The Identity and Difference between Keats's *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*

—— on Common Lines

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1

Hyperion and the revised *The Fall of Hyperion* have almost the same lines, that is, common lines. In this paper we will scrutinize the common lines and clarify the identity and difference between the two poems.

The first three lines of *Hyperion* appear in *The Fall*, I, 294-96. We will juxtapose the lines of both poems:

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 gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;

(*Hyperion*, I, 1-5)

. . . side by side we stood,
(Like a stunt bramble by a solemn pine)
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.

(*The Fall of Hyperion*, I, 292-300)

In these quotations the dots at the heads of the lines and the underlines are marked by the writer of this paper. The dots indicate that the two lines are identical. The underlines mark the parts of lines or whole lines that are different. These marks are used in the same way through this paper.

In *Hyperion* the three lines in question continue, with a comma, on the following line, "Sat gray-hair'd Saturn . . . ." Therefore we can clearly understand that Saturn sits in the shady valley in the deep forest and that "the shady sadness" implies the sad heart of the fallen Saturn. The grandeur of the description which symbolizes darkness is suitable for the fallen divinity. In *The Fall*, however, the three lines end in a full stop. The lines follows the sentence, " . . . side by side we stood." In this sentence "we" means the poet who tells the story and Moneta who is a goddess serving at Saturn's temple. They stand side by side "Deep in the shady sadness of a vale" and the poet looks at Saturn's figure "beneath the gloomy boughs." It is understandable that Saturn sits in the vale, but the three lines do not combine directly with Saturn. The artistic intensity of the lines, therefore, seems to be reduced.

2

Hyperion I, 7-25 corresponds to *The Fall*, I, 310-30. We will separate these lines into three parts and examine them in detail. The first part of the lines of *Hyperion* is as follows:

> No stir of air was there,
> Not so much life as on a summer's day
> • Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
> But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
> (*Hyperion*, I, 7-10)

The counterpart in *The Fall* is like this:

> No stir of life
> Was in this shrouded vale, not so much air

As in the zoning of a summer's day
• Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell there did it rest:
(*The Fall of Hyperion*, I, 310-314)

In *The Fall* Keats uses two and a half lines in order to describe what he tells in one and a half lines in *Hyperion*. Comparing these lines, we note the following. Firstly, in *Hyperion* "air" rhymes with "there"; they form an internal rhyme. As a result, the line is felt to flow lightly. In *The Fall*, however, "life" substitutes for "air" and "air" replaces "life." "There" in *Hyperion* changes into the elucidatory expression "in this shrouded vale" in *The Fall*. As a result, in *The Fall* the internal rhyme of "air" and "there" vanishes and the tone becomes slow and heavy in contrast to the light rhythm in *Hyperion*. This part, however, describes the scene where there is not a breath of wind and the air is stagnant, so the delineation in *The Fall* is more appropriate. Secondly, one word, "on," (*Hyperion*, I, 8) is changed into another elucidatory expression, "in the zoning of" (*The Fall*, I, 312). The meaning of "zone" from which "zoning" derives is this: "To divide into zones; to distribute or arrange in zones" (*O. E. D.*) and the dictionary quotes this line of Keats. "Zoning" gives us a rather circuitous impression, but the meaning is about the same as "zone." Thirdly, in *Hyperion*, "life" (l. 8) is near "light" (l. 9), so these words have an alliterative effect, but there is no such an effect in *The Fall*.

The second part of the lines of both poems goes like this:

A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
• Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.
(*Hyperion*, I. 11-14)

A stream went voiceless by, still deaden'd more
By reason of the fallen divinity
Spreading more shade: the Naiad mid her reeds

• Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

(*The Fall of Hyperion*, I, 315-18)

"His" in "his fallen divinity" in *Hyperion* changes into "the" in *The Fall*. This change was "necessary to the altered scheme" as E. de Selincourt points out[1]. *Hyperion* is a pure story of Grecian gods and only Saturn has appeared in the poem by this time; while in *The Fall* the poet and Moneta figure in and are looking on Saturn —— *The Fall* is, as it were, a drama within a drama. "A" in "spreading a shade" in *Hyperion* changes into "more" in *The Fall*. Perhaps Keats intended to emphasize the meaning and correspond to the adjective of the next line, "closer," by using the same comparative form. As for the meaning, "a" is good enough, for it indicates the meaning "some."

