtimam gösterdiğini açık eder.

Moneta, yani esin perisi, abjekt ve abjeksiyon tartışmasının etrafında döndüğü merkezi bir karakterdir *The Fall of Hyperion* şiirinde. Şair-anlatıcının Moneta ile olan ilişkisi bu tartışma için çok önemlidir çünkü Moneta aynı zamanda hem abjektin kendisini hem de abjeksiyonu savuşturmaya çalışan faili temsil eder. Moneta abjeksiyonu öteleyen etkeni temsil eder çünkü şair-anlatıcının rehberi olarak ona şairler ve hayalperestler arasındaki ayrımı korumasını salık verir. Şairin kılavuzu olarak Moneta esin verdiği şaire sınırları muğlaklaştırmamasını öğütler. Fakat aynı zamanda, bu rolünün tam zıddı olarak, Moneta şaire dehşet veren abjekt bir figür olarak da ortaya çıkar. Moneta şair için Kristevan'ın tabiriyle annesel Şeyi cisimleştirir. Şair-anlatıcının Moneta ile kurduğu ilişki, anne ile dilsiz çocuk arasındaki üçüncü tarafın olmadığı simbiyotik ilişkiyi andırır. Bu simbiyotik ilişkide ben ve öteki arasındaki ayrım ortadan kalktığı için, muğlaklık, yani abjeksiyon ortaya çıkar. Şair-anlatıcı bu tarih öncesinden ya da başka bir ifadeyle simgesel dil öncesinden gelen annesel figürün sarmalayan bir küre, içine alan bir kubbe gibi, kuşatan bir yuvarlaklık gibi betimlenen zihnine yolculuk yapar. Yuvarlaklığı vurgulamak için kullanılan İngilizce kelime “globed” aynı zamanda “orb” kelimesini de akla getirir; bu çağrışım sayesinde, anne figürü ve şairin arasındaki ilişkiyi optik bir metaforla da güçlendirir. Bu sarmalayıcı yuvarlak yuva fikri anne ve çocuk arasındaki göz bebeğinde kurulan tamlık hissini uyandıran bütünlüklü dil öncesi birliği de anımsatır. Moneta'nın böyle betimlenen zihninin, şairin anlatacağı hikâyeyi (Titanların düşüşü) rahim gibi içinde barındırdığı söylenir bu alegorik şiirde. Moneta'nın zihninin bir ana rahmine benzetilmesi, şair-anlatıcının anne bedeni tarafından kuşatıldığı fikrini de güçlendirir. Ancak özne ve nesne ayrımının ortadan kalktığı böyle bir bütünleşme şiirde, aynı zamanda, korku ve tikslenme duygularını da uyandırır. Bu yüzden, anne figürü de olan esin perisinin yüzü ölüme doğru giden ölümcül bir çehre gibi tasvir edilir. Moneta'nın yüzünün betimlenmesinde, yaşam dairesine bulaşmasından korkulan ölümün bu denli somut bir şekilde kullanılması bu ilişkinin abjektle olan bağıntısını hatırlatır. Karanlık geceyi

hatırlatan bu asembolik rahimde şair-anlatıcı aslında kendi kendini döller; çünkü esin perisi ile şair arasındaki ayrım ortadan kalkar ve birbirlerine karışırlar. Bu birleşme şair-anlatıcı için hem büyüleyici hem de korkutucudur. Bir taraftan bu birliktelik şairi cezbeder çünkü rahim gibi tarif edilen esin perisinin zihni üretken ve doğurgan, esirgeyen bir karanlıktır. Diğer taraftan bu hemhal olma hali şairi ürkütür çünkü şairin dil öncesi bir alana çekildiğinin işaretidir de bu aynı zamanda. Bu nedenle, tamamen dilsizleşme ihtimali şairi rahatsız eder.