We will quote the last part of the lines of both poems:

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
• His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were closed;
• While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth,
• His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

• It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
• Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
• With reverence, though to one who knew it not.

(*Hyperion*, I, 15-25)

Along the margin sand large footmarks went
No farther than to where old Saturn's feet
Had rested, and there slept, how long a sleep!
Degraded, cold, upon the sodden ground
• His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,

Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were clos'd,
- While his bow'd head seem'd listening to the Earth,
- His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

- It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one who with a kindred hand
- Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
- With reverence, though to one who knew it not.

(*The Fall of Hyperion*, I, 319-330)

"His" in "his feet" (*Hyperion*, I, 16) changes into an elucidatory expression, "old Saturn's" in *The Fall*, I, 210. This change also results from the altered scheme: the poet looks at the secene and tells it. "Stray'd" in the same line of *Hyperion* changes into another verb, "rested" in *The Fall*. We may imagine that Saturn "rested" after he "stray'd," so "rested" suggestively implies his resignation to his own fall more obviously. The terse expression of "slept there since" in *Hyperion*, I, 17 is revised into "there slept, how long a sleep!" in *The Fall*; this rather prolix expression has two forms of "sleep," that is, a noun form and a verb form, and an exclamation, so it evokes a sentimental impression. "His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead, / Unsceptred" (*Hyperion*, I, 18-19) has a superb array of four adjectives, but in *The Fall* Keats adds two more, "Degraded" and "cold," and produces redundancy. Thus *The Fall* displays the clinging touch of sentimentality.

3

Hyperion, I, 37 correlates with *The Fall*, I, 339-71. In this scene Thea, the wife of *Hyperion*, comes to Saturn and talks to him. The first half of the lines proceeds as follows:

- There was a listening fear in her regard,
- As if calamity had but begun;
- As if the vanward clouds of evil days
- Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear

- Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
- One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
  Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
  Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain:
- The other upon Saturn's bended neck
  She laid, and to the level of his ear
  Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
  In solemn tenour and deep organ tone:
- Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
  Would come in these like accents; O how frail
  To that large utterance of the early Gods!
  "Saturn, look up! — though wherefore, poor old King?
  I have no comfort for thee, no not one:
  I cannot say, 'O 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 pass'd; and all the air
- Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.

(*Hyperion*, I, 37 - 59)

- There was a listening fear in her regard,
- As if calamity had but begun;
- As if the vanward clouds of evil days
- Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
- Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
- One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
  Where beats the human heart; as if just there
  Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain;
- The other upon Saturn's bended neck
  She laid, and to the level of his hollow ear
  Leaning, with parted lips, some words she spake
  In solemn tenor and deep organ tune;

- Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
  Would come in this-like accenting; how frail
  To that large utterance of the early Gods! ——
  "Saturn! look up —— and for what, poor lost King?
  I have no comfort for thee, no —— not one:
  I cannot cry, Wherefore thus sleepest thou?
- For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
  Knows thee not, so afflicted, for a God;
- And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
- Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air
- Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.

(*The Fall of Hyperion*, I, 339-61)

The first six lines of the two poems are quite the same. The following lines are also almost the same. Let us examine the different parts closely. "His ear" (*Hyperion*, I, 46) changes into the rather explanatory "his hollow ear," through which we may imagine the huge ear of giant Saturn vividly. There is a noticeable difference between "these like accents" (*Hyperion*, I, 50) and "this-like accenting" (*The Fall*, I, 352). We will put the meaning of "accents" and "accenting" in juxtaposition:

> Accent *poet.* A significant tone or sound; a word; in *pl.* speech, language; including both the tones and their meaning. (*O. E. D.*)

> Accenting . . . 1. A pronouncing with accent or stress. . . . 3. Uttering or pronouncing; intoning. (*O. E. D.*)

"Accents" is, thus, poetic and refined diction, so it is more appropriate to describe Thea's speech.

As for "O how frail" in the same line of *Hyperion*, "O" is omitted in *The Fall*, for "accenting" has two syllables and "O" is not needed in this pentameter verse. Keats uses "O" lavishly in his earlier poems, so this ommission is welcome. "Though wherefore, poor old King?" (*Hyperion*, I, 52) is revised into "and for what,

poor lost King?" (*The Fall*, I, 354). There is little difference in meaning between "though wherefore" and "and for what," but the former sounds more heavily than the latter. "Wherefore" is used twice in *Hyperion*: here and in I. 54, whereas the repetition is avoided in *The Fall*.