Bu tezin dördüncü bölümü Kristeva'nın yorumladığı haliyle melankoli kavramının Keats'in uzun şiirlerine nasıl nüfuz ettiğine eğilmektedir. Melankolik Endymion sembolik alandan uzaklaşır ve adlandırılmaz olana doğru çekilir. *Hyperion* şiirinin yenik tanrıları asembolik bir alana doğru kayarken, yükselen yeni Olimpos tanrısı Apollo ise sadece bir güneş tanrısı olarak kalmaz, adeta Kristeva'nın kullandığı kara güneş mecazını hatırlatacak şekilde, yeni kara güneş tanrısı olur ve temsil edilemez olan Şeyle birleşir.

Dördüncü bölümün birinci kısmı *Endymion* romansındaki melankoli tartışmasına ayrılmıştır. Keats'in bu şiirsel romansı melankolik bir kahraman etrafında örülür. Endymion Kristeva'nın tabiriyle annesel Şeyle simbiyotik bir ilişkiye gömülmüş bir karakter olarak ortaya çıkar. Bu gömülmenin sonucu olarak da romans kahramanı, dilbilimsel göstergelerin imlemediği asembolik bir alana çekilir. Bu alan gecenin eski rahmi diye tarif edilir bu şiirsel romansta. Bu leyli rahim, simgesel tarih öncesine konumlandırılan, adlandırılmaz annesel Şeye işaret eder. Bu geceye ait rahim mecazı, melankolik karakterin sükûnet mağarasına çekilme arzusunda da ortaya çıkar. Bu sessizlik mağarası, dilsiz çocuğun annesel Şeyle birbirine karıştığı söz öncesi bir alanı betimler; huzuru çağrıştırdığı gibi, karakterin çaresizlikle ve huzursuzlukla tanımladığı ve içine sıkışıp kaldığı bir deliği imler. Bu dil öncesi mağara karanlıkta görünmeyen ışıktır melankolik Endymion için. Karanlıkta görünmeyen ışık mecazı, melankolinin nuru siyahını, Kristeva'nın deyişiyle kara güneşi anımsatır. Rahmin parıldayan gecesinde Endymion sadece kendi ayna imgesiyle bakışan bir Narkissos değildir. Aynı zamanda, bu doğurgan, üretken ve esirgeyen gecenin rahminde düşen değil düşünen, sadece gören değil görüş de bildiren birisidir. Bu geceye ait rahim ona psişik bir içsellik sağlar ve içgörü bahşeder.

Dördüncü bölümün ikinci kısmı ise *Hyperion* şiirini melankoli mefhumu üzerinden tahlil eder. Bu kısımda melankoli tartışması Satürn, Hyperion ve Apollo karakterleri üzerinden yürütülür. Satürn melankolinin karanlığı tarafından ele geçirilmiş bir karakter olarak karşımıza çıkar. İktidardan düşen Satürn'ün melankolisi, görme yetisinin zayıflaması ya da kaybolması, ölümcül hareketsizlik ve taşlaşma/hiçleşme ve duyuların boşlanması üzerinde betimlenir. Satürn sembolik düzlemde çekilmiş ve melankolinin ölümcül karanlığında teslim olmuş gibi görünmektedir. Fakat Hyperion, Satürn'ün aksine, melankolinin dipsiz karanlık gavyasına düşmemek için çabalar ve teslim olmaktansa bu geceyi fethetmeyi arzular. Usulca kara geceye giden Satürn'ün aksine, Hyperion ışığın tükenişine öfkeyle bağırır ve tüm simgesel temsillerin kaynağı olan ışığa, güneşe tutunmaya çalışır. Diğer tarafta ise, yükselen yeni güneş tanrısı Apollo gecenin karanlığını da kucaklar; çünkü bu yeni güneş tanrısı, şarap tanrısı Dionysos'un özelliklerini kendinde barındırır. Hyperion sadece güneş tanrısı iken, Apollo hem güneş tanrısı hem de şiir tanrısıdır. Dolayısıyla, bütün temsilleri mümkün kılan simgesel ışığı, şiirin bu ışıkla hemhal olduğu karanlığı ve Delfi'nin kâhinlerine özgü gizemliliği kendisinde barındırır. Arkaik annesel Şeyden koparılmış bir güneş tanrısı değildir Apollo. Yaşam ile ölüm, ışık ile karanlık, varlık ve yokluk, kimlik ve kimliksizlik arasında salınan kara güneş tanrısıdır Apollo. Arkaik annesel Şeyle böylesine birleşmek hem ölümcül hem de coşkuludur.