The commonplace phrase "poor old" in *Hyperion* is altered into "poor lost" in *The Fall*. Shakespeare used this "poor old" effectively as a repeated epithet for King Lear, as E. de Selincourt points out.[2] Saturn not only lost his throne, but also has the tragic misery of an old age in common with Lear, though he is a supreme god. There are some phrases expressive of his old age in both poems: *Hyperion*, "gray-hair'd Saturn" (I, 4), "His old right hand" (I, 18), "thine hoary majesty" (I, 59), "old Saturn" (I, 89); *The Fall*, "old Saturn's feet" (I, 320), "His old right hand" (I, 323), "thine hoary majesty" (I, 361), "old Saturn" (I, 400), "some old man" (I, 440). Saturn is compared to "some old man" on the earth in *The Fall*. "Old" has a significant and vital meaning. "Say" (*Hyperion*, I, 54) is replaced by an emotional verb, "cry" in *The Fall*. "O" in the same line of *Hyperion* is eliminated in *The Fall*.

We will quote the latter half:

> 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.
> O aching time! O moments big as years!
> All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,
> And press it so upon our weary griefs
> • That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
> Saturn, sleep on: ——O thoughtless, why did I
> • Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
> • Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
> Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep.
>
> (*Hyperion*, I, 60-71)

> Thy thunder, captious at the new command,

• Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
  And thy sharp lightning in unpracticed hands
• Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
  With such remorseless speed still come new woes
• That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
  Saturn, sleep on: —— Me thoughtless, why should I
• Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
• Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
  Saturn, sleep on, while at thy feet I weep.
  (*The Fall of Hyperion*, I, 362 - 71)

There are a few noteworthy differences between these lines. "Conscious of" (*Hyperion*, I, 60) is rephrased into "captious at" of enhanced meaning in *The Fall*. The three lines of *Hyperion*, I, 64 - 66 are compressed into one line in *The Fall*. In *Hyperion* "O" and the exclamation mark are used in three places, whereas they are omitted in *The Fall*: Thea's speech in *Hyperion* is marked by sentiment but she controls her feeling in *The Fall*.

4

Hyperion, I, 72 - 82 correspond to *The Fall*, I, 372 - 81. We will quote them.

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; the while in tears
  She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,
  Just where her falling hair might be outspread,
• A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.

(*Hyperion*, I, 72-82)

As when, upon a tranced summer night,
Forests, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night, without a noise,
Save from one gradual solitary gust,
Swelling upon the silence; dying off;
• As if the ebbing air had but one wave;
So came these words, and went; the while in tears
She press'd her fair large forehead to the earth,
Just where her fallen hair might spread in curls,
• A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.

(*The Fall of Hyperion*, I, 372-81)

As for the first line, "summer" and "night" are hyphenated in *Hyperion*, but the hyphen is omitted in *The Fall*. In this line "tranced" is powerfully impressive and forms the keynote of the following lines of both poems. The next lines differ entirely. One-plus lines, "Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods, / Tall oaks" in *Hyperion* is condensed into one word, "Forests" in *The Fall*. "Those green-rob'd senators of mighty wood" is in apposition to "Tall oaks." The oak is a large and long-lived tree with tough, hard wood, common in many parts of the world. Keats compares the tree to a "senator," which means a member of the highest council of state in ancient Rome or the Upper House in modern times. *O. E. D.* gives the following meaning and quotes this line of Keats: "In vaguer sense: A counsellor, statesman; a leader in State or Church. Also *fig.*" This would be an honorably aged man who plays the part of a leader in state or church. "Senator" is an apt word for an old oak which grows thick with green leaves and stands upright to the sky. M. R. Ridley says on these two lines of *Hyperion*, I, 72-73 in his book, *Keats' Craftsmanship*, as follows: "The first two lines were good enough to satisfy any one."[3] Keats, however, replaces this superb phrase, "Those green-robed senators of mighty woods, / Tall oaks," with a wellworn word, "Forests." It is regrettable. Oaks reappear as "time-eaten oaks" in *The Fall*, I, 408.

The following two lines beginning at "branch-charmed" of both poems are about

the same, but after "without a" comes "stir" in *Hyperion* and "noise" in *The Fall.* In this case "stir" means "slight or momentary movement" (*O. E. D.*) and oaks are compared to senators and personified, so "without a stir" is an appropriate expression. We have already seen such fine expressions as "no stir of air" (*Hyperion*, I, 7) and "no stir of life" (*The Fall*, I, 310). On the other hand the meaning of "noise" seems to be "a sound which is not remarkably loud." Forests dream without a noise of leaves. *O. E. D.* quotes the line of Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott*, "Thro' the noises of the night / She floated down to Camelot" (IV, iii). Keats also expresses ingenuously: "A little noiseless noise among the leaves" ("I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," 11) or "A rustling noise of leaves" (*Endymion*, II, 496). Both "without a stir" and "without a noise" show the quietness of the place, but the sounds of the words themselves give us different impressions: "stir" has a hard and clear sound; "noise," a soft one. These artistic lines, "Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars, / Dream, and so dream all night without a stir," are revised ones. The original ones are as follows:

> The oaks stand charmed by the earnest stars
> And through all night without a stir they rest.[4]

Comparing these two kinds of lines, we can point out some admirable improvements. "The" is changed into "Tall," so the height of the tall oaks is reemphasized. "Stand" is a very common expression for trees and in this case the oaks are likened to "senators" and personified, so "stand" is too "colorless" as M. R. Ridley points out[5] and is not suitable in this line. On the other hand, revised "dream" corresponds exactly with "tranced" (I. 72) and "branch-charmed" and produces colorful and fantastic imagery. The repetition of impressive "dream" makes us imagine vividly the silent oaks in the starlight.

The lines "Save from one gradual solitary gust" in both poems are quite the same except for the presence of a comma at the end of the line. This line is also a revised one and the original is "Save from one sudden momentary gust." The revised one is better from the viewpoint of the sound resonance and the meaning. It is in harmony with the quietness of the place and suitably compared to Thea's words.

As for the next lines, "Which comes upon" and "dies off" in *Hyperion*, I, 77 are changed into "Swelling upon" and "dying off" in *The Fall*, I, 376. The meaning of both phrases is the same, but the former uses the present form of the verbs and the latter uses the present participles. As we can understand from the line, "As if the ebbing air had but one wave," the wind is swelling like a wave in this place. From this viewpoint, the expression in *The Fall* is superior in its smooth flowing sound. We can feel the swelling air from the accents and intonations: "Swélling upón the sílence; dýing off." In the following line, "So came these words and went;" the difference is the presence or lack of a comma.

The next lines describe Thea putting her forehead to the ground: *Hyperion* uses "touch'd," *The Fall* "press'd." "Press" has an enhanced meaning than "touch." There is no significant difference between "ground" and "earth." As for the next lines beginning with "Just where her falling hair," the passive form of "might be outspread" of *Hyperion* is replaced by "might spread" in *The Fall*. The last lines of both poems are quite the same: "a soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet." The metaphor of the expanse of Thea's hair for a mat gives us rather a strange impression.

We have examined one third of the common lines of both poems and pointed out the significant differences between the two. Consequently we can say the following. Firstly, *The Fall* is more explanatory than *Hyperion*. This comes from the differences in the poetic schemes of the two poems: *Hyperion* is a pure story and a classical epic, whereas *The Fall* is a modern one in which the persona "I" appears and tells the story. Secondly, Keats trys to avoid repetition as much as possible in *The Fall*. Thirdly, exclamations and exclamation marks are carefully restrained in *The Fall*. We don't have enough space to discuss the whole, so we will consider the rest of the common lines elsewhere.

Notes

1 E. de Selincourt (ed.), *The Poems of John Keats*, revised ed. (London: Methuen, 1926), p. 522.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 496-97.
3 M. R. Ridley, *Keats' Craftsmanship* (London: Methuen, 1963), p. 74.
4 E. de Selincourt, p. 497.
5 M. R. Ridley, p. 74.

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This is the revised English version of the first part of Chaprter 1 of *The Identity and Difference between "Hyperion" and "The Fall of Hyperion"* written in Japanese by the same author.