Bu Kristevacı okumaların hepsi Keats şiirinde salınımların ne kadar temel olduğunu gösterir bize. Simgeseli semiyotiğe açma ve semiyotiği simgeselleştirme arzusu bu uzun şiirlerin bel kemiğini oluşturmaktadır. *Endymion* romansında semiyotik simgeseli gölgede bırakırken, *Hyperion* şiirinde ise simgeselin baskın olması istenmiştir. Bu iki şiir arasındaki salınım *The Fall of Hyperion* alegorisinde Moneta'nın çift katmanlı muazzam muammasında tekrar görülür.

Bu salınımlar semiyotik ve simgeselin birbirini yok eden bir zıtlık üzerinden tarif edilemeyeceğini, aksine birbirine bağlı, birbirini zenginleştiren bir ilişki üzerinden açıklanması gerektiğini göstermektedir. *Endymion* ve *Hyperion* arasındaki ilişki de bu şekilde üretken ve doğurgan görülmelidir. Keats'in *Endymion* romansını yazmamış olmayı dilemesine karşın, onun zihin dünyasını ayrıntılı bir şekilde görebildiğimiz en uzun eseri dört bin küsur dizesiyle *Endymion* romansıdır. Romans ve epik arasındaki

gerilimli ilişki aslında *Hyperion* şiirinin ancak *Endymion* şiirinin ardından yazılabilirliğini gösterir. Burada *Endymion* kurucu metindir. *Hyperion* kendini bu kurucu metin üzerinden tanımlar. Kristeva'nın semiyotiği üretken çözülme olarak gördüğü gibi, *Endymion* şiirini de doğurgan bir karanlık olarak görmeliyiz. Ay ışığı etkisindeki romans ile güneş ışığının etkisindeki epik birbirlerini beslerler. Bu kaynaşma Dionysosçu Apollo figüründe yoğunlaşır ve gizemli Moneta karakterinde zirveye ulaşır. Apollo'nun güçleri çeşitlidir. Güneş tanrısı olmasının yanı sıra, aynı zamanda salgın hastalıklar da anılır. Sadece müzik, şiir ve sağaltım tanrısı değildir, bunların yanısıra bulaşıcı hastalıkların tanrısı olarak da geçer. Apollo'nun bu gizemli ikircikliliği Keats'in Dionysosçu Apollo'suna denk düşer. Keats şiirinin betimlediği Apollo karanlığa da kucak açan kara güneş tanrısıdır. Sadece sağaltan, aydınlatan tanrı değil, aynı zamanda öldüren ve karanlığa gömen tanrıdır da. Tam da bu sebepten dolayı abjeksi ötelemeyen, Kirke'yi ve gizemli Moneta'yı da içinde barındıran bir Apollo figürüdür. Bu yüzden, Kirke *Endymion* romansında Apollo'nun kızı olarak geçer; Apollo'nun kötü tohumu olduğu ve Apollo mitinin karanlık tarafını temsil ettiği öne sürülür. Dolayısıyla Keats'in betimlediği Apollo ötekiliğini kendi içinde barındıran bir tanrıdır. Semiyotik ile sembolüğün böylesine iç içe geçmesi Kristeva'nın şiir dilinin devrimci bulduğu yanıdır. Simgeselin adlandırılmaz, bilinemez şeklinde kurduğu semiyotik, alt akıntı olarak sembolüğü rahatsız eder, altını oyar ve böylece daha önceden temsil edilemez olanı ifade edilebilir olana dönüştürür; bunun sonucunda simgeselin sınırları önce yıkılır, sonra genişleyerek yeniden kurulur. Bu süreç semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki salınımlar sayesinde bitimsiz bir şekilde devam eder.

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